

A ritual of darkness and rebirth - Berlin

(10 pages)

A thick layer of anxiety surrounded us as we settled into the darkness.

For the past fourteen months, the thirty-five of us had been brothers on a deep journey of inner exploration. Our one-year training had been a rich container of spiritual growth in which we learned about tantra, somatic practice, and various other aspects of the human erotic experience.

We shared from the heart, laughed, danced, sang together and learnt techniques for touching each other's cocks and hearts.

Normally we would spend up to 3-4 hours in somatic "mystery" practices that would give us a peak behind the iron curtain and into the cosmic field.

Yet, today, the process that was presented to us destabilised even the most centred of men in the group. We were to go into a deep dive, spending 3 full days and nights in complete darkness, in a non-verbal space, immersed in our usual elements of breath, sound, movement and touch.

We were invited to go even deeper into our beings, engaging in our version of the live-resurrection practices of the Mystery Schools which came before us. For this time, in a sacred space in Berlin's Kreuzberg neighbourhood, we would be like the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Maya, who, centuries ago, secluded themselves in temple chambers and caves, ingesting magic potions and sat in deep process to dissolve the illusions of the material world.

Those of us who were serious about our spiritual lives would be well served. I was one of them and fully opened myself to die and rebirth like a snake eating its tail. While I knew this darkness would be a teacher, I had no idea what the lessons would be.

I was entering into this experience as a broken man, carrying the weight of a 500,000\$ debt from a business that was failing, and I had no one to blame for it but myself.

Right before entering the deep dive, I was facing one of the most challenging moments of my career. My company, a small, previously-successful London design studio, had a little over one hundred dollars left in the bank, and the salaries of the 11 employees were due to be paid while I would be deep in the waves of this process.

The thought of it paralysed me. I was overtaken by anxiety as I visualised the consequences for the hardworking men and women who would be without their salaries. Many of them were supporting family members, mothers, fathers, children, some of them sick and disabled. This was one of the lowest moments of my life. It was unanimous: I had failed.

I knew chaos would await me as I emerged. I surrendered, hoping this important space would give me the power to navigate it.

The debt had accumulated as a result of unfortunate circumstances. Our once stable and highly-successful interior design studio had undertaken an ambitious expansion, from a small three-hundred square foot studio to a full six-floor, three-thousand square foot building which included a gallery and a café in central London's famous Soho.

After expanding our team from three to eleven, we lost 85% of our most stable business, from clients we mistakenly assumed depended on us more than they did.

The deeper we dropped into debt the more we invested to create visibility. I sold everything I owned to invest every last penny in this titanic business, and it still wasn't enough.

In my rational thinking, I thought it terribly idiotic to enter a dark room with no access to life outside, while the tsunami of eleven unpaid pay-checks met the shores of my incompetence. A knowing however hidden, assured me I was in the right place..

As I entered the process carrying the stress and anxiety of this unrelenting baggage, I first encountered deep rage. Why couldn't I, like everyone else, simply lie back and enjoy the relaxation of what I perceived to be a "three-day nap?". "Why did I have to enter this process facing my darkest shadow?"

As I told myself that it didn't feel fair, I kept a jar of Nutella with me as a recompense. Despite the thorough instructions and advanced talks, we settled into the darkness with "what next?".

The windows were blacked-out. Each of us had a mat, limited bedding, and anything else we would need for the next three days, Nutella included.

Lying down onto my mat, under my large silk sheet felt like slowly entering a still like in the dark of the night; unsure of the sludge, mud, or wildlife which would be found at the bottom.

Yet, I was ready to trust fully.

At first, the dark room felt thick and overwhelming, as if the veils of a thousand disgruntled widows had been dropped over my eyes.

I couldn't remember if I had ever been in complete darkness before, without even a slither of light to be found. The windows and doors had been covered in black-out sheets and a small tea light was left by the door for us to find the toilets and showers when needed. It felt as if the whole world dissolved. Death was already looming.

With time, my eyes adjusted and I could begin to decipher certain shapes in various shades of very dark charcoal and grey.

I noticed that as my external landscape switched off, my internal one awoke. My thinking mind and its maddening dialog went into overdrive. It was loud, heavy and excruciating. It spoke of all the things it usually did, but louder.

It spoke of fear, failure, disappointment and the ever-increasing list of problems that had no apparent solution.

Hums and hisses echoed across the room, reminding me that I was not alone. All 35 of us were diving into the sludge, guided by the sequences of sound, breath and the slow movement we'd been practicing all year.

Like a restless young boy on a church bench with his parents, I became aware of the ceremony which was about to take place.

