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Wayne: What is your name?

Amar.

Wayne: Omar?

Amar. A-M-A-R.

Wayne: A-M-A-R. Have we met before, Amar?

No.

Wayne: So how is it that you find yourself here tonight, Amar?

Somebody invited me to a Muji seminar, and I met a guy named Andrew, and he told me about you, so I looked you up online.

Wayne: I see. And what did he tell you that interested you sufficiently to look me up online and then come down here today?

We accidentally met after the Satsang at the Whole Foods, and just started talking, and so I said why not? So...

Wayne: Have you been interested in this subject matter for a long time?

Relatively speaking, yes.

Wayne: And do you recall how that came about, how you started to look into this stuff?

Like most people, probably suffering.

Wayne: Suffering in general or suffering from something specific?

Suffering in general. There are too many specifics, so it becomes in general.

Wayne: And so were you seeking to understand what the source of the suffering was, or how you could end it?

You mean my purpose for coming here?

Wayne: in the beginning of your seeking, do you remember?

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Ah. No I really can't say I remember.

Wayne: And where has that seeking taken you, in terms of your current understanding?

Various schools of thought, various teachers. A lot not so good, a few good.

Wayne: And what is resonating with you currently?

What I like, or at least what I've liked out of the many things I done down through the years: I like Krishnamurti, Ramana Maharshi, The Course in Miracles isn't bad, I know Kenneth Wapnick down in Temecula, he's good. I like Edgar Cayce.

Wayne: That's quite a diverse group, so you're quite eclectic that way.

Yeah, I say like I've been down the spiritual path, plus this is California, there's a trillion things. And there used to be the Bodhi Tree [Bookstore] so there's a trillion more things that used to be there.

Wayne: Yes, yes. I was just reminiscing when you mentioned the Bodhi Tree. When I started my active spiritual seeking that was one of the places that I was drawn to. You'd just go and suck up the juice that was there, it just seemed so wondrous, and there were so many diverse and, to me, fresh and new possibilities there. Very wonderful place.

Yeah, unfortunately they're closed.

Wayne: Yes. They've been replaced by the internet.

I don't think it quite replaces it, but...

Wayne: Well, in a sense, that same kind of possibility exists on the internet – that you can start to surf your way through all of these different teachings. And then through YouTube and the like you can be exposed to all the things you could be exposed to all the things you could be exposed to at the Bodhi Tree. And in some ways, more powerfully. I mean, some of the video images of Ramana, of Nisargadatta Maharaj, these are very strong, impactful kinds of imagery that you couldn't get from reading, as far as I'm concerned, you couldn't get from reading a lot of books that had a filter in between them. Because neither Nisargadatta Maharaj or Ramana Maharshi, for example, ever wrote anything. These were all recollections, recordings, interpretations of what these people said. And so at least when you're watching the videos and some of the archival movie footage that's available on YouTube and

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stuff, you get a real immediate sense of these beings, and to me, that's in a lot of ways, a picture's worth a lotta words.

So have you come to a place where all questions have fallen away, or are you still grappling with anything?

I wouldn't say all questions have fallen away, I don't bother asking them much anymore. I haven't stopped suffering either, so...

Wayne: Did you ever get an opportunity to read any of Ramesh Balsekar's stuff?

Is he the one that smoked a lot?

Wayne: No, he was the disciple of the one who smoked a lot. The one who smoked a lot was Nisargadatta Maharaj. And the book *I Am That*, which is a pretty famous book in this particular circle, was about his teachings. And then my guru, this fellow Ramesh Balsekar, he was Nisargadatta's disciple. And Ramesh was kind of an interesting character because he was the President of the Bank of India. And then when he retired, he had always been interested in nondualism, and Advaita had been a part of his life particularly in the more formal kind of Advaita that's practiced in India, but when he retired, he had the opportunity to really begin to explore it more deeply. And this led him to meet Nisargadatta Maharaj, the smoker who in fact had a shop of beedies which are the Indian palm leaf cigarettes, and so he was a very small time merchant of beedies, and lived in a poor section of Bombay which was actually not very far from the very nice section of Bombay that of course Ramesh lived in.

