

Edji Satsang Transcript



Moved by Grace

December 24, 2011 – Online Satsang

[Chanting—*Gopala*]

Now that you are deep within yourself, look... look around. Look around inside of you.

What do you see?

Do you see darkness?

The emptiness?

Do you see thoughts?

With your eyes closed, does your body exist? What do you feel where your legs are supposed to be? Anything?

If you turn your vision around, looking inward, what do you see?

You do not see the inside of your brain. You may see darkness. You may see lights. You may see light at the third eye.

You may see emptiness everywhere, permeating everything.

And if you see the emptiness, is it lighted, or is it still dark? What is the quality of that emptiness? Is it visual, or is it tactile?

Does your body feel tension? Do you feel tense muscles anywhere?

Do you feel your sense of presence, the 'I Am'—that *thing* that is Michael, that is John, that is Mamaji, and Joan? Do you feel that essence of humanity; where consciousness goes from being personal to impersonal—the nodal point, the 'I Am?' Do you feel that, the 'I Am?'

Can you locate the 'I,' the sense of 'I?'

If you feel 'I Am,' can you find that?

Look within yourself. Do you feel that sense of self, of 'I'-ness?

Me, me, me.

Supposedly, it is there from about the age of two and a half on. Sometimes two. Some people never have it. It never develops, coalesces; at least in the proper way.

Can you locate that 'I Am' sense?

When you find it, just stay there. Stay with it.

Love it. Worship it. Bow down on your knees to it. Worship it.

[Pause]

I first started practicing “Who am I?” in 1967 or ‘68. I practiced by myself—went into the desert and lived in a tent—the Sonoran desert—until June. It was 114 degrees Fahrenheit [app. 45 degrees Celsius] every day. I said, “To hell with that!”

I went to Rochester, New York to visit Kapleau Roshi.

He kicked me out. I was too much of a problem.

Then I went to see Sasaki Roshi. They kicked me out, because I was too much of a problem. They were too much for me, too. It was a mutual thing.

Then I went through a gauntlet of Zen teachers: Thich Tien-An, the Abbot at the International Buddhist Meditation Centre, Maezumi Roshi, Seung Sahn Soen Sa Nim, and half a dozen others I cannot remember... Kozan Roshi. A whole bunch of them.

Then it all died. Zen was cold for me. Nothing was happening. “Who am I?” became very dry. I got distracted. Too many koans; too many masters; too many teachings; too much trying to figure it out.

It died.

Then Muktananda came along, and breathed a little life into a lifeless practice—gave me beautiful chanting, like we have tonight.

Such a difference.

I got kicked out of Siddha Yoga, too. I had been telling people not to visit India. They would not like it—*There is too much poverty there, too much illness. All you will pick up there is some parasite. You will not get any enlightenment there, so stay away.* They thought that was sacrilege, so I got canned from Siddha Yoga, too.

I am very consistent! [Laughs]

I am trying to get you all canned from your jobs, whatever they are, too. Get you tossed out, so that you are useless. People throw you out in the street—employers, husbands, wives—*Get out of here!*

And then I was graced. I attended a little satsang. I had not gone to any satsang in two or three years. And I met Robert Adams, and I knew instantaneously he was my teacher.

I stayed with him for seven or eight years, before he moved away... well, before he died, actually. He moved away six years after I met him.

I think our satsang is more and more being moved by grace, rather than by method, or by teachings. There is more a sense of grace now in our satsang. I began feeling it strongly about three weeks ago, four weeks ago.

In Soto Zen, classically, they talk about two different energies, or forces, within oneself. One is called *yoriki*. *Yoriki* is the power one develops from sitting in meditation. It is the Self-power. It is the power of samadhi, of dhyana [Sanskrit for “sitting,” as in meditation.] And the other is *koriki*, which is the power of the other—of grace.

It descends on you, and you feel so thankful to be alive, and to be in the presence of that grace.

It is quiet. It is deep.

And you just want to fall to your knees, touch the ground and feel the descent of grace, for it washes everything away. It washes all the emotions away that hurt; all the depression; all the sense of desolation; all the physical pains. They all disappear for a moment, once grace descends.

Koriki. It is like the story I told of the baseball player who was always such a great baseball player that everybody asked him what he did, and he says, *I was lucky. I*

was lucky. The ball bounced the right way. I hit it the right way... accidentally. That triple play—I was lucky.

And then somebody asked him, *But you practice eight hours a day! How can you discount that?*

And he says, *I have found the more I practice, the luckier I get.*

That is what I am trying to get you to do, is to get you “lucky.” Have you practiced the ‘I Am?’ Have you become aware of the traps in your life every day, day-to-day, moment to moment? To really look at the brutality of the world, and decide to do something about it—either by going within and escaping, or doing something without to change it. But do not just stay stuck.

