nterview with Tony Parsons
Nobody here, Nobody there...

A meeting with Tony Parsons hits you like a typhoon. Everything — any idea or concept on whatever level — is wiped out completely and immediately. What is left is a seldom heard or spoken clarity. The message of the man from the United Kingdom is so simple, so loving or as he himself says: 'So terrible, that people come to hear me once and never again.' Most shocking are the playful but deadly consequences of refusing any possible method or offering any technique thus leaving the so-called spiritual seeker completely unclothed and naked in their self-created cold.

Amigo: 'Nobody here, nobody there'. Is that your message? The apparent 'us' having an apparent interview with an apparent Tony Parsons?
Tony Parsons: Yes, everything ... we sitting here ... it is crazy; and yet this is it: nobody here, nobody there, no destination and nothing to talk about.

Are you the only one who is going that far?
Yes. Yes. And there are others: Nathan Gill, Jan Kersschot and Roger Linden. And I have a feeling there might be somebody in America. There are very very few people who are going into this madness.

You mean: 'No method', 'nothing to hold on to', 'nowhere to go'? Most teachers speak to an apparent person. They speak to 'a person' and they presume that that 'person' has a choice. But in reality there is nobody.

Could it be that they pretend?
Or they pretend ... I think most of them sincerely believe there is someone there who can choose.

Could it be compassion?
No no, fuck off with compassion! The only compassion is Clarity. In the end the only compassion is to demonstrate to people that there is no one there. Giving that is the greatest treasure of all. If you sell yourself short by trying to convince them that there is someone there to limit this treasure I would then say that is the greatest evil
you can do although there is no such thing as 'evil' in my world. In the end you promote the idea of a seeker.

One could say, 'You think you are a seeker, so seek', in order to discover at the end there never was a seeker?
I can't say that. But that could be an approach.

You are very direct: 'Nobody here, nobody there.' That is your message isn't it?
Yes. Ahaa! (roaring with laughter). Yeah, it is — in the end there is no one.

Do you remember how you were 'before'?
No. Not really. I could only give you a list of things I was like, but there would only be a memory arising of it now.

But you remember 'the seeker'?
O yes.

How did you seek?
I was young when I walked across the park. (Tony was 21 in the sixties when he walked across a park and suddenly 'knew' I AM THAT). The only way there was to seek in those days, was through Christianity but 'this' was such a strange thing that nobody recognized it at all. It was too mundane. And the other thing was I had a friend who knew about Gurdjieff and he introduced me to some books of G and that cleared my understanding. Then I left the Church because I could see that 'that' had no connection with Christ and then suddenly I walked across the park and that was it. There was ..... what happened in the park was the recognition I AM THAT, I am all that is. When I say 'all that is' that doesn't mean anything more than what was. It doesn't mean I am China or I am Africa...

Did you have moments of doubt, deception, disappointment — or what you would call 'walking through the desert'?
Yes. I think for most people, when there is an opening to this, then the old values and the old world fall away for something called 'time' — there is nothing either way. There is nothing to gain and everything is being lost — that is 'the desert' for some people. They walk across and in that 'desert' there can be the temptation 'to go back' and find a technique or something in order to get back into
'doing' but here we are and 'this' is It! (Tony rubs three fingers as if feeling the quality of the material).

I am always moved when you make this gesture of what you call 'This' or 'That' or 'It' or 'The Beloved' 'or 'Being Intimate With What Is'.

(roaring with laughter). Some people hate it! In Bristol they tell me: 'Don't use that word 'The Beloved', I hate it.

Tell us about 'Walking in the Desert'. How was that for you? It took a long time before you started talking in groups about self-realization or enlightenment.

Yes, but basically I wouldn't say I was in the 'desert' then. I didn't have very much 'desert'. Some people do and some people don't. It depends on who you are in all of this. For me awakening, that walking across the park, was a joy moving into a greater deeper joy. And thereafter what I saw was great wisdom appearing, it wasn't mine, it was just wisdom saying: All there is, is This. And for many years after that it was in a way like going into This and going back into identification, then going into This and then going back into identification.

