

## Meeting Nannagaru

### An interview by John David Arunachala during Deepam 2002



Q: Ramana proposed the fundamental question, Who Am I? - Nanna can I ask you, Who are You?

Sri Nannagaru: I am undying spirit.

Q: Many Western seekers come to India looking for enlightenment as if it is an experience, what is enlightenment?

Sri Nannagaru: Enlightenment is truth-realization.

Q: Could you please explain that a little more?

Sri Nannagaru: Enlightenment means truth-realisation. If you realize the Truth freedom will come. Freedom from rebirth, freedom from bondage. Enlightenment means truth-realization.

Q: When Westerners come to India seeking enlightenment they have the idea that it is something for them to get, that it something to find. Is that true?

Sri Nannagaru: It is an experience. In India there are people who have attained realisation. Enlightenment means truth-realisation. India is a spiritual land with many truth-seekers, prophets and seers. India is a very ancient land. Western countries should learn about spiritual things from India, and also India should learn about material things and welfare from Western countries.

India is a spiritual centre. There are many, not just one or two, realized souls in India some of these realized souls are known and others unknown. Certainly if you are in the presence of truth-realization you will be inspired to live in the Truth, to absorb the Truth and to know the Truth. That is why so many Western people come to India. There are many holy places in this country - India is a very ancient land. Thinkers, spiritual kings, noble souls, advanced souls, and evolved beings are all here in India, and so Western people come for guidance from these India seers. You must know the Truth; unless you know the Truth you cannot get freedom. Freedom is essential from known and unknown.

Q. Can you tell us what is this Truth?

Sri Nannagaru: What is truth? Truth means eternity. The nature of Truth is bliss, freedom,



knowledge and undying spirit. The nature of Truth is that it knows neither birth nor death. Truth is above all troubles, customs and traditions. We accept Truth, accept Brahman, and accept reality. Everything is created by the mind. Customs, traditions and cultures are also created by the mind. The only thing you can't create is Truth - Truth is always there whether you know it or not. Except Truth everything is created by the human mind.

Q: So when people come to India seeking Truth, looking for Truth, in fact they are already Truth?

Sri Nannagar: Yes you are already in Truth, not just you, but everybody is in Truth. If one knows the fact he is a seer. If he does not know the Truth that is in him, he is not a seer. In everybody's heart there is Truth, if you know it you become free and become a sage. If you don't know it, then you become a slave to circumstances, likes and dislikes and so on. There is Truth but the main thing is whether you know it or not. If you know it you will become happy and you will get a sorrow-less state, if you don't know it then sorrow will hunt you and drive you birth after birth. Only Truth is free from sorrow, and free from bondage, only Truth is free from everything that is nonsense.

Q: So there is a little joke yes? Because people come to India searching for Truth when in fact they are already Truth?

Sri Nannagar: That's right, they are already Truth itself no doubt about it, but how to know the Truth that is already hidden in the heart? People come to India for guidance to know the Truth already in them. But if you do not see a seer, enlightened soul or evolved soul, then you continue thinking that you are mere mind and body - not only inwardly but outwardly also. But if you see the seer, an enlightened, or advanced, evolved soul, then it is so nice. If you live for some time in their presence then you will get the thought, Oh! There is a Truth in me - I have to realize this. Such inspiration comes from meeting seers.

Q: I understand. I think that is why we enjoy sitting with you.

Sri Nannagar: Ah very good! Thank you very much. (All laugh)



Q: You have such beautiful eyes!

Sri Nannagar: Thank you very much.

Q: You have such twinkling eyes!

Sri Nannagar: Thank you very much for your understanding. (All laugh).

Q: So another question, are there any qualifications for enlightenment? Is sadhana necessary?



