"Please understand that there is only one thing to be understood, and that is that you are the formless, timeless unborn."
- Nisargadatta Maharaj

"Here is just emptiness. There is no getting my ego out of the way, and all that stuff. There is just the seeing, shining in great brilliance and clarity."
- Douglas Harding

Look, it's all so incredibly simple. There is no one here. This is not a figure of speech. I mean there is truly no one here, no person, no individual speaking to you. You look at me and think there is a person here talking to you, trying to tell you something. I assure you, there is not. Look at me. If there were not Consciousness streaming through this body, what would be here? What would this body be if Consciousness were not here? A corpse, of course! Dead matter. There is nothing else here. There is
only the appearance of a body, and Consciousness which animates it. You, along with the rest of the world, have assumed that there is a discreet individual person here: that the Consciousness which is the animating force here is an individual consciousness, unique to this body and separate from the consciousness in other bodies.

This is based on appearances: there appear to be separate bodies, so the assumption is that there are separate consciousness-es. The belief in this assumption blinds you to seeing What Is, and is also the cause of your experience of this life as disquieting, confusing, unhappy, and generally full of fear and suffering. But it is not the case. There is in no way an individual sitting here talking to you. This body is nothing, an appearance in the dream. All there is is Consciousness, and it is Consciousness which is streaming through this appearance.

There is nothing here that exists in and of itself. What we call the human being is not an independent being, not an originating mechanism, not a transmitter. It is a relay station, a pass-through mechanism for Consciousness, the One Consciousness, All That Is. That is what I am, talking to you. And it is the same One Consciousness listening to this, looking back at me out of those eyes you call your own. What I am when I say 'I Am' is exactly the same as what you are when you say 'I Am.'

Once seen, the irony of the situation is staggering. Look: what you think of as your'self,' what you perceive as an individual person, this idea of being a separate entity, a body-mind-personality-soul-intellect: this is a subsequent by-product, an artifact, an almost accidental side effect of this streaming, this flowing of Consciousness. It is the
streaming of Consciousness in this organism which the organism inaccurately perceives as a 'mind' which it thinks is its own: it is the very Consciousness streaming in this organism which allows this perception at all, which makes it possible for this organism to think it is other than that same Consciousness. A simple, innocent misperception. And a silly one, because the very One who appears to be thinking this, who appears not to see, not to understand that it is not as a separate individual and is only as All That Is, is Itself the very I-ness that is the only Is-ness of all seeing, of all understanding.

Look into what is behind this perception. Investigate what you think of as your 'self.' This is the purpose, the meaning of all spirituality, of all seeking, of your very being: to understand this amazing intricate play of Consciousness by seeing what is this illusion, this mistaken perception, and what is its source which makes it possible. What you are, you always already are. It is by seeing what you are not that there is a stepping away from it, stepping out of the misconceived role of a separate fearful individual.

When you step out of what you are not, what remains is not something you have to become, but what you always already are. That is why there is nothing you have to do, or become, or learn, or practice, or work at, or purify. It is completely effortless to be in your natural state. What is full of difficult, constant effort is maintaining this false and unnatural idea of being somebody, of being an individual, a separate something. You are a non-entity! Let it go! When it is let go of, you rest in the effortlessness of All That Is, of what could be called your natural state.
Effortlessness is not something that can be attained by effort. No-mind is not a state that can be achieved by the mind. Peace cannot be achieved by striving. Trying to be aware of ‘just being in the present moment’ is a contradiction in terms; being ‘self-consciously’ aware of it takes you out of it. Trying to be aware of “I Am” is a similar contradiction, and for the same reason. You can’t try to be happy any more than you can try to go to sleep or try to act naturally. You only act naturally when you’re not trying, not thinking, but simply going about life. People would come from all over India and the whole world to see Ramana Maharshi and ask him for advice on the spiritual path. His advice? “Just be yourself.”

This is what Nisargadatta Maharaj said of your natural state, of what you are naturally, spontaneously, without effort:

“This state is before the appearance of beingness. It is prior to or beyond beingness and non-beingness. I Am, in that state which existed before the arrival of beingness and non-beingness. With the arrival of the waking state, all the world becomes manifest; because of my beingness, my world is manifest. That also is observed by that state which is prior to beingness, and you are That!”