

# *Satsang with Om Baba*

(Rishikesh 2019)

## **On identification**

Welcome everybody to the Satsang!

What about shall we speak today?

Perhaps we can examine what is identification. How identification works, how it affects us, how we might be able to step beyond it, how we might be able to be free from identification and what is this identification all about.

This is a pretty advanced subject. This is not something they teach us at school, except if we have some acting lessons, which can be very useful by the way... So, if we do have some acting lessons or some very base knowledge of what is acting, you know that the whole acting is based on identification. That means, if a certain actor, Mr. Bob, is playing the role of King Lionheart, he has to identify himself with this role. He has to step out of his nature as Mr. Bob and he has to assume a new identity. He must become a king, he must learn the language of a king, the behavior and the decorum of a king, the *etiquette* of a king, the dignity of a king, the high manners and the authority of a king. He has, in other words, to cultivate qualities which are not his own in order to play his role successfully. He has to be like a chameleon, he has to shape-shift and become a king, he has to become something he is not. And if he succeeds in this, if he succeeds in this shape-shifting, in this identification, he will play his role well, he will play his role in a convincing way. Isn't it like this?

So, to identify ourselves with something we are not is very useful if you are an actor! At the same time it is the greatest obstacle if you are a seeker of truth! Because if our actor, Mr. Bob, if he stays identified with his role for too long time, he will forget who he truly is. And maybe that actually happens...some actors that play some soap operas for twenty years or something, they forget who they truly are, they become fully identified with the role, they become fully identified with something they are not. In the same way, the immortal Atman, the perfect Self, having identified Himself with the ego, with a limited entity, lifetime after lifetime, hundreds and thousands of lifetimes, naturally He has forgotten who He is. Having identified with something He is not, He has forgotten who He truly is.

So, identification means exactly this; to take a role or a quality or something that is external and say *I am this thing!* To somehow deceive ourselves, willingly! To deceive and to fool ourselves, willingly! For the sake of playing sometimes, for the sake of having some benefit. To take a role and say *I am this role!* And forgetting who I truly am. This is what happens with the average conscious being.

Now, there's another important aspect of identification. When we are identified with something we are not, naturally we share the lot of that something. That means, if that something goes up, we also go up; if that something goes down, we also go down. For example, when we see a movie, and we have various emotions while seeing the movie, emotions of joy, emotions of sorrow, emotions of fear, emotions of worry, emotions of *suspense*, all this kind of emotions...how is it possible we have these emotions for something that is just digital images on the TV? In what way, except through identification, can we have these emotions?

Identifying with something we are not, identifying either with a character of the story or identifying with the story itself. If we don't identify how can we share any of the emotions of the characters? We know very well that it's just a play, a theatrical play... We know very well it is all set up, it is not real! But in this moment, in order to enjoy the movie, we have to forget this, we have to forget the truth! If we want to enjoy the movie, we have to forget this and willingly deceive ourselves, willingly enter into ignorance, so that we can enjoy the movie. Now, if the character we are identified with goes up, we rise also high with him; if the character we are identified with falls down, we also fall down. This is something everybody experiences, either through a movie or a book or any story.

Now, let's examine this internally. Inside us many energies take place, various energies move... These energies can manifest themselves as prana, as pure life, or they can manifest themselves as thoughts, as images, or as memories, or emotions, etc. And we give them names; we call them anger, or passion, or sorrow...we can call them joy, love, beauty...We assign to them various names.

Let us say it's just energy, to make it more clear, just energy! If we identify ourselves with this energy, when this energy goes up, we also go up; when this energy goes down, we also go down. When there are thoughts that are joyful we become joyful, we go up with them, we are carried up by them; when there are thoughts which are heavy and sorrowful we fall down together with them. This process is called identification!

We hold on, we catch something that we are not and we follow its course, we follow its movement... Positive thoughts – we rise high, negative thoughts – we fall down! How can the Atman that is One, all pervading, perfect, pure life have any change? How can it go up

or go down when everything is pervaded by It? How can this happen except by identification? This identification, this is the primal ignorance, the primordial ignorance. This is how everything started, identifying with something we are not. If, at some time, through some method, through some grace, we stop to identify with the thoughts coming up and going down, then we simply stay where we are. We simply stay as Life, we simply stay as what is called the Buddha Nature or Krishna Nature or Jesus Nature or True Nature.

Identification and identity is not only something that we have willingly accepted but it is also something that is cultivated from the outside. We are taught and programmed to do this and furthermore, wherever we look around us, be it our family, our friends, our mates, our neighbor – they do the same. So, somehow we are inspired to do that also; identify ourselves with a limited entity, identify ourselves with our thoughts, with our emotions, with whatever happens, identify ourselves with something we are not!

We were saying the other day how useful, how beneficial it is to say '*I have nothing! I am nothing! I know nothing!*' This is one way to cut off the identity. Because as long as we say something is *mine, these thoughts are mine, these emotions are mine, this body is mine*, then it's very difficult to be free from identification. So, one very easy practice, very easy technique, is simply to say '*I have nothing!*'

Whatever energy moves, remember; *I am not this thing!*

It goes up and down, *I am not going to follow it, I am not this thing.*

*That Awareness that I am is unchanging.*

*It is immutable, It doesn't go up, It doesn't go down. It's independent, completely independent from these movements.*

*Even if It would like to move, It cannot, It is immovable by nature.*

*That shining Light that I am is unchanging and independent from these ups and downs.*

This identification happens mostly out of the power of habit, because even now that you listen to something that can get you out of the identification, even if you practice occasionally, even if you read the nice books and you go to Satsangs and you are reminded about it, again you fall back into the identification, again we all fall back, because there is a very powerful habit behind it. That's why it is important to repeatedly practice this understanding, to bring it into our everyday practice, to cut off this identification just like one cuts off the alcohol, just like one cuts off smoking or any bad habit, diligently, with patience and persistence. And remember that this identification cannot happen if we don't

sponsor it, willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously if we don't sponsor it, it cannot happen, it's not possible, it's not our nature.

