

Edji Satsang Transcript



Freedom from Conventionality

December 10, 2011 – Online Satsang

You know, I was going to talk tonight just about how this path is one of getting rid of conditioning and concepts... getting rid of ideas... getting rid of all kinds of ideas—but it is also about grace.

You can feel God's grace, or the grace of Consciousness, in this satsang if you can get into the chanting. You will feel the presence of God, the presence of Consciousness, moving through us; through the chanting.

I know a lot of you get blissed out as soon as the chanting starts, but it really, really, really helps to participate—to get your human presence into the chanting; at least at the beginning. To get the power moving through you, of Consciousness—the grace of Consciousness. *Speak* with the voice of Consciousness, calling God's name.

Because that is what we are doing over and over again—is calling God's name.

God, God, God.

God, God, God, God.

Then the silence comes.

Then the healing comes.

But please, try to participate in the chanting. It is so simple. The words are so simple. Even if you can become totally useless like me, you can think of those words.

This is the groundwork. This is what we are all about—except for the grace. Nisargadatta Maharaj does not talk about the grace here. He talks about it in other books, but not in this one.

[*Prior to Consciousness*, December 29th, 1980, page 87]

Maharaj: *A murderer is loose; he has committed many murders and the international police are after him but unable to catch him. That is like the traditional scriptures not being able to locate or find the Absolute. It is beyond the grasp of the Vedas, Puranas, etc., because it is not conceptual.*

The Absolute is *not* conceptual. What you really are is not conceptual—cannot be grasped with the mind.

This murderer is very proud to escape all the efforts of the police force; he is so fearless that he sits where the plans to catch him are discussed and hence he cannot be caught.

He is right here. He is you.

No matter what you think, he is going to escape you, because the mind cannot grasp him. And he is listening. He is there, where the plans are being made to capture him.

Everyone has to die, so die as your true nature. Why die as a body? Never forget your true nature. It may not be acceptable to many, but it is a fact. If you must have an ambition, have the highest, so that at least while dying, you will be the Absolute. Decide that now, firmly, with certainty and conviction.

A tiger is coming at you: you know that when he attacks you, death is certain. So, why die like a coward? Attack him and maybe he will run away. But if the tiger is passing by, do not unnecessarily attack him! Only when absolutely necessary, jump on him.

That is good advice! If you go to a zoo, do not attack the tiger behind the bars.

God is great and maya is vast, but what are you in the end? The mental modifications take you away from the Self. Nobody wants to enquire about the Self deeply and thoroughly; everybody enquires on a superficial level.

These are the people that dig shallow holes. They go from one discipline and one guru and one teaching to another. They really do not care about the Self. They care about teachings. Directions. Ideas. Knowledge. Something to wrap themselves around. A book—discuss all the meanings, and so forth.

But it is so easy—you just look into yourself. And yet so difficult, because it is not that exciting.

Questioner: *My mind does not stay quiet, it goes here and there.*

Maharaj: *With all these ramblings you will be entertained, but you will not obtain knowledge. This is all spiritual entertainment, because the factual state of affairs is that what you are, you are, without modifications.*

In other words, if you are talking about anything but what you are—your true nature—it is *entertainment*, and that is what most people perceive. They talk about... but this is not on a psychological level. On a psychological level, you talk about all kinds of things—repressions, and denials, and dreams, and dream interpretations, and working on the vasanas [latent tendencies] and...

[Speaking to his cat, Lakshmi] Okay, come on, Lakshmi. Jump, jump, jump! Don't get caught... oh, she got caught again. Here, oh [very concerned] ... there you go. [Loud meowing]

She is a critic now.

She will be back.

[Skipping to page 89]

Maharaj: *Mind and all the concepts are due to your primary concept "I Am." Your parents and you are simultaneous concepts. Now, without trying to experience, what experience are you having?*

In other words, if you are deliberately trying to experience something, like samadhi, that is what you are trying to do. But *without* trying to experience, what is your experience?

Questioner: *I Am.*

Maharaj: *Is it not a concept? There are concepts formed from concepts, it is a vast world of concepts.*

In other words, our life is a vast field of concepts—a network of thought that interpenetrates. One thought links to another. It is an infinite progression of ideas, swirling around in our heads. Ideas, ideas; thoughts—should's, ought-to's, morality—concepts, concepts!

Questioner: *I would like to be free from them.*

Maharaj: *This is to be realized by one's self; it is not to be passed on by word of mouth.*

In other words, the questioner says, "I would like to be free from concepts," and Nisargadatta says, "This has to be realised by *you*. I cannot give you this freedom.

