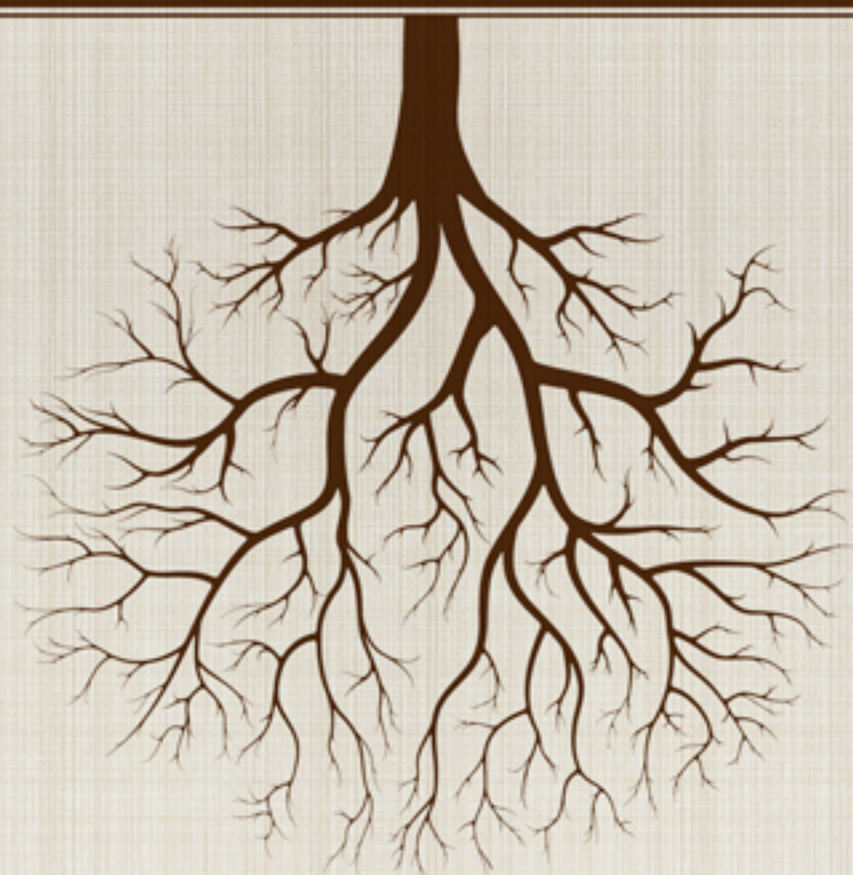




YOUR TRUE NATURE
WISDOM OF LIVING MASTERS

by Natalie Deane and Damien Lafont



Your True Nature: Wisdom of Living Masters
By Natalie Deane and Damien Lafont

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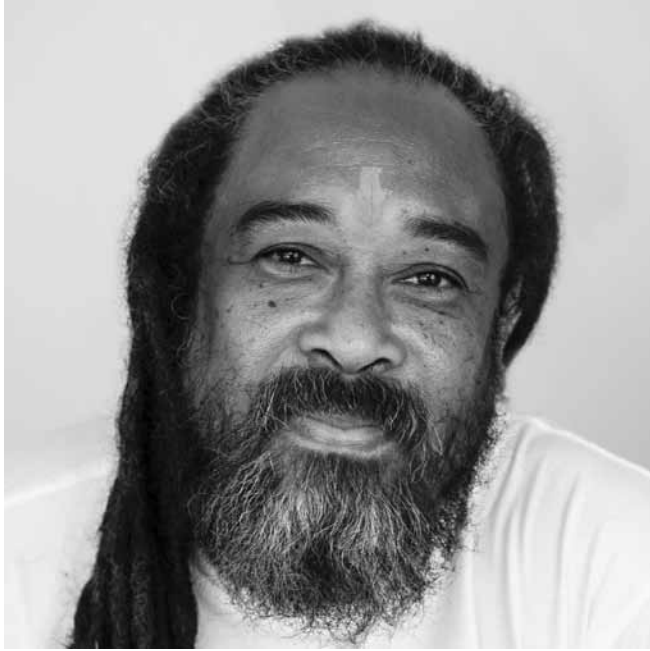
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MOOJI

You are That!

Mooji (Anthony Paul Moo-Young) is a disciple of the great Advaita master, Sri H.W.L. Poonja or Papaji, as he is affectionately known by devotees. Mooji was born on 29 January 1954 in Port Antonio, Jamaica. He later moved to Brixton, London where he lived for over 40 years. Here, Grace brought an encounter with a Christian mystic that caused Mooji to “walk out of his life”—an expression he uses to convey the profundity of that meeting. There was no longer a sense of personal autonomy. In his own words he says, “I felt I was sitting on the lap of God. A deep peace and trust in the Supreme arose inside my heart and has remained to this day.”

