



Satsang
with Advaita Master

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Laying the Groundwork

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Okay, this is our second international *satsang*, and I wanted to discuss two topics tonight – I don't know if there's time to cover all of them, but this is another kind of "laying the groundwork" kind of talk, to set the stage for future and more advanced talks (such as about the method.) I want you to know first of all that no enlightened person has anything on you, or is more special than you in any way. Every non-psychotic spiritual experience is already present somewhere within the raw data of your experience.

All that you have to do is explore your own experience in a methodical way to have these experiences, and then drop them, as they are not that important. Everything is within you: "No mind," "I Am-ness," the subtle state, the waking state experience, the dream experience, the causal body, and ultimately, YOU. All you need to do is to learn how to find them. Then realize that all states have to be transcended, and let go of. All spiritual experiences have to be dropped. This will happen when you recognize who you are at the deepest level, and see that experiences come to you at this core and leave without touching you.

So, awakening is both an experience and an understanding, or realization. There is both self-knowledge and the Self, as you, who is beyond all experience. This is the beginning and end of my teaching and also Robert's. That's the nutshell. That's the whole teaching. Then the process is to use the method to find out what's going on inside of you, and to even drop that. You have to find the core, but we'll get into that some other time, in the next couple of times.

My second point I want to make is, why is the spiritual desert so barren and confusing?

How many of you have read Krishnamurti? Raise your hand. How many of you feel that Krishnamurti has changed your life? How many of you understand Krishnamurti? How many of you have read U.G. Krishnamurti? How many feel you understand him? How many of you have felt that your lives were changed by reading U.G.? How many of you

have read books by Bernadette Roberts? Again, I ask how many of you feel you understand Bernadette? Do you understand her experience, or do you think it's completely beyond you? Has she helped you reach any understanding whatsoever?

The common element these teachers lack is method. They just tell you about their own experience. They offer that to you: "*Here's my gift to you; this is how I see the world . . . blah, blah, blah, blah.*" How many of you studied Zen, or read Zen books or listened to Zen masters' talks? How many of you have found that their minds are set at ease by reading these books, or listening to these teachers, or practicing these methods? Not a lot, right.

How many have read Muktananda and understood what he was talking about, his methods, so to speak – to love the Self, to honor the Self? What's that "Self" he was talking about, and how do you find it? I was left totally unclear by Muktananda, the method. He just told endless, stupid stories at satsang, and the only method appeared to be giving *shaktipat*, when he tapped you on the head with the peacock feather and you made your donation, at his feet, in the donation line, \$30,000 a night.

All enlightened masters are not the same. You might say that each great teacher has a separate message. And these messages and the experiences that generated them are incompatible to a large degree, or to a certain degree, between different teachers. No matter how hard you try to understand the enlightenment or spiritual experiences by reading about them via some teacher or another, you will never have that same experience – *their* experience. You bring a different story when you enter the spiritual arena than did those teachers that you are reading. All teachers do not point to the same final goal. The concept of "Totally Enlightened" is bull; deliver yourself from this concept at all costs! There is no such thing as a universal state that all masters point to. Where you are going is beyond states and spiritual experiences.

So, doing comparative shopping, or comparative analysis, is worse than useless; because it can only make you more and more confused, and lost in philosophical distinctions and confusion. You'll always be comparing your experiences against someone else's, and because you trust them rather than yourself, you always wonder if you are doing things correctly and wonder why you haven't attained what they allegedly have, whatever that is. What you want to do is to really know and understand all of your own experience. Because what you are looking for is already available in your own everyday experience.

However, at this point, you have not explored your own inner experience well enough to know that in there is your liberation – in your ordinary mind. You have to explore that mind through different methods.

Let's just say that I wandered in the "spiritual desert" for twenty one years before I met Robert, and for six years thereafter, before my search found fruition. I put up the

website “it is not real dot com” for two reasons: as a dedication to my teacher Robert Adams, and to help people not waste twenty years in fruitless pursuits. If possible, I want to cut all confusion. Besides the teachers I mentioned above, I studied Zen under five or six different Zen masters, each of whom had a different teaching technique; and, I am assuring you, a different level of spiritual attainment.

Nowadays, there are only two remaining schools of Zen. Hundreds of years ago, there were five major traditions. Now, there’s only *Soto* and *Rinzai*. Soto Zen has one technique only, called *shikantaza*, which means “just sitting.” That’s all you’re doing . . . not counting breaths, not watching the mind, not watching thoughts, not watching the “I” thought . . . just sitting, doing nothing. Rinzai Zen on the other hand, uses the *koan* system. I studied koans under five different teachers and answered hundreds, maybe thousands. Kozan Roshi, who was one of the teachers I studied under, told me that traditionally people think there’s 1700 koans, but in fact there are over 25,000, and he learned the answers to all of them. He stated if he could answer them, anybody could answer them — meaning they’re not hard, there’s just a lot of them.

To be a Zen master, to be a *roshi*, only required that you answered the koans and be conferred *inka*, or transmission by your teacher — then you could teach. In both Rinzai and Soto temples, the temples and teachers are a family thing, and temples were passed on from generation to generation. The koan system combined with meditation caused various awakening experience with reflections on those koans. That is, *sometimes* it did. That is, Rinzai Zen is really a body of knowledge and experiences, with a certificate after twenty years of study.