You have to *win* this freedom from concepts. This is something *you* have to do by discovering your true nature. I can give you more concepts, but I cannot give you that freedom. That is for you to do.”

Maharaj: *Who is obtaining the Self-knowledge directly? When did I happen to be? I must know about it myself, first-hand, not from others.*

You are, you know you are—this is the great Lord, the sudden, explosive effulgence. Surrender to it, and you will know all. It is without form or name. It is to be abided in by firm conviction.

This is where Nisargadatta is different from some of the other advaita teachers because he says that one of the keys is not only to dwell in the ‘I Am,’ but to have the *conviction* that you are not the body—that you are consciousness itself. That is the first step.

You are first at the ‘I Am,’ but you have the *conviction* you are not the body. That you are the Absolute. You are even beyond consciousness. And with that conviction, you have one experience after another that tends to reinforce that conviction, until ultimately you have freedom. You have an awakening experience.

And this is his way. There is a heavy emphasis on concepts-to-end-concepts; and at the same time, a direct pointing to your Self.

[Skipping to page 90, December 31st, 1980]

Questioner: *Is there something which I can do to help me to grow, to progress?*

Maharaj: *Consciousness does not undergo any progress. Even the space cannot have any progress and the space is number three.*

One is the Absolute, two is consciousness, three is space. Where there was no knowledge "I Am," that is number one;

- the Absolute -

...later on there is the sense "I Am," that is number two; then there is space—number three. Passing the examination of the Upanishads, does it give you knowledge of the Self?

In other words, he is talking about your experience where there is no knowledge—that is the Absolute. Number two is consciousness, or the sense of presence—the 'I Am.' And number three is the emptiness, the space that contains all of the manifestation.

Now he says, "Passing the examination of the *Upanishads*,"—those are the end of the Vedas, the last books of the Vedas—"does it give you knowledge of the Self?"

Questioner: *No. However it does something.*

The questioner is holding onto the idea that the Upanishads *somehow* give you something. The Vedas, the learning, the book learning, the concepts that teachers give you—they *mean* something. They *give* you something. It *does* something.

Maharaj: *In my case, everything is spontaneous—that is my dharma. If the knowledgeable people come and tell me I am foolish, I will say, "This foolishness is my richness, my freedom. That knowingness which has come over me, that itself is foolishness."*

You are a very gentle woman; if someone comes and abuses you, thinking you are a man, you will get very angry at this misunderstanding. To identify with anything, "I am like this," is abuse of your nature.

So, he is pointing once again: do not identify with the body. Do not identify with any thing. Your true nature has nothing to do with any manifestation.

Questioner: *How to lose this identification with the body?*

This is very important. Listen to this carefully.

Maharaj: *Increase the conviction that you are the formless consciousness. You develop your firm conviction that you are the total manifestation, universal consciousness. There is nobody who can have the knowledge of the Truth, the Eternal. It is one's eternal true state, but it is not a knowledgeable state—you cannot know It. So-called knowledge is boundless and plenty in the state of attributes, "I Am."*

I have no idea what that last sentence means, but... [repeating]

Increase the conviction that you are the formless consciousness. You develop your firm conviction that you are the total manifestation, universal consciousness.

The universal consciousness which manifests through worms, and flies, and cats, and dogs, and other people. Do not identify with your particular body. Identify with consciousness itself; as a first step.

There is nobody who can have the knowledge of the Truth, the Eternal.

That is your true state! You cannot have knowledge of it. That is you! But is it not a *knowledgeable* state. You cannot *know* it.

[Pause]

And now, the last part. Let me see...

[Skipping to page 91, January 2nd, 1981]

Questioner: *It seems that I am more and more busy, and I don't have much time anymore for meditation.*

Isn't that most of us?

Questioner: *I want instruction from Maharaj on how to come to Self-realization.*

But he does not want to meditate.

Maharaj: *Carry on your work in the world but your work can only take place if you are there—the sense of being must be there. That is enough.*

Questioner: *Is it necessary for me to constantly remind myself of that, to be aware of that?*

Maharaj: *Who can be conscious of consciousness other than consciousness itself? Is there any other entity? It is there, the consciousness is always aware of itself.*

[Repeating]

It is there, the consciousness is always aware of itself. The trouble is that consciousness has identified with the body. Do nothing else except this: do not identify the consciousness with a body.

Again, that sentence is garbled. [Repeating]

Do nothing else except this: do not identify the consciousness with a body.

In other words, you cannot be aware of awareness, because you are always aware of awareness. That is the nature of consciousness, is to be self-aware. But remember what your true identification is—not with the body but with awareness itself, or consciousness itself.

