

Satsang with Om Baba

ON LOYALTY TO PRACTICE

(from Satsang on 19.01.2015, Tiruvannamalai, India)

Main Question: *Shall we stick to a certain practice or can we change our practice technique?*

Answer: We will talk about the constancy of practice, about adherence, loyalty to a certain practice.

To get a catch of it, and stick to it, stay with it.

Like, for example, if we want to learn playing a musical instrument, a piano, a guitar, or a violin.

Shall we stick to it?

Shall we go deeper into it?

Or shall we play some day a little bit of piano, another day a little bit of guitar, a little bit of violin, some day read a book, like this...

It is actually more a question of LOYALTY.

The object to which we are loyal, perhaps, is not so important in itself.

It is good if we are loyal to what we are naturally attracted, what is our natural skill.

Perhaps, it could be playing of an instrument. Perhaps, it could be dancing.

Perhaps, it could be any spiritual practice, like meditation, repetition of a mantra, pranayama.

Anything that we naturally feel attracted to. That somehow we naturally fall in love with, and we enjoy doing it, every day.

But the question is deeper, it is about loyalty.

Loyalty. Staying with one thing.

It is a question of developing the quality that we call 'loyalty'. And the question is: do we need loyalty in our life?

Do we need loyalty?

Or loyalty is something like a bondage, like a limitation, like a restriction?

Do we need loyalty, or devotion, dedication to something? And how will it help us in the end?

In spiritual practice we need two things; all together, two things.

One is Knowledge, Knowledge of our True Being.

The second one is Devotion.

Somehow, by Divine Grace, the Knowledge can come. 'I am THAT'.

But if we are not loyal to THAT, if we are not devoted, we will lose it immediately.

The Illusion is very powerful, and very charming.

And we are habitualized to go by the waves of the Illusion, for many lifetimes. We are habitualized to be very loyal to the Illusion.

We are very-very loyal to the Mind. We are very loyal to our own Ego.

And the Mind, by its nature, it is so much fluctuating, it is always changing. One moment it wants this, the other moment it wants that.

It is always changing in constant motion. It's never steady.

It's impossible to have a steady mind.

It's always changing, transforming, That's why it is so fascinating, so charming. Because it always wears a new dress, a new costume. That's why it is so fascinating.

So this is something that all of us know very well: that the Mind is in perpetual motion. It always changes, constantly.

Even if we want to keep an idea in our Mind, even if we want to grab it and keep it with us, we cannot. It will change.

The Mind is constantly changing.

Are we are loyal to it, or not?

That is, do we follow its fickle nature? Yes, we do.

Most of the times we are very loyal to the Mind.

The Mind says this, we say, 'Yes, of course'. The Mind says that, and we, 'Sure', the Mind goes this direction, 'Yes, yes'.

Like this.

So, the Mind has a changeful nature. Constant change.

What is THAT that is aware of the Mind?

What is THAT that our eyes cannot see, but THAT that always sees the Mind, that is always aware of the Mind?

What is THAT?

THAT which is always aware of the movements of the Mind, THAT itself never moves.

THAT which is somehow entertained by the movement, itself it never moves.

THAT which knows of the movement, itself it never moves.
It is unmoving. It is unchanging.
It knows of the change, and it is entertained by it, but itself, it is unchanging.

So if we somehow grow devotion or dedication towards the Unchanging...

... in any form it might take...
it might be a spiritual practice,
it might be a relationship,
learning a musical instrument,
it can be any art, painting, dancing,
it can be any skill,
it can be gardening, it can be swimming,
it can be driving fast the car, whatever you like,
it can be video games, if you like...

If we somehow develop it,
if that devotion to the Unchanging remains fixed in something, in any object...

Or, somehow, if we remain fixed in anything we do in our life,
and develop that devotion to the Unchanging...

And what is the UNCHANGING? Our own innermost Nature.

It's like a technique.

That which is fascinated to jump from object to object, that is the Mind.

Or it can be the Ego, if you like.

But THAT which knows of its movement,

THAT which knows even of the fascination itself, THAT itself does not move.