Here there are methods, but there’s also a body of knowledge, and repeated experience. Is this an awakening journey you want to take — twenty years of answering koans? Really, you’re just learning a cultural way of seeing. One of the Zen masters told me, matter of fact, more than one, that in order to really understand Zen, you had to understand Chinese, and the Chinese culture... because that’s where Zen came from, and all of their experiences were tainted and forced by that cultural tradition. So really, you’re learning how to be an ancient Chinese person with all these awakening experiences and the kind of awakening experiences they had a thousand years ago. And if this is what you want — go for it. There’s not a lot of good Rinzai teachers though in the United States.

But let me say that all the Zen masters I have known have been very ordinary people, and I don’t mean in a deeply spiritual way. One of them used to get drunk and pound on the walls when other people in the building got too loud. One was drunk and fell down and broke his ankle and he spent several talks over several days talking about how ashamed he was for getting drunk and harassing people. That same roshi was caught in a number of sexual scandals. He was also jealous about the number of houses another

Zen master had in a nearby center. He was the most ordinary of people, and he was the most educated of them all.

Another very famous Zen master, who would spend many hours per week screaming at other people at the top of his lungs, over the phone or in person for various reasons – one time he got extremely upset because someone put raisins in his rice and he had diabetes. He screamed and yelled that people were trying to kill him. He was also involved in sexual scandals. He would watch television soap operas for many hours every day; supposedly, he said, to learn English. He taught everyone exactly the same way, with the same methods, and the same words. And the phrase I used is: “He made everyone fit into a 38 Regular.”

Another roshi was continuously involved in sexual scandals, and at 103, he may still be, based on his reputation in the past.

Once I had an interview with one of the four High Lamas of Tibet. There are four Tibetan traditions, and each one has a High Lama, the number one guy. There are four of them in Tibet. The Dalai Lama is the head of the Karmapa tradition, and this guy was the head of another one. I had just been ordained as a novice monk in Zen, and I had a private interview with him and several of his monks in the same tradition. I asked some dumb question or another, and he ignored it. Instead, he started asking me what Zen monks did for sex. He pursued this line of questioning, and I was getting pretty uncomfortable, and he even started stroking himself through his robes, masturbating through his robes, while all of these monks were crowding around me, getting closer and closer. I couldn't wait to get away; I practically ran out of that interview!

Now, the Tibetan system has its own methods of practice and its body of knowledge as well as sequences of spiritual experiences, but it also has this kind of moral corruption, just like Zen does. And... is this something you want? I found this to be the case with almost all spiritual teachers that I met. They all had a very high philosophy, and a high projected attainment. They all were all very, very ordinary men and women, or even coarse.

This is why Jiddu Krishnamurti and U.G. Krishnamurti rejected all the rules, so to speak. They did not walk the walk. On the other hand, U.G. Krishnamurti, when I talked with him on the phone for about half an hour, was extremely chatty and conversational, and had an opinion about just anything you could imagine. He seemed in marked contrast with someone who claimed that all words left him and the entire background of knowledge left him in a so-called enlightenment experience he called, “the calamity.” He said he couldn't function for a while because words didn't make sense, and knowledge didn't make sense, and nobody's concepts made sense. And yet, he was a pretty chatty old guy when I talked to him.

I found nothing in his presentation, or in what he said, that would distinguish him from any other chatty Indian guy of the same age. All Indians know ten times more about spirituality than we do. So, if you get an ordinary chatty Indian, he sounds like a guru, compared with our knowledge. And there's nothing to distinguish him with any of the other Indian gentlemen that knew spirituality.

Bernadette Roberts only talked about her own experience entering the "unity" state, and then progressing to the "no mind, no self" state without any reflexive self-recognition – what the hell ever that means. However, she also regarded that state as a *calamity*. She said no one in their right mind would ever wish to experience it. Nor could she state how one would acquire this experience, as she offered no method. She only commented on her own experience. I've been getting some e-mails recently from a guy in Germany who's been questioning me about Bernadette... saying, "Well, in her opinion was there reincarnation?" And what does she say about this and what does she say about that, and I said, "Hey, guy, I haven't talked to her in 22, 23 years. I don't know. I don't remember. I haven't read her books in 22 years." But he kept pushing and pushing and pushing, and I said, "I'm sorry. I can't help you."

And he said, "Well, it's really important because if there is no existence or nothing to be reincarnated, what's to stop me from killing myself now?" And I knew then I was dealing with somebody with problems, and I hadn't recognized it to that point. In any event, he continued talking and got more and more violent, talking about killing people, "Why don't I liberate a lot of people by killing people?" But... [laughs in exasperation], I had to stop communication with this guy, because I can't do long-range psychotherapy. He wasn't interested in finding out anything about himself. He was only juggling in his mind these philosophical concepts, and probably had a lot of violence going on inside of him, also.

