

The Ocean,
The Fish
and
The Buddha

Pamela Wilson

A
Little
Book
of
Advaita
Metaphors
and
Fables

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This book is dedicated to
Robert Adams
and Neelam
for endlessly revealing the Heart



to Yudhishtara
Mira
and Arjuna
with love and laughter
for their guidance and friendship



and with infinite gratitude to
Shri Ramana Maharshi
and Shri H.W.L. Poonja
for their Grace eternal.

Welcome to Satsang*

This little book consists of extracts from Pamela's satsangs.

It is an outpouring of exquisite insights and helpful irreverence aimed at the doubts and beliefs of the serious seeker.

It is also a tapestry of words woven from love, overflowing with compassion and an understanding of what it is to be human.

Pamela speaks the truth of *advaita*, non-duality – that the universe is one undivided whole.

But you won't find philosophy here. The object is just to delight – you, the seeker and the sought.

* Literally a truth-gathering. An informal get-together of people to sit with the truth of their being and, occasionally, talk about it. As Pamela has put it: Satsang is a gathering of mountains to discuss their mountain nature.

The Journey

In the beginning of this journey, the Buddha set out with a servant called Thought. And somehow, in the midst of the journey, the roles got switched. Maybe Buddha tripped and hit his head and had a concussion. Then Thought took over and said, "I am the holder of truth."



In the old days there were dragons and wolves and bears and outlaws that kept the seeker from what is sought. Now all that's left is thoughts and feelings and memories, things we want to change: I wish I had done that, I wish that hadn't happened. This is what is left of those old dragons.



The Beloved is patient, just waiting until finally the little bedraggled explorer arrives. It used to be in the Himalayas, but now there is a nice little convenient cave right inside. And there is only one food served in that cave: peace. One bite will do. He who tastes this peace becomes peace.

The Battle

I was thinking lately that all the myths and all the fairy tales and all the seeking of romance, and all the great battles that any warrior ever fought, are really about the persona and the Self, about being a body-mind or thinking you're a body-mind on a quest for the Ultimate.



In the old days the knights, before they went into battle, used to bring their sword and their armor to church to be blessed. That's what we do in satsang. We bring our defending to be blessed. We just lay it down, our sword and our armor, just for one moment, trusting God or the Beloved or Love itself more than we trust the armor - just for a moment. Could you just trust Love more than any idea of needing protection? Just for a second. Just like lighting a match. That fast.

See this blade here? Has it been tempered enough in the fire?
Do you think it's a fine enough blade? Does it need any more
hammering? Well, let me say I speak for the bladesmith when I
tell you: This sword is fine.



When you're drafted you don't know where you're going to be
posted, but you can trust that all will be well, that you will be
used wisely.



The mind thinks it's holding up a sword: the Self sees it as a
toothpick.

The Cloak of Separation . . .

We come to satsang wearing this beautiful cloak that's woven through time, and it gets heavier and heavier. Leela has woven this cloak, and then Love - the same trickster Goddess - unravels it. It's one of her promises. She weaves it, and she unravels it.



One by one, like a thief in the night, a sweet thief that takes only suffering and concepts, any extraneous identification, she steals. She probably hoards all that, like a blue jay hoards bright shiny objects. There's probably a treasure cave somewhere in the Himalayas, filled to the brim with thoughts and feelings and sweet little cloaks of separation, like relics. So, maybe to her these are sacred. They're her trophies. She says, "I found this cloak of separation in Cleveland, and it was hard won, so I treasure it."

. . . and the Sweater called You

We are just unraveling a sweater here, so we're down to the last few little loops.



There's this sweater, a sweater called you, and woven through this sweater is maybe some silk of enjoying nature, and a little bit of linen - that's education, conditioning - and there are all these threads. So you bring this sweater, this vestment that you wear called an individual persona, to satsang, and Grace starts to unravel it. And she unravels it in a place you can't really see. She likes to go about her business very secretly. So she starts unraveling the sweater. Then what happens is you feel a little freer, like your sweater got a little bigger. And then you keep coming back to satsang, and all of a sudden before you know it you've got this backless sweater on and you say, "Oh my God, all this fresh air! I feel so fresh and new." And slowly but surely you're now wearing a sleeveless sweater. Luckily you have something underneath called vastness, so you're very well clothed. No worries there.

Take off the T-Shirt . . .

If there are any distractions just bless them for a moment with your attention and then return your awareness to That. Just like a sweatshirt that you don't need, or a T-shirt that you take off when you're too hot, set the distraction aside for a moment. And just return the awareness to this visitor.