Intrigued by this major shift in perception and wanting to merge fully in Truth, Mooji discovered the teachings of the great Indian saint, Sri Ramakrishna, whose utterances satisfied his heart deeply. This connection prompted Mooji to travel to India, where, seemingly by chance, he was to meet his living Master, Papaji. There, at Papaji's feet, whatever still remained of a functioning ego was finally uprooted.

Recognizing Mooji's radiance, people from various parts of the world began to approach him in search of the direct experience of Truth. The capacity to guide them arose spontaneously in him. Although Mooji's presence carries a devotional fragrance, the words that spring from his being are of the nature of non-duality. His guidance evokes the love for and the direct recognition of the timeless Self we are. Mooji's unsparing pointings to the Truth, through the method of self-inquiry, forms the essence of these pointings.

Mooji choicelessly dedicates his life to the calling of the Heart. It is this which has given rise to Monte Sahaja, an ashram and retreat center being built in the south of Portugal. As Mooji himself explains, "I was compelled to come here, led by an unseen presence, so that seekers may meet the *real* land-Lord inside their own Heart."

mooji.org



Damien: *What is the best way forward for humanity?*

Mooji: I remember something my master said when he was asked, "What should mankind do in order to transform life from one of increasing crisis to a life of harmony?" Papaji responded: "*Mankind must become kind man.*"

The kindness that my master, Sri H.W.L. Poonjaji, speaks about is what we have to rediscover afresh. Mankind must become humble and open again. He must learn from his errors and also trust in and cooperate with the higher power. Man must not become a victim of his own vain projections. He must become wise through perfect knowledge and understanding. He must learn from the wise beings on the Earth.

What has to happen is a changing over of power, from manual to automatic. By this I mean a reorientation from a personal mode of consciousness, where the “I” functions as ego, to an impersonal mode of consciousness, which is experienced as unmixed “I”-presence. But this takes place only when our own consciousness deepens to the extent where it ceases to function merely as a psychological entity or ego-mind and functions from the perspective of unassociated being, the natural sense “I Am”. So, the ego-centered mind cannot really arrange its own freedom. Grace plays an important role in awakening from the dream of a personal self. Grace compels us to stop looking at the mind’s projections and introduces us to really examining ourselves deeply with a pure conscience and a willingness to change what is not in harmony with our heart’s light and wisdom.

Damien: *Scientific signs indicate that the universe will have an inevitable end. What do you think about this?*

Mooji: Science is a great expression of consciousness which has contributed to the human experience. However, scientific projections have been proven wrong on numerous occasions and many predictions of certain catastrophes did not happen. Why? Because on the whole, life is not as predictable as our minds often imagine. Life is essentially functioning in harmony, it is not trying to destroy itself; in fact, on the contrary, life takes care of life. Man is not the manager of existence.

The mind of man is a much lesser power than the cosmic mind. Although consciousness in its expression as the human being manifests

a tremendous diversity, a higher power, far beyond man's capacity to comprehend, prevails as the substratum of all of existence. If only we would understand this, we would trust more in the cosmic mind, in its benevolence and intelligence and so come to live a more harmonious existence with nature.

You may ask if it is grace that saves us from such phenomena. Yes, grace plays a large part in this. But I don't want to use grace in an open-ended kind of way so that people don't think that they have no part to play and close their minds to the spontaneous and wise actions that flow out of their own hearts.

Damien: *Is there the possibility of a united spiritual tipping point or a critical threshold to which our spiritual nature could, in fact, alter or reverse the course of our future?*

Mooji: Man cannot know the future; he can only speculate. There's always the possibility that life, nature, God—whatever we choose to call it—may bring about a disaster, but we wouldn't be able to anticipate the time of its exact happening and magnitude. Our assessment of such phenomena will vary from person to person, nation to nation. Any major event has innumerable outcomes depending on the maturity of perception. A "calamity" may bring about enlightened change in human culture and reshape our perspective by raising the level of consciousness. All assessments are subjective assessments, never objective, and they hopefully lead to humbling admissions that we are indeed not rulers of destiny.

So, this spiritual tipping point is not something humanity can create. Even if mankind has the aspiration, we have not shown the power to generate any real force for change. Even among the people who come together for a common good, there are so many fragmentary perspectives, so many differences of opinion, that they often defeat their original intention.

You may ask, “What about beings who have reached the pinnacle of human spiritual potential, meaning those who have realized their inherent unity with the source of life and are the living embodiment of that, don’t they have the power to direct us on a new path?” No, it doesn’t work like that. We cannot even rely on such spiritually elevated beings to intervene on humanity’s behalf if the desired cause for which their help is sought is merely to suit self-centered desires, projections and fantasies. They will not—and cannot—act against the will of the Supreme. Being unbiased in their perception, they find no fault, as such, in the playing out of names and forms.

