



Fantasy Spirituality

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A talk on our fantasy perception of spirituality, rather than appreciating the dimension, depth and hard work demanded of any spiritual path.

In the Name of the Beloved, the Compassionate and the Merciful.

Many of us have a fantasy perception of spirituality rather than a real awareness of it. Sometimes this happens because a person wants to escape from the demands of the worldly life, or they may be totally unsatisfied with the life that they have. There are many reasons for our misunderstanding spirituality.

People who turn to spirituality have usually had experiences that will bring them to search for it. There are exceptions, such as people who have been raised in a spiritual environment since childhood or children who are inspired to seek out a spiritual life but essentially, we all have that sense of seeking within us, even before we are born. When you are conceived in the womb you are separated from your origin - the Beloved - and when you try to 'find yourself' you're really seeking that original relationship or Union with the Beloved. The child's attachment to the mother is part of that seeking and comes from the desire for the existence and attachment that we had before birth.

When you join a spiritual path or even experience Sufi Reiki (essentially the same but to a lower degree), you meet a teacher and the Heart of your soul (not your physical heart) feels the presence of that Absolute energy. This is pure, divine energy, not energy in the material sense. The teacher's task is to use that energy to vibrate and unveil the Heart of your soul. In this way he or she 'wakes up' the soul. Through this experience, the student feels quite an attraction toward the teacher without necessarily understanding why, though the attraction could fade away if the student doesn't apply their free will to the relationship and seek to go further and understand the Path more deeply.

When you decide with your free will that you want to embark on the Path, or attune to the Sufi Reiki on a lower level, the teacher vibrates your heart chakra. That is why many feel they become more sensitive and more loving. Through this process, and because there is limited contact with the teacher, our reasoning diverts that love toward what we have around us, for example, we become a nicer person to our family, colleagues and neighbours. This is a good start but then you can become bogged down or distracted by that because you may expect them to feel the love just as you do but the key point is that you have changed, not them. You are the one who has opened up, vibrated and started to become alert to the Absolute energy which is pure love.

Because of this, some seekers just get bogged down in worldly relationships. This could work out but then, when the naffs and ego play around, those relationships could suddenly become more demanding and the relationship could eventually

deteriorate and be affected by that. This is not productive and it is not how spirituality should be. You have to be continuously aware that because you have changed, you can have no expectation that others should also change. Who are you to impose change on others?

Be Good Before You Do Good

The best you can do is to change yourself and then sustain that. If you can achieve that and start knowing yourself properly, then you have fulfilled what you have been created for. You don't need to do any more than that. A lot of spiritual fantasy stems from learning from many religions and preaching to others how they should live, how they should love, how they should practice. This approach is dominating and suppressive and you can witness this in many religions. People are either born into religion or they join because they feel their heart needs that connection, but then they find they are limited rather than liberated. In this way, religion becomes institutionalised.

However, as a seeker, you should not look at religion as the cause of that. It is us causing the problem as humans. All religions have essentially the same message and it's a message of love; you were created from that love and given experience so that you can be above any other creation. In relation to the cosmos we are nothing, yet we have been given that affection and love and importance within it. Rumi, the Sufi mystic, is right when he says we sell ourselves cheap! We are unaware of the importance of our own being. We are so distracted by worrying about other people, thinking that we are being very spiritual if we attend to others, yet the key point is that you first have to attend to yourself. Once you have done that and tried to be a better person, you have helped humanity as a whole.

Humanity doesn't really require the external corrective help that we ordinarily apply to social problems around the world. What is really required is the pure correction of the individual and the principle of love between ourselves. But this love should be real love, not based on greed or the support of the ego.

It is very difficult for the seeker to be on guard against these issues caused by the vibration and expansion of the heart. We have had so many retrievals and have heard reports about how lovely the experience was, yet people don't perceive what is happening underneath that. It is the teacher who is working unconditionally and giving freely because he has felt the Absolute energy and the pure love inherent in that. Once your heart feels that connection you feel the same, you do not expect any return, you just do it for love. That is a hard thing to do in today's society which is based on the gratification of the individual. We are influenced in such a way that we have the constant expectation of 'what can I get out of this?' We have really become slaves to that greed but free people are those who give and because of that giving they receive far more than those who expect to gain or are seeking gratification.

This is one of the worldly delusions. We find that the richer someone is, the less inclined they are to be generous. One cannot be rich and generous. In the third world, you will find the hospitality of some people is so great they will share anything they have, yet a rich person will guard themselves and protect what they have at all

costs. We have conditioned ourselves in this way. Richness does not bring happiness, which has nothing to do with material gain.

If a person has embarked upon the Path and has been given some practices, then he or she is continuously expanding while they sustain those practices. But that in itself is not 'it', there is more to the Path than that. If you just expanded in that way, you would become just like an angel but the Beloved didn't make humans to become angels – He wants us to be higher than angels, in terms of our understanding Him.