. . . and put on a Thousand Stars

For a moment take off the persona. It's just an item of clothing, threadbare, stained with years of wear and tear. Much more fun to put on a fresh fragrance. Like putting on a raiment of a thousand stars.



Leela weaves satsang into the cloth of samsara. It's the golden thread through the coarse cloth of form.

The Lion . . .

In the old days young men used to go into the forest, or into some very dangerous place to prove their courage. This is actually the most dangerous place: the heart. That's why we talk about being lion-hearted. It requires the courage of a lion to rest here.

. . . and the Parrot

Who is beating the drum of the heart? Who is this musician? There's a sweet little parrot that lives in the brain that says, "I am beating the heart." That's why they say: Bird brain.



It's like a parrot that goes from one end of the rainforest to the other, keeps trying to find the edge, and then report back to the other parrots. "Well, it's very big, it's big." But it can't fly far enough to find the end of it. It's doing the best it can.

The Boss

No wonder we all go around with low self-esteem. Because there's this little i that thinks it's in charge of the body and it's going to keep you safe and get you organized and make you return those phone calls and pay those bills and tend to business - and it senses the vast quietness that's really in charge.



You're too magnificent to be pushed around by a tiny little twenty watt unit up here. It's not a nice master. The creative part of it is exquisite and is fully to be honored. The practical part of the mind is a wonderful assistant, but then there's that little part of it that is downright mean. It's abusive, it's controlling, it's tyrannical. You wouldn't have it as a friend if it wasn't a part of your brain. Would you? Would you want to hang out with a friend like that?

What mind? Can you find it? It's like what they say about the mafia. You know, they call it organized crime. Everybody says, "Well, it's not that organized." So we see this grand title to a bundle of thoughts; we call it mind. We make it an object, and then we think it's a big deal, because there's a universal agreement that we all have them.



When the sovereignty switches from the mind being the guru back to the Buddha taking his place on the throne - consciousness being the boss, rather than thought - then there is a lull. Just like in any political system when one leader gives over to the next leader there's always a lull. Plus a little chaos. It makes sense. This is the unfoldment.

The Secretary

The brain is really just like a secretary, in the finest sense of the word. It can be organized, it can remind you of very practical things that are required. And in that you love it for its sense of duty, for its extreme loyalty to this form, extreme loyalty.



Then you just let the heart say, "Rest, rest, rest. Let this noble secretary rest." Maybe even retire. Give it a gold watch.



We use this awareness as a secretary. We send it out to judge things, but it really is the Buddha. We don't use it for this amazing healing it can do.

Taking Care of Business

Sometimes that energy, *shakti*, is like a frustrated FedEx delivery person, who has to keep coming with those little notices, “I am here, I am here,” until you take delivery. “Ah, I am That.” Then there’s peace.



We’re just travelling salespeople for rapture. I’m in the rapture business. Rest and rapture. R and R.



When failure comes, or fatigue comes, it’s a blessing. This is the humility that is required: to stand naked before God, to say, “You’re right. I am a failure at doing.” This is innocence.



Problems come to satsang. We put them under our chairs. They get drunk on grace, and keel over. Then people forget them as they leave.

My Family . . .

Sometimes they say the little i gets nervous when it's about to fall into the ocean, because it knows it's falling into the ocean of love. And it's sometimes like a little kid at the movies, and when the people start kissing it says, "Yuck, all that love stuff. Gross. Don't want to go there. Too much love."



The mind just plays catch-up - for years. How could it ever grasp this? How could it? How could it keep up with its elder sibling that is so enchantingly mysterious and vast?



It's like a frustrated philosopher. Sometimes it tries to figure out what this is. It wants to put it in its library, catalog it, label it.

That's the hook. See, this is how the little i plays. It has two cards, past and future. So anytime you're getting a little too relaxed or happy, it'll go fishing with you. It throws out the hook with the bait, future, and it has to make it interesting so you bite, and then it reels you in a little bit.



There's no one that gets the freedom. It's more that the little i that is the seeker just falls away. It can't stand the grace. It's like, Grace: 1, Little i: 0. It gets drowned in the grace.



Words are just bones thrown out for the mind, to keep the mind busy while the grace does the work. Like dog biscuits.

. . . and Other Animals

I call it the mouse with the megaphone. There's this immensity, and the mouse is saying, "You don't exist." That's why it's so sweet. From the Self's point of view it's adorable. It's like an elephant looking at a mouse. Sometimes it's fun to rest in the mouse's point of view, and sometimes it's fun to trumpet the truth.



Is there an entity living in your body called a mind? Can you find it? Go find it. It's like a mouse. When you go to look for it, it scurries away and hides. But if you keep looking you find that there never was a mouse, nor a mind.