Knowing all of this, and knowing all these people, reading all these books, studying all these Zen masters, practicing all the different koans and meditations, left me feeling utterly frustrated and hopeless of finding someone who was genuine, and who could provide a way out of the desert to some sort of meaningful fruition, and a sense of realization, and a cessation of seeking. And then I met Robert, and he was different. He was not of this world. The more time I spent with Robert, the more I saw he was not of this world. And I never met a teacher like him. He was quiet, unassuming, and funny.

The first time I met him, afterwards in *darshan*, I said, "Where have you been my entire life?" I knew he was the one. I had given up seeking many years before, but I knew he was the one. Now, you may remember the story in one of the transcripts... and I can't find the transcripts, where Robert saw Ramana walking down the road towards him, and he took off all of his clothes, threw himself at Ramana's feet naked; and Ramana reached down and said, "Get up, I've been waiting for you to come!" But when I told Robert that I'd been waiting, that "You're the one I've been waiting for – where have you

been?” Rather than saying, “Get up, and take my hand, and take transmission,” he said, “Oh... I’ve been around.”

Robert’s teachings were very close to those of Ramana. However, Robert also spent six months with Nisargadatta, as well as dozens of other teachers over a seventeen-year period in India . . . (even though Nicole Adams said that she was by his side for forty six years straight, and never left his side.)

It took me six years to understand what Robert was talking about in terms of having experiences which generated understanding I have now. It’s taken me fifteen years of maturation to develop my own style of teaching, which is much different from Robert’s, because it’s much less eclectic than Robert’s. Robert taught many different people with many different backgrounds at many different developmental levels. He didn’t always recommend Self-inquiry, but taught many different methods.

Self-inquiry is actually quite complicated as a technique, because as a person changes and grows spiritually, the “I” sense changes and becomes more subtle. Almost everyone who reads Ramana or Robert also reads Nisargadatta, and that’s a problem, because in many ways these are incompatible teachings. If you read Ramana – and supposedly they’re both Advaita, so shouldn’t they be talking about the same thing? But in fact, they’re talking about different things – if you read Ramana on the surface, it sounds like a Neo-Advaitin’s experience. However, if you read a little more deeply into Ramana’s teachings, he’ll talk about consciousness or awareness beyond the waking state, but not tell you how to get to such knowledge, except through Self-inquiry. But he’ll state it as an ontology. He’ll say “This is definitely the case;” but doesn’t lead you to how to understand this.

Nisargadatta on the other hand will say that the Ultimate is altogether beyond consciousness. And that’s the rub, because for Ramana, there is no “beyond Consciousness,” there is *only* Consciousness. Thus we have a dilemma, because we’re talking about different experiences in different ontologies, with different epistemologies. (Those are philosophical words which really don’t mean anything except they’re talking about different things. Ontology means, “What exists?” Epistemology is, “How do we know it?”)

I get a lot of emails on this kind of topic when I say something. They pick and choose from Ramana’s millions of words and Nisargadatta’s millions of words, and they give me a quote to prove me wrong. Please don’t do this. I’m only making a general statement, in a general argument. You can always find something to contradict something I say or anybody says by finding a phrase that somebody said in 1912, or 1928, which is different from what I’m saying now.

But this is why you get endlessly confused and distracted. You're trying to find commonality between different sets of experiences and understandings because you assume commonality or a continuum, or progression of states, understandings or enlightenment. In fact, each tradition is like a separate vacation on a different planet. Therefore, and this is the key to finding your way out of the spiritual desert – pick *one teacher*, and follow him or her to the end. Or pick one technique, and follow it to the end.

Most of you will balk at this notion – and I would too, given how many teachers I've been with, and thought the world of, while I was there. I even doubted Robert for the first three years I was with him. But this is the key: Find your teacher and follow his/her advice and methods for as long as you can tolerate it, without bolting and going crazy with doubt.

Doubt, and checking your mind, will always be your enemy. And it has always been your enemy up to now. You ask, "Is Self-inquiry for me?" You ask, "Am I doing Self-inquiry correctly?" You ask, "I'm having such and such an experience; is this a correct experience? Am I on the right path or doing a technique correctly?" You will ask, "Is Ed right for me? Will going to another teacher allow me to progress faster?" (There's a clue here: there is no such thing as progression. But we'll get to that later. You're either enlightened or you're not enlightened; it's an on/off kind of thing. And although you can get closer to it, you can't talk about progression in the normal way.)

Three years ago, I stopped being eclectic. Before that I taught many different methods, just like Robert did. Now I only teach Self-inquiry, because I noticed that the questions on the blogs were wandering further and further away from the kinds of topics or questions that would actually help a person spiritually. You have to understand, most people who read spiritual websites or blogs are merely curious. They're not really internally wired to make the sacrifices necessary to realize themselves. Real enlightenment is extremely rare. A good thing about Self-inquiry though, is even if you never really awaken, the technique itself can bring understanding, and unending happiness, and a sense of completeness, and a feeling one is resting in one's own home, so to speak, in one's true Heart.

That's why I like Self-inquiry. The method itself, in a sense, is a fruition of the teaching, even without the stunning enlightenment types of experiences, even if you never have an enlightenment experience. The closer you get to your own Heart and your own beingness, for some reason compassion grows, and the need to help others. At some point for many of us who practice Self-inquiry, the compassion and need to take care of all sentient beings becomes stronger than even the will to awaken. One then becomes a *bodhisattva*, who vows to help to rescue all sentient beings from suffering and distress, and defers their own enlightenment until all others have gone before them. (At least, that's the theoretical goal of the bodhisattva vows that many monks take.)