I reconnected to the sounds which promised to carry us deep into the depths of our beings, in a way many of us had never experienced. They immediately felt like medicine, soothing my thinking mind, their vibrations gently caressing the inner layers of my body.

Eventually, the critical voices became clearer and sharper, as if they were coming from a different room in the house, or an old radio.

Sensations which had become familiar to me in the past months emerged, commanding centre stage. These gave birth to micro-movements: undulations and powerful pulsations which came up in my legs, arms and in the front of my spine.

They were spontaneous, uncontrollable, and at times uncomfortable.

I realised I was beginning to hallucinate when a candle eight meters away from me began to look like a small campfire roaring between the dunes of a desert far away at the distance. The sounds of the men around me sounded like the howls of wild animals. Images of the past arose: from this life and previous ones, perhaps even as visions of those yet to come.

I had been a Bedouin, left to die in the desert after being knocked off his horse and beaten. I had been a small Jewish girl, brutally torn away from her parents in 1940's Germany. I heard painful cries, sirens, and sounds of horses stomping on cobblestone. I could even hear voices uttering Portuguese, reminding me that I had been a slave, left to die from the wounds of a tragic accident while quarrying a crystal mine in Brazil.

My body felt possessed by spirits I didn't seem to recognise. As I felt these move through me, my body twisted and writhed, spiralled and convulsed. The Nutella jar I had been nursing quickly emptied and I began to feel lonelier and more lost. I was comforted by the shadows of the men who walked by the dim candle light on the way out, reminding me I was in a studio in Berlin, and I was safe.

After a while, everything went flat; as if the whole world had been erased. My thoughts disappeared, as well as the visions. I didn't seek anything for the moment. I found comfort resting in the sense of peace in the present, knowing it would likely be disturbed shortly. I have no idea how long this lasted, it may have been seconds or hours, or perhaps even a full day.

I began to hear a man's breath and the rustling of his body on his bedding get clearer as if he was approaching me.

It was Oliver. A gorgeous blond German man, with tanned skin and piercing blue eyes I couldn't see but knew. We had previously experienced deep sexual connections and purposely chose to keep our mats close to each other for this experience.

Soon, I could feel the tips of his fingers begin to gently skim and caress the surface of my left arm, and his touch more intensely than before, as if the tips of his fingers ignited small fireworks underneath the top layer of my skin.

I dove back into the sounds and breaths, dropping my awareness on the places where his skin met mine. Even the lightest touch sent giant waves rippling across my body, intensified by the sounds and the breaths I was expressing.

My body began to shudder, convulse and writhe uncontrollably. In its involuntary movements, I felt myself pulled magnetically towards him, keen to let more of my body become available to his gentle touch.

I was naked and could feel he was too. The tip of his erect cock was rubbing on the side of my leg and I instantly got hard too..

Our sounds met and we merged as one. When the sound dissolved, the limits of our physical bodies merged into a new organism that was neither him nor me. We kissed passionately, yet this kiss was more electric, passionate, fiery and unlike any other we'd shared before.

Together we became a supernatural creature, like a Hindu deity with other arms and legs. It didn't matter which parts of our bodies were connecting. I was him and he was me.

Our beings mutated as we had sex. We'd done it many times but this time it was completely different. We vibrated, shuttered, trembled, writhed.

I was now one with him, with myself and all that was. I'd barely discovered it before, this erotic potency that felt like the sex of the Gods of mythological Egypt.

My legs opened and I could feel his large hard cock rubbing the inside of my thigh, lubricating, generously oozing pre-cum at the tip.

It drew a wavy line as it moved slowly up towards my root area, my anus, and my genitals. It moved slowly, slowly... as slowly as the earth turned, it seemed.

It circled my genitals, my scrotum, my balls and slowly found my anus.

Like the head of a snake, peaking its head into the cavity of a tree, it began to enter slowly, slowly.

My head jolted back in untenable pleasure, my hands seeking something to grip.

The sheets, his hair, his neck.

I felt us drop into an even deeper connection to oneness with each other, with ourselves, with the earth, and with the entire universe. Our bodies were now sensitive to the subtle vibration of the tips of our fingers lightly stroking, tickling, and dancing on the surface of our skin. We whispered sighs and groans that echoed back into the dark studio which had locked me into itself as a chamber of a sacred temple.

Our sounds dissolved into the pool of sounds of the other 33 men who lay around us. We may have been the only ones sharing an act we would normally refer to as “sex”, yet I knew they were all part of our energetic orgy.