THAT is very-very fixed. It is one.

So originally the question was: should we remain fixed in one practice?

I say, it's very helpful to develop Oneness in anything we naturally feel attracted to.

And remain steady with that.

So we develop the quality of being steady.

So also when the Knowledge of the Supreme Beauty comes, we will be able to be steady in it.

The Mind is not satisfied with the Supreme Beauty, not for long.
It is not satisfied with anything.

Even when the Supreme Beauty comes, it says, 'Ok, let's go to the cafeteria now'.

It will immediately change the subject. Immediately it will ask for something different.

Because this is the nature of the Mind.

So, if we are very loyal to the Mind and to its vices...

The vicious mind...

if we are very-very loyal to it...

...even when the Truth comes, we will not be ready to stay with it.

The Mind will take us out of it.

Because we are very loyal to the Mind.

Steadiness is not the quality of the Mind.

Steadiness is the quality of the Being.

So, if we develop steadiness, we can say, we develop a quality of the True Being.

Unconditional love is not the quality of the Mind. The Mind cannot do it.

The Mind calculates things. 'Ok, this person gave me money, I love him. That person spoke good to me, I love him.

This person is very beautiful, tells nice jokes, I love him'.

Like this.

'This person does not speak good to me, I don't love him.

This person wants my money, I don't love him'.

The Mind always calculates.

It cannot have unconditional love.

Unconditional love belongs to the Atman, belongs to the Being, belongs to the Self.

If we step into the Self, we can have unconditional love.

But also, if we, somehow, develop Unconditional love, we can step into the Self. It works both directions.

The same way with the steadiness.

For some people, steadiness is easier, more natural.

They are naturally more steady.

They are steady in their relationships, they are steady in their everyday routine.

They are very steady in their everyday schedule, they wake up at 5 or at 6 - every day the same things.

Every day they take a shower at the same time, take food at the same time. Every day like this.

They can do it naturally.

Strangely enough, monks are like this. Strangely enough, highly-developed spiritual beings, they do that. Most of the ones I know personally, they have a standard schedule, very-very standard schedule. They do the same things every day, same time go to the bathroom every day. Same things.

So somehow we can say that this steadiness is connected with a sort of maturity.

It is not like a bondage, it does not come out of effort.

I don't see an effort in this. It is very joyful, very enjoyable.

For example, shall we practice meditation every day at the same time? Can this be a question?

Shall we practice meditation every day at the same time, say, from 6 to 7, or from 5 to 6?

Why? It sounds like such a bondage, such a restriction.

Perhaps, It could be a little difficult at the beginning. For the first 2-3 days.

Just persist, just give it an initial push.

Just give it a push for the initial 2-3 or 4 days.

After this, if you don't meditate at the same time, the Mind will complain.

It will say, 'Just a moment, it's my time for meditation. What are you doing here? Why are you sleeping? Wake up, wake up!'

The Mind is not against meditation. It's not against anything.

But it likes to have patterns.

It likes patterns, it likes its program.

So if we develop a habit to meditate from 5 to 6 every day, naturally at 5 o'clock something meditative will start happening inside of us.

Naturally the whole system, the body, the fluids, the prana, the Mind, everything will become ready for meditation.

All the doctors now realize that it is so healthy for the body to take food every day at the same time. So important.

The body has a kind of a clock. A biological clock.

It knows, 'At one o'clock I'm taking food'.

So at one o'clock the digestive fluids will start flowing. Everyday.

And some people say, it is good to take the same food every day, or similar food.

Because the body knows how to digest it and how to assimilate it.

It can do it very easily. And very effectively.

That's why in the ashrams they have the same food everyday. Similar food. It's very good for digestion. Quick digestion, light digestion.

In fact, if we have a standard schedule every day;

wake up standard time, take food at standard time, take our breakfast standard time...

...everything standard time...

Life becomes so easy!

These things become so easy.

We can have during the day 2-3 hours to "get wild". To do whatever we feel like. Anything.

I don't mean meditation full day.