Damien: *So do we just let things be what they are?*

Mooji: Well, we don’t know what they are. We have an idea in our minds about what they are. To begin with, man has a mighty misconception of his real nature. He conceives himself to be a psychological being and projects his own neurosis upon the world. Consequently, he cannot help trying to “fix” the world he believes begs for his messiahship, a deep complex he treasures within himself. Thus, he dwells in a realm of self-inflated fantasy of possessing autonomous power to transform a world he has created out of his deluded mind. He imagines he needs to “save” something or someone but he has forgotten to include himself in his own mission.

Damien: *Are you saying that even people who get together with the intention to make “positive” changes, to work against what threatens man’s existence on this planet, that all that energy is wasted?*

Mooji: Don’t be disheartened. There is something within man which is perfect, whole, complete—his original being and nature. He must seek and discover his true Self. But he suffers heavily from distraction, due to intense psychological conditioning and false identity. He looks at what his deluded identity imagines rather than looking for the deluded identity itself. Transcendence of any self-belief as the person into the recognition

of his being as conscious presence is his highest and deepest challenge. His loyalty to his worldly conditioning obscures his intuitive recognition of his timeless being and so he sleeps on. Incapable of recognizing and acknowledging his own delusion, he remains oblivious of his perfect Self. Incredibly, when he begins to investigate himself, he will come to recognize his conditioned identity as a mere psychological thought construct. In the moment of such a profound insight, he will spontaneously recognize his true being as the awareness in whose light the unreal notion of himself is seen. The world that he imagined he inhabited was a reflection of his own psychic projections. If man comes to such a revelation, he has reached his highest potential. The whole falsity starts going up in flames and he rises like the phoenix out of the ashes of his own delusions and is freed from the prison of his own dream.

I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak so bluntly about this. I'm aware that it won't be so palatable for the conditioned mind, but it's vital and a fast-forward to freedom if freedom is what we are really seeking.

Damien: *In his profound book 'I Am That', Nisargadatta Maharaj said, "In my world, nothing ever goes wrong." Is this how we should all fundamentally view our lives? From a higher perspective?*

Mooji: No, you cannot do it. You may attempt to do that but without direct experience of this place from where and as what Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj speaks, it will only be a contrived mental state—a pretence that will not last. When Sri Maharaj says, "In my world," he doesn't mean, "In my personal world as 'me', the person, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj." He means that in the world as is viewed through the eyes of the impersonal consciousness, nothing ever goes wrong. At the superficial level, something may appear to go wrong, but from the place of pure consciousness, one sees everything has a part to play and has its own timed appearance. The sage knows this and is one with the dynamic and spontaneous unfolding.

Life is never what you think it is. Life becomes exactly what you imagine it to be based upon human perception when it is shaped by personal conditioning, desire and belief. These color the “What Is” and make it appear other than what it is.

The awakened one has transcended the egoic identity and is no longer a person. He is free of personal desires and motives and his being is one with the universal consciousness. It is an effortless alignment with all that exists. Therefore, he is naturally happy. This will always baffle the ego, which tirelessly works at life with effort and strain. It misses the simplicity of being. The sage’s life demonstrates that man’s higher Self is in effortless unity with the cosmos.

Damien: *Can we keep this state of “nothing ever goes wrong” continuous when we ourselves reach pure consciousness?*

Mooji: That would, at best, be only a belief. This “nothing ever goes wrong” state is a discovery, not the outcome of some effort. There’s no keeper of that state and neither is there someone who can reach it. If there was a person who had to reach and then keep that state of consciousness, he would not be able to do it, because the person, in fact, does not exist in reality. How could the person maintain any state when he himself is only an image in consciousness?

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj is speaking from and as Unborn Awareness, which alone is constant and real. From the Unborn, this state of “I Am” consciousness is itself observed. So even the “I Am”, the state of presence, as majestic as it is, is not the final reality. Beyond the state “I Am” no efforts can be made for what lies beyond is the Unborn Awareness—Absolute timelessness. Nothing witnessable or knowable can reach there. This Unborn Awareness has to be intuitively grasped and energetically confirmed as one’s ultimate reality

Damien: *Most teachers across all denominations talk about Oneness: How we all are fundamentally one consciousness. Though many seekers*

may intellectually understand this concept, so few seem to fully experience it. How can we truly experience the ultimate state of oneness? How do we bring this into our everyday lives?

