MOOJI
THE HEART OF LOVE

HELLO! TRAVELS TO RISHIKESH TO MEET MOOJI, A JAMAICAN-BORN PORTUGAL-BASED SPIRITUAL LEADER WHO IS ATTRACTION A GLOBAL FOLLOWING WITH HIS ‘INVITATION’ TO DISCOVER THE TRUE NATURE OF HUMAN BEINGS

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The small, crooked lines of Rishikesh appear no more than bicycles, wheelerers, men, women and children on foot to maneuver through their snaking backlanes. Interestingly, each of these narrow road leads up to the open expanse along which the Ganges flows with all its might. Walking in these bylanes is like taking a metaphorical journey tracking the pilgrim’s progress from darkness to light, from limitation to the infinity of freedom... a word Mooji often uses in the context of freedom from the dominance of the conditioned mind. The promise of this kind of ‘freedom’ has brought many into his fold - from hundreds of his disciples that have left their homes and countries to live in Monte Sahaja, an ashram he established in Portugal, to a Bollywood actor who came to attend a day of his month-long satgur session in India, senior bureaucrats and corporate and many more Indians are now stepping into Mooji’s global following.

When we meet Mooji, born Anthony Paul Moss Young, we see him in the midst of a multitude, smearing towards him like bees to nectar. He hugs them, holds their hands or just smiles at them and they reciprocate with their emotions exuding to a zenith. Those who embrace him are captivated by Mooji’s love and can’t help but hug others around them. But the former street artist who lived many years in London before discovering the spiritual life, despite the frenzy around him with a smile. “Sometimes people say, ‘Oh, Mooji sure growing so famous.’ I say, ‘That to myself! I am not famous, so myself I am not special.’ I feel most comfortable as nothing – as no particular thing. Otherwise, it may appear that I am a teacher, but I am not only teaching. I am doing many things. It depends on who defines me. To my children I am not a teacher, I am dad. With every attempt to define myself, it feels like I confine myself. At the root of my existence I am pure awareness, just like everyone else. It’s merely a question of when this truth is discovered in oneself. By some grace, some good fortune, I was able to stop and go all limiting ideas about who I am and, in turn, the truth of my existence was revealed to me beyond doubt. So, whatever remains now as me is not an idea I have about myself. To be nothing or no one is not a higher concept – nor is it an insult. It’s the most beautiful truth about what we are at the core of our very being,” he explains.

Mooji has been making frequent trips to the subcontinent since his first visit in 1993 and his teachings are aligned with the Indian Advaita (non-dual) philosophy. He explains, “India has been soaked in spirituality. Although such varied spiritual influences have come in over time, the spiritual culture of this country is so powerful that it just absorbs all these diverse streams and somehow expands itself by taking the best from each one. There are so many places in India that are potent with spiritual energy and peace. Even people who don’t have any spiritual or religious inclinations feel on some level that they come into contact with a tremendous transformative power. From the first time I came to India, I have felt so comfortable here. I feel very much at home in India. I can’t explain it but I’ve been told that I have a past life connection with India. There is some joy in hearing that. Definitely, India’s spiritual potency is what brings me here. In India, there is so much openness to truth and so much devotion, little obstruction in the mind, that seekers are quickly and easily guided into authentic self-recognition. I am moved by that.”

In Rishikesh, Mooji’s temporary home is a smoke-free building on the banks of the Ganges. With bare minimum furniture – the only noticeable aspects of his house are pictures of his guru Yogi Prasun and the flurry of activity created by his immediate disciples who seek his guidance with unconditional love. “He never gets tired. He’s always ready to meet people and never says no to anyone when it comes to satisfying someone’s urge for freedom,” says one of his immediate disciples, most of who treat him as though he was god. “So, how does Mooji define God, we ask. “God is indefinable. When I refer to God, I am referring, not to a personal entity, but more to the sense of a totally unconditioned, unformless, inescapable, harmonious and all-encompassing. But when I speak about the love of God, a warmth that flows from love takes a sort of shape of a supreme being or presence who I relate to in a very fatherly manner, but that’s my unique experience, which as it turns out is similar for many. I no longer feel God with the sense of a quarters I once used to. Satgur is about helping people to awaken to that indwelling power by which one recognizes God in our own essence – the reality we can never be separate from, although through ignorance we imagine we are apart from it. As we deepen in this discovery, our outer life starts reflecting that innate divinity more...”
and more,” he says, pinpointing his own deep realisation.

Coming from a Christian background and associated deeply with Indian spiritual philosophy, Mooji approaches religion from a fresh understanding. “Though it is often taken to be the main focus, religion is not limited only to a code of conduct such as doing right and avoiding wrong. For many it is actually their way to experience a relationship with God in a more natural way. It is often due to human microcosm or misunderstanding, which cause divisions in the true intention of religion that the locus doesn’t go beyond the deities and deities of human behaviour. When you continue discovering the universal consciousness and find that you’re one with all, good qualities gradually begin to emerge in you in a natural, spontaneous and automatic way. Many people discover this, to their surprise and relief,” says the man in his deep baritone.

