

# Edji Satsang Transcript



## **On Love, Knowledge and Nisargadatta (and Robert Adams' Lack of Presence)**

*July 9, 2011 – Online Satsang*

I want to say tonight is going to be different, but just hang on. We are going to start with some chanting. The theory is that the sentience you are—the sense of “I am,” your beingness—is not the body, but it is suffused through the body. When you listen to the chanting, try to feel the chanting within yourself, within that vacuous sense of presence.

And if you cannot do that throughout your body, rather than hear it from the outside, hear it from the inside. The point of the chanting is to soothe the mind and slow it down, to make it more receptive to later talks, stuff we talk about. This is a new chant.

[Music starts]

It is only in your mind that the sound comes from outside. Convince yourself that you can hear it from within your body.

[CHANTING “Radhe Govinda – Krishna Kanhaiya”.]

The last two times I have been talking about Advaita, but today I want to talk about something different. It is bhakti, it is love, and love for the guru. I loved my teacher, Robert, unbelievably for a long period of time. And before we get into that, one more chant, which is the “Jyoti se Jyota.” Basically, in English it is saying “Kindle my heart’s flame with thy flame—Satguru, kindle my heart’s flame with thine.”

There are two types of people that come (well, there are many types,) into spirituality. But Ramana and my teacher divided them into two types: jnanis and bhaktis. Jnanis were like me, like Michael [Satsang attendee], who sought knowledge of the ultimate truth directly through the mind.

And then there were the bhaktis, like Ramakrishna and a lot of the women devotees in all practices, who seek the ultimate truth, who seek satisfaction, who seek eternal rest in themselves through loving—loving the teacher, loving other people, loving themselves. This is the way of bhakti.

This used to be a straight, straight jnana practice here—there was no affect allowed in my satsangs! But so many bhaktis started coming, and it awoke similar feelings in me. Because of that, I am teaching a lot differently. This is really, really important. I had no idea that I was having an impact on you people out there in video-land. But a lot of people were saying it is my sense of presence, or that my presence is very powerful; I do not feel that.

What I feel more and more now is great love for all of you out there, my viewing audience and those whom I talk to every day. Let us try this “Jyoti se Jyota.” Try to feel the affect of love, and then I am going to go into that a little more.

[CHANTING “Jyoti se Jyota”.]

We used to have a growing and thriving satsang here in Los Angeles, and then suddenly it disappeared, overnight. One person left, another person got ill, and satsang disappeared from Los Angeles overnight, which just goes to show you the variability of Consciousness. You cannot count on anything in Consciousness. Nothing is permanent. Everything changes. Even the most electrifying symphonies end sometimes, literally, with no warning. But it is all a gift. It is all a gift.

I want to show you now the difference between some of the devotees in the past and the devotees now, and where this satsang is going. I emailed one of the people in Los Angeles that left and said “Hey, I miss you! What happened? Where did you go? Where did you disappear to?” And she responded—and this is how I might have responded a year ago:

“I haven’t disappeared. In fact, I’m alive and well in xx. I have witnessed the LA satsang group move and shift, and I am included in that mix. My practice continues. I deeply welcome its presence in my life. I hope your online satsang is satisfying for you. I have not had the opportunity to view it. Wishing you all the best always. With love, K.”

Now this is a person that even before satsang, used to come with other people to my house to visit and to have an informal satsang. But she disappeared. “I hope your online satsang is satisfying for you. I have not had the opportunity to view it.” And she used to come all the time, but does not say the reason why [she stopped].

And then she sent another one:

“Dear Ed, There’s no longer a satsang in LA. There is a shift. I was in the mix. Now it is no longer. It seems to be a natural unfolding for me and all. Why, I have no idea. Just witnessing it all. All the best, K.”