Mooji: How can we truly experience this ultimate state of oneness? Oneness is not an experience that you can have and then leave. *The oneness state is not for somebody. It is only for nobody.* Only Mr. or Ms. Nobody knows this oneness state. Mr. or Ms. Somebody cannot know it. The main aim of spirituality, if you want to be direct, is not to try to be *one* with everything. The sole and supreme aim is to find out and be who you are. If you find out who you are, you will automatically understand and *be* that effortless oneness at a living level.

Oneness doesn't mean I have to look like you. Oneness doesn't even mean that I have to like you. It's not that we are all 'being' one, like some kind of religious unity, projection, or vision. Oneness means that what has been discovered here in this body as the unchanging ground of being, functions as the same one reality inside each body. It is the common source of all manifestation. Once you have unswervingly realized the Self—that you are That—then you cannot fail to see that it is the same Self manifesting in all bodies. This is what oneness means and is. Knowing this, one cannot have an intention to really harm "another", as there is only the one Self appearing as many. This Self expresses love and compassion for all beings as forms of its own Self.

Damien: *How do we bring this into our everyday lives?*

Mooji: Again, this is a question completely constructed on false notions. There is no "we" who can bring this into our lives. We are always and already the one perfect Self, we simply are unaware of this truth due to the fact that we believe we are the body-mind conditioning. All ideas based upon human effort to try and reach the ultimate state produce only a simulation of liberation. The mind tries to imitate the quality and fragrance of the pure Self through imagination. And if we go with the mind, we may think that we are making great strides towards the realiza-

tion of our limitless Self, but all that we're actually doing is exchanging worldly conditioning for spiritual conditioning, that is all.

Do not despair. If your urge and goal is to discover the final, unalterable and ultimate truth, practice alone will not reveal it, and that is a good thing. Why? Because it means that self-discovery requires no skill, which you might fail at. What practice can do is expose the lie or make you see through the false. This is already something powerful. However, the full recognition of truth requires grace also.

Grace is ever-present, and the grace of a teacher—the one who has already transcended the influence of the egoic mind and who possesses the authority and power to guide seekers beyond the complex realm of phenomenality—chops off the ego identity so that the pure being alone shines. This is not a creative process. It's an unveiling of the truth that has always been present, but which seemed eclipsed by the belief that we are our personalities.

Damien: *So, what is the best question to ask a living master?*

Mooji: Can I find and become what the Buddha, Christ or any of the great spiritual masters discovered now, today and if not, what stops me? Is it all a question of luck or can I actually do something about it? Do I need to leave my present role in life, my family, my career, in order to discover what is real? Such questions would be the best ones to put to a living master, should you have the occasion to meet one.

Damien: *The world around us seems fully real according to our upbringing and education. Where does the urge come from to raise such questions, to challenge our conditioning?*

Mooji: We've been very much conditioned in a cerebral way. The concept of an objective reality has become our root support. We believe very strongly in the evidence of the senses and the mind in its aspect as literal, rational and logical functioning. These are aspects and abilities within our being, but our capacity as consciousness is much broader than

these. And so it is not inconceivable that from somewhere inside this vast consciousness, the urge to wake up from this slumber of ignorance can arise spontaneously without human agency. An outside event, like an accident, may be the trigger. But for some rare beings, upon hearing just a single word of truth spoken to them, or even the mere encounter with the silent presence of an awakened being, they find their hearts opening up with great delight to this greatest of human possibilities.

As we start to question the mind, all that is untrue—our belief in certain concepts, the conditioning we’ve received based upon the “I am the body” belief, and the opinions we hold about ourselves and the world—begins deconstructing under the power of self-inquiry and a clearer view of life is experienced. Here is the beginning of what is referred to as the road to awakening. We’re stepping out of the groove carved by the personal identity and the conditioning that we’ve adopted due to naivety, into a sort of spontaneous existence.

Damien: *So, we must continue questioning ourselves in order to discover our real nature; is that so?*

Mooji: Since the birth of this body, something inside has been saying “I” millions of times. What is this “I”? This is true questioning. When we look *with or from* the position of the personal “I”, we merely dream on, whereas when we look *for* the source of “I” we awaken from the sleep of ignorance into our real nature. Can the natural sense “I” or “I am” be merely an object or thought? Is the body what I truly am? Is the “I”-feeling a person and if it is, what perceives it? And is that also a person? We must find out.

The one who ponders over these questions with sincerity and earnestness discovers their immutable and eternal being. Such a one discovers that the personal “I” does not really exist and is essentially idea-based. Being a psychological construct, it doesn’t exist in reality and therefore cannot decide things. What really happens when we speak of decisions is that an urge arises spontaneously from the depths of consciousness, hits

the conscious mind, and the mind recognizes it and says, “I have decided to do this or that...”