It can be just the elephant moving the furniture around in the brain.

The body really is like a pet that we have. We should walk it and we have to feed it, make it rest. If you had a young child or a pet and it was really scared you wouldn't judge it. You would just comfort it.



That's all feelings are. Just coming for your blessing. It's a mangy dog, this one, this suffering. It's old. It has fleas.



That's what freedom is. Just for a second, identification falls away and that which has always been present, like a groundhog, comes up to say that a new life is here, spring is here, freshness, aliveness, freedom.

The Ocean

So you haven't been thrown in the ocean yet? Could be that the ocean chooses the best for last. Could be that it has a great sense of humor sometimes. Might be choosing Valentine's Day for all you know.



Sometimes there's a desire to dive deep into the ocean. So, like those pearl divers who wear very little so that they can be unobstructed in their diving, just for a moment could you set aside this form and dive into that presence with your formless essence?



This is where the river, the lifestream, meets the ocean, and it's a joyous meeting. And sometimes the river is so silent that there's not a big bang. Sometimes it's a raging river, so there's the experience of a big bang. But it could be soft as rain, this meeting.

There are storms on the surface of the ocean, but the ocean doesn't mind because it's at rest. And it actually likes it. It's fun to have a good storm occasionally, as long as no boats get broken.



So you're in the ocean and this fish called "wondering" swims by. So, enjoy the fish, and just let it go by. Your business is savoring the moment, not wondering how to catalog that fish. So just enjoy the feeling of the ocean, the vastness.



The promise of satsang is freedom, refuge and relief. It always keeps its promise. It's guaranteed. It has an odd sense of timing, however, because it's timeless, but when Silence meets the whirlpool of devotion it pulls you into the heart. Emptiness isn't void. It's filled with love. The promise is drowning, but only to suffering.

The Fish

There's a belief that thoughts are bad. But thoughts are just fish in the river. You think a river minds having fish? It says, "That's a bad fish, that's a good fish?" It's just a fish.



People call it a net of thoughts, or a bundle of thoughts, to make it a little less threatening or challenging or oppositional or real. It's not organized. It's not a mind. It's just like a lot of fish swimming in the sea.



Sometimes I get caught, and then I see I'm caught, and then I usually laugh. It's like being a little fish.

At the Beach

Having a body is like being a beach, just letting the waves of peace ebb and flow, and allowing peace to be welcome in the body. Peace is welcome here.



It's just like the beach. It feels the ocean come and it feels the ocean go, but it always knows that's just the way it is. It doesn't mind at all. Only the mind minds. That's why it's called mind.



Sometimes there's a shark in the water and you don't really want to go in. Sometimes contractions feel like that. "I'm not going in there." So check. Is it a shark? What is it?

The Beloved

Love, like a sleeping beauty, lies in the heart. And awareness is the prince that goes inside and kisses the sleeping beauty. We take our awareness into the heart to find love, and just one kiss, awareness and love, awakens Truth.



The Self comes to us as a lover. We like it when it's present, and then we get agitated when it's gone. So this is unconditional love: If it's gone you just twinkle and you say, "Okay, you're gone again, but that's okay with me." Then love comes back, and says, "Ooh, I find this one very interesting. He has my number."



In this love affair it's nice to bring the Beloved a little gift - tiny. We sacrifice what's held dearest - not a cow, not a camel, not a goat, but just a little bit of individuality we give her as a gift. You hand her the castle walls and defenses as your gift - a small trade.

There's this little thief called Grace who sometimes, if you leave trouble under your chair, comes and steals it. She has a way of stealing heartbreak. She definitely steals the past. So what's left when all that is stolen, when trouble and heartbreak and suffering are stolen out from under us? What's left? Peace. The good news is: peace cannot be stolen. Here is the peace that doesn't go away.



The Buddha is always in disguise as thoughts and feelings. So you just welcome it, and it has to throw off its cloak of sorrow or longing or pain, and bow before you. It's just the Beloved knocking on the door from the inside, but disguised to see if our love is unconditional. If it comes as a beggar is it welcome?



It's nice to be the servant of love, because the servant is always with the master. The servant usually lives in the master's house. It's a big house. Free rent. You can't get evicted.

The Tea House

The body is like a tea house, and the proprietor is the Buddha, and the handmaiden is Grace. What they serve in this tea house is peace, to whatever visitor comes, be it the past, or trauma, or pain, or suffering. These visitors are very welcome. They get tea, warm understanding and welcome. And then eventually, all those problems, they bow before the proprietor, consciousness, and fade away, because finally they got a little love. All they ever wanted was just your loving attention and compassion.