Movement, movement, movement.

Then staying still, while that movement takes place, so you can watch it—watch the movement play through you.

I do not know if you feel the grace settling onto you, but I do. It is like an energy that comes from above, and just washes away everything that is “Ed.” I feel it going out to all of you. I do not know whether you feel it or not.

It is kind of here to protect us all; take us all away.

[Pause]

But I trust it.

[Pause]

I just posted two posts on Facebook, and on our blog. There is a teacher, Andreas, in France who calls what is happening in spirituality “the advaita illness;” and my friend Shankarananda calls it “California advaita.”

The concept is that once you recognise, by introspection, that there is no 'I,' either, and they are bit confused here—either no 'I'-thought or no 'I'-object—then you realise there is no separate sense of self, and there is just unity consciousness, and you are awakened. There is no more to do. You are finished. No more effort.

So they challenge you: *Look inside. See if you can find an 'I.'* And you try for thirty seconds—and Tino says three to five seconds—find that there is no 'I,' and you are free. *Wasn't that easy?*

None of this Buddha shit, starving yourself for 7 years. Going from teacher to teacher to teacher. Practicing meditation 24 hours a day. Different pranayama. Different kinds of austerities. Do you weigh 90 pounds, and you're 6 foot 8? Sitting in the cold with the snow falling on you, warming yourself with different kinds of breathing techniques.

Going to teacher after teacher after teacher. Listening to lecture after lecture. Reading book after book—all the Vedas; the Mahabharata; the Bhagavad Gita; all the Upanishads. You read Krishnamurti. Go to one Zen master after another. Go to shaktipat gurus, and receive shaktipat.

Hell no, these people don't go! They look inside themselves for three to five seconds. Or thirty seconds, or two minutes. And *My God, I look inside of myself and I don't find an 'I!' That means there is no separate 'I,' which means that there is only one consciousness. Which means...* and then they read books that tell them what it means.

Then they start posting on Facebook exactly what they learned about what “no separate self” means; “no separate I” means. And they talk, and talk, and talk, and talk. They all talk the same.

They read the same books.

And you try to say, *Well, aren't you missing something?* or *What is your experience?* and they say, *Isn't it obvious? My experience is of no separate self.*

And you ask them, *Well, what does that mean?*

- *Ha ha! You idiot! I just told you. No separate self!*

- *But is that it? Wasn't there an explosion of consciousness? Have you changed in any way?*

- *No, you asshole! There is no separate self. How can anybody do that? I don't understand. What is the matter with you? Can't you listen, you asshole?*

They get so vociferous about how deeply enlightened they are [chuckles,] and how they cannot possibly communicate any experience about their deep enlightenment, because there is nobody there. And since there is nobody there, there is no world there, too. So somehow they are able to live day to day, and not have a self, and not have a world! It is utter confusion.

Then there are a few that are completely mad on Facebook, like Faisal; who argues with everybody. Or Ricky, who sometimes argues with everybody. Or Joan, who argues very articulately with a lot of people.

But you know, there is a lot more—there is *a lot more*—to Self-realisation, than finding out there is no 'I.'

A lot of times, people identify the 'I' with the ego; and they say, "When the 'I' disappears, the ego disappears."

Do not believe that for a second. What is the ego? Is it just the 'I' thought? Is that all there is to it?

If that is all there is to the ego, the last 125 years of Psychology has entirely missed the boat, because they have found dozens and dozens of structures and processes that comprise the ego.

The ego, according to Freud, was the "reality principle." It mediated between the primitive us, who always wants things, wants things, wants things—the *id*—and

the reality of the world, where only some of those wants could be met. For some people, none of them are met. Just complete frustration. And the ego is to serve the *id*. It is to give that person as much impulse gratification as it can, and stay out of jail.

Then the “superego” develops, and that is morality. That is where you start learning principles. You know—*Don't harm animals. Go to Sunday school. Learn all about Jesus, and how much he loves you. Take your marriage vows, where you are doomed to live together forever.*

All kinds of conventions about jobs... *Work hard! Progress! Get ahead!* All these fantasies.

The great American dream—the house—which as we see, has nearly sunk our economy, and the whole world, too. Everybody wanted the American dream; with the house, and everybody got a house and nobody can afford the house anymore. So we are going back to pre-Communist Russia, pretty soon.

All these fantasies we live in. And the ego tries to make a path through the fantasies and external conventions and give the *id* what it wants, and the superego imposes a moral structure. In the East it is a very severe moral structure with lots of stratified societies, like in Japan; and in India, with the caste system. In the United States it is more conventional. It is religion, it is the State, it is the laws. These are incorporated, and become morality.

