

Edji Satsang Transcript



How You Can Tell Who Your True Teacher Is

July 2, 2011 – Online Satsang

[Chanting—*I Will Sing Thy Name*]

You know, normally my satsang topics come to me automatically at the last minute. But this morning I had a discussion about some questions that could be asked, and it has been percolating in my wee, little brain all day long.

So, we will have two sections. I want to talk about the question that came up this morning, and then we will talk about Advaita.

The question was asked, *Really, how does a student know his or her true guru?* How do you learn how to discriminate, amongst all the hundreds and thousands of gurus out there, who is yours?

But isn't this question almost identical to, *How do I find my soul mate?*

How do I find my perfect partner?

How do I buy the right car?

Well, with a car it is easier. It is what you can afford, and what the consumer guides say!

But when it comes to gurus or soul mates, there is really a *lack* of information about it. As a matter of fact, the soul mate spectrum has no... [laughs]—there is nothing, no information out there! It is potluck. It is trial and error, hit or miss. Mostly miss.

And when it comes to gurus, there is that one website that talks all about the various gurus and their consumer ratings, according to various students. ["Sarlo's Guru Rating Service" - <http://www3.telus.net/public/sarlo/Ratings.htm>]

But isn't it obvious that there is no true guru, really? It is the gurus you run into, that you have access to.

It is where you are at that particular moment in space and time, and what he or she said at that particular time.

Sometimes, the first teacher you ever go to is your true guru, but you do not know it for five years. You go to twenty gurus after that, and then one day a memory comes of that person, the first person, and you go back; and you realize that person was your true teacher, after all.

One definition I heard recently about how you know whether a person is your guru or not, is that you keep showing up at satsang.

How do you feel around this person?

Are you happy?

What do you feel?

If you feel happy, if you feel complete, if you feel loved—that is the right person. If you keep coming back—that is the right person. Or at least until you stop coming!

But, you know, it is so hard to find real information on the teachers out there. For example, Facebook. I think there are 1,862,000 teachers on Facebook. Each one of them has 300,000 followers. And they do not like criticism of their teacher in any way, shape or form, or negativity on any of their comments, or they will kill you!

So where do you find information on teachers? There are not really a lot of places out there that you can find that information. It is all hit or miss, more or less.

However, I do have one surefire way of finding a true guru: if they wear a shirt like this, you know they are the real thing. [Points to his t-shirt]

Can you read it?

I think it says, *I can only help one person a day. Today is not your day, and tomorrow doesn't look good either.*

Now, this is a Robert Adams-type shirt. He always had a sense of humor. He was not self-important. As a matter of fact, he did not really like being looked up to as a guru, except insofar as it helped the student develop.

So, that question is solved! Any other questions about gurus?

Anybody want to raise a question?

How to spot a fake guru?

Anything?

Nothing?

You guys are really disappointing. You know, where is the drive to *understand*, to *know* yourself? God, come on!

Alright, let us go to chanting.

What are we going to do? The next part, we are going to go deeper again. Let us start with *Arati Sadguru*, and then *He Bhagavan* right after that.

We are trying to go deep now.

[Music starts]

Can you turn the volume up louder?

Let the music play through you. Pretend it is not coming from outside anymore. It is coming from your own body, from your own heart. Let the music emerge from your heart.

Let it permeate your entire body, and swing with it.

[Chanting—*Arati Sadguru*]

[Chanting—*He Bhagavan*]

On a more serious note, I want to welcome you with all my heart.

I love you all, for taking the time to join me in satsang. You could have been doing something important—like getting a beer, going shopping at Macy's—but instead you decided to come here. And I thank you for that.

That means I mean something to you; and you all mean something to me.

All kidding aside, it took me 22 years to find my teacher. And I studied with some of the greatest of the teachers. My first was Philip Kapleau Roshi in Rochester, New York—a world-famous guru, very powerful Zen teacher.

Then there were many, many others... like Sasaki Roshi, who was a *devil*... but a nice devil. Seung Sahn Sunim, world-famous Zen teacher. Muktananda—I was his bodyguard for a while. And then the two kids that took over afterwards.

I have been with many, many teachers.