No, you can have some free time everyday for the Mind to get wild.

For some people 3 hours, 4 hours, 5 hours. As much as you like.

You can do whatever you like.

If the Mind feels it needs some space, it needs to get feral, to get wild, like a wild animal to run away, do whatever it likes, give it space.

Give to the Mind some space to be free, sometimes.

And sometimes you say to the Mind, 'Now you participate in the spiritual evolution.'

So, in truth, to have a steady program is easier in the long-run than to do one day this, one day that, next day this, other day that.

This requires effort. It requires a constant adaptation.

Every day we need to adapt to a new program.

The secret to acquire steadiness is to find something that we fully love.

Nobody can force you from outside to be steady to something. Nobody can tell you, 'Ok, you learn the violin, every day two hours.' It will not work.

But something that we naturally feel attracted to. Naturally.

We can develop steadiness through that.

And as the steadiness will grow, meditation will grow.

We will work towards our True steady Nature.

And at the same time, we will dive much deeper into the subject that we are steady in.

If it is how to play the violin...

If we really want to learn the violin and be good at that, we need to have some steadiness in this.

We need to practice every day for, I don't know, 2, 3, 4, 5 hours.

Every day, every day.

Maybe we will attain a very high level at this.

Perhaps, later we don't need to practice anymore.

Perhaps, later we can give up the practice. It goes automatically.

We see also many very advanced musicians, very advanced piano players...if we ask them, 'How you spend your day?'

'I practice 10 hours every day.'

'You practice? You are like a gold medalist in piano. You still practice?'

'Yes. Why I practice? Because I like it!'

The same with spirituality.

Some people may have attained the Supreme Realization, yet they practice everyday. Why not?

If we want to go deep into a practice, into a yoga, it can be any yoga...

Bhakti yoga, Kriya yoga, it can be Hatha yoga, pranayama...

it can be Christian way, it can be Muslim way, it can be Sufi way, it can be anything...

If we want to go deep in that, we have to stay with it for a little bit of time, to stick to it for some time.

And if we want to go to the essence of it, we have to go deep into it.

If we want to go to the essence of spirituality, we have to go deep into it.

To dive deep, deep, insist, dig deep in that ground.

Sometimes we do a practice. Let's say japa.

Japa is a very good practice - repetition of mantras.

And we do the first day. We sit for one hour, 'Ahhh, it's blissful'.

Then we sit the second day - and it is good, but not like the first day.

And we do for the third day, and it requires a lot of effort, it's not so good anymore.

And we do the fourth day, and really we don't feel like doing it.

This happens to everybody. This happens to EVERYBODY!

Don't think that there is something wrong with the practice or with you.

It happens to everybody.

The difference between practitioners is that one person insists, he will go on.

'I will go on, even if I don't like, I will return to the peace, I am sure. I believe in that'.

The other person gives up.

My suggestion is: go on, go on.

Stay with it for a little time. Stay with it.

It can be a practice. It can be a teaching, anything. Stay with it. Stay with it for some time.

Wait until it gives a little bit of fruits. Wait a little bit.

It's like we plant a tree in the ground. The tree comes out in one year, and we see no fruits.

We say, 'What's this?'

We don't dig the tree out. We wait.

Wait. Nourish it, give it some water. Give it love, take care of it.

Be patient. It will give fruits. Be patient.

Don't cut it off, if it doesn't give fruits in one day.

We don't do it with trees in our garden. We don't do like that.

So we also don't do it with the trees of our practice. We wait. We wait.

It is the nature of spiritual practice not to be every day "super blissful". No spiritual practice is every day super blissful, super exciting. Some days it's a little bit blissful, some days it's medium blissful, some days you need to make a little bit of an effort.

Then again it is very blissful the next time.
It is its nature. It is natural.

What is that that wants the practice to be always blissful?
It is not possible, for everybody.
Even the greatest saints, their practice is not super-blissful every day.
It doesn't work like this. But practice is necessary.
Everybody has to find their way of practice.
And my suggestion is: practice at the same time every day.
It will be easier.
It's just a suggestion. It will be easier.
Wake up at the same time every day. Wake up early, when there is not too much noise around.
The energies, the cosmic energies are very beneficial for spiritual practice early in the morning.
That will help you. And stay with the practice for some time. That will help you.