Freud made a further distinction between that which is unconscious, that which is conscious, and that which is preconscious. Preconscious is something like when somebody asks you something and you say *Oh, yeah, I remember that. I remember that.* You try to remember it and you cannot remember it, and then a day later you remember it. That is preconscious. It is accessible to the conscious mind.

The unconscious is that which is carefully hidden away by the ego. The ego has a bunch of things called “defence mechanisms,” so that certain things are not

brought into consciousness; including pain—psychological pain. It is repressed, or denied.

And there are other mechanisms by which the ego either tries to tell the id, *I cannot give you that right now. You will have to wait. Or, I cannot give you that, ever.*

Or there are certain conflicting impulses that would just tear you apart in the real world if you tried to satisfy both, so the ego has to reconcile these impulses somehow. You know how hard it is sometimes to make decisions. *Should I do this, or should I do that?*

The ego is always working that way—trying to decide what comes into your consciousness. Sometimes maybe five things want to come into your consciousness, but you can only handle one or two at a time. It does the work for you. It does it on an unconscious level. And this unconscious is not accessible to the conscious mind. The unconscious sort of has to *leak* its contents into the conscious mind; through dreams, or through Freudian slips; through imagination, through free association.

And the ego functions in the area of consciousness, unconsciousness, and the preconscious. It floats in all those areas, while the id is totally unconscious, repressed.

Now. How does that fit into the Eastern model? In the Eastern model, is there an unconscious? Not like in the West. The most common model—or a common model—is that found in advaita, and in the advaita of Nisargadatta, where they talk about the “four bodies,” or “five bodies” sometimes: the physical body; the subtle body, which is the mind and imagination; the causal body, which is the transition into the deeper levels of unconscious, for them, which is not-knowing, which is ignorance, which is going non-experiential, just pure awareness. And the fourth level—I forget what they call it—a different body, but it is basically Turiya, the Turiya state, the fourth state, from which the others are viewed. The natural state.

These models, in lots of ways, are irreconcilable. There is nothing like dream analysis in advaita. But there is with the Sufis, and there is in Psychoanalysis. You see, we have many different models of the mind and ego. Some are bewilderingly complex.

Freud started it, but afterwards there has been 100 years of psychoanalysis, getting ever more sophisticated and subtle. Doing studies of children, how they grow up and how they develop; what processes develop. *When do they learn how to say 'I'?* *When do they feel separate from the environment?* *When do they develop mathematical skills?* *When do they learn how to read?* *When did they start learning how to get along with other people?* *When did they develop a sense of morality?*

All of these are parts of the ego—Our ability to function in the world. Our ability to talk and to communicate, and to love another person effectively. Our ability to maintain ourselves eight hours a day at work. Our ability to do basic math, or to do reading.

We change these skills from moment to moment, during a day. One time we are talking to somebody on Skype. A couple of hours later, we have to do the books, which means balancing a month's worth of receipts. Then maybe you have to do more complicated math... do some algebra for some odd reason... maybe that is part of your job.

And how do you do math? Do you go to a math nucleus inside of yourself, like a 'math I'? Is there a cell which you go into to be a "math person," like you are supposed to go into the 'I' to become "I?"

You know, it is like... I do medical reports. I edit them, and I do rebuttals of psychiatrists that we disagree with; which means I tear their reports about our patient apart, saying they do not know what they are talking about, we have testing that proves our point of view, etc., etc.

It requires a lot of thinking, a lot of decision making, a lot of probing, a lot of looking at the details they may have missed; for some little clue which I can use against them. Or maybe they have got us, and I just have to lie my way out of it.

And it is not easy to do this. You have to be in a certain mind state. You cannot go from listening to Krishna Das to doing something like that. You have to have a transition where you begin functioning in the world, using your mind. Often, for weeks at a time, I cannot get into that mood, to be able to do these fucking reports.

It is the same with math. You cannot just... a lot of people cannot do math, unless they work their way into it. It is like we go into that place. We say, *Okay, let's settle down. Let's take a look at this problem, here.* Then we focus—we exclude the other stuff—and we *become* math. Or we become a rebutter, or a report writer.

Other people, when they come into a room and they want to greet people in the room, they get into a certain mode where they can *feel* the presence of people in that room. They talk to them, they can *feel* them. They can feel where they are coming from.

One-on-one, they can look into their hearts and feel where they are, and try to greet them at the deepest level that they are capable of. And it is not easy. I mean, it is a talent, being an empath like that. Everybody has it to a certain degree. Some are very, very, very gifted at it.