The man of ego, when a good thought comes to him, he says *I thought something good, I thought something great today!* The man without ego, when a good thought comes, he says simply the truth; *Some nice thought came!* The man of ego he writes a poem, he puts his name under and he goes and gets the copyrights. He writes a song, a poem, a book, anything... The man who is free from this, when a song comes... it comes! He doesn't claim to be his, he receives it as a gift. When an inspiration comes, when poetry comes, when words come, when thoughts come, when anything comes, he receives it as a gift. How can one say *it's mine*? In what way you produced it? It came from somewhere.

In short, whatever we receive in this human life is always a gift, whatever it is! Why to claim it as ours and simply make the ego stronger and make identification even stronger? How much more beautiful it is to say *I have nothing! Nothing is mine...* How much more true and more beautiful at the same time to say '*Nothing is mine.*' Some men say '*My wife is mine. This is my wife.*' How is it yours? It's a gift! Be grateful for that!

So, these two main ideas, the idea of *I am like this and like that* and the idea *I possess this and that* – these two strengthen the identification, the identification with something we are not, with this body, with this limited entity. If you say *I am nothing*, which is actually the truth, and if you say *I have nothing*, which is also the truth, identification cannot survive for long.

When this identification with a limited entity is broken, there remains only the boundless entity. There remains only the Truth! Just like the actor who stops identifying with what he is not and he remembers who he truly is. That's why in the traditional scriptures like the Upanishads it is said again and again: "*You don't really need to identify with the Self, but you need to stop identifying with what you are not! Then you will stay as the Self because you are That. You don't need to create or fabricate an identity with what you are, you simply need to stop the false identity!*"

So, observe this! Observe this inside of you, when the energies go up, you don't need to go also up – you are already in the Highest Position. When the energies go down, you don't need to go down, it is their nature to go up and down, this we cannot stop. We can a little bit modulate and moderate it, but we cannot stop it! But what we can stop is this identification. It requires a very sharp intellect and sharp awareness to notice it – this is something we can develop. To stop it, it requires a little bit of willpower, this is also something we can develop.

That's why in some spiritual schools they teach arts like archery because you need to develop a very, very sharp focus – very sharp! To be able to see and to notice that which is very subtle because this moment of identification inside is something very subtle and it happens all the time – that's why we fail to notice it. We have become fully accustomed to it, but if we see it, even one time, and we know it's there, we simply need to remember it, again and again.

And the other thing we need, as we said before, is the willpower to stop it. We need strength, just like we need strength to stop any habit, any old harmful habit that we have. We need strength for this. And the main way to have this strength is not to spend our strength in useless activities! Not spend our strength in things that are actually unnecessary to us, but learn to maintain it! Because a person who has too many duties, too many distractions of his energy, too many burdens, too many concerns will not have the necessary energy to break any habit.

We need all the energy we have, we need all the energy we can spare for ourselves and keep for ourselves. That is the reason why those yogis, who are fully devoted, they give up everything and they go and stay by themselves in the caves or in any secluded place, in their room, in the ashrams, in order to maintain their energy and use everything that they have to rise higher and to be free from this identification. Perhaps this is not practical for everybody, perhaps this is not necessary for everybody, but definitely we must learn to maintain our energy.

So, a very clear awareness and strength is what we need. Observe it inside of you, see this happening, see that something that is not you takes you up and takes you down because you are identified with it, because you are attached to it! Catch it, catch it in action! See it happening! Realize that you don't need to do this, you can stay where you are. You don't need to follow the ups and downs of your inner energies! Let these energies rise and fall, according to their own principles, according to their own laws. You should stay in your nature! You can stay as the shining Being, shining just like the Sun.

Just like the planets go around the Sun – they may go up, they may go down, may go round and round, may go in one direction, may go in the other direction, may come closer, may go further – but the Sun shines just the same. Just like the Sun is the heart of all the Solar System and is the heart of all these movements, in the same way, the Self is the heart of all these inner movements, of all thoughts, of all emotions, of any energetical movement, He is the heart and the magnetic center and completely uninfluenced by all these.

Observe it, recognize it, understand it! Understand it both in your external life that you are identified with a role, understand it in your inner life that you are identified with your inner

energies, with your thoughts and emotions. Understand that you don't need to do this, you can be free from this. And experience, even for a glimpse, even for a moment, the freedom from that.

How absolutely wonderful it is!

How absolutely complete it is by itself!

How fulfilling it is!

Disidentify yourself from all your roles by saying *I am not this, not this!*

Disidentify yourself from all possessions by saying *This is not mine and this also is not mine! I have nothing!*

Disidentify yourself from all labels that other people give you by saying *I am not this and not this!*

Disidentify yourself from the story itself, from the destiny.

Disidentify yourself from the inner movements and stay as pure life, pure entity, free from limitations!

- *Om Shanti Shanti Shanti!* -