Damien: *And this is true even if ego seems to determine something? Even an egoic action originates from a deeper consciousness or what you call the Self?*

Mooji: Yes. For the Self, ego is nothing at all. It’s only for the psychological mind that the imagined self is believed to be something real. There are forces greater than the “person” at work, playing in, as and through this image of the world and its functioning. When we wake up from the sleep of egoic autonomy, we discover the world to be a divine play and ourselves the formless witness of it. It is the sublime realization—complete and fulfilling in every respect.

If we could only realize that the world is not in the hands of human beings, we would all relax more, trust in the higher power and come to see with greater clarity, wisdom and joy the divinity of life.

Damien: *But there is so much distrust towards life and nature as a whole.*

Mooji: Human beings have developed a basic distrust towards nature, but the fact is, it isn’t nature that human beings can’t trust, it is each other. Human beings cannot trust human beings. And this is so because our self-definition as a human being is merely an artificial construct—more human, less being. Consciousness creates a portrait of itself as a separate autonomous person, needing to fend for himself in a perilous and insecure environment called life. Moving within this kind of paradigm, we believe that each person possesses a significant, though not equal, amount of autonomy. Those who we perceive to have more powerful positions in society than our own are often believed to determine or affect our fate in some way. This instils a sense of powerlessness and fear in many. But human beings are not the controllers of consciousness, they themselves are the expressions of consciousness. Consciousness is greater than man. Man believes he ‘has’ consciousness but the truth is, consciousness

“has” him. He is merely an idea conceived in consciousness. The twist or seeming riddle is to find out whose idea it is. So there is no such thing as a single human being possessing autonomous power to do as he wills. It is all a one-man show and consciousness is the sole actor, director, producer, critic, audience, theatre and stage.

When you read a book, each character behaves in a certain way. But their entire persona is the author’s creation. Where do these characters come from? They don’t exist independent of the author.

For instance, you really like a character in the book and you say, “Oh my God, I really like Ms. Jenny. She’s so beautiful and wise.” But you know what? It is the author you like. A book’s story and characters are conceived by the author, they are the author’s creative expression. “And Mr. Jones, that shopkeeper,” you say, “I hate that man, all he thinks about is money and his stupid old car.” But who is really behind Mr. Jones’ character? The same author who’s writing each role. You see? And then you think, “Oh, yes, I wish Ms. Jenny would fall in love with George. If she fell in love with George, it would really be great for the story.” But this is all the author’s doing. There’s no Ms. Jenny deciding anything.

Everything is the author’s creation. Do you understand? God is the author behind all the movements of life’s expressions. When you think you are a person, then your experience will be as though you are functioning as an actual, factual autonomous being. When you realize you are the Self, then you are actually at one with the supreme power. It’s just different layers of identity that we function through and as, for a time. You can be a person, or you can be the supreme. You are not a person, you are consciousness. What you identify yourself as just depends upon the maturity of your understanding.

Damien: *We once read that you had told someone there is no free will?*

Mooji: I have not really presented this to anybody as a fundamental

teaching. I don't preach to anybody that they don't have free will. I don't need to say such things. What I have to share with you is so much higher than that.

I have said that there is *apparent* free will, not total free will. There is a sense of free will because consciousness is free. You have some amount of freedom to make life as pleasant as you can, according to your present capacity and also to mature more deeply until a point is reached where there is no more desire left to be requiring personal will. Only when you identify as a person does *free will* matter so much and is conceived of in such a way that life would be felt unbearable without it. However, this is not the case for a liberated being, because having awakened to the unreality of the ego, he finds his nature to be one with the cosmic Self, which is a harmonious existence. Therefore he lacks nothing.

Your experiences in life tell you already that you are not the sole architect of your existence. We each have the power to dream, but we don't have the power to make our dreams come true. Or would you say that you are able to create exactly the life you want? For instance, do you have the free will to meet and marry the person you keep fantasising about? No. Do you have the free will to manifest money as and when you choose? No. So other forces are contributing to the life you call your own. I have to tell you here that all of this is inside the great dream. We are aware of ourselves inside the dream, which we believe and call reality. But for the wise the so-called reality is a dream, which he witnesses inside his own being. This is almost impossible for an unawakened being to grasp, because so hypnotised is he by delusion that it makes him believe both the dream and his dreamed identity to be real. And yet, inside that dream is a key and a door that take you out of the dream. The wise know the way. Seek to be in their company and follow their guidance.

Damien: *Are you saying we don't have free will at all? Could this not be felt as a suffocating concept?*

Mooji: To those who feel like that, I would say, slow down a little bit and try to really follow what I am saying here. Contrary to what you might imagine, it's out of life's kindness, out of God's kindness that you are allowed only a little bit of will so you don't spoil your existence. People do terrible things out of selfishness, envy and greed. If you actually had total free will your life would be so terrible. You would choose only chocolate-flavored experiences that wouldn't challenge your ego. But, basically, we don't grow inwardly on Nutella.