I lived at the International Buddhist Meditation Center [in Los Angeles] for many years, and my teacher there, who ordained me, was Thich Thien-An. It was sort of a center where he welcomed teachers from all over the world. The Dalai Lama made his first visit there, back in 1971, or something like that. I was part of the security detail, and I got to meet the Dalai Lama, and some of the other ones that came later—Shakya Tenzin and many, many, many, many teachers.

I met *many* teachers.

But in 1989, I had given up looking for teachers. I thought I knew everything. I was not happy, but I thought I knew everything. Then one day, somebody said, “You know, there’s somebody you ought to visit.” And he was not the first person to say this about this person.

So, despite my better judgment, I actually went to the satsang.

It was a small apartment in Beverly Hills. When I walked in, there was this man dressed in white sweats, with a grey sweatshirt, with a beard. I walked in, and he looked up at me.

I had a feeling then... something different about this guy. There must have been only five people present. It was a small room, you know, no more than 125 square feet. He sat on the edge of his chair; sort of leaning into the audience.

And his eyes were so penetrating. He saw right through you. Then sometimes it did not seem like there was anybody looking, he was so empty. There was nobody there, and yet there was—something about his eyes.

I listened to him talk. He was talking about consciousness in the Advaita way; and I had never been exposed to Advaita, except for Ramana. I do not remember the words he said that day, but by the end of his talk I knew I had met my teacher.

Robert Adams.

Afterwards, I went up and I asked him, “Where have you been my entire life?”

And rather than saying “I’ve been waiting for you, my son,” he said, “Well... I’ve been around.”

But after getting to know him, going to lunch and satsangs, he called me aside one day and we went to lunch. He said, “Ed, you’re not my devotee. I want you to be my friend. I have nobody to talk to, and I need somebody to talk to.”

So, my teacher wanted me to be an equal.

He wanted to step out of the role of the guru, and meet me as a friend; and an equal. That is how you can tell a guru: if he is willing to step out of the role of being a guru, and meet you where you are, and bring you up; so that you can meet him where he is, or she is.

Robert has never left me since then. I still feel his presence within me and around me. Always.

I love him so.

I was so lucky to have met him, after 22 years of seeing literally hundreds of teachers over that period of time—I mean, just visiting them, or saying hello, or something.

But he was different.

There was no immediacy, like there is with Zen—being in the moment.

Robert was entirely beyond this world. It was like he was here because he had to. And while he was here, he wanted to help people to escape suffering, to join him where he was—beyond this world. Beyond the body, beyond the mind.

Not too many people followed him. I guess I did because I had seen so many teachers and done so many spiritual practices, and found them kind of useless. But here was somebody who went entirely beyond the world.

That is how you can tell your teacher.

He takes you beyond the world. All the way beyond.

He takes you out of your suffering into happiness, joy and to the unmistakable belief that you are not a human—you are more than that. You are more even than God, because God is something that you see. You are that principle that sees God.

That teacher takes you there, as your friend.

And I thank you for coming here.

Now, I want to take you a little deeper into Advaita. I want to read you little snippets from Nisargadatta.

I recommend that you all get this book, *Consciousness and the Absolute*, a little orange book.

[May 10, 1980, page 2]

Maharaj: *How did I get to the truth that I prevail everlastingly? By meditating on the meditator, by "I Amness" merging into "I Amness." Only then did I understand what my true nature is. The great Sages meditated in the same way. Nobody had told me how to do it. I did not seek this knowledge externally. It sprouted within me.*

In other words, the method he advocated of staying with the 'I am' was his own method, and it came to him naturally. The guru did not teach it to him. It came spontaneously, after he listened to the guru's words that *you are not your body. You are something else entirely.*

... In deep sleep, consciousness was in a dormant condition; there were no bodies, no concepts, no encumbrances. Upon the arrival of this apparently wakeful state, with the arrival of the concept "I Am," the love of "I Am" woke up. That itself is Maya, illusion.

[Skipping forward to July 29, 1980, page 6]

Questioner: *Why did this consciousness arise?*

Maharaj: *You are both the question and the answer. All your questions come from your identification with the body. How can any questions relating to that which was prior to the body and consciousness be answered?*

It cannot be answered with the body or the mind.