And that is from a person that used to attend all the time, and then disappeared. Then yesterday, I received an email from a person from the West Indies who speaks French, and the English was translated by one of those Google translation

devices that are hopelessly poor. So I will give you this somewhat edited version of what he said. There is such a difference:

“Hello. I fell on your text. Whereas I was feeling hopeless to ever meet a teacher who could help me, I am animated by the permanent obsession to bore into the mystery of life. Everywhere, always and near, such a person would help me meet the teachings said that no effort was necessary, where I believe, by my own experimentation, that it is possible to do something to advance towards the light.

“I read and read again all the text translated into French on your site and printed 97 pages of *Autobiography of a Jnani*, which I keep near me on the bed. I cry sometimes by reading the complicity which settled between you and Rajiv. Comprehension of what is known, as one with the other is moving; so much so that I feel impotent not to have ever met that teacher.

“I do not know if my control of English language here is an obstacle for an exchange between us. But my most cherished wish is to really be heard and to find an echo in you with the request which is mine. I can, if I so should be moved, take English courses. I can yield with all the ideas, experiments or the instructions which you will be able to give me to live. But I am ready, and I have so much energy deployed inside which I do not have any doubt about my aptitude and my motivation to make what is necessary there.

“Please hear me. I live in the French West Indies in Martinique, and I am far from all, in a very small country. But I know that one needs more than an ocean to prevent me from meeting someone like you. Answer me, please. Tears run in my eyes by writing, and yet I am a father and I am 53 years old. So long, Jean-Marc.”

What a difference. What a difference. He is a bhakti. He is a natural bhakti.

And what I have been teaching lately is exactly what Nisargadatta taught. I read him now, and I find myself in his teachings. Exactly what I am saying is what he says. And I am going to one other book right now, by Sadhu Om. Listen to this, and then I will get to Nisargadatta.

“When, having wept and wept with intense yearning for a long time, unceasingly thinking of and adoring the gracious feet of Ramana, the mind which rises as ‘such and such’ dissolves and becomes pure, the blemishless Self-inquiry will become firmly settled in the heart and the experience of Self will of its own accord arise, and very easily indeed.”

And then, on the identity between knowledge and bhakti:

“By means of our love of God, he will give us more knowledge of him; and by means of our knowledge of him, he will give us more love for him. Therefore these two paths: bhakti and jnana.

“Follow that one for which you first gain a liking, because the one path, will lead you to follow the other one into the heart. [In] the life of the aspirant who is seeking liberation, bhakti and jnana will be experienced as inseparable, like the two sides of one sheet of paper. Hence, each one is equal to the other. They are not two different things, for the true nature of both of them is one and the same. Know that bhakti and jnana are merely two names for that one thing.”

And then Nisargadatta. I found this the other day, his talk on September 28, 1980:

“Questioner: Why so much attraction of the I am for the body?”

Why is that? Nisargadatta responds:

“When it expresses itself as ‘I Am’ it is already fully charged with that love to be. Why, in the insect, worm, animal, or human being, this instinct to keep itself alive? Because with the sprouting of the life force, this ‘I Amness,’ that is itself the very instinct to live, to love to live. That love is to be the prime motive force for all life’s activities.

“You will find, when you are the manifest consciousness, you alone are the multiplicity; you express yourself in all this ample, manifest world. This state itself will be transcended, and you will be in the nirguna state [this is the state

beyond the emptiness state, the nothingness state]; but these are all your expressions, only you as 'I Amness.'

“What I am talking about now is more subtle and more profound and very difficult to understand, but if you understand, the job is done.

“Consciousness is an aid to know. Presently that consciousness knows itself as the body. It should not be so; consciousness should know consciousness bereft of the body sense.”

The I am-ness is the sense of presence. Often the sense of presence seems to be identified with the body, with the feelings of the body, with ecstasy and other kinds of things, but the I am-ness is not the body.

The I am-ness is the fragrance of consciousness. The consciousness itself arises because the body and the mind arise. So they are tied together but he says not to identify with the body portion, but to identify with the essence, the I am; which, through time, through purification, through self-attention becomes transparent. And through that transparency, you see your true nature, or you apprehend your true nature and the Absolute: the nirguna state, the state of nothingness, which you truly are, which is beyond the four states.