Sri Nannagaru: Are there any qualifications for enlightenment? Qualifications are essential in relative truth. The utmost importance should be given to purity. The essential thing is that mind, speech and deed must be one. Mind-word, mind-heart, mind-word-deed, these things must be one. That is the main qualification for truth-realization. Purity is essential but the topmost qualification is that there should be unity of heart, mind, word and deed. Also for enlightenment there must be purity. For purity the essential qualification must be



mind control. Unless we can learn to control the mind we cannot concentrate it towards the Truth that is already hidden in the heart. Where the mind springs there is Truth, which is not relative Truth. By Truth I mean actual Truth. It is absolute Truth! The question is, Are there any qualifications for realization? The answer is the main qualifications are that heart, mind, word and speech must be one. There should also be purity and mind control.

Q: When you say mind control, exactly what do you mean by mind control?

Sri Nannagaru: Mind control means that we have to arrest the wandering of the mind. Wandering of the mind brings unnecessary thoughts, sorrow, and also brings physical and mental ill health. Too much wandering of the mind is very bad both for spiritual and also material life, so power of concentration is essential.

Q: Do you suggest some particular practice?

Sri Nannagaru: For mind control there is upasana. Put your mind on your favourite God. Put your mind on any God or Guru you like and please remember his name and meditate on his form. If you like pranayama you should also do it as it will be beneficial, but the best thing is upasana. Upasana means to constantly think about Arunachala, think about the Hill and its name. If you think one thing, think God. If you think always about absolute Truth then automatically the wanderings of mind will be stopped. There is upasana, this is a Sanskrit word and means Upa - mind control. In the Indian tradition most truth seekers and devotees say unless you are accustomed to upasana you cannot get realization.

Q: Do you recommend meditation?

Sri Nannagaru: Upasana is another form of meditation. I recommend three things, which I consider important, dispassion, discrimination and meditation. Meditation also will help to



arrest the mind. Are there any qualifications for enlightenment, and is sadhana necessary? If there is a sadhaka, then sadhana is necessary. (All Laugh). If there is a sadhaka, then sadhana is necessary, if there is no sadhaka then sadhana is not necessary! (All Laugh).

Q: So just to explain, if I think I am somebody then I need to meditate, and if there is nobody then I don't need to meditate?

Sri Nannagaru: Meditation is meant only for truth seekers. Meditation is not for realized souls. Meditation is not the destination it is the means to go to the destination. It is not necessary for realized souls. Meditation is only necessary for the sadhaka, the truth seeker. Who meditates? The mind meditates. If there is no mind then meditation is also not necessary. If there is disease then medicine is necessary but if there is no disease then no medicine is necessary. Who is the meditator? Only the mind is the meditator, so if you have no mind then who will do the meditation?

Q: I have another question. Ramana said self-enquiry is the most direct route to realising the Self. What do you say about Self-enquiry?

Sri Nannagaru: Ramana did not achieve realisation through self-enquiry. Ramana taught not only self-enquiry but he also taught surrender marga. He taught only these two margas. He gave importance to surrender both to partial surrender and to absolute surrender. In the early state there is partial surrender and in the end state automatically absolute surrender will come. Ramana taught not only one path. He laid much stress on two paths, surrender to the will of God and also to self-enquiry. If you have complete trust that there is a God, and that there is an almighty and you have complete trust about the controller of the Universe then surrender marga is the best for you. If you constantly doubt the existence of the world, and doubt the existence of God then self-enquiry is essential.

Q: So could we say by conducting self-enquiry we are being constantly reminded of God?

Sri Nannagaru: These are two different things. In self-enquiry, first one thing - mind, world and God, if mind arises then there is also world and God, but if the mind subsides there is no world and there is no God. In self-enquiry you have to put the mind in its source. There is Truth - in real self-enquiry there is Truth in our heart. Simply you put your mind in the Truth. You put your mind in the Truth that is already hidden in your heart that is real enquiry. There is Truth, there is one Truth, there is undying spirit, and there is the immortal state that is already present in our heart.





Simply put your mind in its own source. That is the real self-enquiry, and then you need not think about God. Because after the mind arises, God will come, and the world will come everything will come, fear will come, our separateness will come. After the mind arises, God will come, the world will come, he and I will come, the first person will come, the second person will come, third person will come.