In a sense I think there are more saints generated by this tradition than those that are generated by traditions devoted to love and devotion, because the compassion and love are generated by the increasing absence of an “I” or “me,” as well as by the development of an increasing love for one’s own sense of presence or “I Am-ness.”

I hope I haven’t confused you. This talk follows naturally from the first satsang, where I told you what *Jnana Marga* has to offer and what it takes. Here, I’m telling you what *my* mission is about. And it’s to help bring some clarity to those lost in the desert of spirituality amongst all these teachers and techniques. That’s why I strongly advocate for certain methods and strongly oppose certain teachers’ methods, because I think they’re going to hurt people... or they’re too slow; or they’re this, or they’re that, or they’re fakes, or whatever.

Like I said, in a sense there’s no real progression from not being enlightened to being awake. You’re either awake, or you’re not. One day you have an experience, and the mind dies, in a sense – resulting either in a unitive state, or the recognition of the state beyond all states, which itself is not a state.

However, even if you fall off the path of Self-inquiry at any point, all the time you spent in correct spiritual practices, such as Self-inquiry, will not have been in vain. The process itself will have left you more loving, more kind, more compassionate, more discriminatory, with more native intelligence about all aspects of your life – and this is good. It’s not like weight-lifting which you may practice for years, and then stop, and within three years you return to being the same slob you were before you started weight-lifting.

Self-inquiry will change you minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, month and by year and so forth, until you do awake . . . and if you don’t, as a consolation prize, you may still become a saint.

I think the next two satsangs should be about the method: Self-inquiry, and how to practice it.

And now, the imaginary bell for ending satsang has just rung.

Part 2, Stump the Guru follows below...

Stump the Guru!

As you read the questions and answers below, it is very important to understand that the answers that are given in each Satsang must be taken in the full context of that Satsang AND that Edji's answers may appear unusual, or seem to contradict answers to similar questions in the past.

Partly, he is answering each person based on their current level of understanding, and more importantly, is telling them what he thinks they need to hear at that time. Also, realize that all general statements contain within them their own contradictions, and most Satsang statements are general statements due to limitations of time.

Therefore, a general statement one week may appear to contradict another general statement of another week. In the largest sense, there is no truth at all, but until one awakens, or until one's self-inquiry has reached deeper levels, words, and the necessary distortion of words, are still one of the main ways a teacher still teaches.

So don't hang onto any one sentence because in a month's time you will find a contradiction. You need to go beyond the words with limitations in meaning and intent, by just listening without interpretation or dwelling on the words.

Also, Edji likes to joke sometimes and don't take those answers seriously!

Question 1

What is Cooking?

Janet: I recently started my formal meditation, and as I increased my time I started noticing how my emotions intensified. And it occurred to me that perhaps I'm being "cooked"! So I wondered if you could say something about what exactly "cooking" is? And you've a little bit mentioned and spoken a little bit about "cooking" on your blog, and that it's often when your ego gets challenged. So, I want you to a little bit elaborate on what "cooking" is exactly...

Edji: Okay. Cooking is something other people do to you, especially the teacher. It puts you in a situation where you feel either embarrassed, humiliated, angry or something like that, and you just have to suffer that experience and watch the experience. And if it happens a few times, you learn how to stay out of those situations, or else the emotion doesn't come up any more.

Now, formal meditation, when you're seeking the "I," "I am" is not a cooking kind of thing. That's introspection, is the effort you're making on yourself and it's actually uncovering all the different intricacies of your own subjective experience. And you're saying emotions are coming up, strong emotions. During that, or are they caused externally?

Janet: Externally.

Edji: Okay. So, somebody's cooking you, or else you're becoming more sensitive to your emotions, because maybe some of your defense mechanisms are being removed by the introspection, I don't know.

Now, what kind of emotions are coming up?

Janet: It's more like... I have two little children. One is one, and the other one is three years old. When they fight, for example, I will feel much more intense and react stronger and kind of... so it could be very... different feelings, but –

Edji: I've got a solution. Drown them both in the bath tub.

Janet: (*Surprised laughing*)

Edji: Then you won't have that problem anymore (*smiling*). No, that's alright. What the hell do you expect? They're one and two years old. They're gonna rock your boat all the time. Two of them that young – Wow! No wonder you're suffering! (*smiling*)

Janet: (*Laughing*)

Edji: And now you're working too, aren't you?

Janet: Yes.

Edji: So, that's a lot of stress too, right?

Janet: Mm-hm.

Edji: So that's another thing. You've got an increased stress situation which can cause a lot of lowering of your defenses against controlling those emotions, but the emotions aren't going to hurt you.

Janet: I actually find myself resting at work (*laughing*).

Edji: You rest at work? (*laughing*)

Janet: Emotionally it's more rest, because then I get more intellectual, so that gives me a break from being emotional at home.

Edji: Oh, I see. Okay. You don't lock the kids up in a room and let them battle each other?

Janet: I'm learning how to raise two boys.