There are yogis who have sat in meditation for many, many years seeking answers to this question, but even they haven't understood it. And yet you are complaining.

Questioner: *It is a great mystery.*

Maharaj: *It's a mystery only to the ignorant. To the one not identified with the body, it is no longer a mystery.*

Questioner: *Maharaj cannot convey it to us?*

Maharaj: *I keep telling you but you don't listen.*

Questioner: *Does Maharaj see us as individuals?*

Maharaj: *There are no individuals; there are only food bodies with the knowledge "I Am." There is no difference between an ant, a human being, and Isvara [God]; they are of the same quality. The body of an ant is small, an elephant's is large. The strength is different, because of size, but the life-force is the same. For knowledge the body is necessary.*

In other words, the body is necessary as a conveyor of truth. But the truth is beyond the body.

[Skipping forward to November 8, 1980, page 9]

Questioner: *... As an individual can we go back to the source?*

Maharaj: *Not as an individual; the knowledge "I Am" must go back to its own source.*

Now consciousness has identified with a form. Later, it understands that it is not that form and goes further. In a few cases it may reach the space, and very often, there it stops.

I have warned people over and over again: do not stop with emptiness. Do not stop with the void. A lot of people identify their true nature with the void, or with emptiness.

He says:

In a very few cases, it reaches its real source, beyond all conditioning.

It is difficult to give up that inclination of identifying the body as the self. I am not talking to an individual, I am talking to the consciousness. It is consciousness which must seek its source.

Out of that no-being state comes the beingness. It comes as quietly as twilight, with just a feel of "I Am" and then suddenly the space is there. In the space, movement starts with the air, the fire, the water, and the earth. All these five elements are you only. Out of your consciousness all this has happened. There is no individual. There is only you, the total functioning is you, the consciousness is you.

... I am the total universe. When I am the total universe I am in need of nothing because I am everything. But I cramped myself into a small thing, a body; I made myself a fragment and became needful. I need so many things as a body.

In the absence of a body, do you, and did you, exist? Are you, and were you, there or not? Attain that state which is and was prior to the body. Your true nature is open and free, but you cover it up, you give it various designs.

So, for many months I have been talking about the 'I am,' and not talking about the Absolute. He is talking about the Absolute—getting to know the Absolute through the 'I am.' But you see, for many people it is hard to find even the 'I am,' the sense of 'I' existing, the sense of self, the sense of being alive.

Some people are like living zombies, and they do not feel their own existence. They do not feel their bodies. They do not feel emotions. They have become machines.

The first step is to *own* your 'I am'—to own your presence, to own your life, and to feel that sense of presence expand, and grow powerful. And delight in

experiences. Delight in love. Delight in joy. Delight in ecstasy. Delight in happiness.

Then, a few hours later... to feel anger. To feel empty. To feel lonely. To feel yearning. To feel loss. To feel depression; hatred—whatever. It is all part of the 'I am.' The play of consciousness.

And you have to own it all.

Through owning all the various colors of emotions, and love, and hatred within the 'I am' and within yourself, a transmutation takes place; and the 'I am' is purified.

One day, it is as if it drops away.

Because the Absolute sees itself through the 'I am.' Because the 'I am' has become invisible. Transparent. Purified.

Then you know who you are: the only one.

There is only one.

It has six billion pair of human eyes, and hundreds of trillions of insect eyes, and snake eyes, and mammal eyes. But there is only one, who perceives this illusion through billions and trillions of illusory eyes. And you know you are That. You are beyond the world.

But, to go from the machine to the Absolute requires an enlivening of the 'I am.' A burning intensity of the 'I am.' A purification of the 'I am.' A love of the 'I am.'

You love yourself. You love your feelings. But the 'I am' is only a gate. And one day, you have to step beyond the gate.

It is not you who steps beyond the gate, but the gate disappears—leaving only you and the knowledge of your existence; beyond time and space.

But the gateway I teach is through the ‘I am.’ Otherwise, it is *so* difficult to obtain. And that is the method. But even more important than the method is the presence of your spiritual friend who knows the way: your teacher. Or whomever.

Without Robert I never, ever would have awakened.