Angels don't know the dark side of the cosmos and these other attributes of the divine. All an angel knows is that he is submitted, the Beloved is pure love and that he is in love with the Beloved. Angels don't know reality but humans are given that opportunity.

Negative Energy

That's why we experience negative energy. It's there to influence us, sometimes giving us the delusion of enjoying things in life. The harder you practice the spiritual Path, the more you find your shadows or entities becoming stronger and negativity trying harder to distract you. But there is a purpose in that

and it's not really that gloomy, though religion sometimes expresses it as such by talking about evil.

In Sufism, we take the view that good and evil have both been created by the Beloved, everything is created by Him and there is a purpose within that. Once you begin to ascend higher and expand positively, negativity tries to disrupt that.

The ordinary person who never remembers the Beloved, functioning in an automatic way through work, sleep patterns, seeking to deceive others for monetary gain, they demonstrate what is really happening in our society. We are constantly seeking to get one over on each other in order to get a bargain. But what is a bargain? It means that you have someone else's hard work, free of charge. If this is happening, the negative energy is quite happy, because the lips of this person will never remember the name of the Beloved, or feel him, because he or she is so preoccupied with their own life. Yet at some stage the Beloved will try to wake anybody up from this state.

If you start to do practices and your spiritual awareness increases, the negativity has to work harder and the distractions will start to become stronger. The entities and shadows you had will also become stronger as the negative energy tries to match the positive energy.

At some stage of the Path you may find you have real trouble on your hands. The negativity will try to prevent you from attending retrieval for instance, by perhaps confronting you with an accident or a disruption in your life. But the key is to see this as a test. If you become preoccupied and fearful and forget the Beloved, then you will remain at that stage. Similarly, if you become entrenched in the distractions you will not progress either. But, if you seek Him from your Heart and you know that He is the one who affords total protection and He is the one who is above everything – and

you persist with the practices and stick to them no matter what is happening – then you will find that you are shifting.

From this perspective you can see that the negative energy is actually an agent to assist you to progress. It is there to get you higher, not to hold you back and though it can influence you, it is not really ruling you. Even evil does not have the power to rule over you. Possession by evil does not exist, a person can only be possessed if they allow evil to possess them. You cannot be possessed against your free will. The Beloved gave you free will and even He respects that.

There are verses in the Holy Books in which Satan says, “When the time of Knowing comes, I will declare that I am just an agent to influence you. I cannot make you do anything. How can I, when He created you with free will? I merely assist you with what you want to do.”

It’s the same principle at work when you approach a teacher for spiritual expansion and he assists you in that way, your free will is the key. The more you utilise your free will toward knowing yourself and through that, knowing the Beloved, the more assistance you will receive.

Be wary of negative energy and entities, but never allow it to hold you back. If you let it hold you back, you’ve lost it and you can remain in a stalemate for a long time until you realise that this is your own vision, your own action. Even the Beloved does not force you to do anything and although His Will is important on earth, the Beloved always respects your free will.

Self-Realisation

It is very easy to lose sight of the fact that your teacher is continuously working on your spiritual side, particularly when you’re so wrapping into knowing your inner self. Your part is to deal with the psychological and emotional side, whilst the teacher works on the spiritual side.

Obviously you can consult the teacher on these issues and you will receive as much assistance as possible, but you need to use your free will to deal with these issues when they arise. Self-realisation cannot be given to you - you have to work for it. Why? Because that is your own private experience with the Beloved.

You cannot receive self-realisation from anyone, and anyone who professes that you can be given the experience is a charlatan. A teacher is an assistant and a coach who simply uses his experience to assist you.

In Sufism, the teacher’s job is the hardest thing to do because you can see what some students are falling into, but you have to keep silent because you cannot override their freedom to experience that. You have to go along with it unless there are catastrophic things happening, in which case one has to speak out. Generally, all experience is part of the student’s growth. Negative and positive should be approached equally on those terms.

Things may be painful but that is usually because the person wants to control and they are perhaps going against the higher Will. The Beloved's energy is very pure and simple, only humans like to complicate things. The creation law is very simple. Everything is moving and dynamic, all is submitted and moving in the same direction apart from humans who have been given the free will. Hence, because of that, we cause many headaches for ourselves. Even marriage is made complicated by us.

It is the influence of the negative energy and our reasoning that makes things so complicated. We apply that reasoning because we want to survive in society and we use it for other things. But you cannot apply reasoning to spirituality, it simply doesn't work and you have to abandon that approach to move forward in the Path. In some Paths, even book reading is forbidden in the beginning because you are diluting yourself and deceiving yourself. Knowledge only comes on the basis of experience, not from reading information from external sources.

Hopefully that assists to clear up some of the delusion we have about spirituality. The Path is a hard work, nobody ever said it was easy but the contentment that comes from that far exceeds any worldly happiness or sorrow.

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