Now...you all know that Rajiv came to me totally surrendered about two or three years ago, and we had that dialogue that took place over three or four months, which resulted in his understanding truly his own nature and the samadhi states that led up to his nature. But he was ripe, and he was totally surrendered.

A few months ago, somebody else came. I published on the blog today something she said. This is Janet Beier, [interpreting the spiritual meaning of a passage from Rumi]:

*In love, nothing is eternal, but drinking your wine.*

And she says, “Only when I love deeply in the authentic experience of love am I identified with the eternal aspect of love that moves through a changing

consciousness from life to life. In that loving, I know who I am, and I am is eternal.”

Now, I am is not eternal like nothingness, but I am is eternal insofar as sentience exists throughout the galaxy—everywhere, somewhere, sentience is, and I am is.

She quotes: *There is no reason for bringing my life to you other than losing it.*

Janet says, “I realized that in love, all that was cherished and held dear in life is dropped. The identity and life of the lover has disappeared, and only the loving remains,” which she identifies with.

She quotes Rumi: *I said, ‘I just want to know you and then disappear.’ She said, ‘Knowing me does not mean dying.’*

And Janet said, “When listening to this, I asked myself, who is the ‘I’ and who is the ‘she’? as a spontaneous Self-inquiry. I saw both as spoken from the Absolute. ‘I,’ the Absolute, want to know all my attributes through you (all appearances).”

Through all of phenomenality. ‘I,’ the Absolute, want to know all of my attributes through phenomenality, through the I am.

“And then the response from her being, like an echo from the Absolute, again reassuring us that this knowing doesn’t mean death.” Janet says, “In every moment I am loving you, I am eternal.”

“In every moment I am loving you, I am eternal.”

Because the I am and the love are both permanent aspects of sentience. They are, we will say, the essence of phenomenality. In that sense they are eternal. Insofar as there is life they are eternal, and you are identifying with that.

In every moment I am loving you, I am identified with that eternal I am and that eternal I, or eternal love.

“Through the experience of love, we transcend death here in the phenomenal world. In deep gratitude and love, Janet.”

Well, I felt amazed when I heard this. Janet had an awakening experience about two or three months ago, but because of the complexity of her life, it disappeared. But she has been integrating it ever since, and it comes out time after time in little vignettes.

I said to her, “Janet, your depth is amazing. You challenge me. Through love you have come to know the Absolute, or at least about the Absolute, so intimately. No one knows the Absolute directly through consciousness, only by consciousness’s disappearance through the purification of devotion. The attributes of the lover disappear, leaving only the transparent I am, through which the Absolute shines.

“You have brought jnana and bhakti together so beautifully, combining love, I am and the witness in Rumi’s poem and, as an embodiment of the truth of Nisargadatta’s teaching—and mine—by arriving at the Absolute through your loving I am-ness, which was revealed when you loved me.

“I am so glad God sent you to me so that you could know and love your deepest aspects of the Self through me. What a gift for both of us. You are beginning to articulate deep truths that will move many people in the future.”

See, there are so many paths to the truth, to awakening, and there are so many different kinds of awakenings. There is no one final awakening.

Trying to find the commonality between Nisargadatta’s enlightenment, Ramana’s enlightenment, Robert’s enlightenment, or all of the others, is a fool’s task. Each person is separate; their understanding is separate; their experiences are separate. Insofar as they are alike, that is good. That means you are on the right path.

You are on the right path that will open for you, because you share a similar genetic code, training, whatever. So you go to a teacher or a lineage that you are



comfortable with that seems to reveal the depths of whoever you are, through the practices they use and the talks that they give.

Now, I guess five or six people claim to have awakened by following me, and I do not know how many under Robert, but most of the people disappear. They send eight or ten emails and they seem to have a deep knowledge, and then I never hear from them again. A few of them stick around, like Deeya and Janet and Rajiv. But really, only three are sticking around me.