And Ramesh, when he read about this man Nisargadatta in the newspaper from the Ramana Maharshi ashram, they publish a periodical called the *Mountain Path* and there was in that magazine an article about this fellow Nisargadatta Maharaj – this was in the early eighties I guess – written by a woman named Jean Dunn. So Ramesh read this, and then when he read it he went over and saw Nisargadatta, and they formed a very tight connection, a very profound resonant connection was felt by him when he encountered him. And he began to translate Nisargadatta's talks, because by this time the book *I Am That* had been published and seekers from around the world were coming. And Nisargadatta spoke no English at all, he spoke only the local Marathi, he wasn't an educated man. But Ramesh spoke Marathi and Hindi and English and Konkani, and he was educated at the London School of Economics. He was extremely well read and very, he was brilliant actually. So this partnership formed where he would go and he

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would translate many of the morning talks for Maharaj. And it was through this association that his own understanding deepened and finally became complete.

So when I met him, this was quite a departure from my understanding of what Indian gurus were all about. Here this fellow was very much a man of the world, he had been a business man, family man, golfer and all the rest of it. So he was, for me, the perfect bridge between the traditional style of very Hindu-based Advaita nondualism. And he was able to bridge it someone like me, who was relatively new to spiritual seeking, and coming from a background that was not at all spiritually based. I mean I had been alcoholic and a drug addict for nineteen years, up until two years before I met Ramesh, and that was what my life had been all about. So I had only been out of that whole crazy world for two years when I met him. So he was able to bridge for me in a way that turned out to be quite perfect for someone like me.

[silence]

Wayne: [reading from the chatroom] Five AM says, "When I really look into all this, I can see that I seem to do whenever I'm motivated to, without exercising any power to make it happen. But in my functional experience I just cannot see it. The overriding sense is that I act from my own power, and could have acted differently. I've been in this in-between place for years, and this inquiry consumes most of my attention. As it seems that seeing this is the only thing that can bring peace." Ah, he's been doing it for many years because it seems that this is the only thing that can bring peace.

The peace I assume that you're talking about is that absence of suffering, peace, that peace that has no opposite. And to the extent that that peace is only available through the total dissolution of the sense of being an independent authoring entity, then yes. The looking into your own sense of let's say authoring, your own sense of being the source of things, is one approach. And if it's one that resonates with you, then great. We can continue to explore that together, and you can continue to explore it on your own.

The bit about power is one that's pretty interesting, because when you look into it, you see that you do exercise power. You had the power to formulate a series of sentences, you had the power to articulate and type them, you had the power to hear my answer, assuming that you heard my answer you had the power to do all those things. Now what we really need to look at is,

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what is the source of all this power? And that's where things start to diverge. Because the assumption, the widely held assumption, is that you have generated that power somehow, that you are the source of the power. And that assumption is what we're examining in this teaching, to see if you in fact are the source of the power that you exercise. Or are you an instrument through which all of this power is being exercised? The power to think, the power to feel, the power to act – all of which you have in varying degrees, from time to time.

So the first way that you can begin to see into this, is to realize that if you were generating this power yourself, presumably you would generate it all the time, there would be no limitation on this power. So the fact that there is something limiting your power should be an indicator that there is something else at play here, bigger than you. And the recognition of that is the beginning of this investigation that may lead you into seeing directly that which is the Source.

[silence]

Wayne, you know what? I'm just thinking every time you explain that, you know, I listen to it like I'm hearing it for the first time. But it's easier to grasp because I've heard it so many times, and it just goes right there, you know. But seeing that, it seems like a simple question, just like one really easy, simple question. Like: are you the source? Or: what is the source? But when you begin to see it, like it answers everything else. It just has all these branches and tentacles going out, emanating from this one simple little question. You go on that and then it just spreads out. And all the other questions just disappear as well. It's not just one little thing, it's a whole lot of things. It's much bigger than it seems.

Wayne: [reading from the chatroom] John says, "If the human assumption that they are the source of their power is proven to be an absolute fact, how would that change the teaching or even your perception of enlightenment?"

So, if black was proven to be red, what would that do to the whole color spectrum? It would change it, or course it would. If this were different from that, then *that* would be different. But that's not what we're dealing with, these are hypothetical questions: if this becomes that, then that will become something else. But that's not really the question, that's just mental chatter. The question is: What is it that makes you do what you do? Specifically, in your case, in your body, in your mind, in your consciousness? Not abstract philosophical concepts of this then that, what about this and that. *What about you?* And if that same mental energy is turned back in on itself, then instead of it being dissipated, it becomes concentrated, and when it becomes concentrated it becomes very powerful. So, give it a try.

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It becomes concentrated when you start focusing on yourself instead of the ideas behind Advaita?

Wayne: Yes, all the ideas behind Advaita are simply pointers to return the energy to look and to test those ideas in the crucible of your self. See what's true here about you, about your experience, about what makes you do what you do. How is it that you feel the kinds of things that you feel, and experience the kinds of things you experience? What's behind that, what's orchestrating all of this? If it was you, it would all look different, clearly, it would really look different. So what is it, what's going on? It's that focus, that looking, that this teaching is encouraging.