By doing something or not doing something, is there any change in the consciousness? There is no need of any sadhana except being aware of the fact that it is only in this consciousness that everything takes place.

Relatively you are the consciousness and the consciousness has no form. You can only sense consciousness, you cannot see it.

You can see things. You can see manifestation, but you cannot see consciousness itself.

You know it; you know that you are.

That knowing is a different kind of knowing. It is an intuition, an apprehension; but it is not grasped by the vision or by the mind. It is your beingness.

Who directs the body to do what it does? It can only be the consciousness, there is no entity. Consciousness does whatever is to be done through the various bodies. You are that consciousness and the love that consciousness has for itself.

[Repeating]

You are that consciousness and the love that consciousness has for itself.

And here is the most important:

Questioner: *Then there is really nothing in particular that you can do to realise this and you can't try to do nothing. It just is. That's the way it is and that's all.*

Maharaj: *Yes. Just understand. Just be your Self.*

Just be yourself.

Questioner: *Should one have faith in the Self?*

Maharaj: *Once you are your Self, where is the question of faith? Just be your Self.*

Operation is brought to a standstill. When you are that, it is finished—the circle is closed, you are your Self.

[Pause]

You know, it is so easy to talk about... “You have to transcend thought. You have to get rid of concepts. You have to get rid of societal conditioning. You have to get rid of conventional morality.”

“You have to get used to this idea. You have to get rid of that idea. You have to do this. You have to do that.”

And you hear this over and over again from teachers—“Transcending thought, transcending ideas.” But unless you get into the nitty-gritty of the ideas that are difficult to get rid of, you are not really doing anything.

Now, where are some of the ideas that are current, that everybody has a problem with—that bring out all kinds of bullshit? It is not whether I am or am not, or whether karma is or is not; or whether there is predestination or not; or whether God is in heaven or not. These are not the questions that move us, that trap us.

I could not care less whether there is karma or not. I could not care less whether the “I” exists, or not. I could not care less whether I am supposed to love all people, or not, as part of this *sadhana*. I do not even know what the hell a “sadhana” is.

It is a word... meaning *you fuck up, beginning in the morning, and you fuck up all day long*. And at the end of the day you say, “Oh God, I fucked up!” And you are punished for it. That is “sadhana.”

These ideas are *not* the ones that are hard to get rid of. These are *not* the ones that are going to produce freedom for you. It is going into the difficult ones that trap us in everyday life. And what are they?

Basically, conventionality. Ideas about marriage. Ideas about sexuality. Ideas about abortion. Ideas about social security.

Ideas about Medicare. The ideas about the State, and how much it is supposed to impact our life. All these ideas that grab us—especially sexuality, and of loving.

Who you are supposed to be allowed to love, and who you are not supposed to love.

I cannot believe there are still people that think that if you are in a married relationship, you cannot love someone from the heart outside of that relationship. It just boggles my mind that there is this thought that if you love somebody outside of a marriage or a committed relationship, you are somehow cheating or doing virtual adultery.

My congress of gurus would be finished if no-one who was in a relationship would be allowed to love us.

And what kind of problems this causes. What kind of jealousy. What kind of pain. What kind of feeling cheated-on. What kind of anger. Husbands keeping tabs on me, doing internet searches on “Ed Muzika,” to find out what he has done recently.

It is the same thing with animals—I have had threats against my life, for trying to take care of animals. It gets very involved. There are cliques involved. There is a reporter for an internet newspaper who was extremely critical of a new general manager starting for Los Angeles Animal Services, who we all thought would make wondrous changes for the better. She attacked him unmercifully, and I and several others, like Mary Cummins, defended him.

Because of that we got into lots of problems with animal networks that wanted to really destroy us, and did everything possible to destroy us—even threatened to attack us, and to harm us. We even had police watching the street for a few days after some of these threats.

So you have to know, what are your limits? What are you willing to do, to pursue your heart? If you think animals are going to be saved—what are your limits? What can you do? What will you do?

Same thing if you are married. How much can you love outside of the marriage? How much can you love an idea, an ideal? A movement? Or, pursuit of the Self?

Or loving someone outside of your marriage? Conventionality traps us into a narrow cocoon.

I am doing this with each of you—each of you that gets close to me. It is not just words I am talking to you about, about freedom. But I try to put you in situations to see how much ability you have to squirm out from your ideas, or to take the heat.

[Pause]

Robert used to do this to us all the time: put us in difficult situations, to see which way we leaned. Was it towards him, or was it towards ourselves? How much squirming did we do? How much pain did we feel? How much gnashing of teeth was there?