And so, we all have so many different abilities. The ability to find our way to work and back; find our way to Starbucks and back. The ability to learn a new program. The ability to put up with all the shit at work, or in our life. To be able to tolerate it, too.

We are infinitely variable. We juggle many, many balls; and each one requires us to be, sort of, a different person. But there is a unifying sense, in all of us, of being 'I;'

of always being Jo-Ann, or John, or Michael, or Ricky, or Tina, or Ryan, or Alan; Joan; Edji. I mean, we always feel from moment to moment, day to day, that we are the same person, it is just that we put on different faces.

And one tiny face, in all of that, is the sense of 'I.'

I think it is only spirituality that gives that concept of 'I' such a big space, and makes such a big deal out of it. Such that when the 'I' goes—when you see through the 'I,' that it is only a thought and there is no I to which it refers—suddenly your universe is transformed, and you are enlightened.

God, no! It is a little step. It is a little step.

Too much for Alan, I guess I blew his head off. Alan, I was saying it was too much for you—I blew your head off.

But do not believe for a moment that just because you see that there is no self to which the 'I' refers, you have made it. Really, seeing that there is no 'I,' or looking for the 'I,' is only to reveal to you, as the *looker*, the vastness of your internal world.

It reveals your inner void—the emptiness. It reveals to you your sense of presence inside, that fills that emptiness. Gradually it reveals the energies that permeate your sense of presence and your body. You become aware of them. You become conscious.

All this inner work just reveals more and more, that you never knew existed. The void. Your sense of presence. An inner light—consciousness has its own light. Your own consciousness has its own light.

And all kinds of spiritual experience—unitary experience; where there is only one experience, and no experiencer. Or other experiences, like the 'I' disappearing. And still other experiences, where you see that consciousness itself is not real. And the sweetest experiences of great love for another; for God; for an animal.

And even greater than that is the sense of grace.

God loves me. I feel it. Consciousness loves me. I feel it. Its energy and magnificence is beyond measure. I feel so small, and yet so held by this grace that descends, and fills me.

[Pause]

Then, there is the sense of living without a mind—you live from the heart. It is as if you do not function from your brain anymore. You function from your heart. It *really* feels like that. It feels like, you are walking around... you are seeing through your eyes, you are hearing through your ears; but you are no longer functioning from the head.

You are functioning from the heart, and the mind is playing a minor role. It is there, at that point, along for the ride. Mamaji [Jo-Ann Chinn] will know this state someday, once she gets out of her programs and technology.

But the head does not function. It is quiet. Only the heart functions.

[Pause]

What a state this is.

To have no mind, and not even feel a heart, in the sense that we feel like we love, or something like that. It is just that we are living in our emptiness, and the emptiness kind of feels like our heart.

There is no conflict here. Not even a great sense of love, but you are *manifesting* love. You are *manifesting* grace, and every moment is magnificent. Every moment is quiet, yet filled with presence. Emptiness is manifesting perfectly. It is manifesting perfectly your individuality—you as John; or Michael; or Ricky. Or Joan.

The emptiness fills your life—*holds* it. It holds you. Holds you still, and allows everything to pass through you, leaving no trace.

This is not the bullshit the Facebook people talk about. This is grace. God's grace raining down on you, with great peace. Robert talked about *peace that passeth understanding*. It cannot be comprehended. It is a different dimension, it is so deep.

[Pause]

What is a good chant, Mamaji? A nice, long one. And a strong one.

[Pause while chant is being set up]

By the way, there is a secret with chanting—if you do not know the words, slur your voice when you go over them, and just pretend. Like in that last one I did not know... “Gopala” I understood, but the rest I did not. I just faked it.
[Chuckles]

You could hear me faking it? I was caught, huh? [Laughs] I thought they were saying “day-fuck-ananda,” but I knew they were not saying *that*, so I just slurred over that part.

[Chanting—*Jaya Jagatambe*]

When the music receded, when it got quieter and quieter... when the music got quieter and quieter and receded, where were you?

Did you leave with the music, or were you always present?

How did you feel, when the music died? Did a sadness come up in you because you wanted more? Did nothing move in you? Did a feeling of thankfulness for the music arise in you, for the beauty of the chanting?

I want to read again from *The Tiger's Cave*. This is by Trevor Leggett. It is a series of essays by a Zen abbot, and it has been out of print since 1977. This is page 23, and the abbot is talking about the Nirvana Sutra. Actually he is talking also about the Heart Sutra, but he is quoting the Nirvana Sutra. And he says:

In the Nirvana Sutra is the illustration of three animals crossing a river, and they represent three ways of living. The animals are the elephant, horse and hare, and they illustrate shallow and profound views of life. The hare slips along on the flotsam on the surface, and such is one who sees only the surface of life and thus only the physical form. The horse crosses by swimming half immersed in the water. Such goes a little deeper into life. The elephant forges steadily across with great strides along the bottom. This sort of living is going right into life and penetrating to the real basis, and it is complete living.

