

Satsang with Om Baba

(17 March 2017)

The art of giving up

Question: Can you speak about suffering? I experience a shift between a state of emptiness and peace into a state of suffering, fear and attachment and this creates a strong urge to return to the state of emptiness.

Many times in the process of becoming free from the ego, in the process of purifying ourselves from false ideas, from the false understandings and false attachments, in this process sometimes some openness happens.

Out of Divine grace something is experienced, some state beyond the normal sensual and mental experiences, a very peaceful, vast and natural state.

At this moment it seems to us that we will stay there forever. This is true somehow. However, out of the momentum of our past actions, tendencies and habits, we come back to the previous state. It is as if something has not been fulfilled yet, as though there is still something to experience.

Our friend here says he experiences something that is suffering and that there is something that has an urge to be free from that suffering. That something is the very same thing. That is the ego. It is the ego that experiences suffering and it is the ego that has the urge to be free from the suffering.

At the same time there is something that knows of this process - there is something that is aware of the ego experiencing suffering. Maybe the ego is screaming at this point, maybe it is shouting for help. This is a critical moment - at this moment you should not believe that it is 'you' who is shouting for help, it is just the ego inside that is somehow cornered, it is in its last steps and is struggling for survival, screaming for life.

This happens with everybody, nobody can be free from that experience. When the ego is about to die, or give up, everybody will have the same experience of fear and suffering. Who is it that is afraid? Who is it that struggles for survival? It can be nothing less than the old tendencies, our old patterns - in other words, the ego. This is a very crucial moment, to recognise that the thing that is shouting inside is not 'you' - you are simply the one who is aware of it. It is a crucial moment! The moment you recognise this and see it clearly you become free from it.

Let it scream as much as it likes! Let it make as much drama as it likes, let it project many desires and fears, let it do what it likes... you are not this, and you are not its servant anymore. So, when that suffering comes, can you see inside you, that it is not you that suffers? There is something inside that suffers - nobody can deny this. We are not denying the existence of suffering, but can you somehow distinguish that it is not you that suffers, but something that is separate and different from you?

The more we become closer to the Truth, the more we come closer to a point of dissolving things, the more it shouts. You can say to it: "Shout as much as you like, let's see what will happen!"

The ego is like a ghost - it can intimidate us, but it cannot really hurt us. Say to it: "You can scream as much as you like!". At some point it will get tired, it will stop. If you have ever taken care of small children you will know that sometimes, if they cannot get their own way, they will start screaming, shouting, banging their head on the floor, etc... Let them do it, they will get tired soon and stop. It is the same with the ego, it cannot do it for ever, in fact it can do it for only a very short time, it will get exhausted and will stop. And this is when we can return to our natural state.

The ego and the fear are two things that are constantly together because the ego is a lie, a false idea. Of course it is afraid that at any moment it will be exposed, it can be realised as something false and useless, and just like a mirage in the desert it can disappear. The life of the ego is very vulnerable, its existence is very vulnerable. The ego knows that at any moment it can be dispelled, this is why fear is a part of its nature. Fear is not a part of the Self. Fear does not exist in the Self. If you say to me: 'I am afraid', I can say to you with confidence that you have never been afraid. There is something standing in front of you, that you can watch, like any other object, and this can become afraid. That is the ego, if you like you can call it the mind, you can call it anything you like, but it is not you, it is something that stands in front of you. Let it be afraid, let it scream. I have heard that screaming myself many, many times.

In the beginning I also made the mistake of being identified with it, but at a certain moment a click happened and I simply understood that it was not me that was screaming. It's just the ghost of the ego and when that realisation comes there is immediate freedom. It may keep on screaming, but it will not touch you.