His hand reached my heart, which paused as if it no longer needed to beat. My arms and legs released as I licked my lips as my eyes rolled back in my head with my pelvis spiralling. I returned to the sounds of our practice, my cock harder again and my body dripping in pre-cum and sweat.

For a long while, I could not tell if our bodies were intertwined or not. It didn't matter. The critical voices returned. Perhaps they felt safe here now.

They spoke of my failures, my idiocy, my inability to function as a normal and successful human. They spoke of perpetuity, to the point of no return, to complete doom. They were loud and nagging and stirred some uncomfortable tension and pains in my body.

I was surprised and terrified by the sudden appearance of visions of demons, burning in flames around me. My chest tightened and I couldn't breathe. I wanted to escape.

Despite the pleasure of the sexual events with Oliver, my body was now overtaken with the images before me. I found myself bowing my head to surrender.

“You win,” I said.

“Destroy me, pulverise me, annihilate me, kill me.
Show me the worst you can do.”

I was surprised by the strength of my speech and the confidence in the words that had emerged. The vivid imagery intensified a bit more. My fingers and toes curled, clinging to the sheets below me.

I released my grip. I knew I could let go.
I knew the play before me would end somehow.

I was the sky. This was all a passing storm.

Then suddenly, the fear began to dissolve into void and it was then that I experienced the concept of complete absence and death.

The fear I had been experiencing began to dissolve into void.
I experienced complete absence and death.

The demons disappeared, their job was done. My arms and legs opened to the side and I melted to the space which held me. The darkness softened and the desert campfire still roared in the distance. I was exhausted as the erotic exorcism dissolved.

Images of the past re-appeared and had somehow evolved. The chains which clung to my wrists as the prisoner I had been were releasing. Whether I liked it or not, the tyrannical ruler I had been playing was now being pardoned by the mass of rioters that would happily have him dead.

It was freedom. Like a company of parrots escaping the palace of an unsuspecting queen.

The taunting voices of my childhood reappeared too, slowly changing tone, losing power, dissolving with the other voices. It was like they'd come to say goodbye..

I was proud of myself. I stared into my shadow, saw its eyes and despite the exhaustion and despair, everything stopped, even time. The clocks must have still been ticking and the calendar pages still turning.

After that experience of void, absence, of death I knew I could face anything. I had gone from being a man, to the essence that created all men.

Stories and patterns dissolved and in this greater field, death was birth, scarcity became abundance and the unconscious became conscious. The destructive, menacing forces of chaos became a fertile field for rebirth.

The groans, sighs, hisses, and hums of my brothers echoed around me forming a healing symphony.

I realised that everything was exactly as it should be. It was right that I entered this space as I did, paralysed as I was meeting my darkest shadow. The lessons I learned could not have been learned anywhere else.

The process ended with the last somatic piece which had been instructed by our facilitators. We were guided to visualise a long snake spiralling around our body as we breathed, sounded and hissed. It would wrap us like a sarcophagus before his head eventually emerged from the back of ours, its mouth meeting our lips, and offering us a kiss of death.

A kiss that would lead us deep into death, into the void, into the eternal.

The snake would then break apart and we would emerge, like a mummy from its bandages, ready for a new life.

I realised how deeply immersed I was in the experience when our teachers signalled the ending. In our time to rest I reflected on the time I'd passed in this space, the torture and the pain, the love and the hell and the rebirth of the soul. I knew I would experience it all again.

Deep erotic abundance

As I emerged from the dark room, I moved into a world that felt equally as slow. My mind was foggy and I sensed my brain chemistry had altered. I knew I had to face the disaster that was inevitably looming in London.

Eleven employees and their dependants would have gone unpaid. From experience, I knew that some would even be unable to keep their mobile phone active, pay their rent or get home from work on the train as a result.

I took a deep breath and checked my phone for emails and calls. To my shock, there was nothing. No chaos, nothing out-of-order; just the usual stream of emails I would have accumulated on any normal day including updates on projects and questions from clients. There was no crisis at all..

I wondered whether I was still in altered states and confused the dates. Had I gotten it wrong? Could it be that the salaries were due to be paid another day? Or did I miscalculate the situation entirely?

I released a deep sigh, slightly relieved the crisis had not yet emerged, yet conscious it was still looming and would probably unfold in the coming days. I realised, however, that I was now much better resourced to handle the situation, although still unsure how it would unfold in practical terms. I had a strange feeling, deep in my core, that I was supported and everything would be ok.

With no crisis, I decided to head out for a walk with my dive partner Oliver and a few other brothers. We were curious to experience life after the rebirth process and had planned to have a simply coffee in a nearby patisserie followed by a walk to the bank machine.