I wish you could have this, Mamaji, to be able to read it. I would love to hear you read this... these kinds of parts.

In the Nirvana Sutra, the elephant crossing the river stride by stride is an illustration of completeness in living. Now the hare is the symbol of taking life as the body. Such thinking is always escapist. It is the psychology of the shirker. The shallowest view of life is to consider something which can be evaded. To think that one can escape by moving from here to here. This superficial attitude of hoping to get out of one's responsibilities.

I have my role in life, which may be as a coolie or a cleaner. My allotted part is that of a priest. Each has his own. To be religious is also a role, and I sometimes wonder whether the role of a religious man is not rather an unworthy one. Among religious people I am of no account, but even so I always seem to be getting pushed into things by flattery. All the time one is being flattered. 'No-one but your reverence. Please may we have a few words from you.' One gets caught, and there is nothing for it but to comply. One cannot help but feeling a bit pushed into things.

Oh, to find some way to give it up and retire, buried snugly in a temple in the country. Such thoughts may come. And yet those who refuse to follow the flatterings—they are awkward fellows too. The fact is that everyone does act at

the instigation of others. Even such great men as Saigo was flattered by others into doing things and to follow the flattery and try to do what they want is all right but in any case, however flattered, we don't escape our role in life. To switch from role A to role B, from role B to role C, and from C to D in the hope of peace and happiness is an attitude of evading responsibility.

It is like running from one Zen teacher to another, one teacher to another. Somewhere we can find happiness. Somewhere we will find the perfect teacher that will make everything all right. Or the right religion. Or the right book. Or the right self-help group.

Not liking the life of a priest, let me have a go at business, and if I don't like that I can try a government job. So I try to get out of my obligations. The one thing I don't want to do is my allotted role. Evasion of responsibility is the most shallow attitude of life.

The second attitude is typified by the horse. Here the idea is to reduce life to a void.

To a void—to emptiness.

Whereas the first attitude was to run from life, from the responsibilities and the inconveniences of family and so on, this second attitude goes somewhat deeper.

This is very important. They are talking about really, advaita, as it is normally practiced.

They think that if the unsatisfactory human life can be reduced to emptiness, it can be done away with and got rid of altogether.

Sound familiar?

In Buddhism this is called the way of the second vehicle, or the Hinayana. Those who practice the Hinayana, the small vehicle called the second, are termed shravakas and pratyekabuddhas. To their way of thinking this life of birth and

death is altogether emptiness, and Nirvana is the state of literal annihilation. Not to be born again. Not to come back into the world. To annihilate the individual completely. A literal annihilation of body-mind is their state of nirvana.

The second attitude to life is that the sorrows and joys of life are all to become nothing.

This is typical advaita.

The third view is the bodhisattva view. Evasion and escapism are the attitudes of ordinary man who always wants to get out of his allotted role in the world. He thinks that if he can just get out of his present condition there will be satisfaction just over there. But the third view of life is to find the meaning in this life, which however much we try to escape we can never escape. And it means to realise the true Nirvana state.

Escapism is the first attitude. The second is to think that emptiness means neither to weep nor smile nor do anything at all. But life is not like that. We set ourselves not to weep, but life brings us towards tears. We set ourselves not to be angry, yet anger arises—it cannot be escaped. The third attitude—the profound attitude—is the spiritual practice to discover a power in the very midst of the sufferings of life. Profundity means technically, to penetrate right into life.

And I will skip a few pages, because there is a lot of unnecessary stuff. He begins to talk about this.

To look through the real form is to penetrate to one's reality, free from self-deception. This is true renunciation. Not trying to throw away, and yet throwing away all the same. When we can gaze steadily at our ignoble self and understand, this is itself the principle of renunciation.

In other words not to run away, shirk responsibilities, not to seek emptiness; but to look at ourselves as we really are, in our imperfection. In our flawed nature.

In our brokenness. Just to look at it. Not to do anything about it. Not to throw it away. Not to try to change it—just to look at it, honestly.

When you really come to a deadlock, it is renunciation. To change our condition from this to that it is not renunciation, which never implies switching from A to B. When there is a complete realisation of the true character of oneself, there is a feeling of throwing the self away, and that is the principle of renunciation. When we have penetrated to the bottom of this illusory self, not without negating, and yet not negating, there is the power of the knowledge of ultimate emptiness and the self is thrown aside.