And around Robert, I knew very few. Nobody stayed long around the great teachers. I am not saying I am a great teacher, but around Robert, very few. He did not want to have a lot of people around him. He kept pushing them away, seeing who would stick. But those who loved him turned out all right in the end.

Those who stayed with him turned out all right in the end. All the others were squabbling whether he was a true teacher or not, a true jnani or not, and saying, “Well, a jnani wouldn’t do this. A jnani wouldn’t do that. A bhakti wouldn’t do this. A bhakti wouldn’t do that.” God, I heard this shit all the time.

I said this kind of stuff, all to myself, through years of visiting various gurus. There is so much doubt, so much criticism based on concepts of how a guru should be and how a spiritual path should be, based on reading hundreds of books, but not practicing enough.

So, Michael, how do you find the pneumena? How do you directly apprehend the pneumenal world, the pneumenal self? That is what this is all about. What is the relation between the phenomena and the pneumena, and how do you directly grasp the pneumena?

You cannot grasp the pneumena as an object because it becomes an object in the process and is no longer the subject. That is the eternal problem of any kind of dualistic thinking or philosophy. And yet deep down inside, I am still Kantian and I identify with the pneumena, the emptiness.

Although I cannot directly apprehend it I know it, because I can take the position where I watch the coming and going of consciousness, the various states—the waking state, the sleep state, the dream state, and no state, where I perceive nothing. Yet when I become conscious again, I am well aware that I *was*, somehow, in some way—not as an object, not as phenomena—but as the source, as Ramana called it and Robert called it, or the Self, which is the visible aspect; the I am, the sentience part, which contains the manifest world—the projections and our subjective sense of presence.

But there is a principle behind that which watches all of this come and go, and is not changed by it. It is like it comes from a different dimension and is only peering through binoculars at what is happening in this world of phenomenality.

And the gateway to know this Absolute is through love, and through devotion. I practiced and practiced and practiced for well over twenty five years—meditation, sometimes ten hours a day; all kinds of samadhis; disappearing; Mt. Baldy; all kinds of gurus; all kinds of koans, hundreds of koans; all kinds of states. But I kept coming back as me. It was not until I met Robert—and even after two years of fighting him—that I surrendered to my teacher.

I loved him. In him I saw something beyond all of the teachings, beyond even Ramana, beyond Nisargadatta. I saw an embodiment in him, in his presence, of such depth and power and unmovingness. Nothing touched him. I have never met anybody like that. Nothing touched him, and yet he was gentle and accepting of all of us. He loved us all in a very gentle and kind of aloof way. One could say he was pretty cold, but he accepted us all where we were.

Sometimes he used to criticize me. He would look deeply into my eyes, as if I was a little gnat that had offended him somehow. He would look at me a long time. Then he would put his hand on my head and say, “Ah, Ed, you’re all right.” I mean, he made me feel like a worm for thirty seconds, and then he says, “You’re all right.”

Fortunately, I had another teacher at the time who I saw maybe once every three or four months, and that was Jean Dunn, who was one of the two successors for Nisargadatta. And when Robert was busy tearing me down, she was busy building

me up, saying, “You understand. You understand enough. Don’t worry.” So between the two, they wrecked me. [Chuckles] I did not know whether I was coming or going.

So, with Robert it was hard to feel his sense of presence because it was as if there was nobody there. I can feel a sense of presence of all of you, and I know you can feel me. But imagine looking at someone, being close to someone and seeing nothing there. There was no presence there. He was completely empty.

And I was completely empty until a few months ago. And then this sense of presence came, and has been bothering me ever since.

Nisargadatta said... what did he say? *Because my mother and father had a few minutes of fun, it has caused me eighty years of misery.* This is where the whole new class of Facebook gurus comes in, the neo-Advaitans, “Be exalted in the moment, where the I am-ness greets the world and shakes hands with phenomenality. Be in the present.” I am not sure what they mean by that, whether they mean the present in terms of being in the world, or the present in terms of being in their own sense of presence, in the I am-ness; or in both.