I was lost after 22 years of spiritual practices of all different kinds, and all different kinds of experiences and samadhis. But being with Robert I knew—he was beyond this world. I *knew* it. At first, I had to be with him to know—*what is this?*

What is this, where he is? And then I wanted to be where he was.

Actually, *is*.

And, you know, I did not find it until after he left, and he was no longer around to hold onto this place for me.

The realization came for me. I did not seek it. I only felt the loss of my Robert. Going inside, feeling that loss, I felt the bliss of my own existence; the happiness of my own existence, even while I felt his loss. And I listened to sacred music all the time.

Gradually, the happiness grew, and grew, and grew, and grew; until one day I took a shower, and the caress of the water on my back... I asked myself, “Who is feeling this wonderful sensation?”

I saw nobody was there. Only emptiness, only the space. And the space was me. I was consciousness. I was awareness. But there was no entity named Ed. I was the totality—the shower, and the experiencer.

I was everything.

What freedom! What freedom.

Freedom from being a body. Freedom from being a human. Of going beyond and becoming the totality. And happiness.

It has taken me probably fifteen years to learn how to bring that back, for you, to help you find freedom.

It has also taken you loving me to reawaken my own 'I am.' And it allows me to touch you better than I could, years ago. [Edji had his shower awakening experience in 1995.]

For that, I thank you. You have all helped me.

Are there any questions?

Sebastian: Hi. I'm wondering how much time is necessary to put into meditation, in order to make spiritual progress. I've heard conflicting things from different people.

Edji: As much as you can. As much as you can. If you can sit ten hours a day, that is good.

Sebastian: Wow.

Edji: If you can sit one hour a day, it is good. But ten hours is better than one hour.

It is *persistence* over a period of time that is more important than the intensity at any one given time, but you're probably referring to that book by Michael Langford [*The Most Rapid and Direct Means to Eternal Bliss.*]

Sebastian: I haven't read that.

Edji: The more you sit the better. Formal meditation, *and* informal meditation. If you could devote your whole life to it, *do it*. But still, the teacher is so important. The presence of a teacher is so important.

And the next most important thing is the method of immersing yourself in the 'I am'—of the 'I am' immersing itself in the 'I am.' Or herself.

Sebastian: Got it.

Janet Chaikin: My question is... the commitment of the student to the teacher. I realize, based on his question, that you can go as fast as you want. But is there a commitment that you as a teacher want from the student, in terms of how much time they put in, or other effort?

Edji: Not really. I think generally what a teacher looks for is surrender, love. Those are two signs a student is ready. And the more surrendered and loving a student is, the more open the teacher will be for them, spend more time with them, because he feels loved, or she; and that opens the channels. It is automatic. It is not like a mental thing, *Oh, she's spending two hours today and four hours tomorrow*, etc. It is not that at all.

It is a very subjective thing. Is the commitment there? Are you serious? Because for every serious student, there are a hundred dilettantes and curious people, who come and go. Robert—probably the greatest teacher I ever knew—in the six years I was with him in Los Angeles, probably a thousand people went through his satsangs. There were never more than fifty or sixty people at a time, but hardly anybody lasted more than a year.

He was always stirring the pot. He did not want to have too many people around. He wanted to see who would stay. And the satsangs were kind of boring and repetitive, too, unless you were really into Robert.

So, I stayed. He was my teacher. I knew it.

It was me. I was committed. Not that I didn't question him, we all questioned Robert...

Why did he do that thing? Why the hell did he do that? What did he do that for? He can't be real.

I heard this all the time.

He's not realized. Otherwise he wouldn't have done x, he wouldn't have done y, he wouldn't have done z.

He was *always* stirring the pot. A lot of people could not stand the stirring, and they left. And they missed out.

I just took his shit, because I loved him. I trusted him.

I do not give my students shit. I leave that to Facebook. I do it on Facebook, sometimes; to, like, Guru Swami G, and then she gets me back for a while.

Any other questions? Does that answer yours, Janet?

Janet Chaikin: Yes, thank you.

Edji: Okay, let us do the last chant.

[Chanting—*Hare Krishna*]

Edji: Just a parting word.

Endless bliss and happiness is readily available. You just have to be open to it.

It is already there within you. You just reach down and find it. Happiness for no purpose, for no reason.

Just your Self.

Good-bye.

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