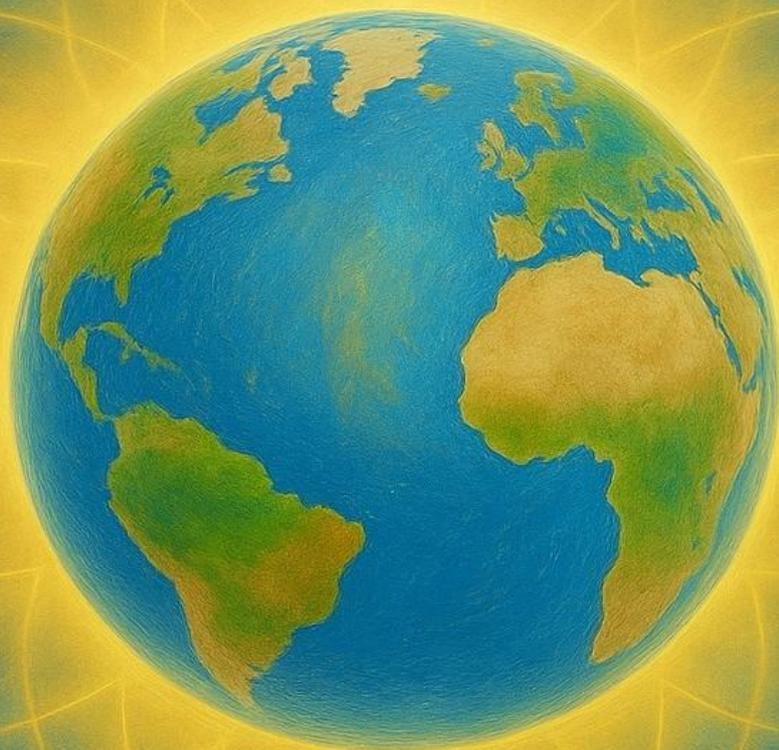


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The Dark Night of the Soul, A Profound Spiritual Journey

The Poem - by St. John of the Cross (1577 - 1579)

I

On a dark night,
Kindled in love with yearnings—oh, happy chance!—
I went forth without being observed,
My house being now at rest.

II

In darkness and secure,
By the secret ladder, disguised—oh, happy chance!—
In darkness and in concealment,
My house being now at rest.

III

In the happy night,
In secret, when none saw me,
Nor I beheld aught,
Without light or guide, save that which burned in my heart.

IV

This light guided me
More surely than the light of noonday
To the place where He (well I knew who!) was awaiting me—
A place where none appeared.

V

Oh, night that guided me!

Oh, night more lovely than the dawn!

Oh, night that joined Beloved with Lover,

Lover transformed in the Beloved!

VI

Upon my flowery breast,

Kept wholly for Himself alone,

There He stayed sleeping,

And I caressed Him,

And the fanning of the cedars made a breeze.

VII

The breeze blew from the turret

As I parted His locks;

With His gentle hand He wounded my neck

And caused all my senses to be suspended.

VIII

I remained, lost in oblivion;

My face I reclined on the Beloved.

All ceased and I abandoned myself,

Leaving my cares forgotten among the lilies.

Who was St. John of the Cross?

St. John of the Cross (Spanish: Juan de la Cruz; Latin: Ioannes a Cruce; born as Juan de Yepes y Álvarez; 24 June 1542 – 14 December 1591) was a **Spanish** Catholic priest, **mystic** and Carmelite friar. He was a major figure of the Counter-Reformation in Spain and one of the 38 saints recognized as having made a significant contribution to theology or doctrine through his research, study and writing.



John of the Cross was mentored by and corresponded with the older Carmelite nun Teresa of Ávila. Both his poetry and his studies on the development of the soul, particularly his '**Noche Obscura**' ('Dark Night of the Soul'), are considered the summit of mystical Christian literature and among the greatest works of all Spanish literature.

A Profound Spiritual Journey

Have you ever felt inexplicably lost or disconnected from your once-familiar sense of self-worth or faith? Then you may have experienced the Dark Night of the Soul.

The concept of the Dark Night of the Soul holds a unique aspect of spiritual evolution. It refers to **an intense period of seemingly endless hardship and desolation**, in which we feel **abandoned by Source**, face our deepest fears, confront our shadows and release attachments and illusions. It is an opportunity for profound growth and **a shift towards a more authentic and meaningful existence**.

To understand the Dark Night, imagine being at sea during a surprisingly stormy night, where everything is shrouded in foggy darkness and there is no beacon to guide you. It's not about giving in to despair, but about enduring this phase until clarity returns, like dawn after a dark night.

The Dark Night is not meant to be suffered; rather, it's a transformative process that can shape our perception. It's a profound process of self-reflection and purification that allows us to release old patterns, attachments and beliefs that no longer serve a Higher Purpose. Think of it as a dramatic pause or reset button in our life, where - through deep introspection - we acknowledge hidden aspects of ourselves in order to embody a more authentic Self.

The 4 Stages

Stage 1: Major disruption or triggering event(s)

The Dark Night of the Soul often begins with some sort of trigger or disruption that we are unprepared for in some way. It is often described as an existential crisis due to intense pain caused by outside disruption we have no control over. This could be, but is not limited to, the death of a loved one, extreme poverty or illness, betrayal, injustice, abuse, job loss and so on.

Stage 2: Loss of direction and hope

Following the initial trigger, as the Dark Night of the Soul sets in, so, too, does despair and hopelessness. We may feel as if life - and specifically the life we've been living - is meaningless during this stage.

This journey leads us down, down, down to the depths, which brings us to the next stage.

Stage 3: Rock bottom

The entire Dark Night of the Soul is not easy, but at rock bottom it's going to feel like a breaking point or threshold of pain. This is typically the darkest time in our life.

We may become emotionally numb, lose friends and family, isolate and/or numb through addictions during this time. Often in this phase, family and friends abandon us. Although

this phase turns into the darkest hours of our life, it will also teach us a valuable lesson if we are open to receiving it.

Stage 4: Waking up to the truth

There is light on the other side of rock bottom in order to return to a sense of wholeness. After our darkest hours, we begin waking up to the truth, which won't be easy.

This stage can include physical symptoms of stress such as headaches, nausea and body aches and even psychological and emotional manifestations. We will have the opportunity to go deeply into ourselves because it's an inner journey back to Source. We will finally be ready to face 'what is' instead of running away from it and waking up to the greater meaning of our life and it all.

No two Dark Nights are identical, but here are some general guidelines for navigating through it, enduring it and emerging from it:

- **Acceptance:** accept this process as part of your spiritual journey
- **Mindfulness meditation:** cultivate moment-to-moment awareness
- **Reflection:** keeping a journal can offer insightful perspectives
- **Seek guidance:** seek help from counselors or spiritual guides if needed

- 🌱 **Patience and compassion:** be patient with yourself and show compassion for your personal struggles during this challenging time

The Dark Night of the Soul is not a punishment, but an invitation to deeper self-awareness and transformation. It may seem like an extremely difficult phase, but always remember that just as every night has a dawn, every setback also has a breakthrough, with hope for the future.

This spiritual journey is unique to each person, so stay hopeful on your path!

Key Takeaway

When we stop resisting the darkness and begin to move through it consciously, it becomes a passage — not into despair, but into greater authenticity, awareness and inner unity.

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This material is based on publicly available research and presented in an original framework developed by **The World Platform**.