You describe it as 'contracting' and then you discovered that even that 'contracting' is 'This'.

First I didn't realize that there still was a me- ing and a be- ing going on. I still felt at that time that there was someone who could choose to be open to be- ing and move away from me. And it was interesting that I wasn't out to go teaching because that would have been a very confused teaching. There is still a lot of teaching around which is about the idea that YOU have a choice to move into be- ing away from me- ing. It is totally irrelevant and comes from a deep ignorance. It was only later on that I saw that me- ing and be- ing are One. There is no one there. There IS no one who can choose be- ing or me- ing; there is just what arises: me- ing and be- ing, and they are the One arising.

Does it need to be expressed, taught, talked about?

It seems that it is being expressed ... In general, I think, it is a response to The Drama of the Search to find Itself. The lover, the beloved is looking for the beloved and in that is communicated by the clarity that there is no need to look for the Beloved.
For it is already there. It has never been away. Yes. This whole drama is about Paradise Lost and Paradise Found.

Amigo #3 was about 'what is love'? The other day you said that falling in love has nothing to do with Love (with a capital L). Can you say some more about that?

Basically, what we see in the manifestation, is our attempt, or people's attempt, or apparently people's attempts to love and that is manifested in all sorts of different ways. What we are trying to touch is something that is beyond relationship. You meet somebody and you try to love them or you do love part of them and maybe you don't like the other part and so there is a relationship between this and that. And we attempt to bring love into that relationship and actually sometimes we do touch unconditional love. When we touch unconditional love, then actually at that moment there aren't two people there is simply unconditional Love.

* [...] When the self is no more, there is simply an abiding in the beloved. The game goes on and there is a response to the game. But the response comes from nowhere and goes to nowhere. And the game and the response is the divine expression. All and everything is seen and heard and felt as the beloved. And the beloved is the ground of all that is. [...] — from: 'AS IT IS' by Tony Parsons

So everything in the world manifests as love. Most of that love is need. But what it is longing for is that which is beyond relationship which I call Unconditional Love. So the love we think we experience in the world is simply a reflection of another love that is greater than that. That overflows into the world and yet also embraces it: The divine expression which is what we are.*

Could you speak about the two different Paths: the Way of the Insight or Knowingness and the Path of Love, Surrender and Devotion? Does 'nobody here, nobody there' actually mean surrendering to what is? Is surrender important? It is in one way —except what seekers have to realize is that the whole seeker is an illusory thing. The only thing worth realizing is that there is no one. And actually at the end there is no one who can seek. There is nothing to seek but, what I do see is that for some apparent people (and I have to add the word 'apparent') the
way for them is to understand and be clear and then the melting happens. For other people understanding is not really that relevant. It is not important for them. Somehow for them it is an intuitive opening into what is being talked about. There is an element of understanding and clarity about it but basically I do see these people are ready to just open. In the end every apparent person in the world lives in their own unique Invitation. Whatever is happening to that person is uniquely their invitation to discover that they are the One. So everybody in the world actually is meditating. Everybody in the world is in what you could call 'a process', except that the process is not happening in time because there is no time.

Are you ever frightened?
No, but there can be fear. Fear can arise. But it no longer rises for anyone.
It is seen. There is no one who is seeing. It is seen.

In spite of everything that is happening in the apparent world these days?...
(chuckling). I know I know I am terrible!.. Yes, this is such a radical message that is has its own language.

Every teacher has his/her own 'language' or way to express. I feel your message is so radical that it might scare people away.
O yes! Many people come and go and many never come back. Absolutely. But there is something that people recognize you see. People know really, in the end that what they are looking for is right where they are. Somehow they know that what they are looking for is very simple and it is here. People know that because that is what they are. When I was a kid I knew that God must be everywhere, he could not just hiding in the Church. He had to be in everything. If he wasn't in everything he wasn't even worth looking for.