Edji: Yeah. It's going to be hard. It's going to be hard for the next six or seven years.

Janet: Okay. Thank you.

Edji: You're welcome.

Question 2

Does the Mind Die?

Edji: Nice seeing you.

Ryan: Nice to see you, too. My question is about something you said during your talk. You said that the experience of enlightenment is when the mind dies, and you either enter a unitive state or the stateless state, the state beyond the states. I was just curious if you could clarify by what you mean when the "mind dies," because I know it's not thoughts.

My understanding is that it's not that thoughts cease, it's just that, it's something else. So if you could clarify on that, maybe I've interpreted it wrong...

Edji: Well, I used the wrong expression, "the mind dies." Let's put it this way: my awakening experience may have nothing to do with anyone else's awakening experience. You've got to find your own - it may be very different from mine.

Ryan: Sure.

Edji: But I had two which I would consider awakening experiences. One which is similar to what the Neo-Advaitins talk about, and then one that Robert himself authorized and said, "Yes, that's it." Now, that's the second one.

Now, the first one is entering the "unitive state," which means the identification changes from being a body and a mind and a person to identifying with the totality of space that contains all phenomena, whether it be inner phenomena or the external world.

Now one identifies with the totality of the space and sees that all objects are in you – or in me.

Ryan: So then it's not conceptual, it's an experience?

Edji: Well, it's an experience, yes. And you can see thoughts, and you can see thoughts have a kind of... intangible form, but if you get too close to the thoughts, the thought itself creates the object that you're seeing in the external world.

You see that the word "I" has no referral whatsoever. There's no "I" inside. There's no person, there's no "Ed Muzika," there's no entity that the word "I" applies to.

Because everybody uses the word "I" all day long – "I do this, I do that," "I ate this, I ate this."

And what is that "I" referring to? If you look for the "I" and you don't find an "I," at some point along there suddenly you come to the conclusion, "Well, thank God, there is no 'I' inside of me!"

Okay, the "I" thought is the central thought of all existence. The network of thought all requires an "I," because you have an "I" which is an inside and you have the world which is an outside. If the "I" disappears the other half of the duality disappears.

So, if there's no longer an "I," there's no longer an external world. And what it's replaced by, is one continuum of inner and outer spatial experience that contains everything. It contains all concepts and images and ideas and things floating inside of yourself subjectively, and the supposed objective world of objects - of the television, of the walls, the sky, etc.

Instead of being me here and that out there, there's just oneness, just one continuum of consciousness which contains all of this. And that's, let's say, the "unitive state."

And I don't want to explain the other state because that'd be too much for you. I'd like you to grasp one concept at a time.

Take a look at "It is Not Real" (as long as it's still up.) And there's a thing where I talk about my personal enlightenment experience; it's a shower experience. Read that and then read about the second awakening experience. It will give you the background.

But "ItisNotReal.com" and it's called "Walking with God," or something like that, the old book. Well take a look through those pages. [*Dancing with God* from Ed Muzika's website recounting his guru-devotee and awakening experiences with Advaita guru Robert Adams]

Ryan: Yeah. I've read them and I'll make sure I re-read them. But I just feel... obviously it would be a Neo-Advaitin realization that I don't have an "I," if there's not that experience of oneness?

Edji: Without the experience of oneness, it's just a concept.

Ryan: Yeah, is it? So is that like a *samadhi* state?

[*difficulty with sound*]

Edji: Is *what* a samadhi state?

Ryan: The state that you were just talking about.

Edji: No, not at all. No, it's a loss of identification with the body and a gaining of an identification with the space. And the space is continuous, from inside to outside. The same outside space, you're not aware of an inside space that's similar. And there's nothing in either of those spaces.

All the objects are not real. They're only thought structures. They're seen as concepts. So, in a sense, you have become the space which has eaten everything.

Ryan: Okay. Thank you very much.

Edji: You're welcome.

Question 3

How Does One Stay in Tune with the Teacher from a Distance?

Tim: How is it best for a student to stay in tune with the teacher when there's such a distance between us?

Edji: Communication. And just... what kind of practice do you do?

Tim: Self-inquiry.

Edji: Uh-huh.

Tim: I basically focus on the feeling of being.

Edji: Good! And how do you do that?

Tim: Basically, I just sit, close my eyes... I let being come about, and just keep my eye on existing.

Edji: Are you aware of the emptiness inside?

Tim: Yes. When I start to focus on it, I enter a stillness and just sit there, and just remain in myself.

Edji: Okay. And what other phenomena do you experience? Do you experience sounds and so forth, the normal sounds?

Tim: I don't have any.

Edji: Do you daydream?

Tim: No special effects. It basically just stillness and emptiness...

Edji: How do you feel when that goes on?

Tim: Good, actually. It's very peaceful.

Edji: Are you aware also, you're aware of the sense of presence? Right? Of beingness?

Tim: Yes.

Edji: Okay. Are you aware of a sense of "I am," rather than just the beingness?

Tim: See, that said, I've written you many times on this before. I feel that I could be aware of the beingness, and I could be aware of the "me," the feeling of "me"...

Edji: Uh-huh.

Tim: I could be aware of both of them.

Edji: Uh-huh.

Tim: But it's separate.