His voice has a comforting quality as he speaks to people gathered around him, forming their minds about their existential query. His delivery, however, lead him a populist-quality that goes well with his simple topic-striking prayers heads and a shawl carelessly hanging from one shoulder. His personality is immediately noticeable, but noted on several lines despite the fears around him. He’s distant the pedestal, and at the heart of his teaching, he says, is being present loving. His disciples endorse love: wearing a robe of simplicity and smile – who are eager to help and be of service in whichever manner that they can to support Mooji’s growing Saanga.

“Love is inherent in our nature,” he says. “I don’t know how many people realize this but this is natural, isn’t it?” My sharing is not philosophical or poetic but actually to assist people to come into the direct experience of pure or of their true nature. You cannot argue with experience. But as we spoke to our true nature we discover the source and fountain of love – not love limited by personal devices, but universal love that embraces and uplifts all,” he professes.

For someone who is now helping many people find their way and course through life’s vicissitudes, Mooji, has an interesting story of self-discipline. His first deep spiritual encounter took place in England when he met a local Christian man named Michael who later would regard as a man of “God.” “I was not consciously on a spiritual search until one day a big transformation occurred in my life. For many years, I had been working as an artist and one thing I used to make stained glass. One day in 1987, my partner told me that someone who had stopped by earlier enquired about the stained glass in the window windows. I want to come back and speak with me. I met this man the later same day. He told me that he was also a stained glass maker and artist who lived around the corner, and that his home was also used as a church. I liked his company so much. We spoke a lot about faith and his relationship with Christ and we kept meeting like that for about 10 times over a period of two months. A turning point in my life came one Sunday, just as he was leaving the house. I asked him, ‘Michael, next time when you go, will you pray for me?’ He said, ‘Sure,”

MOOJI’S DAILY PRACTICE SUGGESTION

“Even if you can find only five to seven minutes in your busy life to sit quietly in some place, I invite you to take this opportunity whenever possible. As you sit quietly, you may close your eyes and just be aware of whatever arises in the mind. Whatever ideas you’re holding on to, whatsoever comprises your life in terms of memories, projections, desires and attachments, without trying to control them, I ask you to simply be aware of your movements without getting involved. Like this you come to see that they are just like clouds passing by. Simply remain empty. By empty I mean that you don’t combine your natural sense of self with anything appearing in the mind, such as thoughts, memories, feelings, desires and attachments, even your personal identity, its hopes and aspirations. Be entirely empty. You will, by closing your eyes and clinging to nothing, experience that the multiplicity of ‘thingfulness’ calms down by itself. It’s quite likely that you are now already experiencing a spaciousness and tranquility inside your being. As you continue, whatever thoughts may come, do not engage with them or identify with anything at all. In a very short time, you find yourself in a state of effortless happiness, peacefulness, and lightness. So natural will be your happiness that you will wish to remain in this state permanently. As you continue deepening in this introspection, you will spontaneously discover that you are pure, unadulterated Consciousness itself.”

Mooji says ‘I feel most comfortable as nothing – as no particular thing’

Hello! SPIRITUALITY

Now, the Saanga Saanga works with the precision of a well-oiled machine managing its outreach, publications, social media and TT, the name given to their video and audio platform that serves up recordings of Mooji’s talks and broodlistens of his sound that can be accessed globally. Mooji, new age approach has made traditional synaesthetic wisdom, imparted in the ancient time under the shades of holy trees, accessible to today’s seekers of truth on mobiles and laptops. The styles have changed, but the message continues to be the same. So, where does he feel it all stems from?

Is it grace or hard work that takes people to truth? “The first push is always grace, which can take many forms. Often grace comes in the form of a crisis, for example losing someone dear to you may almost certainly provoke a deeper urge to explore the meaning of life. While we continue to pursue a life of pleasure and excitement, that urge is not triggered in us. But to experience with the will of God, life brings a bitter fruit in the moment where you are able to make the best use of this– to become a hunger for true self-knowledge. You may not be aware of this that all grace, but I believe this is an unexpected twist, grace. In fact, grace is synonymous with life itself. Eventually, you won’t be able to find a difference between yourself and life. This recognition is itself a mystical expression of the Oneness of all existence,” he explains.

In a world in which we are seemingly being overtaken by strife and struggle, Mooji’s wholeness is simple: “Keep quiet; don’t touch past, present, future or any thought. Like this, you will spontaneously discover the peace, joy and love inherent to who you truly are. My teacher once told me, ‘You need nothing to be happy. You need something in order to be sad.’” As we wrap up the interview, Mooji looks at the people surrounding him. Some members of his Saanga that had gathered to meet him before they set out to their respective destinations on the last day of asanga are also present. They are unusually quiet, waiting in all the wisdom that transpired in Mooji’s interaction with HELLO! Some have come from places of deep personal struggles and some merely finding their way out of their existential questions. For all the long winding journeys taken to seek the truth, Mooji as their teacher is directing them to undertake ‘distances’ journey to their real Self.

Mooji will offer free open Satyanars in Ritchhikash from 12 February to 8 March