Without dividing anything into 'good' and 'bad'...
O no, no dividing! Because there is no 'good' and 'bad'. Don't listen to the mind. The mind is just a divider. There is no division and there is nothing to divide.

Alexander Smit used to say 'Relax in Consciousness'. Stop critisising yourself. Relax in your Being.
In Being, not your being !! (roaring with laughter)
Shit!
Yes, I know it. I am terrible, but I have to keep on saying that. Sometimes it is surprising how that can shock people. They say: 'What you were suggesting is that I relax in my being'. Then I have to correct them by saying: 'No, relax in Being'. They are shocked by the whole thing their not being anyone.

How would you call your teaching? 'The Beloved'? 'As It Is'? 'Nobody Here Nobody There'? 'Intimate With What Is'? 'The Divine Expression'? 'All Is The Invitation'? Is it a teaching? Did you figure it out?
Well, I am not a teacher but you could say those are the sort of things that come out of this voicebox. (chuckling) I have no 'teaching'. There is no one here to teach. There is no one to be taught ...

Okay, but there is an apparent teacher; there is some thing; there is a body that produces words and movements. That cannot be denied, can it? ...
No, but in the end what's discovered is that there is nothing to learn because there is no one that can be taught ...

But you are sitting there and we are listening to you. You are there, we are here. That is the basic setting ...
I dearly love for that situation not to happen. I would dearly love not to sit there and you sit here. I would someway like to get rid of that sense of me telling you — I'd give anything. As soon as you come in here and sit there and there is this guy, here, in the front, the mind thinks 'he knows something that I have not got'. I will give anything for that not to happen.

One could call it compassion.
Bullshit!! Compassion! ... I really mean it. I want to give up talking to people who are in the room and that I didn't need to appear; just touching your shoulder ... I would just go, like that. Really. I mean it. I would just say, 'Oooh yes, oooh yes, all is perfect ...'

Maybe the physical set up could be a help as long as we are still identified and thinking to be 'a person'?
Yes, it could but, when people say to me: 'You are so ordinary' then I start to celebrate a bit because at least I hardly get in the way. You
understand? I just don't want to get in the way! As far as I am concerned I am concerned, this is so divine, so exquisite. THE ONLY REASON TO BE HERE IS TO DISCOVER THIS! If I could get out of the way I would. You see: 'THIS' (quality gesture) is the exquisite thing, nothing to do with this guy Tony Parsons.

Is Realization a fixed state?
No, it is not a state at all. And it is not an object. There is no such thing as Enlightenment.. There is no such thing as an 'enlightened person'. No person has ever been 'enlightened'. All there is is light. And in that light arises apparent darkness. Part of that apparent darkness is the sense that there is some one, an identity. There, in that sense of 'there is someone', arises separation. Separation is the root of all fear and alienation and disease and feelings of discomfort, alarm, etc. Then there is a need to go beyond that, and so the mind thinks that there is a way of going beyond that, because it thinks that there is a person there that can find something that takes them beyond this fear of separation. And so there is the confusion about this because most teachings are speaking to an apparent person attaining something called 'enlightenment'. All of that is totally illusory and rooted in a misunderstanding or ignorance. There is only light. And there is apparent darkness. Awakening is simply the dropping away of the idea that there is anyone, and the apparent darkness is again seen as light.

Sometimes you call it 'teaching from a glass box': there is nobody here, but still there is someone that wants to be taught. You blame some teachers that they teach as if there are 'individuals' who choose doing or nondoing. Yet you say at the same time that it could be useful for certain 'apparent' people at certain 'apparent' levels to be taught in that way. Remember I am never referring to a 'person', a 'teacher' or 'someone who is teaching'. There isn't anything happening that is not The Invitation. One who teaches from a moralistic or dualistic viewpoint is still nevertheless a part of the divine expression. When people go there and invest their energy in that, what they are doing is coming to discover that there is no one.

So we can think we have the choice to choose?
Yes. And in the end you will find out there is no one to choose.
So everybody gets there anyway?
O yes, everybody gets there anyway.


[interview: Belle Bruins & Kees Schreuders April 2002]