Through the power of ultimate emptiness of renunciation, there can be a change to a state which leaves no track. When the self has been thrown away, when the discipline matures, there is a crossing into Nirvana. This is the method of the practice of the bodhisattva canon.

And it is from this that the Heart Sutra [the Maha Prajnaparamita Hridaya Sutra] is generated, from the bodhisattva:

When Avalokiteshvara was practising the profound Prajnaparamita, he perceived that all five aggregates are empty and pass beyond all suffering and distress.

O Sariputra, form is not different from emptiness. Emptiness is not different from form.

Form is emptiness and emptiness is form.

And so also are sensation, thinking, impulse and consciousness.

All things, Sariputra, have the character of emptiness.

Neither born nor dying, neither defiled nor pure.

Neither increased nor lessened.

So in emptiness, there is neither form nor sensation, thinking, impulse, nor consciousness,

No eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind,

No form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch nor object of mind,

No element of I nor any of the other elements, including that of mind consciousness,

No ignorance and no extinction of ignorance,

Nor any of the rest, including age and death and extinction of age and death.

No suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path, no wisdom and no

attainment.

*The bodhisattva, since he is not gaining anything by the Prajnaparamita,
has his heart set free from all hindrances,*

And with no hindrances in the heart there is no fear.

*Far from all perverted dream thoughts he has reached the ultimate
Nirvana.*

*By the Prajnaparamita all buddhas of the three worlds have utmost right
and perfect enlightenment.*

Know then that the Prajnaparamitra is the great spiritual mantra,

*The great radiant mantra, the supreme mantra, the peerless mantra which
removes all suffering.*

*The true, the unfailing, the mantra of the Prajnaparamita is taught, and it
is taught thus -*

Gone, gone, gone beyond, altogether beyond,

Bodhi, svaha!

Now—I chanted that in one Buddhist centre or monastery or another for God knows how many years, and I never understood it. And it is chanted all over the world by millions and millions of Buddhists every morning, in one tongue or another... Vietnamese, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, English.

And it is always a mystery. What are they talking about? What state is he talking about?

I will leave that with you.

Get a copy of it. We must have it on our website somewhere, the Heart Sutra. Do we, Jo-Ann? We have the Heart Sutra?

Okay.

Chant time. Pick a chant. You choose. [To Mamaji] Surprise us.

[Pause as chant is being set up]

Just let the chant take you away. Go into your emptiness, and feel the chant from there.

[Chanting—*Om Namah Shivaya*]

Again, where were you during that chant?

Did the music carry you away?

Who is the you that was carried away?

How do you feel now?

Looking around inside yourself, your inner self, your deep self, what do you see?

Do you see emptiness? Do you see darkness? Do you see light? Do you feel your body from within? Or is it a vacuum, an emptiness?

Is your emptiness filled with a sense of presence, with your 'I Am'-ness, or is it just dark?

[Pause]

Dropping back a bit further, do you feel yourself going to sleep? Being taken by sleep?

[Pause]

So... looking inside of yourself, *who are you?*

[Pause]

What are you?

Joan, who are you?

Really, answer. Who are you?

Joan: I don't really know how to answer that. I don't know how I would answer that. Right now I am just extremely irritated, with a lot of noise in the background.

Edji: Okay. [Pause] Next week. Ricky, who are you?

Ricky: I don't know either. I don't know who I am, or what I am.

Edji: There you go! That's good. That's doing really well, Ricky. Good. The two of you are good for nothing. Michael, who are you?

[Michael is silent. Pause.]

Edji: That's even better—staying silent. Tina is dead. What is death like, Tina? What is it like on the other side?

Tina: Very peaceful. In this moment. [Laughs] Empty. Spacious.

Edji: Good. Is that you, though?

Tina: Me as Tina? No.

Edji: No, is that you? Is that really you—the emptiness? Is that the real you?

Tina: No.

Edji: What is the real you?

Tina: It is even beyond that.

[Pause]

Edji: Ryan? You look like a Buddha. It looks like we are looking up at a Buddha statue, with the sun shining in the background. Who are you?

Ryan: I don't know.

Edji: Very good. Very good.

Ryan: Who are you?

Edji: None of your fucking business. [Ryan laughs] Whose satsang is this?

Ryan: I don't know.

Edji: [Laughing] That's several of us! [Laughs] John, who are you?

John: Can you hear me? Am I... ?

Edji: Yes, you're on.

John: Who am I? Oh, can you hear me? No? No?

Edji: Yeah, I am afraid we can hear you.