Some people cannot sit down. It's not necessary.
You can walk around and repeat your mantra.
You can do some Karma yoga.
You can go in the garden, and sing some bhajans while doing your gardening. Anything like that.
You have to find your perfect practice.
Practice is a vast field. It includes everything. Everything.

We can just give a few suggestions. Only this.
Practice can be simply asking, 'Who am I?' Doing self-inquiry.
'Who am I?'. At all times.
This is also a practice.
The field of practice is vast. You can choose your own practice.
But it's good if you stay steady for some time with it. It will help you go deeper. Because you want to go deep inside yourself.
Go deep into the practice. It will help you go deep inside yourself.

And never be disappointed, never be desperate if one day the practice does not work. It is natural. It happens with everybody.
It happens with me. With everybody.
Even if two days if doesn't work, even if three days it doesn't work, don't give up.

Don't give up!

Perhaps, you took some food at night, and then next morning you cannot meditate. It's ok.

Patience. Be patient.

Be persistent! Be loyal! Be steady!

That is what I have understood from my own experience: that steadiness gets us deeper into ourselves.

So steadiness helps.

Side Question: *At the moment I am reading a lot of other texts, like Buddhism.*

And there is a lot of joining in their ideas. It goes deeper and deeper.

We are doing one technique, we are doing the other...

And not loyalty to one.

At the moment I feel that for me it's good.

But at the same time I feel maybe I should choose... Buddhism, Hindu or whatever.

Answer: My feeling is that the destination is the same.

But you have to walk the path to the end.

All the paths lead to the same destination.

But we have to walk the paths to the end.

And which path you follow, should be the path that is natural for you.

You are free to choose the path. The path that is natural to you.

The path that does not require too much effort for you to do it.

Somehow naturally you can do it, naturally it comes.

This is the best path. The path that is natural for us.

That's why the Master, the traditional Master or the "modern traditional" Master, when people come to him at the ashram, he gives everyone a duty, a different duty.

Perhaps, one person has just to drive the car.

He says, 'You will be the driver. This is your way for spiritual perfection. You will drive the car'.

The other people would work in the kitchen.

To the other people he would say, 'Just stay in your room. And do japa. And nothing else'.

To another person he would say, 'You just do the pooja. Go in the temple, do the pooja, learn all the mantras and everything'.

Everybody has his own path that is natural to him.

But you must stay with that.

Sometimes a path will take us somewhere, and then we have to take a different path to continue the way.

Sometimes it's like this.

Side Question: *How do you feel that this is the moment to choose another path?*

Or if this is the Mind that, before you reach something, says, 'Now it's time to stop this practice'.

Answer: This is a very good question.

For me there was one thing that was perfectly steady: that was my Master.

My Master did not really restrict me outwardly on a certain path.

The restriction was that you fully dedicate yourself to spirituality.

Like a sannyasin, like a monk.

But he did not tell me outwardly, 'You practice this sort of meditation'.

He just told me, 'Japa'.

But he did not tell me Bhakti yoga, Raja yoga, Gyan Yoga. No.

He just told me, 'You come and clean my room'. Like this.

So the practice that I was very much loyal to, and very much steady every single day, every single day, was the cleaning of the room of my Master.

And that was not an easy practice.

It sounds easy, perhaps. It sounds naive, or childish.

But it was not at all an easy practice. It was a very-very difficult practice.

So around this basic practice I had freedom to play around.

So I said, 'Let me try some Raja yoga'.

And I enjoyed it very much. And I went very deep into this for many years.

And I experienced some results.

And I felt, 'Ok, enough of it'.
Let me try a little bit of Bhakti yoga, let me try a bit of Vedanta.
It was a sort of a hobby for me.
It was a secondary practice.