That which washes the cups at the tea house, the practical mind, it thinks occasionally it's the owner of the tea house. But really it's the one in the kitchen washing the dishes, and like any insecure little being it likes to run the show. But it's sweet. You just bring it tea and comfort and it relaxes as well.

Eating Out

In order to sit at the table you can't be standing up, proud.
You have to kind of squidge down to get your knees under the
table.



It's a constant buffet. There's always a dish being offered, and
if it's to your liking, feel free to eat it. But if it's not, send it
back to the kitchen.



The mind is just a waiter, really. It comes and it presents this
and it says, "Do you want this?"



So send it back to the kitchen, and rest.

More Good Food

After lifetimes and decades of drinking words and experiences and perceptions and sensations, even a body is tired of such food. It says, "I want a simpler fare. I want that which I can eat in a moment, and satisfies me forever. Who serves such food? Who?"



Satsang is the master. That which visits us here blesses us by its presence. So if there is any suffering or any perceived separation it's nice to let Love eat it. It eats it for breakfast. It's the breakfast of champions!



This is content-free satsang. Like a really good gravy, it's reduced down to its main ingredients, silence and love. We could add some croutons of words, or we could just simmer in this.

This is why those yogis, they didn't have to eat, some of them. They were just eating this. They were going, Mmmm - feeding directly on grace. Yummy. No calories. The satsang diet.



That's what's nice about satsang: there's no doing required. The innocence just gets uncovered by Grace. She peels us like ripe fruit.



In America we have alphabet soup. So there is just *N* and *O* floating in this peace.



Here we marinate in the Self.

The Wine

First when wine is uncorked you only have the aroma. You don't have the wine yet, but you have the aroma of the wine. Love comes to the dedicated sipper of silence.



There's a moment when wine reveals its formless self, its intoxicating nature.

The Card Game

This is like playing cards. The Beloved comes to see what interests us, so it plays cards with us. It throws out a joker, a thought, to see if that interests you. What are you going to put your money on, a thought or the calm? Well, that's the divine play inside.

The Magic Show

Satsang is also a magic show with an invisible magician and a beautiful handmaiden. I don't know where the rabbit is, but there is a hat, a black hat, and when you look inside it's fathomless. All creation comes out of that, even rabbits, identities, problems. So since they come out of the hat, if you return them to the fathomless, to the silence, return them back from where they came, then it's finished. Any problems, suffering, identification, any contractions. So who's to say who is the magician? This room is filled with magicians.



Love is a magician. Everything it touches turns into itself.



Forgiveness. That's the magic wand.

More Entertainment

At some level the mind is just like a tired actor or director.



Just like those western towns that have those fake fronts, and you go round back and there's nothing there - that's usually how we relate with people. So no one can see that there's actually nobody home. We really try so hard, and we try to be funny, or entertaining, or giving, or really bad - we go the opposite way - to cover up this empty feeling.



The good news is, mind gets drunk on grace. It comes to satsang, this little character, and it gets inundated by grace - just the grace that visits us all here - and then finally it dissolves. Like the wicked witch of the west in *The Wizard of Oz*, grace pours the water on top of her. "Ooh, I'm melting!" And then everybody lives happily ever after.

I mean God adores this. How fun! A thought arising in consciousness! God has no problem with thoughts. Who do you think is the one who thinks? God invented thinking. What delight! Emptiness, and then things in space. Beautiful poetry. Weird stuff, endlessly entertaining. It's like a little tickertape, but it's God's tickertape.



What an amazingly complex theatrical display! All for our entertainment. So this is why the wisdom is just to rest, and enjoy the display. This is total in-home, in-house entertainment. I mean, amazing comings and goings!



It's like playing Ping-Pong with the mind. It sends out, *ping*, and you say, "Thank you," *pong*.

Modern Technology . . .

You hold no data because you have access to the mainframe.



The awareness is a movement sensor. It's still, and then, just like those very fancy security devices, protecting the body, if there is any movement of a thought or a feeling, it just goes *whirr*, swivels to look at that.



What's being played on your screen? You have a channel clicker. And you also have a mute button, which is even better.



See, that's the superglue. A thought arises and we say yea or nay to it. And if we say, "Yes, this is true," then it has to be true, because we are the Buddha. We are agreeing that this is reality.

It's like a twenty watt bulb trying to assist the sun. "I'll help. And I want to be a forty watt bulb, please."



It's sweet when the mind tries to drive. It oversteers and really rides the brake a lot, and it honks at all the other drivers, which is really rude. Plus it swears at them too.



So this is a very holy place, satsang and the sangha, because limitation gets burned here. Concepts, like trains, run out of steam here. Karma ends here. It's guaranteed.



