



Puppetji is a popular online guru, joyologist, momentarian, and public speaker. His video Socksangs have bestowed enlight-tainment to seekers in over 90 countries. Puppetji is a coveted headliner at prestigious spiritual festivals, and his wizedumb has been translated into Chinese, Portuguese, and Polish, among other languages—despite the challenges of capturing his endearing accent. To do this interview, *Common Ground* was required to fight through crowds of devotees following Puppetji’s standing ovation lecture at the Science and Nonduality Conference.

## THE COMMON GROUND INTERVIEW

# the wazdumb of puppetji

**Common Ground:** It is an honor meeting such a divine figure—a real guru. Is the correct protocol to address you as *Your Holiness* or *Sri Sri Puppetji*?

**Puppetji:** No protocol, you can just call me Puppetji or Master Puppetji. Kind of like Masters and Johnson, without a Masters or a johnson.

**My first question is, “What kind of guru are you?”**

I am the un-guru—the only one made of foam.

**You have critics who say what you speak about is filled with inconsistencies and untruths, and may be contradictory since you really have no idea what you are talking about. Some say you tend to make stuff up and avoid the question.**

Oh, what is this, “60 Minutes”? Well, let’s be clear—I am no Dr. Phil or Wayne Dyer. So if you’re looking for help, you’re barking up the wrong guru. I am not a therapist offering advice. I am no expert in anything. I have no degrees or qualifications to be your marriage counselor nor to give fashion tips. If you have a serious condition you should seek immediate assistance. Call 911 or 108, and if you don’t have those numbers call 411. Or speak with the vitamin clerk at Whole foods; they know quite a lot.

**You didn’t answer the question.**

My point exactly. You see, I am a momentarian. I just hang out . . . and listen. Then go from there.

**Puppetji, you’re very popular on the spiritual circuit. You must have a clear message.**

Look, I hear what you are saying, but I am not actually listening. You see, because I am not here right now. I don’t really exist. So how could I possibly sell hair products, yoga pants, or a self-help book? I am not here to coach you on how to grow your brand or hydroponics in your garage. Okay? I just go where I go, say what I say, and do what I do. But do not do as I do—or what others do—for that is a lot of do-do. And we all know what that smells like, yes?

**Might you share about the personal challenges of being a momentarian puppet, leading followers down the path of the unknown?**

First of all, everybody loves puppets. You can’t say that about clowns. Maybe unicorns. In truth, we are all just puppets operated by the hands of our history. So there is an intrinsically mysterious metaphoric acceptance of this perception in all beings. Most humans are running around trying to manipulate or energetically puppeteer everyone around them. In order to feel in control, safe, secure—when in truth, you’re but a pimple on

{ BY ROB SIDON AND CARRIE GROSSMAN }



Buddha's bum—and he's on the way to the spa for a salt scrub.

**What advice do you give to those who are lost on the unknown path?**

First of all, you're not lost, and secondly, there is no path. I teach how to hone your intuition and follow divine guidance. And for Buddha's sake, if you don't know where the hell you are going, ask Siri. Use the Google Maps.

**Why are we here?**

Ah-h-h. That is the big question. I have no idea. Nobody does. This is an unanswerable question to the biggest mystery of all. That is the question to which many teachers, charlatans, and clairvoyants make up the answers—to give one's life meaning and purpose, when in truth, there is none.

**What about you?**

Well, I believe I am here to share meaningless insights about that which I know nothing about, but that which may tickle the mystery-loving mind with so much paradoxical ecstatic curiosity, one just might discover the spiritual insignificance of all the meaninglessness I speak of. So when seekers on the pathless path receive the dharma [spiritual teachings] after one of my talks, they walk away feeling invigorated, confused—yet free. Maybe a little constipated. Like having a chili dog right after a raw juice cleanse. You see?

**You were a hit at the Science and Non-duality conference in the Bay Area; what was that about?**

Yes, I am the resident guru for this conference.

They invite me because I speak the truth and have no idea what I am talking about. Unlike most of the other speakers, only I admit it. Though I might be done with the nondual thing.

**Really? Can you elaborate?**

Listen, I love a good pork chop just like the next guy, but sometimes pork is not good for the digestion. Especially if you're a vegetarian.

**I don't follow. What does this have to do with nonduality?**

Absolutely nothing.