John: Oh, God—look out! Look out. Um... who am I? What am I, is not-knowing. I don't know. I don't give a... I have no... It's this, but it's... It's this awareness, is what I am. Like Popeye said, "I yam what I yam."

Edji: "And I don't give a damn."

John: I don't give a fuck what you think!

Edji: [Laughing] You're learning.

John: But it's not knowing. It is just total not knowing.

Edji: Yes, it is a mystery.

John: I am not the consciousness. I know that. I am not the pictures. I am what's behind it, what it floats on. We'll never know. And from here, that is the mystery. That is the wonderfulness.

Edji: Yes.

John: That is the juice that some of the neo-advaitins aren't looking at. It's like a head thing. You know, it's like you said -

Edji: I know.

John: You go, *No 'T—I'm done!* [Edji laughs] By the way, Ed. What you said tonight was so... what came out of your mouth tonight was so amazing.

Edji: Which part of the bullshit that I slung... [Laughing]

John: It was all bullshit. You know, like a dog bark. It's a dog barking, right? But for us right here, this is what we get. This is all that we get, and it's wonderful.

Edji: Thank you.

John: Amazing... I hope you taped it, Jo. Okay. Yeah, I don't know anything.

Edji: Good for you. You're very advanced. [Laughs]

John: Throw me out the door.

Edji: You're very advanced...

John: Throw me out the door. Yeah, I'm very advanced.

Edji: You're good for nothing! You're good for nothing! [Laughing]

John: Just put me on the curb.

Edji: Yes! Put a little sign—*Give me money, I can't do anything. I'm utterly useless. I don't even know what the Prajnaparamitra Sutra means. I'm hopeless.*
[Laughing] Good.

John: And loveable.

Edji: Yeah. [Laughing] Good.

John: Hopefully.

Edji: Alan, what are you and who are you?

Alan: What am I? Nothing. But everything.

Edji: Okay.

Alan: Contracting and expanding at the same time.

Edji: Okay. So you're impermanent... and contradictory.

Alan: Yeah, impermanent would be the best way to describe it. Yep.

Edji: Does Mark want to say something?

Mark: Hi. Hello. It's nice to be here.

Edji: Nice to be here. Are you an Aussie?

Mark: I'm a Brit. I'm in the UK.

Edji: Oh, you're in the UK. What part?

Mark: Northwest.

Edji: Northwest... that would be Ireland? Scotland?

Mark: Manchester way.

Edji: Oh, you're still in England then, huh? Not in the British Isles? Okay. You're not that far north. How are you?

Mark: I'm good, yeah—thank you.

Edji: What's going on with you?

Mark: I was just thinking of the question, you know, 'Who am I?' And -

Edji: Who are you?

Mark: I just thought of the kind of textbook answer, [laughs] that "I am That through which all conception and perception takes place, but is itself inconceivable."

Edji: Okay, that's a good answer. Thirty lashes.

Mark: [Laughs] But seriously—there's no answer, is there?

Edji: No, there isn't. Nothing that can be put into words. Just your beingness. Just being. And what you are as pure beingness is far beyond anything anybody can conceive.

Mark: Is it also that whatever within would be stirred up to try to answer that, the very stirring-up of anything would itself take you away from it?

Edji: No, not necessarily. No.

What happens is, when you practice Self-inquiry and you go inside and you start seeing the stuff in there, you recognise that all the stuff you're seeing is stuff that is not you—that you are the one that's looking. You are the looker, the subject.

And then you begin looking at the subject. So, you can get into very interesting times, and very interesting paradoxes, as you have to answer these questions for yourself, as you go deeper and deeper into your beingness; and seeing what is there, and what is *not* there. Seeing if your body is there or not.

Mark: Mm-hm.

Edji: Seeing what concepts are there. Seeing your own *bliss*, so to speak, that comes after a while. To see that consciousness itself is not real too, and anything in consciousness is not real. It is impermanent. It lasts but a moment, including the looker. Or, is the looker permanent?

Mark: So, is the 'I Am' impermanent, then?

Edji: Yes, it is.

Mark: So, I have been following this instruction that I picked up somewhere, to recognise that which is the same, no matter what the situation is.

Edji: Yes.

Mark: So, whether I am listening to music, whether I am angry with someone, whatever I am—a part of my mind keeps looking for that.

Edji: Yes.

Mark: I seem to have found this totally undescrivable thing that *is* always there, and that sometimes has been more at the forefront in my life, as well. So, when my brother died, it was there then. There was an emptiness then. So this thing that never changes, it was more prominent; and the sadness was kind of just floating through it, but that wasn't the way I looked at it, at the time. And since I've been able to recognise it, I've been able to identify lots of times within my life where it has been more prominent.