Well what I keep coming back to is, though I have this controlling personality, I keep remembering that I'm not controlling it, that something bigger than me is. And I almost feel like I'm just stuck at that level. Like okay, okay every time I'm stressed out from not getting where I need to get to on time, or I double booked something, whatever it is, I take a second and I remember, oh yeah that's right, okay it's gonna work out the way it's supposed to work out. I really have no, I can put one foot in front of the other but I have no control over what's going to happen, and that makes me you know relax a little bit. But sometimes I feel like I'm kind of stuck there and I feel like there's more, like there's further, it's almost like I'm afraid to go there or something. I don't know.

Wayne: Okay, that may be true, that there may be fear there. But the real point is that there is more, and that the same energy which has brought you to the point where you are, will be responsible ultimately for moving you on. So if you can focus back on what is it that has brought you this far, and you can recognize what that is, then implicit in that will be an understanding of what's going to move you on. When you feel that it's up to you to move on, that somehow your fear or your personality or your nature or something is holding you back, and that you have to overcome that in some way to move forward, that puts the load right back on again, you see. All of a sudden you're back in control, you've got to control surrendering control.

Yeah. Right. Sometimes like when you talk my mind goes blank, like I don't even know what I'm hearing. I don't know if it's so complicated or it's so simple. Like honestly, my brain stops. I'm sitting watching you go like this and I don't even understand what you're saying. But it hits me so hard a lot of times, and that's what keeps bringing me back, so something's bringing me back. I feel like intellectually that it's so simple and I try not to make it a complicated thing, but that I hear what you say from a gut level or something and not necessarily a mind level. Does that make sense?

Wayne: Right. Yes, it makes total sense. As far as I'm concerned you're in exactly the right spot, exactly where you should be in this moment.

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Good. That's cool. If you say so, then...

Wayne: Well yeah, I do. It's a total certainty to me. What is completely uncertain, is what will happen in the next instant. I have no clue.

Wayne, can I ask you a question that has something to do with what she said? I'm curious, do you feel that everybody's maybe already there and all it is is just an awareness of it?

Wayne: No.

Meaning it's present working through everyone and everyone simply believes whatever the work that's being done is they're kind of activated and involved in that and if they simply turn their awareness towards the source of all that, it's already there. Does that make sense? So you don't believe that? Well what do you feel about that?

Wayne: It's all here.

How's that different than what I said? You mean it's all the same thing?

Wayne: It's not all the same thing. That's what I'm saying. It's not all the same thing. You're not already there, you're here!

Well, that's what I mean, though. I mean that the enlightenment or the end of suffering – whatever people want to call it which would be the goal of self-realisation, of maybe the truer self in some way a recognition. Is it just it's already done, it's simply placing your awareness there? Is that kind of what happened to you?

Wayne: No, no. If it's already done, where's the question of placing your awareness there?

My experience is that when I did the self inquiry and I just looked and I said who am I, who is this witness? I simply just moved back and suddenly it's like it moved forward but nothing moved it was simply my awareness shifting to the source. And I find that whenever I do that inquiry I am able to move to it.

Wayne: So why don't you do that inquiry all the time?

I do do it all the time. But it's harder when you're walking, the sense is...

Wayne: Then you're not doing it all the time.

Well I guess I'm doing my best at doing it all the time.

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Wayne: That's something entirely different. Why aren't you doing it all the time, then?

I guess, I don't know.

Wayne: [smiling] That's worth looking at.

I've actually thought about it but I always came up with the explanation that it takes a certain degree of awareness and presence even just to like... So I've had a couple of times where I got so kind of all-encompassing that you know there's like a couple close calls. Because my awareness...

Wayne: What do you mean by close calls?

You know, you're driving your car and suddenly you realise that you're everything and it's like, you lose, I lost my arms, and I lost my body but I was driving and it was just... There've been a couple of moments where I've felt that I had to give my attention to the actual material thing, I mean many times sitting here I've become every, just like the room, and everything gets really weird and my body disappears and I'm just like sitting here, and there's energy everywhere and light but I mean...

Wayne: People pay good money for that shit.

But is that some kind of like, trickery?

Wayne: It's not trickery.

Well but what I mean is, to me the experience of it is, is the absence of suffering, and even desire or a need for anything, and often I find myself not even breathing.

Wayne: I assure you you're breathing.

Well of course but it's like it's very you know it's like a tiny movement compared to like...