Edji: That's fine.

Tim: Okay.

Edji: Yeah, also be aware of the background. Be aware of being able to sink into the background of your awareness. It feels like you fall back into your background.

You can be aware of the Void as a total thing. Because you have the total emptiness kind of thing, but also you have the sense of beingness or presence which fills up the emptiness. But the emptiness itself has its own form, minus the presence.

So you've got to explore all of these different things. Try these different tricks.

Also, you may have at this point become aware of a "looker" who is looking for the "I am." Or aren't you?

Tim: From what I said, even being aware of the "I am," I'm always aware that I'm the rear-most principle.

Edji: Uh-huh.

Tim: You know what I mean? In other words, I'm always the witness. There's always a witness.

Edji: Okay, so you're aware of the witness. Can you look at the witness?

Tim: No.

Edji: Try it. That'll be another thing you experience, because you may think that you can't look at the "looker," but you *can* look at the "looker."

Tim: Yeah? Oh!

Edji: So, you've got the foreground sense of beingness...

Tim: Yes.

Edji: You've got the "I" sense, the "I" will point you towards the subject, towards the witness.

Tim: Yes.

Edji: You've also got the witness. You can look at the witness.

You can fall into the background.

You can be immersed in the sense of presence.

All of these kinds of things you can be doing, and doing all of those will bring you closer to me.

Tim: Ah! That's the key word I was waiting to hear. I understand. Because I keep thinking of "Ed Muzika" as "Ed Muzika" the personality, but you've taken me out of that, and you're saying "Deal with the beingness."

Edji: Correct.

Tim: That has nothing to do with "Ed" the personality.

Edji: That's where you're going to *feel*... You're not going to do it through emails or... to a certain degree, but if you feel that commonality which is the essence in everybody, you're going to feel closer to everybody.

Tim: Yes.

Edji: Including me.

Tim: Yes. Good point. I appreciate that, Ed. Thank you very much.

Edji: You're welcome.

Question 4

Is it Possible to Overlook the Samadhi Experience?

Dennis: I have a question. It's something that always comes back in my mind. I'm afraid this is a stupid question.

Edji: Good.

Dennis: (*laughing*) But it's always coming back. And the question is...

We talk a lot about states of mind and experiences while meditating. And also we say, "Okay, this is not important... You go beyond," and "Don't give too much attention to it... Do not look for it..." But it comes back, and then the question arises:

Is it possible that we have all these kind of some kind of experience, but that we overlook it? So, that it is very familiar and that we do not recognize it, but it is there... but we do not recognize it.

Edji: What are you talking about? Recognizing what experience?

Dennis: Well, say like *samadhi* experiences.

Edji: They're *all there* already existing in your raw experience, right now. They're all there.

Even the sleep state is in you. If you look for the sleep state, you can find the sleep state by looking around inside you, once you know... Well, once you're familiar with your insides and you know 'em backwards and forwards, you can feel the sleep state coming and going, feel dreams coming and going. You can watch all these states.

But then the *key state* is to become your Self, your deepest core state, so that you watch all of these other experiences coming and going to you; from you.

In other words, you get into that deepest state which is, let's say the "You" state, the big cap "Y-O-U," and you rest in that state, and you become like a mountain.

And when you're like a mountain you watch all this kind of weather, the clouds passing over and the experiences coming and going, and people climbing up you, and all the sounds of the birds, and the birds shitting on your rocks, and all that kind of stuff.

You see all of these experiences happening to you, but you're not touched!

And so, samadhi experiences, you just take out the sense of "I," you take out the sense of presence, and from your regular experience that you have now – and that's samadhi.

And you'll find that the world is very bright and everything is very vivid, and it seems like everything is immediate. It's no longer at a great distance from you, everything is in you - that's samadhi. That's getting rid of the sense of presence, that's getting rid of the mind, getting rid of the "I" concept, getting rid of the "world" concept. That's one kind of samadhi. There's many kinds of samadhis.

But all of those experiences are already, you're already having them.

All that you have to do is get enough mucking around inside and outside. Watching, for example, the external world, and with a quiet mind, without thinking of anything, just trying to feel what that tree does to you, or that pretty woman you see does to you, or the cup of coffee and how you're experiencing it, without thinking.

And you just mess around with your internal reality and with external vision, and you just keep playing with it, because what you're trying to do is see things in a different way than you've been seeing it all your life.

And that requires really trying things that other people aren't doing. Because if ever other people were doing this for ages, everybody would have enlightenment right at hand.

But most people live within a very narrow conventionality - of their culture, of their education, the social milieu they grew up in - and their experiences are more or less alike, and they really can't talk to people about *other* experiences, because other people don't understand them. So they begin drifting apart into forming their groups, so people that think alike are looking for the similar sort of things.

But I'm saying that your entire blackboard is inside of you, and you don't have to go anywhere.

Just muck around inside.

Sit and meditate, formal meditation.

Practice Self-inquiry.

Look at your mind, watch the thoughts.

But more or less, just feel that sense of presence. Feel it in your heart.

And if you can, get that sense of presence lower in the abdomen, so that your mind drops. It drops out of the brain. And once the mind and the attention drops out of the brain into the lower levels, you'll start experiencing different kinds of samadhis.