In self-enquiry you will have to put the mind in its own source and you need not think about world, and you need not think about God or the world. Who is thinking about God? Mind is thinking about God. Put the mind on the Truth in your heart that is the best sadhana. The thing is in self-enquiry the world is not important, God is not important. 'Who is doing self-enquiry?' - the mind is doing self-enquiry. You must subside your mind. If you control your mind, if you are in a position to return the mind to the source, there is no world there is no God.



Q: So these two paths are not really two paths, they actually become one path?

Sri Nannagaru: In the end, in the conclusion, they lead to the same goal. There is no doubt they lead to the same goal to the same destination but people have many temperaments and many make-ups. These are two paths, but they lead seekers to the same destination. The thing is in Self-enquiry there is mind, world and God. If there is no mind there is no God and if there is no mind there is no world. After the mind arises the world will come and God will come. Put the question, 'Who is this?' not the question 'Who am I?' Put the question 'Who is this mind?' If you constantly question the mind, slowly it will reach its source, where the mind springs, there is eternity, and there is Truth that knows neither birth nor death.

Q: When Ramana is asked, 'When will the realization of the Self be gained?' He replied, When the world which he was seeing was removed, there would be realization of the Self, which is the seer. What is the true understanding of the word, World?

Sri Nannagaru: If you see the rope, like we have learned before, if you see the rope in its true form with correct perception - the rope is not a snake, it is only a rope that appears like a snake. Even if you think, That is a snake, that is a snake it is still only a rope. If you are seeing the snake in the rope, than the thinking is, that the rope seems like a snake to you. If you see the rope correctly than there is no snake. Snake is only appearance, it is not real, and after you see the rope, the snake will have already disappeared. World also just seems





-there actually is no world at all, it just seems! If you realize the Truth, if you see a rope, there is no snake, if you see the Truth, there is no world. There is no world; it just appears, just like the snake seems to appear in the rope, in the same way the

world appears as the Truth. If you see the Truth face to face then there is no world to see, and there is no mind to control.

Q: How to remove the world?

SriNannagaru: Unless you realize the absolute Truth as it is, you cannot remove the world from your mind. If you see the world, fear will come, duality will come, lights and visions will come, and everything will come that is nonsense to us. Also the fear itself will also bring death and sorrow. If you see the Truth face to face then there is no world to see. If you can't realize the absolute Truth as it is, then do dhyanam and the world from the mind - whatever kind of sadhana you do.

Q: It has been suggested that the mind must be destroyed for liberation to occur, do you have a mind?

Sri Nannagaru: Yes, yes I have a sattvic mind. My mind will work; it will act but not react. I have a mind. My mind is sattvic - I have mind, but there is no reaction whatsoever under any circumstances. Yes I have mind, but it is a sattvic mind, it is a cool mind.

Q: Ramana used the term mononasha to describe the state of liberation, meaning destroyed mind. How to destroy the mind?

Sri Nannagaru: How to destroy the mind? If you constantly put your mind in the heart cave, it will be destroyed. Mononasha is essential there is no doubt, but mononasha means burnt rope. Burnt rope looks like rope but there is nothing, it is not useful for anything, but it looks like rope. Mononasha means burnt rope.

Q: So it doesn't mean that the mind is actually destroyed, it means that the mind is still functioning but has no power?



Sri Nannagaru: There is mind function but it is a burnt rope so it will not arrest you. Mind in purity is the Truth. The essential thing in spiritual sadhana is to acquire purity of mind.

Q: Is this what the Buddhists call, 'no mind'. Is what you are calling 'pure mind' the same as 'no mind'?

Sri Nannagaru: No mind is equal to pure mind. They are one and the same. We need not doubt about it.

Q: So another question, what about vasanas, the tendencies of the mind?