Wayne: So. I'm sure there's all kind of changes which take place, all sorts of experiences that happen. Unitive experiences, they're the best, they're the best. I have made an exhaustive study of experiences, and I mean I've been interested in the quality and nature of experience. I used to fly hang gliders, I've done all kinds of drugs, I've you know made, I've done all kinds of sexual things, things that are heavy duty experiential kinds of qualitative things. And I've engaged in a variety of different kinds of meditations, different spiritual practices, all that have different kinds of experience, and the unitive experience that you're talking about, is the best. Doesn't. Get. Better than that.

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That feels secondary to me, almost, the experience.

[Wayne winks]

It's just a way to describe something that's not describable, it's almost like a side effect or something.

Wayne: I know. So the most amazing thing about that experience is that it doesn't have the quality of it being a singular experience. It's total, it's unitive, it's expansive so that you and it have merged into a oneness. That is the best. But what defines it is that it is not unitive, it is relative to something else that is then experiential.

It's interesting, I didn't have a question but when she asked the question I almost, somehow that question arose in me. I mean, do you feel that it's there for her right now? Why not her, right now? Or are you saying that we have no control over that really, cause I feel like the one thing we do have control over through a lot of inquiry I have found the only thing I have actual control over is where I place my awareness or focus.

Wayne: But you just finished telling me a few minutes ago that there were things that allowed you to focus your attention, and sometimes you couldn't.

Well no, it's not that I couldn't. It was maybe more challenging cause there was a lot of action happening.

Wayne: Okay, now we're dancing around with semantics, you either did or you didn't, you could or you couldn't. If you couldn't because the circumstances were challenging and were distracting you, then you couldn't do it in that moment. That's the point.

Maybe it's just a trick that I played on myself, maybe I can do it when there's a lot. I mean you, it's happened, you know. It's more challenging when I'm running up a mountain than it is when I'm sitting still, in fact every time I sit still it spontaneously happens. So I mean, maybe I don't know, I thought that it was just a side effect of me paying attention. Does it make sense what I'm asking you?

Wayne: Does it make sense what I'm telling you?

It makes complete sense but I feel like I'm missing something, meaning like a specific question is, do you feel for example that she has the specific ability right now to inquire and just realize it because it's here, there's only here.

Wayne: Forget about her, I'm only concerned with you.

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Okay.

Wayne: This is all about your experience. This is the only place where whatever you understand is going to be seen, not her.

My experience is that yes, I do all the time.

Wayne: But you already told me you don't do it all the time. You only do it some of the time.

Yeah. But a lot, comparatively. Compared to...

Wayne: Okay fine, a lot. But what I'm interested in, is when you don't do it.

Right.

Wayne: This is where I'm trying to point you. Take a look at when you don't do it. What you keep feeding me back is how you're getting to do it more, you can do it a lot, I'm trying to get you focused on what makes you NOT do it.

Yeah, the trickery of the thoughts, the stuff, all the things.

Wayne: Okay, so if your thoughts are tricking you so that you're not in control, what is dictating this?

I don't know.

Wayne: Okay. That's where I would direct you to look.

But...

Wayne: Okay.

[17 minute silence]

I have a question Wayne. It seems like at times that I have these moments, I have these experiences, when my mind is kind of cooperating and going along with things, and then other times it seems like it's attacking. And I wonder why? It seems like it really wants to end you, it really wants to do you in or something. And I just wonder about that, if consciousness is doing everything, why does that happen? It's just part of the deal?

Wayne: Well it is part of the deal, that's clearly the case. If we say that

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Consciousness does everything, and that's part of everything, then Consciousness is doing it. Now the why is a whole other question. And human beings have been speculating about why the universe is as it is since the beginning. And it's certainly entertaining and interesting to consider those kinds of questions, but that's not really the subject matter that we're dealing with.

Not helpful.

Wayne: No, I haven't found it to be a productive area of inquiry. Any conclusions that you might come to, tend to morph and change and be disagreed with by others, and the subject of ongoing debate. Whatever it is. Whatever the answer to why is, someone's thought of it before you, and someone else has come up with a counter argument, and it's really tough finding new ground. It's sort of like chess, except played on a board that's morphing and changing dimensions.

It seems like that's part of what the mind does too, is take you to places where there's nothing to help you there.

Wayne: Well it's interesting because the mind can carry you to the edge, but it can't carry you over. Sort of like a horse, the horse will take you right to the edge of the cliff, but it ain't jumpin', it's just not gonna do it.

That's the whole point right? Past there the mind's not relevant, it doesn't exist.

Wayne: Um-hmm.

[5 minute silence]