**Puppetji, my understanding of non-duality is that we are all one, and language merely points us in the direction of the incomprehensible. And the divine dance we all share in the quest for understanding the unknowable. But can you simplify?**

Being that I comprehend the apparent lack of meaning in all things and no-things, let me explain. Life, and the meaningless mystery of the unknowable, is like an unknown all-knowing nonexistent enigma disguised as a double-baked quantum quagmire wrapped in a warm veggie chalupa. That just might taste like chicken masala and a beef kebob. Maybe carnitas.

**What is the difference between what physicists call singularity as opposed to the spiritual notion of duality or nonduality?**

I don't understand this question, but let me just say this: we are all one—one being, one breath,

one love. The other buzzwords are imaginary constructs to explain the unexplainable—mere pointers—echoes of the nonexistent. When the science and the spiritual merge in a crazy, red-hot Tantric union of meaningless nothingness, only then do we realize we have no idea about what is real and what is cashew butter.

**You've talked about singularity and duality. How about a threesome? What is that?**

Okay, you just went from "60 Minutes" to "TMZ," but now that I think about it, I wouldn't mind sharing a few cocktails in the hot tub with Lady Gaga and Miss Piggy. Sample the purple Kush and see what happens.

**I assumed you were celibate.**

Nonsense! Apparently, there was a typo in the ancient texts. They didn't mean celibate, they meant celebrate. So let's party!

**Do you date?**

Now you're prying, but if you must know, Puppetji has no time for these things. Although I do like to troll on the Match.com during TV commercials just to see what's in the dating pond. But I don't understand all the pictures of sunsets, cats, and boats.

**People post pictures of their interests to give a sense of their inner person and not just their exterior image.**

I guess so, but if I were a guy searching a dating site I would want to see the goods, you know? If you're shopping for curry, why you show me pictures of trees and sandy beaches?

**Many Indian teachers have convinced Westerners that great sex—in the name of Tantra—is an ancient and surefire path to God. Others say it was discovered in the Bay Area in the '70s.**

Your question makes no sense. And it's all true.

**Puppetji, you're a very popular online guru. What are your thoughts on social media?**

Yes, I remember a simpler time when we would get together with old friends, sip chai, sit in silence, and make shadow puppets by the fire. That was catching up. No reality shows, no streaming video on demand, no Angry Birds, no acronyms. People used to actually laugh out loud and not just say "LOL."

**The sheep-like masses are addicted to their devices?**

Yes, perhaps. Part of the evolution of the species. But nothing beats one-on-one human



connection. Studies show that hugs and kisses and handholding boost the health of the heart and reduce stress. Of course, with a healthy heart and some Viagra you can go to the next level. So if the ashram's a rockin', don't come a knockin'.

**What do you say to people who are miserable?**

You complain of dirty dishes, yet continue to use a dirty sponge. Get a new freaking sponge, yes?

**What's the best way to work with painful emotions and not get stuck?**

Dance. If you need to loosen up, take a puff from the sacred hookah, then go sweat your prayers. Ecstatic dance is the new therapy. You can work off so much mind-chatter on the dance floor. This reminds me of the old saying: dance like no one is watching and shower like you've never been wet.

**Does one need to be a vegetarian or breatharian to know God?**

Contrary to what I may have said earlier, I don't actually eat or breathe, so I have no worries in these areas. I am a momentarian with no past and no future—just the now. Only this moment, which is filled with endless possibilities. If you want to know God, look in the mirror.

**Do enlightened people still need to take herbs and supplements?**

Yes, especially if you are enlightened and over 40. I am currently taking several over-the-counter and black market herbs and supplements. I feel great with only a few side effects: dizziness, fainting, dry mouth, headaches, ringing in the ears, brain swelling, rectal bleeding. And I am unable to operate heavy machinery.

**Puppetji, what is the meaning of life?**

There is no such thing as meaning. Meaning is a made-up word created to give meaning to the word *meaning*. You know what I mean? Of course not, because all is meaningless. All we believe to be real? Made up. An illusion. It's like

going to see the blockbuster 3-D movie with surround sound, only to realize you have gum stuck on your shoe after leaving the multiplex.

**Puppetji, can you leave us with a bit of parting wisdom?**

It all comes down to this: there is what you know and what you don't know. Then there is what you don't even know you don't know, you know? Of course not—it is unknown. So now that you don't know that which is unknown, take a breath, let go, sing the "Don't Worry, Be Happy" song, and row your boat gently down the stream. It really is all just a dream. And remember: do not take life so seriously. Wipe the gum off of your shoe. Enlighten up! Try the curly fries. 🍟