To meet a teacher where there is nobody there at all and he is still able to interact with you and live and talk to you? It was like talking to Pinocchio, but without the strings. There was nothing there.

But after you knew him awhile, a very cool sense of presence. It was so disarming. After being around him, I went home and I had to go to sleep for three hours. Four hours. I was totally dysfunctional. He made me as worthless and useless as he was. It was catching!

But, unfortunately, Robert is gone, and you are left with me.

And I am stuck with a sense of presence now, which I did not have a year ago. I was blissfully happy being nobody, but now I have come back again and I have a sense of presence. It allows me to teach better, much better, because I can love you now, and before I could not love you. I can greet you now where you are, and

before I could not greet you. And I do love you all—anybody that comes here to share this time with me.

Do we have any questions?

**Alan:** You make constant reference to the term *phenomenality*, but I have not actually heard any clarification as to exactly what you mean by that term.

**Edji:** Anything that is sensed. Anything that is sensed, like touch, taste, smell, and also thoughts, because thoughts can be sensed. Any affect also. Anything that sentience can be aware of, anything that you can be aware of; I consider phenomenality.

Although sometimes the term is restricted just to sensory objects, that which is sensed by the senses. I would also include all the other mental stuff—the visualizations, the fantasies, the sense of emptiness, the void. Even the void is an object that is sensed by me, by you.

**Alan:** I heard you using the term and I had looked it up in my scientific curiosity of trying to understand things. I didn't have a clear understanding of it, so I thought that if I didn't, maybe other people might have a little bit of a problem there too, so I thought I would ask.

**Edji:** And as opposed to phenomenality would be the subject, or, in Kantian terms, the *pneumena*, which is the flipside of the object relationship—the subject-object.

But one of the things that happens in the first awakening is you recognize that in one way, there is no subject anymore. And when there is no subject anymore, there is no object anymore. There is just oneness with no separation between the inner and the outer, between the subject and the object, between the world and myself, and it all becomes one. In that sense, the duality disappears between pneumena and phenomena.

However—and I always talk about this too—even that unity is seen to be a fiction, an illusion, something that is sensed, something that is seen, and that I am that which is beyond all of this. How do I put it?

There is and there is not, phenomena and pneumena. But if you deny even the unity of phenomena and non-phenomena, or pneumena, and say, “Not even that,” this is your true essence—of being beyond even that.

At first it starts out as a conviction from repeated experiences of watching the coming and going of consciousness, watching the coming and going of the states, watching the coming and the going of phenomenality, watching the coming and going of your understanding, because understanding changes over time.

**Alan:** Is that not a sense in itself?

**Edji:** No, it is different than that. It is a non-sensual kind of thing. It is like you leave it all behind, and you become you.

So rather than sensing or cognizing something with the mind, it is like falling back into the Self, into who you truly are, and you feel something—it is like being at home.

Yes, it is a sensing, but you do not feel it at the time. You feel it subsequently, because when you are doing it, there is no perception whatsoever, there is no existence whatsoever. It is subsequently that you know that you were at home. And when you sense falling into your Self, into the pneumena, and going beyond the pneumena...

That is an interesting question, Alan. Let us say there is a conviction that grows from the repeated going into the pneumenal states, and going into the states beyond the states. There is a conviction. It is an apprehension—I do not know what word to use—but it is not a direct knowing through the mind.

It is not a direct knowing through consciousness. It is like an affirmation that comes from deep within you. It is like something calling out to you, saying truth is here and it is totally beyond. And you are that.

**Alan:** More of a total knowing than a sense of knowing?

**Edji:** No. I cannot put a label on it. It is different. All that I can say is it is a sense—

**Alan:** That's the problem. We're limited by language and concepts, aren't we?

**Edji:** Yes.

It is a conviction. It is a sense of absolute truth. It is a sense of being at home.

