

Satsang with Om Baba

(20 January 2017)

The Dark Night of the Soul

Welcome everybody to the Satsang.

What shall we speak today about?

(Question asked in Russian)

I will repeat the question in English. There's a certain terminology in spirituality, it's called "The Dark Night of the Soul". I think it was a book by a famous Spanish saint, Saint John of the Cross. He was a saint, not a philosopher.

This is a very interesting issue, very interesting. It goes like this - as we enter inside to examine what is inside of us, to investigate what is inside of us, we find many interesting things. As we come inside of us and we turn on the light for the first time, we discover many things in that room we didn't know they were there. Just like if you're in a room that is dark and you don't know what happens. Then one day, by grace, someone turns on the light and you start seeing what is there. And we see all kinds of things. There are billions of impressions inside.

There is paradise inside.

There is hell inside.

Everything is inside of us.

The whole universe, all dimensions, are inside of us.

It is only natural that we will encounter some impressions or experiences that are not very pleasant. They may bring a lot of pain to us. They might intimidate us. They might discourage us. They might somehow test our sincerity to know the Truth.

Will we stay there and clean the room or would we rather turn off the light again? This is the main question. Will we stay and clean up the room now that we have seen in which condition it is or will we simply turn off the light?

This inevitable stage, when we start facing and looking inside ourselves, it is a true test and a true challenge and we can call it "The Dark Night of the Soul". Some people experience some discomfort or have an unpleasant experience in their body. Some pain will suddenly appear in the back of the head. Sometimes a very powerful pain. Sometimes it will last for long. Sometimes this pain will not be so much physical, but psychological. But one way or the other, it is rather inevitable. It is a sort of detoxification and all the toxins start to come out. By the word toxins we mean many impressions, much karma, etc.

Things that were already inside us; they were not created by spiritual practice. They were already there. These things that come out, they are not caused by meditation. They were already there, they have just become evident through meditation. This is a very positive and healing event. We start watching the demons that are hidden inside of us. We become intimidated by them. We become tested by them.

Do we really want to know the truth and go beyond this dark stage?

Or do we prefer to stay in our comfortable illusion?

So as we say, this stage of encountering all sorts of stagnant impressions inside of us, this is inevitable. By stagnant impressions, I mean impressions that somehow have not been digested. They have stayed inside of us. They have been accumulated. Sometimes we see the impressions themselves, sometimes we remember the actions, we remember the karma.

Sometimes the impressions may take a different form. They can take the form of a ghost, the form of a devil, they can take the form of pain or of fear, of anxiety, of restlessness. This we call "The Dark Night of the Soul."

In my opinion, I can call it simply a test. It is not something that there is a way to avoid. It is simply a test for us.

Do we want to know the Truth of our Being?

Because if the answer is a sincere "Yes!", all those impressions which rise up will not intimidate us. The Dark Night of the Soul will not drive us away. If we are not sincere, even when the dusk comes, when the sun comes full down (when the sun sets) and the night of the soul begins, we will immediately run away.

What will we do? We will stop this spiritual practice. We will stop meditation. Say, "No, no, this is not for me. It brings too much pain. I prefer to stay in my comfort zone. I prefer to be comfortably numb."

The Lord of the Dark Night of the Soul is our own ego. We can call him "The Dark Lord". It's our own ego. He has been our Lord forever. Lifetime after lifetime. And as we enter into spiritual practice, as we enter into meditation, we start somehow to question the lordship of the ego. His timeless rule begins to be questioned.

Am I truly this body?

Am I truly this personality?

Am I truly all this accumulation of desires and fears?

Is this truly what my life is all about?

Running after desires or running away from fears. And when we make just the first steps to answer "no" to these questions, then the Dark Lord appears in his full power, projecting our most powerful desires. Projecting the most powerful fears that we have. Just to keep us in bondage. To make sure that we will not escape. To make sure we will not be free.

This, when the ego appears in his greater strength and tests us, this is called The Dark Night of the Soul. It's just a terminology.

At this moment, the seeker is very vulnerable. Even if he has made very much spiritual progress, the ego will come and appropriate the spiritual progress. The ego will take the form of arrogance, which is one of the greatest forms of darkness. If one does not have, on the other hand, important spiritual experiences, the ego again will come and take the form of frustration or despair. It's so tricky, so flexible, like a shapeshifter. It will try to block us in all possible means. And most of the time, it will succeed. Because we have no other master than the ego. Who will save us from this all powerful Dark Lord? We need a true champion, a true hero. Where will we find one? We have either to make ourselves a hero, which is not so easy as it sounds. Or we have to take shelter or take protection of a true hero. That true hero, that true champion that can help us in this case, is the Guru. In my opinion, he alone can face The Dark Lord. He alone is authorized to do so because the Guru is somebody who has already faced the Dark Lord and has been victorious.

It's like our greatest hope...

“If you have been victorious yourself, oh Master, please, be victorious inside me as well.” The chances are that he will, if we will permit him to do so. If we say, “No, no I don’t want. I will do it by my own strength.” I don’t say it is impossible but I say it is very highly improbable. Because he who speaks and says, “I will do it by my own strength” is the ego. If again, you can see it, if you can spot it and understand that this who speaks is not you, if you can see that this that speaks inside of you and says, “I don’t need any Master. I will do it with my own strength”, if you can see that this is your own ego, then you have a very good chance to be free from it. If you can recognize it, you have a very good chance to understand that this is not me who is speaking. This is my good-old enemy.

If you ask me, “How can we go through the Dark Night of the Soul?” I can find no other way than the Master, the Guru. Because the Dark Night of the Soul is something vast. Where’s the way out? And at the same time, that which does not permit us to surrender to the Master, that is part of the Dark Night of the Soul.

The Dark Night of the Soul is nothing without the ego. This is the only thing we want to be free from. Just the ego. This is the only thing we want to take out from ourselves.

We don’t need to create the Self or create self-realization. We don’t need to do this. The moment the ego stops, realization takes place automatically. The moment the false idea of who I am goes out, immediately the Truth of my Being becomes evident.

We don’t need to learn who we are. We simply need to take out the false idea, the false understanding. What is a better way to be free from the ego than to simply surrender? Simply surrender. That is why the intelligent seeker surrenders at the feet of the Master.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti!