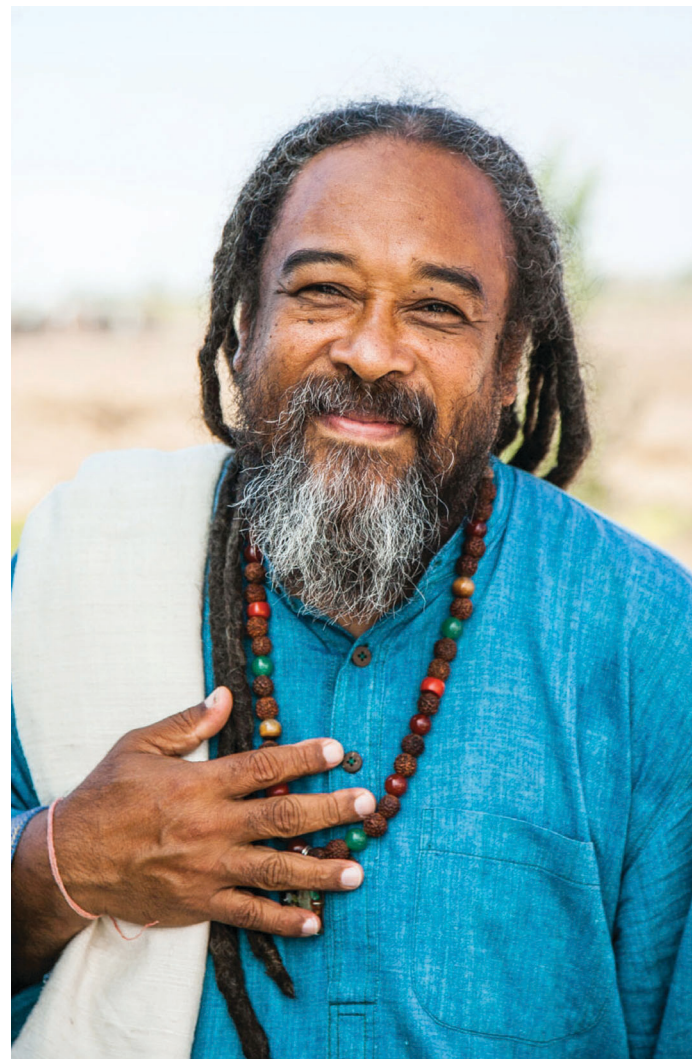




From person to Presence

Advaita master Sri Mooji is an international spiritual teacher in whose presence delusions drop and the true Self arises, says **Rohini Singh**



"You must be so empty of personhood that you become an opening through which God enters this world – together with you as One Being."

-Sri Mooji

Sri Mooji is an internationally beloved sage who brings advaita, the path of non-duality, considered to be the pinnacle of Hindu teachings, into a contemporary, easily accessible format. His pointings are direct, spontaneous, laser-sharp and empowered to burn delusions. Without excessive emphasis on practices, techniques, or complicated methodologies, Mooji is one of the few masters who invites seekers to recognise their reality in the immediacy of now.

Sri Mooji is a direct disciple of Sri Harilal Poonja, the renowned advaita master and disciple of the great sage Sri Ramana Maharshi of Thiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu.

Rohini Singh meets up with Sri Mooji on

the eve of his five-week season of satsangs in Rishikesh.

Welcome to India, Sri Mooji! The five weeks of free satsangs that you are offering in Rishikesh are an incredible gift. What is it that keeps bringing you back to India?

I wouldn't come if there wasn't sufficient openness and depth in beings to reach the highest potential that a human life grants us—to rediscover our divine nature. I know people come to satsang for varying reasons. Some come out of curiosity, while others are looking to develop spiritual qualities or even spiritual powers. Regardless, all are welcome to satsang, but I have come specifically for those rare beings who are up for the fullness of true self-discovery, to call and guide them home.

I notice that you offer no techniques, no tools, no practices, no methodologies, no meditations. Your way is to offer direct recognition through satsang. What really happens in satsang?

Satsang is a form of grace where Truth reveals itself

inside your heart in accordance with your earnestness, maturity and urge for self-realisation.

We, the consciousness, have somehow accepted the conditioning that 'I am a man' or 'I am a woman'. Believing this to constitute the truth of what we are, the consciousness contracted into a bodily identity. Along the way, other psychological aspects attached themselves to this primary identity. Like this, a self-image of a person was believed and thus shaped into existence from which we, the consciousness, transact, enjoy and suffer in this world. Satsang exposes the unreality of these self-limiting notions.

I recommend self-inquiry, which is like a mirror and a sword, to discover afresh what lies behind the facade of personhood. You could say self-inquiry is a method but only in the sense that, since you are the very consciousness that does the looking, there is no way to really see yourself phenomenally. Self-inquiry simply opens up the possibility to show you a reflection of your true Self intuitively. The psychological forces, which are rooted in personal identity and conditioning, and tend to hold the beingness hostage, assert themselves fiercely in the face of authentic self-inquiry. And in any genuine search for Truth they have to, so that one may gradually develop the discernment to transcend their hypnotic influence.


Your pointings make it appear so simple. Yet there is so much striving, even on the spiritual path. Even 'getting it' seems to become a goal. Could you speak about this, please?

Truth is simple for the one who truly sees. Actually, Truth is simpler than simple, because it is timelessly present and not a construction that anyone has to keep up. Truth has only to be realised, recognised, confirmed, acknowledged or somehow 'owned' as one's very Self. If this is difficult then it is only because we believe it to be difficult! Most things we desire in life require effort, energy, motivation and determination. Religious institutions also often make the simple expressions of saints, who have realised the Truth, into complex methodologies, and so we believe intense striving is required for the discovery of one's own reality also.

I have never met anyone who offers this with such immediacy, as you do. For seekers who believe that the goal is 'out there', far away, to be attained at some future date, after doing varied and often strenuous practices, you ask, 'Who is ready and open to receive this today—right now?'


Consciousness is formless and cannot be blocked unless you believe it can. As light is thrown on these misunderstandings you begin to see clearly how

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thought and projections are at the root of our frustrations and delusions. Thought creates distance, separation, distraction and hardship. Habit and education may have taught us that the true Self has to be envisioned, constructed or reached somewhere or somehow in the distant future. But in satsang you are guided to look from your true position straight away, which does not need to be 'reached' but is simply recognised and confirmed to be ever-present. Whether you will recognise it today or not, I cannot say. But what I can reassure you of is that I will not need to refer you to another day, another place or another practice to attain freedom. Awareness, being naturally ever-present, is here as your very Self already.

You often say that all that is needed is to come to satsang with a 'Yes!' in the heart. What does this really mean?

It means there is an attitude of total readiness and openness to whatever resonates inside your heart. Such an attitude makes everything much easier. Once you feel the bite and come to satsang, grace is released; you begin to experience an inner vibration, a connectedness and harmony with what is

being shown. You feel an inner glow and spaciousness, and this is a vital clue. I would encourage you to follow this vibration, which is not a mental construct but the guiding light of grace. It's like your first touch of falling in love—a feeling that you want to keep falling into completely.

Of course grace brings people with different intentions. You may come out of curiosity. You may come in a lethargic state and get a surprising whack on your head.

When I say, I don't have a future therefore I am supremely happy, I am saying that I have nothing to worry about. Whatever it is, God takes care of it.

You may come thinking you are totally ready for awakening and end up running away clinging fiercely to your attachments. It will be however it will be, but I know that each authentic approach never misses the touch of grace. And when you are touched in the heart, something comes alive. Somehow you feel the life force flowing again, the energy moving in deeper, more blissful streams. There is a divine excitement. You feel you are up for this adventure without even knowing where it will lead.

In satsang, as you choose someone to come up to the microphone, you encourage people to ask their burning question. You phrase it as a freedom question versus a knowledge question. How would you distinguish between the two?

Many people ask questions wanting to impress others with their so-called spiritual knowledge or to merely collect information hoping that this will bring them to the truth. But such questions and approaches rarely lead anywhere. Knowledge questions have no real life force in them. I want a living question, a freedom question. A freedom question is a question that may feel risky, for the answer has the power to completely alter your perception of life and who you conceive yourself to be as the one living it. It doesn't set out to do that, but it is often what happens. When you ask a freedom question, it means that in this moment you are ready to meet God. You are ready to step into the field of freedom.

It is very magical to see questioners who seem so disturbed and caught 'in their own story' look inside themselves with your guidance and support, and right before our eyes, we see them stepping into what I can only call a natural joyousness, a spaciousness, a tremendous recognition. What is it that really happens?

I already know and see your completeness as the Self. It is important that you also have the direct recognition and experience of your real Self. Much energy is invested and wasted in shallow pursuits, which cover up or oppress your spirit. As we look inwardly, something shifts. Age-old misconceptions get exposed and identified in the questioner's conscious presence, and thus begin falling away. Sometimes such simple misconceptions exposed in the light of clarity bring down a mighty tree of delusion.

At this point many people exclaim in surprise, 'Is this it? Can it really be so simple?'