Sri Nannagaru: Tendencies of the mind come from previous births. Suppose you do work you expect results and when the results come you enjoy them. In enjoying the result, a tendency will spring, from the tendency; a thought will come, from the thought comes action - selfish action, and from that selfish body bound action, tendencies will come. If you enjoy the results of your action, whether they are good or bad, certainly tendencies will come. The main obstacle, the root obstacle to God realisation is tendencies. Good and bad tendencies will arrest our progress. The purpose of sadhana is to eradicate tendencies. If you are in a position to come from tendencies, naturally and normally realization will come. The main obstacle is tendencies. In spiritual sadhana tendencies creates habits, our habits are our chains. All habits spring from tendencies - the tendencies must be eradicated and must be removed - there is no compromise here, they must be removed to get God realization. We may follow any path of self-enquiry or devotion but the main thing is that our tendencies must be destroyed.

Q: Could it be enough to achieve a sattvic state of mind and to know ones vasanas so they no longer bind?

Sri Nannagaru: No that is not enough. A sattvic state of mind will show you the path to know the Truth. A sattvic state of mind is not the destination but you should welcome a sattvic nature state of mind also.

Q: So for example when you know one of the vasanas, then this vasana doesn't bind you any more?

Sri Nannagaru: If the vasana creates a tendency then they are a bondage to you, but if the vasana does not disturb your mind, the vasana is not a dangerous one and will not bring rebirth.







Q: So are you saying that you don't have to destroy the vasana; you have to see and understand the vasana and then the vasana doesn't bind you any more?

Sri Nannagaru: We have to remove the vasana completely. If there is a vasana it will bring fear also. If you want to reach the fearless state you have to get rid of vasanas.

Q: I think my question is how to remove vasanas?

Sri Nannagaru: How to remove vasanas? This is the best question! If you are always thinking about vasanas you will not overcome vasanas, by thinking about vasanas you are welcoming them. You should always think of God, think of Truth, of your Guru and then automatically the food supply will be cut to your tendency. If you are in a position to stop the food supply to the tendency then automatically it will fade away.

Q: That is my actual experience.

Sri Nannagaru: Don't face tendencies. If you think of your tendencies they will gain strength.

Q: At the end of Ramana Maharshi's book 'Self-Enquiry', he says, 'That he who is thus endowed with a mind that has become subtle and who has experience of the Self is called a Jivan Mukta. Is this the state that can be called Self-Realization?

Sri Nannagaru: Jivan Mukta and Self-realization is one and the same, you need not doubt this. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna described about the Jivan Mukta - he called it Stitha Prajna. You need not have uncertainty about it; Jivan Mukta and self-realization are one and the same.

Q: And when one has become merged with the ocean of bliss and has become one with it, without any undifferentiated existence, one is called a Videha Mukta - is this state one that can also be called enlightenment?

Sri Nannagaru: There is no difference between Videha Mukta and Jivan Mukta. Some people get realization at the last moment when they drop the body like Shagralla. Ramana Maharshi, Buddha and the Sankaracharya are all Jivan Muktas, Shagralla and Jesus Christ were Videha Muktas. The last words of Jesus Christ before he dropped the body were, Oh! My father and I are one that is Videha Mukti. When one drops the body and gets realization simultaneously then that is known as Videha Mukti. Jnana is one Mukti is one. Whether he has body or not, that is the important thing. When your body is dropped and





at the same time you get realisation of the Self then that is known as Videha Mukti. Do you understand me?

Q: Yes, I understand what you say. I have a question. In the Jivan state, is this residing in the mind and knowing the mind and the second state that of residing in the Self and observing the mind?

Sri Nannagaru: If you have got realization there is no mind to observe. With God realization there is no mind to observe and no mind to control.

Q: It appears essential to meet a Guru and stay with that Guru. Who is the Guru and what is the Guru's role and how to recognise a true Guru?

Sri Nannagaru: It is better to see enlightened, advanced and good souls, and you will get inspiration from them. Goodness also helps us to realize the Truth. Goodness also is part of enlightenment it is essential. If you see goodness that is also part of sadhana - it is the keeping of holy company. It is better to see enlightened souls and realized souls, there is no doubt - mental contact is essential. If you are in the position to be in the presence of the Guru, well and good, but if that is not possible, then mental contact is essential - that will also help you to get enlightenment. In English there is a proverb, As you think, so you are. Mental contact with the Guru is essential, as it gives us much mental strength.