I could ramble on for a long time about this, but –

Dennis: (*chuckling*)

Edji: Has that helped at all?

Dennis: Yes, it makes sense. Yes, definitely.

Edji: It makes sense? What do you practice?

Dennis: I practice . . . it's difficult to say, but...

Edji: In other words, you don't practice.

Dennis: Daily, I take time for sitting.

Edji: Okay.

Dennis: I sit in silence.

Edji: Okay.

Dennis: And I watch inside.

Edji: Uh-huh.

Dennis: I watch inside what's going on.

Edji: Uh-huh.

Dennis: And I try to stay with this feeling of beingness.

Edji: Okay, that's good! That's very good.

Also, see if you can at times locate the sense of "I." Because that sense of "I"... the "I am" has two qualities: the "am-ness," which is your sense of beingness; and also the "I," which points towards the witness. It points towards the source.

So, try to become aware of the “I” also, rather than just be in the beingness, because the beingness has no quality of being “I” or “thou. It doesn’t have that duality in it.

And you want to have that duality of the “I,” because you can follow it to the subject, rather than just remaining in the beingness, which is an object, so to speak, to you.

Dennis: And you speak of this “I-ness,” I can recognize it by identification?

Edji: Well no, you find the sense of “I-ness” by just being aware of for example during the daytime, when you use the word “I.”

Dennis: Okay.

Edji: And then pursuing the word “I,” see where the “I” points. In other words, there’s the word, “I” - “I exist,” “I am;” and the “I” will point somewhere. And you have to look to where it points, to see if there’s the subject to be found.

And this becomes a little complicated, because there are a lot of false subjects, and there are a lot of real subjects, so to speak. And you just have to become sophisticated looking around inside, and really know the internal world.

It’s like psychoanalysis. You could spend ten years, fifteen years in psychoanalysis, investigating all your different dreams and emotions, etc., etc. And this is a similar sort of thing, but you’re not... psychoanalysis is very value-laden. It’s got a lot of concepts associated with it, and a lot of things about nurturing, and growing up, and being a child, and parents, and all this kind of stuff.

Rather than that, we’re doing this with a raw investigation, with no concepts. No understanding, no mind.

Dennis: Without the mind.

Edji: So just watch. You’re like a scientist, watching inside of yourself. And Lakshmi already did it. Look at that. Look how realized she is. [Indicating the cat]

Dennis: *(laughing)*

Edji: Dumb as a rock, just like me. Oops, oops! She didn’t like that.

[Talking to Lakshmi] Oh, I’m sorry! I’m sorry!

Dennis: Okay. Thank you, Edji.

Edji: Does that answer your question?

Dennis: Yes. Thank you.

Question 5

A Question Related to Sitting in Silence

Alan: When I sit and go into the quiet I get a lot of images occurring - different things going, like fireworks, different visions, that kind of thing. And it seems to me to be superficial, like the mind trying to distract me.

I go beyond that and I become aware of, for lack of a better term, different entities; like the mind, the body... as you mentioned earlier, a “witness”... And again that seems to be, in a way, a distraction. Maybe it isn’t.

If I go beyond that, I keep trying to look beyond but let it come to me, if you know what I mean. And then I get into a darkness. I don’t know if you’d call it this Void that you’ve referred to, or whatever, but I get into sort of that state... But I feel there is something well beyond that as well.

And I guess my question is, am I going in the right direction, or am I overanalyzing this too much?

Edji: Well actually, you really can’t make a mistake, once you’re inside of yourself and exploring. Anything you’re doing, really, is helpful. I see nothing wrong with what you’re doing. I don’t see any over-intellectualization or anything. You’re just looking.

Now, when you say there’s something “beyond the darkness”... it depends on what that darkness is, and the form of the darkness. It could be that’s the beginnings of the causal body for you. It could be... Was that darkness always there, or is it a new thing?

Alan: It’s different every time. Every time I meditate it’s, you know sometimes it’s... I don’t go looking for things. I don’t go back in expecting to experience the same thing again. I just allow it to come to me, and sometimes it will come in that form.

And the mind keeps chucking ideas in there; as Deeya calls it, the “sticky mind” wants to sort of distract you. And I don’t fight these ideas, but I don’t pick up on them either, and they just sort of pass on. Sort of like things on a conveyor belt that you don’t –

Edji: Okay, but are you consciously focusing on your sense of presence at all? Or are you just doing everything?

Alan: I don’t know if it would be consciously focusing. It would be –

Edji: Try it. Try focusing on the sense of “I am,” just like written in “The Nisargadatta Gita” by Apte. Rather than just being there globally with everything, start focusing on

that sense of “I am,” and that should be the main meditation, because that will give you a direction.

While what you’re doing, just sort of globally being aware of everything, well it’s more like what you call *Shikantaza* [a meditation practice within Zen Buddhism.]

Alan: Mm-hm.

Edji: And you can get to all kinds of things like that, but you can also get lost in emptiness and...

You want to focus on the sense of “I am.”

Alan: Okay.

Edji: And read “The Nisargadatta Gita,” do it for –

Alan: Yeah, I’ve been reading that quite a bit, actually.

Edji: Do it maybe no more than two or three stanzas, in the morning...