So enjoy the ride. You have no choice.

. . . and Ancient Technology

There are many tricks to capture the Beloved. One is the flypaper of devotion. That's sticky, and the Beloved comes and... Thwhack! It sticks.



We spend a lot of time from the neck up with our awareness, and then at night we go and rest in the heart. It's nice to rest there during the day, too. It's like living your life in a hammock inside, while the body runs around and does things.



It's only a notion, and notions are found in sewing shops and they are usually very tiny. It's called the Notions Department. You can barely pick one up they're so little.

The Post-it Note

Eventually mind says, “Oh, I am not the one that is taking care of this body.” It sees that the Beloved takes care of the body, and in that it’s content to just be washing dishes and reminding us to go get gasoline. It gets very simple, content. It becomes like a Post-it note, a little to-do list, but a lot quieter. It becomes a good servant.

The Jewel

The jewel is always wrapped in that dark velvet of not knowing.

The Raw Wilderness . . .

This is what satsang is. It's the wilderness, the pure raw wilderness in the middle of the city. That's why it's nourishing.



Satsang is really just a gathering of many mountains to discuss their mountain nature.



There is such beauty to the unknown - vast, reverberating peace. So much, that love itself bows before it and knows that it is her master, this emptiness. This is the Mecca that millions bow to every day, that millions chant in devotion to. This is the tree, the canopy, that shelters all creation. And the wind that blows the leaves of this tree is love.

. . . and the Sacrificial Pit

Satsang is an unusual place. It's like a sacrificial pit. So anything no longer required, if brought here with sincerity, any identification, any suffering no longer required, any confusion no longer required, gets burned here - any separation. This is the burning bush. This is it.



At the mundane level, satsang is also a recycling center. Any old containers that are no longer required, we bring them here.



Grace prunes us like a rosebush.

The Work

You have only one job to do. Actually two: relax and enjoy. It's a tough job, but somebody's got to do it.



Your job is just to rest. You're like the seventh day, the eternal seventh day - the seventh day and the eighth and the ninth... Endless rest.



We are designed to be delightfully imperfect. Any attempt at perfection is not trusting the Beloved. So actually you have three jobs: rest, enjoy and be imperfect. Go forth and be imperfect!



It's called life in a floating boat. There's definitely somebody working the rudder, but it's not us, it's not us.

They call humans 'human beings'. They didn't call us human doings, or human thinkings, or human havings, or human worryings. Human beings. Just beings.



This is not your work. You have no need to process any more. This is not your job. You've done your twenty-five percent. Actually you're up to seventy-nine percent, you way overdid it. Just let grace take over. Could you let it do its job?



The vibratory rate of love emulsifies everything. Any concept, like mortar in an earthquake, turns back to dust and sand.



Like the phoenix, a few feathers get burned in return for immortality. A little suffering gets offered to the flame in return for joy. It's a good trade. You'll never find that deal anywhere.

The Lineage

This lineage that we are all blessed by, Ramana and Arunachala, mountain lineage, lineage of strength, silent strength... What a blessing! What did we ever, ever do to deserve this? What did we ever not do to deserve this? Actually it's our birthright. Born of silence, we have to return to silence. Even the human body honors this. Birth from union - form is birth from union - but nothing satisfies unless there's union with the silence. Silence can only be satisfied by silence.



That's why we are so blessed nowadays, because there was Ramana and Poonjaji and Robert Adams and all the blessed brothers and sisters that came before us that were so steadfast. We are just reaping the fruits of their austerity and their devotion and their renunciation. We are the spoiled grandchildren of Ramana Maharshi.

We owe this unusual time to the Masters who were so deep in the Silence that they literally shredded Leela for us so that now we can just be.



The most profound service is to do absolutely nothing inside.



Like water that comes from a long distance, it knows the way, so this fresh water that is here can just taste that ancient water, and know.



It's in the bag. It's handled.

The Million Devotees

We have endless practice giving satsang. We have a million devotees that pass through our bodies, when you think about it. Every thought, every feeling, is a visitor, and you just say, "Welcome, welcome. Come in and sit with me." They're actually just coming for your blessing.



This is the poetry of the heart: silence. You are my poetry, everyone here, fragrant, rich with meaning, love made manifest. Each being is a word in this endless poem, each being. That's how God sees us all. We are just one word in his epic poem.



Thank you for satsang.

You're Invited

To come to Pamela's satsangs, check her schedule on her website at www.pamelasatsang.com.



One Last Note

It's good to have a portable Beloved.

Newsflash: Buddha everywhere is recovering from his concussion. (See Page 1.)