How much gnashing of teeth are you doing, trying to free yourself? Or do you just sit around all day, and chant, and say, “I am pursuing freedom,” but do nothing else?

Do you confront anyone with your truth, your new truth, your new hard-won truth of freedom? Or is your freedom in a box in the corner, where you sit and say “I am free, I am free,” and you stay in the corner? Or do you *roar*? Do you roar with your freedom?

[Pause]

Freedom.

Do you roar, or do you whimper? Do you even know where your freedom is? Do you challenge your boxes that you are in? Every day that you do it, you get a little happier; a little more free; a little more breathing room.

The concept of the spiritual teacher is another one. How many concepts do you have about a spiritual teacher and what they are supposed to be like? Especially the people that read Ramana. [Laughs]

“Ramana never did nothing”, people say. “What a perfect guru he was.” The less he does, the better. He sits around and gets served all day by servants, by his devotees, and he is a great man because he does nothing.

Let me tell you, if you did not have to do anything and you sat around all day and people were putting grapes in your mouth, etc., you would be pretty happy too! And they would be saying, “What a great person. Look—he is never ruffled, she is never ruffled by anything.” Well, nobody is ruffling the guru’s feathers.

How many people were going up and kicking sand in Ramana’s face? It is easy to be the perfect guru when you are not challenged, and everybody around you is a sycophant. But there is no rough-and-tumble at the ashram, except between Ramana’s brother and everybody else.

Get rid of all ideas about a guru, about a teacher, about yourself.

You are not the principal of a school. You are consciousness itself. You are not a housewife. You are not a human with eye problems. You are not really married to Alan. That is your body and your persona.

So, what are you really?

[Long pause]

Who are you?

Looking deep within yourself—dive deep into your psyche, into your body, and look for yourself. Where are you, in all of that mess inside, that consciousness, that void, that sense of presence?

Where are you?

Do you exist as a nucleus somewhere, where the body is tied to the mind? Anywhere in that emptiness, is there you?

You already are you. Complete, perfect.

Just do not identify with your body. Escape all concepts. When a concept presents itself, or a limitation, refuse it. That is what he says [Nisargadatta Maharaj.]

Somebody said to me very recently that for a long time I caused her complete frustration, because I did not give her anything to hold onto. No concepts, no techniques, no ideas. I just kept taking things away.

That is it.

I do not have anything for you. I just want to take all your bullshit away; all your prisons away. To let you know you are loved for yourself.

Get rid of those ideas—you are not a human being. You are not a body. You are not a school teacher. Not a housewife. You are consciousness itself. You are not the body.

You are consciousness itself. You are not the body.

And reading all the books in the world will not reveal this—not the Vedas, not the Ashtavakra Gita, not the Ribhu Gita, or the Avadhut Gita, or Tweedie's autobiography, or Ed Muzika's satsangs, his teachings—which I have to admit are pretty brilliant.

Only you can free yourself.

Look into yourself. *Feel* yourself.

What is your base state, when you are really calm, and your mind is not rocked by ideas? When your mind is silent... the kids are not screaming at you, husband is not screaming at you, wife is not screaming at you, boss is not screaming at you, even the cats are not screaming at you, saying "I want to eat!"

When all is peaceful, and said and done, what are you? What is that peace, that emptiness, that joy? That is what I want to give you. Which is *you*, without any impediments.

Not even karma and reincarnation, although many of us feel like we have been together for a long time; many lives.

And even more than this getting rid of concepts—the *neti neti*; not this, not this—in this sangha there is a movement of grace. Right from Ramana, through Robert, and me; from Nisargadatta, through Jean Dunn, and me, to you.

A gift of nothingness, of emptiness; and nowhere to turn, nothing to do.

This satsang, and as a matter of fact our entire sangha, is all about freedom—real freedom. Freedom from concepts. Freedom from fear. Freedom from conventionality. Freedom from all ideas.

To live free, as your Self. *Truly* you—the human being and the divinity—whatever combination people think of themselves. It only becomes you. You just act, without constraint. That does not mean that you go on rampages, and pillage and plunder. It means you free yourself from your concepts to know who you are; and you act from that state. And there is compassion, there is kindness, there is love.

But while we were playing that last chant I felt something different. I felt the descent so strongly of grace on our satsang. The energy just spilled into me, through my head and then into my body and everywhere. I felt the descent of grace, of Robert's darshan [blessing] you might say... of Ramana's.

I hope it permeates all of you; it helps you identify with your true nature, instead of the body. Your true nature is consciousness; and then it is the Absolute.

I really and truly love you all.

Freedom.

Freedom.

Freedom.

Goodbye.

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