But I had my steady practice. I had my steady path.
That was service to the Master (as well as Japa).
And whatever he would ask me...
He would ask me for some crazy things sometimes...
I have to do it immediately.
That was my main practice, the backbone of my practice.
The rest were my hobbies. I was doing them for enjoyment.

I was lucky, because my hobbies helped me in my spiritual evolution somehow. I liked very much to read the scriptures. Nobody forced me to do it. I liked it.
I liked to learn the music, to play kirtan. That was like a hobby.
And still until today, until this very day, I am steady and loyal to one practice: that is service to the Master.
That is my true practice. That is the backbone of my practice.
Everything else is secondary.

So the question was: how did I know when to change from one practice to the other.
One practice was not changing, it was constant. It was the main practice.
The other practices, I enjoyed doing them.
When I felt like, 'O, now it's enough for me', I just gave up.
... But cleaning my Master's room was my steady practice. I did not miss one day.

Side Question: *What if one has not met the Master?*

Answer: You have opportunities to cultivate steadiness in your life.
So many opportunities.
Steadiness to something that you love.
It can be anything. It can be a husband. It can be a child. Anything.
We have opportunity to cultivate steadiness, cultivate devotion.
This is strength. It gives us strength.

A devotee, a student who is steady, who is a true student, and is steady, and is loyal, and has all the good qualities of a good student, he will find a good Master.

This is the eternal law: a true student, a true devotee will find a true Master.

***Side Question:** How to differentiate between a True Master and a false master?*

Answer: A True Master is the one who will lead you to the Truth of your Being.

A false master is the one who will confuse you even more.

***Side Question:** One master said that all the masters have shadows. And I have experienced their shadows. And they all confused me even more.*

And I reached the point where I don't want them anymore. Because I constantly see shadows.

So can I attain enlightenment without a teacher?

Answer: You can certainly attain enlightenment without a teacher. BUT, my suggestion is to stop seeing shadows and see the bright side.

In general, they say that every different person has a different Master. Me, I would never use this expression 'True Master' and 'false master'. I would never use it myself.

Sometimes Life itself is the Master. And Life is an amazing Master.

But can you be loyal to that Master?

Because sometimes Life takes us into directions that we don't agree with. And we revolt against that.

Can we bow down to Life and say, 'Yes, my Master Life, I will do what you say. I accept. I surrender to you.'

Can you surrender to the Guru by the name of Life?

That would be sufficient. To surrender to the Guru by the name of Life.

It doesn't matter whether some Saints have some shadow in their personality.

Everybody has shadows in their personality. Everybody.
What matters is what is behind the personality.
THAT has no shadow.
Not only in the Saints, in the so-called Saints.
In everybody.

Nobody is free from personality.
Be it a recognized Saint with a 'diploma', be it an everyday person.
No personality is free from shadow.
But what is behind the personality is perfectly spotless, shadowless
in every single person.

In that aspect the Saint and the student, is one and the same.
Behind the personality and behind the appearance,
the Saint and the ordinary person, and even the criminal, is one and
the same.
This is why, you should try to turn your attention behind the
shadows of personality.
Then you can find a true Saint in the eyes of everybody.

But if we focus on the personality, we will find a shadow even in the
greatest of Saints.
And first of all we will find shadows in our own personality.

... So forget about the shadows.
And try to find a Saint and a perfected soul in the eyes of everybody.
That can be your practice.
Not to look for one specific person.

If you can find a Saint inside of you, you can find a Saint inside
everybody, automatically.
If you can find a Saint inside somebody else, in the others, you will
also find a Saint inside of you.
Because it is one and the same Saint.
One and the same Being.
One and the same Life.
One and the same Supreme Beauty.
One and the same Self.

When you are by yourself, find the Supreme Truth inside yourself
in meditation.

When you are with others, find the Supreme Truth in the others also.

This can be your practice.

And if you have an opportunity to fully fall in love with something... maybe a Master, maybe an activity, maybe a teaching, maybe an art...if you have an opportunity to fully fall in love with this, then remain loyal to this.

Stay steady.

- Om Shanti Shanti Shanti -