Not having total free will helps us develop the beautiful expressions of humility, surrender, patience, love, kindness, acceptance and selflessness. See and discover. Don't feel claustrophobic by what I'm saying. There is immense freedom in it.

Presently, the mind thinks, "If I lose my free will, I lose my freedom." It doesn't understand that the one who is free does not need will because they are one with the unfolding stream of existence and its source. They don't need to have something more. Even if they say so, it's only playful. If they don't receive it, they don't mind.

What has to be seen through is that we have an exaggerated notion about free will. Often when we speak about free will, we really mean this kind of egoic will, not the supreme will. The varied expressions of life are already the Supreme will. But are you able to recognize and acknowledge this? Or is it that even in your prayer, "May thy will be done," you are still secretly hoping, "May *my* will be done"? [*Laughter*]

Damien: *And what about choice? Is there choice?*

Mooji: A wise choice is to exercise one's apparent free will to stop the attention from pursuing whatever projections or thoughts are pulling it to go with the personal identity, the past, intention, desire, attachments, and bring it back each time inside the awareness-being or the observing source. Keep bringing the attention back to the Self until it stays here naturally. Just be the Self. This is a powerful expression of your true

will, because when you exercise it in this way, you'll come to recognize that you are only the impartial and detached witness to the passing show parading in front of you. This understanding will encompass and pervade your entire experience of this worldly existence.

Life has its perfection, contrast, harmony and beauty, but we all miss the miracle of this existence because we want it to be different than it is. And life is not here to fulfil our projections. It is as it is. When you are as you are and perceive that it is as it is, you will find harmony and true lasting happiness, for now you intuitively know that you are life itself and simultaneously, witnessing of life occurs to you.

Damien: *If we are truly spirit/consciousness, then why have this physical experience?*

Mooji: What do you mean by this physical experience? There is one earth but there are billions of worlds. The world we each experience is very much a unique psychological perspective of life, shaped by our identity, conditioning, education, attachments and desires. So many factors, mostly untraceable, contribute to the way we perceive, and from moment to moment it is changing. Memory gives an illusion that there is continuity but that is not the real continuity. Memory gives the illusion of stability but it is not any real stability; it's just a frozen picture. The awareness in which such images are seen, that alone is real. We are this pure and ever-present consciousness.

Consciousness is ever-perfect, ever one. It cannot become imperfect or divided. It is as though consciousness wishes to taste experiencing, but in order to do this it has to create the sense of duality. Although duality is an unreality, it is a necessary tool for experiencing to take place and is therefore not a mistake. With the help of duality, consciousness now creates a sense of separateness and uses the play of duality to reunite the "separate parts" into a wholeness it already is and has never left. This is the paradox. And this is the yoga of life: the one appearing as many. It is also called the *leela* or play of God. We are compelled to wake up from

the sleep of duality into the unity of existence. This is the game, opportunity and purpose of life.

While we live in the self-image or the notion of being a person, we have to be in this field of interrelated opposites. We have to go through all the ups and downs of life. Gradually, life somehow becomes our teacher. We don't consciously see that, but consciousness is maturing through all the seeming difficulties, bringing us again to a state of awakening. While we have this body and are asleep to our true nature, this body is like the pyjamas of the being. So you ask, "Why do we, as consciousness, have to have a physical experience?" I feel that it has to happen like that, for without the physical, the spiritual cannot be known or experienced—another paradox.

All beings are in Satsang. Satsang means the pull towards Truth. All beings are pulled by the magnet of Satsang, but not necessarily consciously. Initially, this attraction, this pulsation, this drive, this urge is imagined to be for wealth, for fame, for money or a relationship. And these can be there, but they cannot be one's ultimate goal for they are all perishable, time-bound. We can spend so much of our existence pursuing the wind, only being concerned about the fleeting manifestation. What is by nature changeful is also divine, it is also beautiful, but when you try to keep what is changing, then you suffer. We must discover the unchanging—our timeless reality. And when your search is coming to an end you just start to feel a tremendous love, a silent stillness and space, and an inner feeling of completeness and contentment blossoming within you. You recognize, "My gosh, I always thought I was divided and separate—just one tiny piece of a very big puzzle—but now I see that there is a unity and a harmony inside my heart. When I thought I was only the body I was so very afraid, because I took notice that the body will end one day and I took this to mean that it would be the end of me; but now, seeing from the place of consciousness, I realize that consciousness has no birth, it has no death. I naturally know that I am eternal." This is a different feeling altogether.

Damien: *Do you think this human experience may somehow serve to evolve us, or is it like you said—ultimately it's always the same? Is it not changing?*

Mooji: Again, be reminded that awareness, which is our real Self, is timeless and ever-perfect. When it chooses to express itself as dynamic existence in the form of a human being, it descends into the realm of duality by believing, “I am the body. This is me. I am such-and-such a person.” It seems that from our parents to our teachers and our peers, everybody in society is in this deluded state where we all believe we are separate individuals living inside separate bodies and that this is a fact, a proof of our individuality and autonomy. However, it is still consciousness playing this self-portrait as a person.

Consciousness doesn't waste any expression. It has to use the experiences that come in life, because life is not apart from the great river of consciousness. Through this play, consciousness somehow matures, deepens and evolves towards ultimate self-recognition. In the realm of duality, there is evolution, there is change, there is growth. But ultimately, all this refining is taking place against the backdrop of unchanging awareness—our ultimate being. Even the aspiration and the very search for truth is itself phenomenal from the perspective of the supreme awareness. When you see *from* and *as* awareness itself, then you recognize that what you once thought yourself to be was only a role being played by consciousness. You yourself have always been perfectly untouched as the formless seer behind and beyond the changeful scenes of the mind-play.

Again, be reminded, the ultimate truth is immutable and unchanging. Therefore, the only way that immortal consciousness can experience itself as a mortal being is through the medium of dreaming. This is why it is often said that life is a dream.

Damien: *It seems that there are some people who are not aware of this dream. Some wake up and some don't.*

Mooji: Yes, this is true. Let's be realistic, we are not all at an equal stage along the evolutionary path to awakening, which is a path that happens in the play of duality. Differences will be there, and naturally so. The field of duality on its own without awareness of the full truth is a very volatile environment, potentially turning this impersonal dream called life into a nightmare. Those who come to deeper insights and recognize this are able to guide those who are not yet so aware but are open to the possibility of awakening. The mere presence of one who has realized the ultimate truth exudes a kind of spiritual influence. Even without intention or conscious effort on their part, others are helped according to their capacity to grow into a more profound recognition of their true nature. If there is the aspiration inside you for transformation, this aspiration will bring you into the company of one whose presence resonates with you.

Damien: *It seems that some have this ability to see the wholeness constantly. You see that very often in your Satsangs, when people come up with the big questions, you seem to take them to the present and say, forget this question, that it's right here, right now. Many people talk about being in the present, living in the Now, but it's hard to see the universe, the absolute nature of everything, even in simple moments. It's a very powerful thing for people to have the ability to be continuously aware. For example, if I attend one of your Satsangs or if I listen to someone speaking or if I listen to music, or when I have a coffee or when I walk in the street, the wholeness is always here. How can people be more aware of that?*

Mooji: To remain as awareness is not an ability; it is one's natural being and effortless state. As long as we hold onto the belief that we are persons and not the formless presence, all our efforts will be short-lived. As greater understanding brings you into your heart's field, what you come to discover is that the real Self is not something you do or gain. The real Self is not a doing, but our natural state of being. If you have to do it, there are going to be times when you are incapable of doing it. We stand

in our own way because we identify as a person, which is not stable. The person is always unstable, always fluctuating in its functioning. But there is a deeper consciousness that observes this fluctuation and is unaffected by it. Our true Self is not a phenomenon, not an object, but pure subjectivity within which even consciousness and its dynamic expression are perceived as movements in awareness.

Damien: *Yes, exactly. We think we have to do things and we expect the instant awakenings, the big lights streaming onto our face, and I think that's a big mistake because it is just expectation.*

Mooji: Yes. In the early stages of our search this is unavoidable. We have to try out so many ideas, experience their limitations and then abandon them. Somewhere in that, a focus begins to happen naturally and you begin to see with more stillness and clarity what is unchanging and stable. But in the beginning we have to try out all our ideas and spiritual fantasies to see if they work. Finding out that they are unreal helps us to focus on the unchanging within.

Damien: *Yes, yes. It's as if we pick up a lot of things, we try many things only to finally drop everything and just let the Self be.*

Mooji: It's as if we cannot get to the end point without going to the middle point. Somehow it's very rare for someone to awaken to the complete truth all at once. There is something to be said about going through the factory of life that produces all of this sweat and labour, struggle and broken dreams. I wouldn't say it's for nothing. It is part of the richness of the experience in the search for truth, because if truth came so easily it would not be valued.

You see, this is why I say that somehow we, as the conditioned consciousness, have to be stretched beyond the capacity we imagine we are, challenged until we transcend the limitations of the ego identity and discover our timeless Self. Each one must begin to discover that the truth is beyond the knowable realm of physical and mental manifestations.