Who is the Guru? Bhagavan says God, Guru and the Self are one and the same. We need not see any difference; there is only one thing, and that is the absolute Truth. We may call the absolute Truth as God, the Self or Guru. God, Guru and the Self are one and the same. Who is the Guru? Suppose someone is a more advanced soul than you, you may then get guidance from him even though he may not be a realized soul. Suppose I am in Kindergarten and he is in the Tenth Class, then I may learn mathematics from him - and he need not necessarily have a PhD in Mathematics. Who is the Guru? For the Guru two qualifications are essential, he has to have a direct perception of the Truth and he has to be in the position to explain the Truth - these are the two main qualifications of the Guru.

What is the Guru's role? He is God's representative, Guru means he is in the hands of God. Guru's body is in the hands of God. The Guru's role is to get humanity to a sorrow-less state - that is the main work of the Guru.

Many people are coming to me; in our path everyday there are two or three hundred people. What do they expect from me? Do these people that come expect employment, power, money or good health from me? They come because they just want a sorrow-less state. We cannot buy this sorrow-less state in the market; the sorrow-less state will only come by the Grace of the Guru



Q: There is no market? (All Laugh). I thought that India was the market.

Sri Nannagaru: How do you recognise the true Guru? Trust is essential. If you enjoy peace or bliss in the presence of Ramana or Ram Charam, then he is your Guru. If you experience feelings of peace or bliss, if you are getting some enlightenment or if you are ridding yourself from bondage to the body in his presence, then he is your Guru. If you go and sit in the presence of a purified or enlightened soul then suddenly peace, happiness and bliss will come, not only that, but everything that is good both material and spiritual will also come to you.



Q: The last question to finish is rather strange. Seekers often have curious ideas about the enlightened state, for example that an enlightened being sees the world as a 'grey nothing', while sitting in eternal bliss.

Sri Nannagaru: What does 'grey nothing' mean?

Q: I am just giving an example. Some people don't know what the enlightened state is. They believe that an enlightened being sees no world, and that all is just a 'grey nothing', and you are totally blissful - this is one idea of enlightenment. So I am asking you if you could tell us something of your typical day, what is your experience day by day?

Sri Nannagaru: (Interpreter speaking) What is your idea of 'grey nothing'?

Q: My idea is that when you look out you don't see anything; you don't see John David or Ram Charam?

Sri Nannagaru: No that is not the correct state.

Q: My question is could you tell us Nanna how you perceive the world? Tell us your personal experience.

Sri Nannagaru: Enlightened souls will see the world as a shadow of the Truth. It is only a shadow it is not the Truth.

Q: Please describe a typical day, and how you perceive the world?

Sri Nannagaru: (Interpreter speaking) What do you mean by typical day?

Q: Any day, for example what do you see in this moment?

Sri Nannagaru: So the question is, please describe your every day and how you perceive





the world? If there is mind there is world, if there is no mind, there is also no world. A jnani sees the world not separate from himself; there is no separateness from his realization from the world. The jnani sees the world outside as himself. He sees the Truth in you also, and then you need not be afraid.

Q: For example when you are sitting with your people, you make eye contact. When you are look into the eyes of your people, your devotees, what do you see?

Sri Nannagaru: I am seeing myself in those people. I am seeing myself in those people, and then Grace will work. Leave the body to prarabdha our body and mind should be used to the maximum, opportunity and the time will come to us. We should use the gifts that God has given us. For some God gave a good intellect, to others God gave money, or speech facility, others are good writers - all these things must be used to realize the Self. And another thing is to know God, to see him face to face, negative thinking must be avoided, positive thinking is a must. Positive thinking is essential.

That is my important message. We should not associate with negative thinking people; we should associate only with good and positive thinking people. If you associate with positive thinking people then confidence will come, and everything that is good will come and also self-confidence will come and it will help you to get Self Realization. You have to associate with good, noble thinking; advanced people, positive thinking people and gradually self-confidence will come to you. From self-confidence springs Self Realization.

**Courtesy: John David, Meenakshi at Arunachala**