Well, that is it for that moment. The important point to understand is that it is not about the things you are looking at but rather who you are that is looking. If you look at objects phenomenally, they will keep appearing endlessly. You will clear up one problem and another will appear. But if you look for the one for whom they are relevant, then you have caught the general himself. You need not focus on the troops. When you capture the host and commander, the troops will automatically surrender.

And the game is over?

Then the game is really over. It may reshape itself in different guises, but you have to hold to your real position as the Self. Resist the initial temptation to form any premature conclusions, which is what the mind wants in order to sustain duality. Just stay in and as the space of being, empty of concepts. Space suffers no doubt or confusion.

You have often said, 'I don't see you as a person.' I'm sure that is confusing or may be an intriguing concept for many. In fact I think your exact words are, 'I wouldn't demean you by addressing you as merely a person.' Could you elaborate, please?

Well, such things can only be said to one who is genuinely seeking Truth, and is therefore in a deep state of receptivity. It is in such a one that this statement would detonate, thus leaving the clear space of seeing and being. I will say it only if you can take it; it may be a stretch but you have to be stretched in order to grow inwardly. You must come to see that the mode of per-

sonhood is a very limited form of consciousness, and it is very inconsistent and unreliable. Personhood is the most mischievous, most polluting and distorting assumption. In the mode of personhood we become very selfish, insecure and fiercely protective towards our personal identity. Personhood has a vulnerability that is non-existent in the natural Self. So if I see you and respond to you merely in personal terms, I am not in service to the highest Truth. I would only be supporting an idea or conditioning that apparently opposes or veils the Real.

If you are not experiencing life spontaneously, I can guarantee that your life is burdened with a lot of worry and anxiety. Being accustomed to that state, most people are not aware of it, and that is part of the trouble. Such disturbed states come from a general mistrust in life. Mistrust gives rise to an excessive need to control others, yourself and situations. If you try to control, it means you are in a state of delusion because in actuality you cannot control anything, nor is there any real need. To the awakened one, life not only takes care of life, but infuses and radiates a divine synchronicity to its human expression.

The excessive need to control supports and prolongs your illusion as a person. Though, by the will of God, the universe is compelled to grant a certain support to the person, it will not do this to the extent that the 'person' attains lasting peace or freedom. Otherwise, the universal being would be working against itself, which is to sustain the harmony of the manifest world and not the deluded mind. However, it supports and facilitates the awakening from 'person' to presence naturally.

Another statement that you make may be a 'stretch' for many. You often say, 'I do not have a future so I am supremely happy.' For most of us, it is the future that holds the promise and hope of happiness.

Of course, and I understand that at the mainstream level of conditioned human perception. Time, dreams and hopes are consistent with the paradigm of human life. Most people's minds oscillate between thoughts of the past and the future. Why? Because, by habit, we are unaccustomed to paying real attention to the present moment. We tend to look back to strengthen ourselves with pleasant reminiscences, and look forward with hope of a better life ahead. When I say, I don't have a future therefore I am supremely happy, I am

saying that I have nothing to worry about. Whatever it is, God takes care of it. This is not merely a belief but my continuous experience.

If your thirst is for self-improvement, of course you will do many things to grow, widen and heighten your experience. But I have come to speak to those who want to come fully home to the completeness, to their home in the Divine. I don't want to see beings just growing. I want to see the Buddha, the Christ light, the Krishna consciousness. I want to see that power awakened and embodied in a true human being. Not in a book, not in a temple, not in a rock—but in a living, breathing human being. If you want this, you must give up all your sense of having 'rights'. This is not a political statement. It is a heart statement. Drop all notions of entitlements. Don't think life or anyone owes you anything. Pay little attention to your assumptions and conditioning, and see how it feels when you are without expectations. Forget about the future. Forget about the past. Feel, acknowledge and confirm the space and the vastness within when you hear these words inside your heart. It is the very perfume of the Supreme.

The human mind cannot comprehend the magnificence of the liberated mind and heart.

The whole purpose of satsang is to cut your delusions and return you to yourself. You must be so empty of personhood that you become an opening through which God enters this world—together with you as One Being.

The name of your new book is White Fire...

Fire burns everything, leaving only ashes. But there is a fire so fierce it burns even the ashes—White Fire. So yes, I have come to burn the place down! To show you the magnificence of your imperishable Self.

Welcome and thank you on behalf of all those that will be burned in the white fire! This is a most joyous burning, isn't it?

Yes—a most gracious burning!

Mooji, if you had to impart the quintessence of your teaching to awaken the maximum number of people, what would your pointing be?

Die consciously now to the false idea of yourself as being merely a person, and you will not suffer the death that terrifies the whole world—you will become fully alive as the living Truth.



Rohini Singh is a facilitator and author of two books *The only way out is within*, and *Free fall: The journey home*.

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