When I say “beyond,” I don’t mean beyond in terms of distance or time, but beyond in terms of subtlety. It is said that of all phenomena, space is the subtlest. So you, who are aware of space, must be subtler still. You see, while we are using our mental and physical muscles to reach our eternal state, we continue to miss the effortless and obvious.

Damien: *Yes, because when we are aware of this moment and when we let our Self be, we can feel this peace, but it’s very short-lived. And as you said, then we forget and become busy in life or we choose to be busy and avoid...*

Mooji: Yes, because we have formed a relationship with our psychological identity in our mind, and so we want something from the world and we need the mind to attain it. But that is very transient, so don’t waste time in search for what is impermanent because one day, even if you get it, you will lose it again. Why? Because the very one who gains anything is itself illusory. But we believe this one and trust in it. There are still desires and projections from the mind which we cherish and wish to follow. However, for as long as we hold onto the notion of a personal self, we will be unable to listen to any guidance leading to the real state. We must transcend the limited personal self by recognizing the “I”-presence or beingness and finally, the absolute.

Damien: *It seems very often that this transcendence is triggered by pain and suffering. For many people the relationships they have in life challenge them to the core. In going deeper and deeper to touch something really true, it’s necessary to drop more of our psychological baggage and just keep the essential.*

Mooji: It comes back to your earlier question about why we have to go through a physical experience.

Damien: *Yes, yes, yes.*

Mooji: In a way, without suffering we don’t look deeply enough. We stay in the shallow waters of the mind and personality, which won’t

introduce you to the freedom you are searching for. And let me be clear, the freedom that I point to isn't freedom *for* the ego—to do what you want—but rather, freedom *from* the ego. The pain of suffering is a mighty tool for the evolution of consciousness in its journey from person to Presence—the journey of self-awakening. It stimulates a higher intention for truth and intensifies our hunger for release from the egoic identity and its influence. We are not going to grow strong on lollipop experiences. We have to somehow get bitten, and sometimes crash and feel the deep pain of disappointment, which can trigger a deeper search for the ever-perfect Self. These are the things we rarely say thank you for, because they often carry a bitter taste. But whatever painful experiences you have to go through, these are the real gifts in your life, as they eventually compel you to find what really is as opposed to what merely appears to be.

Damien: *When we take time to be thankful and grateful for this moment, it puts everything in a new perspective, it helps us to grow.*

Mooji: Yes, and we experience a much broader and fuller sense of being. Before we discover truth, we are sometimes very narrow in our outlook, our mindset; we want life to be miraculous inside our narrowness. But after a few kicks and a few thumps we are compelled to mature quickly. We become more acute in our seeing and develop more space, empathy and compassion towards other beings. Having transcended this suffering phase of body-mind and personality, we find ourselves happier, wiser and supremely peaceful and content.

Damien: *And we also forget less... I mean we have more moments when we remember who we truly are. When we have a broader view/vision we make all these moments happen more often in our life...*

Mooji: If it is like this, then you have reached a certain stage where you are starting to enjoy the wonderful fruits of your inner longing. Perhaps without suffering, without being bitten and stung, we are not sufficiently grateful or appreciative of what life is. Like this, you can look back and

compare how your life was before this discovery and how it is now. So with this you feel more gratitude, and grace remains with you as your constant companion. You lose your pessimism and become a lot more peaceful, selfless and more accepting of the world as a living portrait of consciousness. All these are the perfume of freedom.

This is a beautiful expression of consciousness on its journey towards Self-discovery. Like a cube of ice in warm water, a melting is taking place. Ice is water and water is water. The sense of personhood, although a very contracted state of consciousness, is also consciousness. If, by grace and our own yearning for the truth, we are guided to direct our attention inwardly in search of what is real in ourselves, our sense of personhood will gradually dissolve into its source. If it were not so, what would be witnessing this evolution of individualized consciousness? And because of the ever-present nature of the pure Self we are, we don't need to be waiting for the melting to finish before this discovery of our own source can be made. This discovery of truth is the pinnacle of all human endeavours, and it can happen in an instant.

What a beautiful game.

Damien: *It is, yes. Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it. And thank you for expressing it so clearly... you bring it simply. It's beautiful.*

Mooji: It needs to be like that. I sometimes say that the truth is simple but the seeker of truth is complex. This is because we have given too much value to our psychological conditioning which somehow eclipses our intuitive recognition of our Timeless Reality. Satsang removes this veil.

Damien: *Yes.*

Mooji: And so many people find it very refreshing to hear and experience truth being pointed to in a simple way. It helps them to recognize what is timelessly perfect within themselves. Therefore, immense joy

is released through this awakening as the spirit can once again breathe deeply in the empty room of the Absolute.

Damien: *Yes, especially in the Western world where we learn so many things. But once you have realized, you don't really need all of this. It's different...*

Mooji: It is.