It is a sense of resting, and all the searching has gone because you know who you are, and nothing in this phenomenality touches you at all. You get the repeated experience that nothing in these states of consciousness or the concepts can touch you. You are entirely beyond that.

That is the feeling you get: "I am not this. I am something else, and I cannot directly know the mystery that I am. But I know all of this that I see is not me."

**Alan:** So it's more a knowing of what you aren't, than what you are.

**Edji:** Yes, true. The method of the Vedas is *neti, neti*— "Not this, not this."

One after another they go through all the different phenomena and the sense objects, the visions, the thinking... "I am not this, I am not this, I am not this," until you're left with nothing. Nothingness.

Even the nothingness you perceived in meditation is not you. It is still an object. I look inside and I find the void and I find emptiness, but I see it is an object, and I am beyond it.

**Alan:** Thank you.

**Edji:** Can you feel it, what I was just talking about? It is something that has to hit you in the gut, in the heart. It has to be in your own experience.

Now, there should have been a settling in us through all of this talking, and getting into the deeper levels of our awareness. There actually are no levels—but I mean by feeling into your body a sense of presence and being able to feel beyond that, the background that you are.

Sink into that place if you can. Feel that external music as coming from your own soul, not through the earphones. You are singing it out to the manifest.

[Music starts playing]

Follow the music down to the center of your being. Locate the I am. Feel the music permeate through I am, your sense of existence.

[CHANTING “Jai Ma, Kali Durga Ma”.]

My camera has deserted me. I am now a ghostly blob. This is where I deserve to be—I am very ethereal now.

So, I read you three emails, and there is a lesson here. The first one said, “Dear Ed, There’s no longer a satsang in LA. There is a shift. I was in the mix. Now it is no longer. It seems to be a natural unfolding for me and all. Why, I have no idea. Just witnessing it all. All the best, K.”

That is a dead person.

And then there is this man from the Islands:

“My most cherished wish is to really be heard and find an echo in you with this request of mine. I am ready and have so much energy deployed inside, which I do not have any doubt about my aptitude and my motivation to make what is

necessary. Please hear me.... I know one needs more than an ocean to prevent me from meeting someone like you. Answer me, please. Tears run in my eyes by writing, and yet I am a father and 53 years old.”

And then Janet. It was amazing. Janet came filled with love and she has done nothing but express love, and a little anger here and there, over a period of time.

There are so many colors she explores. I can watch her mind putting all of these things together, sewing them together, sewing them together, until there is this maturity of pure experience combined with mind, to be able to bring these things together—all the teachings of Nisargadatta and mine into a poem from Rumi that nobody can understand, until she gives it this kind of life by explaining it.

Janet said, “When listening to this, I asked myself, who is the ‘I’ and who is the ‘she’? as a spontaneous Self-inquiry. I saw both as spoken from the Absolute. ‘I,’ the Absolute, want to know my attributes through you, through appearances, through phenomenality.

“And then the response from her being, like an echo from the Absolute, again reassuring us that this knowing doesn’t mean death. In every moment I am loving you, I am eternal. Through the experience of love, we transcend death here in the phenomenal world.”

Do you see what it takes to really free yourself and to go beyond? There is an intensity that is necessary. If you are dead, you will never make it. And the I am-ness, the activation of the I am-ness, the activation of the powerful need to search and to understand.

It takes that kind of intensity to penetrate out of our concepts and out of our preconceptions, and out of the conceptual molds; and begin to experience things in a raw way, a new way, without the interference of mind.

It takes that kind of intensity of love or one-pointed meditation to stop the mind so that we can see directly, without its interference, and begin to see reality in a different way that allows this freedom to take place and allows concepts to drop



away so that we are able to see things without concepts. And then to reintegrate later, if you want, with concepts.

Intensity is the key word.

I love you all. It has been a wonderful satsang. Take care of yourselves. I will see you again. May you all be healthy, wealthy and wise.

Thank you so much.

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