

# The “I Am” Is Me

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**Dieter:** I have a question about inquiry.

I have followed the *Gita* course. In the course Ram recommends several texts to go to in-depth. Among them is the book *Value of Values* and the interview on Ramana. I read the text of Ramana's. I heard and read that there is a part in all of us that never changes. I know this part for a long time. I asked some so-called spiritual people about it, but they negated it or dismissed it as inferior.

**Sundari:** Understanding that your true nature is the unchanging, non-experiencing witness, consciousness/self, requires qualifications. If they are not present, the mind will not accept non-dual teachings.

**Dieter:** I know this part of me as never changing. It is more “me” than everything outside it, including my body, my thoughts; it never changes. I remember it as long as I can remember. It is outside of time, it never ages. It becomes clearer through the *Gita*. With the explanation of Ram's, I understand the texts of Nisargadatta better. He also mentions to fix the mind on the “I am.” I think he means the same as in the text of Ramana's.

I notice when I enquire into the reflection of the self, the “I am,” and ask myself questions about the “I am,” all the answers are negative, and finally my thinking stops (for a while).

IS the “I am” that part that never changes?

**Sundari:** Yes, the “I am” is the unchanging, ever-present self, the knower of the experiencing entity; but do not mistake the “I am” thought for the “I am.” The “I am” thought is an object known to you, the “I am,” as are all other objects, subtle or gross. The problem with Nisargadatta's teachings is that he did not unfold the methodology of Vedanta correctly. He made statements and did not clarify them, because he was not a qualified teacher.

**Dieter:** But when I can experience it, it can't be the self, because you can't experience the self other than as a reflection of the self, not so?

**Sundari:** No. Everything you experience is the self, experiencing itself, with or without self-knowledge. You are only ever experiencing the self, consciousness, knowingly or unknowingly because that is all there is. When the mind is very still and clear, you experience the reflection of the self in it – but the reflection is an object known to you, the self. The reflection does not exist apart from you (like your reflection in a mirror) but you, the self, are always free of the reflection.

What is meant by the teaching that you cannot experience the self with our senses,

the means of knowledge available to us (perception and inference), is this: you cannot experience the self as an object of experience, because the self is the subject, not the object. It can only be known as your true nature when ignorance has been destroyed by self-knowledge. When self-knowledge is firm, you see everything as non-different from you, but you are always free of the objects, meaning all experience.

**Dieter:** Is the means of inquiry into that reflection of the self to discriminate the real from the unreal?

**Sundari:** Yes. The essence of self-inquiry is to investigate the true nature of reality with the aid of a valid means of knowledge, Vedanta, to enable you to discriminate between *satya* (the self, that which is always present and unchanging) and *mithya* (that which is not always present and always changing).

**Dieter:** Am I on the right track with the above questions or am I wandering around?

**Sundari:** You are on the right track, Dieter! Keep up the good work.

~ Love, Sundari