Alan: Mm-hm.

Edji: Contemplate it, and then sit with it for awhile.

Alan: Okay.

Edji: And then maybe once more during the daytime.

Alan: Yeah.

Edji: But it’s good to master that book. That is the *best* meditation manual.

Alan: Okay.

Edji: And not only that, but “The Nisargadatta Gita” is *one* type of Self-inquiry, and I find it a very powerful one because Apte laid it out so linearly, almost progressively revealing different parts of your Self.

Alan: It seems to be repetitive, though.

Edji: Not at all. Well, it is and it isn’t, because each step reveals something new, if you look at the book. Take a look at it. It reveals something new.

Now my book, “Hunting the I,” is scattered all over the place. It takes a look at every possible aspect of Self-inquiry, while “The Nisargadatta Gita” is very focused.

And it's one method followed very well all the way through. And if you just dedicated your life to understanding that one book, that's all you would ever need.

Alan: Okay.

Edji: For *most* people. It won't work for everybody.

Alan: No, it won't. Thank you.

Edji: You're welcome.

Question 6

What Doesn't Change?

Edji: But I don't know what your puzzlement is. You see, you've got to muck around inside.

And you muck around inside - You find an "I," you find a sense of presence, you find the emptiness, you find many, many, many, many different things. And it *does* change. Almost everything changes.

But at some point, you recognize that which does not change. And that which does not change is you. That's the most the fundamental YOU.

Joy: Right.

Edji: And this becomes a progression of understanding as you watch states and experiences come to you, and you find out, over a period of months and years, that you're not being touched by any of this stuff anymore. It's not touching you. It doesn't penetrate. It's like watching clouds go by.

And that becomes your fundamental stance.

So, in the process of going to this point, you go through all these different experiences - finding the "I," finding the "am-ness," finding the sense of presence, finding the background, finding the foreground... you find so many, many, many different things.

So, what you're doing is peeling the onion to reveal all the elements within your experience that matters. You explore all of your subjectivity. And then eventually, the deepest levels reveal themselves.

And you may go through all kinds of experiences in a very short period of time, like Rajiv did, when he went through the subtle body and the causal body, etc., to deeper and deeper levels. Or it might be more gradual, it might take years.

But don't puzzle about it. It looks like you're very concerned about it from an intellectual point of view, as opposed to just *doing* it. Because like I said, almost nothing you do inside can go wrong, except if you start paying too much attention to the emptiness. That is a trap, but it doesn't sound like that's what you're doing.

Joy: So, it doesn't sound like I'm ... Sorry, could you just say that again?

Edji: It doesn't sound like you're getting lost in emptiness, so there's no problem. There should be no problem.

You're okay, I'm saying.

Joy: Thank you. Thank you.

Question 7

All Experiences are Bullshit

Edji: Hi Erik, how are ya?

Erik: I'm fine, thank you. Hi.

Edji: Hi.

Erik: So my question is, I've been going through the "Nisargadatta Gita," like you said, for several months, reading two or three stanzas; and when you say "Contemplate it," I seem like I read the stanzas and then I don't remember them, and then I just sit with the feeling I get from them. It's not like I can kind of intellectually contemplate them or anything.

Edji: No, you're not supposed to intellectually contemplate them.

Erik: So then I'm just reading them and then sitting with the feeling I get.

Edji: Exactly! Exactly right. Exactly right.

Erik: Then I seem to get a lot of energy, and I get a lot of energy from you, it's like

whooo (making a wind blowing sound)

Edji: Uh huh?

Erik: Is that valuable in any way? Or is that just....

Edji: Let's say, all experiences in the end are bullshit. They're to be experienced and then dropped as not really relevant. You've got to get over the idea of spiritual experiences doing something or other. But how... you've been practicing this for several months?

Erik: Yeah.

Edji: Okay, what do you experience most recently, for example, when you're doing this? What feeling do you get into?

Erik: It's kind of blissful. It's been that all of the time.

Edji: Blissful?

Erik: Yeah, and the energy is so strong almost every time, so I just kind of get into the energy and I'm not sure if that's correct?

Edji: What are you aware of when you're in this energy?

Erik: Hmm... I've been recently trying to look at the "looker," just because I heard that in the recent "Stump the Guru" [Question-and-Answer Period at Edji's Satsangs] when you were talking to the *sangha* [community of spiritual students.]

But I'm not sure how well I'm doing, it feels like my concentration is a bit weak. Like...

Often there are thoughts and I kind of follow them also, even though I'm in the energy. It's like... It's not often there is total silence. I don't know if I ever experience total silence, actually.

Edji: What are you feeling right this second?

Erik: Right now?

Edji: Yes.

Erik: (Long pause) Very... (laughing, unclear)

Edji: Very what?

Erik: Very still inside.

Edji: Uh huh, what does it feel like? What are you experiencing?

Erik: (Exhaling) A warmth from the heart center... (Breathing calmly and slowly) Like I'm embraced. I can just sink into it.

Edji: That's fine, you're doing well. You're doing well. You're sinking below the level of the waking mind, so don't worry. You're doing well.

Erik: Thank you!

Edji: You're welcome.

~ End of Satsang ~