I will repeat one more time... the closer we come to dissolving into this unity, this oneness, the more the ego will start to shout. Shouting for its very life. There is no need to say stop shouting, you simply need to recognise that it is not you. That is all! You can practice this with any fear. Any fear that you have you can simply watch that fear. Sometimes the body is afraid, sometimes the instinctual energies are afraid, sometimes the mind projects scenarios into the future and becomes afraid. Fear exists in all layers of our being, but not in the Self. When fear comes, when the worry comes, when anxieties come, just look at it a bit and simply recognise that it is not you who is suffering.

If again you seek to find Peace in the realm of the ego, this is impossible. If you say I am going to keep identifying with my ego and still have peace, that is impossible. If you say I am going keep identifying with the ego and still have happiness, that is not possible. If you say I am going to keep on identifying with the ego yet still be free of the grasp of birth and death, that is not possible. The great panacea, the medicine for all diseases is to simply stop identifying with this limited entity. The panacea for all suffering, for all pain, is to simply stop identifying with this form and this personality. Some say that we don't really need to identify with the Self – we just need to stop identifying with what we are not. The moment we stop identifying with something we are not, immediately and naturally we stay as the Self.

In that space there is no fear.

In that space nothing is missing.

In that space nothing is desired.

In that space there is no fear, no worries, no anxieties... nothing but a perfect and natural completeness.

It is impossible for the ego to attain the Self, because the Self is the natural state.

Struggling for fulfilment while being identified with ego is just wasted energy.

Identify with the true Self and fulfilment becomes the natural state.

Give up immediately the idea that you are a form.

Give up immediately the idea that you are a personality which is nothing more than a program.

Give up the idea that you are the Prana or the intellect.

Give up the idea that you are the ego that constantly complains about something.

When you have rejected all these things, what is it that remains?

Stay as that!

It is for this reason, that many intelligent people, many spiritual people, who want to dedicate themselves completely to spirituality, they become sannyasins. They practice the art of 'giving up', the art of renouncing whatever is unnecessary. It is like an art, we need to practice this a little bit. Of course ultimately we need to renounce the ego, but can we do it straight away? It will be like somebody who touches a violin for the first time and expects to play Paganini immediately. Is it impossible? It is not impossible, but it is highly improbable.

I tell you, there is nothing that we love more than our own ego. So... it is simply practical and realistic to start renouncing something which is more gross, for example, if you have twenty pairs of shoes, you can give up half of them, if you have three cars, you can give up one, or two, if you have two store rooms full of clothes, you can give up some clothes. You can give up some things you understand that you don't need, maybe physical or material things. This is a good practice - to slowly, slowly minimize, or give up, what is not needed. First we start by giving up gross things, then we continue with more subtle things - we can give up, let's say, false ideas.

We give up ideas that have no benefit to us.

We give up impressions that have no benefit to us.

We stop accumulating more useless impressions.

We take shelter in simplicity.

We give up having too many associations.

We give up too much work and struggling for money.

We give up too much food.

This way we practice the art of giving up. Slowly, starting with gross, tangible things, then when we come to give up that which is essential, our own ego, it is easier to succeed. Of course there are also people, who are monks or sannyasins, who have given up everything except their own ego, and then there are people who live inside the world and they gave up nothing, but have given up their ego... everything is possible inside this Mahamaya! But usually these two things are connected. Give up what you don't need, what you understand has no benefit for you - give it up! Make it a habit, a way of living, to have only what you need and what is necessary. Take as much food as you need, have as many clothes as you need.