In light of my difficult financial situation, the workshop organisers had been flexible with their payment terms, and Oliver had generously offered to lend me the money so I could pay the outstanding sum.

At the cash machine, Oliver tried his card, which didn't work. I wasn't worried and assumed it was a technical glitch.

But after a few more attempts, he gave up, and turned to me with an apologetic smile. Just then, an inner voice came up, inviting me to try my own card. I thought it a long shot but tried it anyway.

I reached for my wallet, pulled out my card, inserted it into the machine, punched the code... The transaction had been accepted, and the money emerged from the machine. My jaw dropped as if witnessing an apparition at the cathedral of Lourdes. Some way, somehow, money had manifested, against my knowledge, into my account.

I pulled away from the group to quickly investigate what had happened. Was it a seemingly intelligent and miraculous force had come into play and transferred the funds to my account? I

noticed that all salaries had been paid, including mine. After a few phone calls I discovered that a client had paid us by mistake while intending to pay another supplier. As we would be working with them soon, they accepted that we could keep it as an advance.

It would be easy to pin this situation to luck or coincidence. Given the sheer scope of the financial disaster our business was experiencing, I knew that would be unlikely. Something greater had happened. I felt I had received, for that moment, validation of the impact of the process I had undergone in the dark. My time confronting flaming demons had not gone to waste. A miracle had occurred.

I would be lying if I said that my financial situation had completely transformed as I left the workshop. It didn't. The months following the rebirth process were the most gruelling ever. Bailiff visits became a daily occurrence, alongside a series of redundancies and employees getting sick from the stress and uncertainty. It all culminated at a point when the UK government sent us a letter saying we were required to wind up, the game was over.

Yet I realised I was navigating this roller-coaster with a whole new set of skills. Similarly to the reports I have heard from people who experienced Ayahuasca journeys, I felt I had developed a neurological experience of being part of something greater. I had touched an intrinsic and unshakeable truth: I was one with the intelligence of this great universe. It had no choice but to be conspiring only and fully for my highest good.

I remember receiving the letter from the government advising we would be shut down, followed by my accountant, moments later, informing me they would formulate an appeal and await a final decision in the next fourteen days.

Now I had more resources and capabilities to sit calmly with the situation. I spent the next fourteen days in meditation, reflecting on my life, my worth, my experience of this greater world I had now become so intimate with. I had vivid visualisations of who I would be when this plug would finally be pulled. I had developed such ease at sitting with void, death and despair that the task felt easy. This experience that was looming would merely be another death allowing me to discover new parts of myself. I would be free.

After fourteen days, another miracle, not unlike the one which happened at the bank machine in Berlin, happened. The appeal had been successful and our business could continue to function.

My response to this news was surprisingly neutral as I had reached a place of no preference either way. Had it been unsuccessful and we would be wound up, I had decided I would go to Rio, my favourite city to spend time with a designer friend and decide my next steps.

I would be lying if I hadn't admitted my disappointment at the outcome. Hidden within me I was looking forward to a trip to Rio and walking barefoot and carefree on the beach with a friend. But fate decided otherwise.

I reflected on how I would be able to turn the business around and repay this significant debt. As if

by magic, a man walked into our space unsolicited. He told us he ran an events business and that our space, which was highly unique, could easily be hired for five-thousand pounds per day. I found this hard to believe. But if it was true, it would allow the entire business to turn around and for me to retire from my role and live independently from the investment.

Within a few months, his predictions had manifested. Half the debt had been repaid and I was free to take on another journey.

I knew these were not coincidences. I had somehow unlocked a deep resourcefulness allowing me to unravel issues around money and survival which had followed me my entire life.

As well as finding myself experiencing miracles, I found myself experiencing contrasting polarised emotions with a new found neutrality. I met abundance, scarcity, success and despair while anchored into a solid foundation. I was connected to the flow of life rather than the struggle for survival as I had previously been led by.

With heaps of free time on my hands, having retired from my role as head of the studio, I now had time to travel, explore and meditate. I was curious to gain another level of understanding of what happened in that dark room in Berlin behind the thick window veils which were slowly lifted from my eyes.

What happened when the masks fell and shattered to the floor?

What happened behind the menacing cries of the flaming demons which showed up in my darkest hour? What role had my dive-partner Oliver played in this process?

I realised that this exploration had led me to a place where scarcity and abundance were one.

Where fear was only the shadow of love. Where the poison of the snake was also its most powerful and transformative elixir. Death was necessary to bring about a necessary rebirth.

This one-year training which I thought would be an initiation to neo-tantra, turned into a modern-day initiation to the mysteries.