Edji: What is it?

Mark: I suppose the truth of it is, is that it's there all the time -

Edji: What is it?

Mark: - it's just that in extreme circumstances, it's more prominent and easier to see that it's there, I guess.

Edji: But what is it? Describe it.

Mark: The only way I could put it would be like the invisible within the visible.

Edji: Okay... Try another way.

Mark: It's beautiful. It's flawless. It's perfect. And no matter what I do or say, it doesn't have any effect on it whatsoever.

Edji: Okay. Does it have colours?

Mark: No.

Edji: Does it have light?

Mark: There's no colour, no smell, no taste, no nothing to it.

Edji: Keep going. Free-associate. Just talk about it. Start talking about it.

Mark: It doesn't move.

Edji: I know, okay.

Mark: It allows movement. It holds everything together, but itself is unsupported.

Edji: Keep going.

Mark: It's colourless. It does seem to have a property of clarity, but that would be adding something to it that it doesn't have.

Edji: Let me ask you this: is there a quality of *sweetness* about it?

Mark: Sweetness? I'm not sure. I think clarity is the closest word I can put to it.

Edji: Is there a sense of existence in it? A sense of presence? Or is it the *container* of the sense of presence?

Mark: If there's intelligence in it, it is only very, very subtle.

Edji: Does it extend everywhere and contain everything?

Mark: Yes.

Edji: Okay.

Mark: Which is where my confusion is, because the 'I Am' quite often can seem a little bit localised, whereas this unchanging thing seems interpenetrating everything.

Edji: And this clarity—it interpenetrates everything. It's emptiness. It's like the void.

Mark: Yes.

Edji: Is it self-illuminated? Does it have a light in it, that you can see things in it? You can see the objects? It's not totally dark?

Mark: Well, I've been trying to recognise it with my eyes open, rather than eyes closed in meditation.

Edji: Well, you could do it both ways, right?

Mark: Yes. I wanted to break down the barrier between meditation sessions eyes closed and through normal life, you know?

Edji: Yes, of course—very good.

Mark: So, that's how I've gone about that.

Edji: Now, the void that you're seeing right now, that is the unmoving void—that is unmoving—try, when you do chanting, to move. In other words, sway with the music, and feel the *two* voids. There'll be two voids. One is the void that will move, and the other is the one that you discover, and you're worshipping now—the void that doesn't move. And just feel the contrast between the two voids. That will be your practice for a while. Try chanting, and move with your eyes closed.

Mark: Noticing stillness relative to the movement; within the stillness.

Edji: Right. Feel both. Feel how they relate to each other.

Mark: One thing I have had... it seems to have stopped now, but for a couple of days at least, when looking into this void, I was feeling quite emotional and sort of crying for no reason. Is that the defence mechanism of the 'I Am' or something, or...

Edji: It's hard to say.

Mark: Emotional baggage being unloaded, or something?

Edji: Well, it sounds very good to me. It sounds like you're recognising beauty, and beauty that makes you cry.

Mark: Yeah, it is. It's not like a horrible sadness or anything. It's really quite beautiful.

Edji: Yes, it is quite beautiful. So those are tears of joy.

Mark: At one point I did say “Well, who’s crying?” And that seemed to make it... that had a deepening effect on it, too.

Edji: Yeah, to cut it off. It stopped it.

Mark: Yeah.

Edji: You try to go around the feeling to find the source of the feeling, or the “who is there?” and that killed the feeling.

Mark: That’s right.

Edji: So, what you should do next time is, when something that beautiful arises, just let it arise.

Mark: So it’s okay to focus a little more on the emotion at that point, rather than try to stay on the void?

Edji: Yes, exactly. Otherwise, your practice can become very lifeless.

Mark: Okay.

Edji: You let those feelings go through.

Mark: Mm-hm.

Edji: Except, if you have any homicidal feelings towards me, try to look who is doing it and stop it immediately.

Mark: [Laughing] Not at all. [Laughs]

Edji: You’re doing well, Mark. Do you leave posts on the blog?

Mark: Pardon?

Edji: Are you the “Mark” who leaves posts on the blog?

Mark: No, I haven’t done. No.

Edji: Not guilty, huh? [Laughing] Okay. Take a look at our blog sometime. Make some comments.

Mark: Oh, okay then.

Edji: [Gives blog URL - <http://itisnotreal.blogspot.com/>]

Nice hearing from you. Nice hearing from you. Take care.

Mark: Nice to speak to you, too.

Edji: So, I guess we’re done, for today? We don’t even have to have a going away chant.

Bye-bye.

[Chanting—*Hare Hare Mahadev Shambho, Kashi Vishwanath Gange*]

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