There is a very beautiful story about Maharajji... you see, true saints, they are like archetypes of simplicity. Maharajji for example was feeding more than two hundred people every day, three times a day, as much food as they could take. Himself, he was taking two spoonfuls only per day - one, two, finished! So, when he was young he was travelling around India giving Satsangs, organising retreats and he was gathering money to feed the ashram. He had only one dhoti and one small briefcase. Inside the briefcase there was just one small towel and a toothbrush, that's all. He always had only one dhoti. Now, it is a discipline of the swami that every day he must wear a fresh cloth. So, he would wake up in the morning and take a shower and he would wash his dhoti and then hang it out to dry so that he could wear it. If it was raining it would take many hours for the cloth to dry. He would repeat the same practice every single day. Some of his disciples said to him, "Maharajji we cannot see you like this - here take a second cloth so that you may wash one and wear the other". Maharajji was accepting thankfully. He took the cloth and went away. After some time he came back and again he had only one cloth, the same discipline. Again they bought him a second cloth, again he thanked them and went away. Maharajji returned again after some time with one cloth. The disciple said to him: "Maharajji, I am not so rich, I cannot buy you cloth all the time, please keep the second cloth." Maharajji answered: "In the places that I visit, there are people who do not have even one cloth! How then can I keep two?"

A man like this can very easily renounce his own ego and an action like this, a way of life like this, is the proof that he has renounced his ego. A person who is dominated by the ego can never do this because the ego likes to hoard, to accumulate, more and more and more. Ultimately what we need to renounce is our own ego, the false idea that we are an individual entity. You can start by renouncing something more simple, something that you understand that you don't need like clothes or money or anything. There is something very practical in this and it works. The ego will tell you no, no, no, you need this, we might need it one day, don't give it away. When you hear this voice you know who is speaking, it's your good old friend, the ego. I'm sure you have heard this voice many times: "Keep it we might need it sometime!". I say to you - give it away.

Living in simplicity provides the proper conditions for practicing Self-enquiry. Living a life of sharing provides the proper conditions for practicing Self-enquiry. There is so much more joy and bliss in giving than in taking. Practice giving – practice giving and giving up. These two things go together and when the proper moment comes you give up the ego and stay as the Self.

Self is not limited in one form.

Self is not a woman nor a man.

It is not from England, From America or from Russia.

Not old.

Not young.

Not beautiful.

Not ugly.

Not a human.

Not an animal.

It has no label and no story, yet it is the essence inside all forms.

It is the very life inside all forms.

It is the one who is aware inside all forms.

It is the one who is aware of the ego screaming inside all forms.

Yet Himself, He never screams, He only smiles.

Question: I sense that something is watching the suffering and the happiness but I also feel that something is behind this that is watching the one who is watching and I am not sure if this is the real me or not?

Yes, this is known as infinite regress. In other words it has no end. Initially when we are told to observe, observe as the Self, who is going to observe? It is the ego that is going to observe because we are habituated to look from the eyes of the ego. The ego will play tricks, it will misappropriate the experience. When you are observing, the ego will say: “Oh, I am observing so well!”. And yes, there is something that looks at this!

Ultimately there is a source that looks but cannot be looked upon. There is no trick to make it happen immediately, to make it snappy. It is something that happens naturally at the correct moment. This awareness is not a product of effort, it is not even a product of practice. It is something that is constantly there. I will give you an exercise, because I know you like exercises (smiles). I will help you to reach that point.

So, for two minutes try to not be aware of anything!

Just close your eyes and do not be aware of anything!

Do not be aware of your sensations!

Do not be aware of the energies flowing inside of you!

Don't be aware of the peace!

Don't be aware of me speaking. Don't be aware of the light!

Do not be aware of your own Being!

Completely stop being aware!

Do not be aware of the infinity!

Do not be aware of your thoughts, do not be aware of anything!

Switch off the awareness. . .

Has anyone succeeded?

Keep trying for 30 seconds more. . .

It is completely impossible to not be aware! That Awareness, which is impossible to switch off, is the Awareness that we are looking for here. You don't need to try to get it. In fact, no matter how much you try, you cannot lose it! That is the Awareness that we are looking for.

It is something natural.

The true Awareness is that which you cannot switch off.

Even death does not switch off this Awareness.

Losing consciousness does not switch off this Awareness.

Deep sleep does not switch off this Awareness.

It is the One that cannot be switched off and nothing can be aware of It.

- Om Shanti Shanti Shanti -