

THE MEDICATION OF YOGA AND MEDITATION

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Visitor: Is meditation a means to conquer the body, the soul and the ego?

Swamiji: The meditational stages are explained in the Bhagavadgita, in the arrangement of the chapters: first, second and so on. In which chapter are you? You can find out where you are. Each successive chapter is a description of a higher ascent, and when the last stage is reached, you become like Lord Krishna. And what is it to become Lord Krishna! Nobody can understand that except Lord Krishna himself. You become a Cosmic person. You get adjusted to everything, tuned up in one second to every cell of the cosmic body. When you wake up from dream, you get tuned up to your waking consciousness. Just as every cell of the body is your cell and there is no cell outside you, similarly when you wake up into this Universal Consciousness you get tuned up in every cell, in every atom of this cosmos; and just as you say every cell is 'I', you will say the whole universe is 'I'. That is the God experience that the Bhagavadgita refers to.

Visitor: Swamiji, why is the eleventh chapter not the last chapter? We have the Viswarupa in the eleventh chapter, and there are seven more chapters afterwards.

Swamiji: The eleventh chapter is not the end of the story, the end of the experience. The Cosmic Vision is not the end; it is only a terrifying vision which Arjuna sees. He has not entered into it. The entering takes place afterwards. Merely seeing is not enough.

Visitor: Yes, in the eighteenth chapter Arjuna says, “Now all my doubts are gone” which is why there are seven more chapters after the eleventh.

Swamiji: Yes. Suppose I suddenly bring you face to face with all the wealth of Rockefeller. You only see it; you cannot get it. If you get it, then it is a different thing (*laughing*) and is the end of the matter. I just show it to you; but you cannot get it. In chapter eleven Sri Krishna has shown all the tremendous magnificence, but as yet that vision is not yours. You don't even touch it. But if it becomes yours, then you can have it, then you really get it. This great achievement cannot be attained by just seeing the Vision. The practice must continue, so the eleventh is followed by more chapters.

Visitor: Is there any significance in the twelfth chapter describing *bhakti* following the Cosmic Vision in the eleventh chapter—that is, if you are a dedicated *bhakta* even this terrifying vision becomes a beautiful form to you?

Swamiji: There is an old saying in Zen that before you reach Zen (and by the word ‘Zen’ they mean the Ultimate Experience) a mountain is a mountain, a tree is a tree, and a river is a river. But in the process of reaching Zen, when

you are trying to gain Zen, you do not see a tree as a tree, a mountain as a mountain. This is the answer to your question. The Cosmic Experience is not a stunning resolution of the existing law. This is only the middle stage, where a tree is not a tree, a mountain is not a mountain, a friend is not a friend, an enemy is not an enemy. Everything changes when you are in the middle stage. In the third stage, a tree is a tree, and so on. You don't have to abolish the existence of things in God-realisation, or Zen. And, this is the experience when you transcend the middle stage to the final—the ultimate realisation of God when a tree is a tree and a mountain is a mountain—because it is no more a renunciation. First you get attached. Then you withdraw. Then you go back to it with a new vision. These are the three stages. The first stage is attachment. Afterwards there is no attachment, but there are efforts towards detachment. In the first experience you only want the world; you don't want God. That is usual in the first experience. A normal man's experience is, "I am concerned with the world, and not concerned with God." The second experience is, "I am concerned with God, and not with the world. I don't want the world." That is renunciation—*vairagya*, and *tyaga*—giving up. Then comes the third stage when everything is okay. There is no withdrawal, because there is no attachment. There is no attachment and, therefore, no renunciation is called for, because everything is perfectly okay.

Suppose a person has a schizophrenic experience. You know what schizophrenia is? There was a very learned philosopher, a master of all philosophy, Western and

Eastern. But he was in a psychiatric institution, where Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru saw him in the course of his visit to the hospital. The man very learnedly discussed all the schools of philosophy with Pandit Nehru. He spoke beautifully. At the end of their interesting hour, Panditji met the doctor in charge (the Superintendent of the hospital) and asked him why such a learned man, who could discuss philosophy in such an excellently cogent manner, was an inmate of the psychiatric institution. He thought there must be some mistake. The doctor listened to Panditji and said, "You want to know why that man is here? Come with me. I will show you." Together they went back to the philosopher. The doctor put out his finger to touch the patient. Immediately the philosopher screamed, cringing away from the doctor's finger, "Don't touch me! I am made of glass. I will break! Don't touch me." The doctor turned to Pandit Nehru and said, "Now you see why he is here. He may be master of all philosophy and many other things, but he thinks he is made of glass. This is the mental problem that he has."

Now, I have given you an example. When a person thinks he is made of glass, the purpose is to give him medication so that he may realise that he is not glass, i.e. the consciousness is withdrawn from the so-called imaginary object which is glass. That is called renunciation. You are saying this is a tree, this is a mountain, this is my father, this is my mother, this is my property, this is my land, this is my building. This is exactly the kind of identification which that man did. In his imagination, he was a thing which was not. There is no tree, father, etc. They are all

imaginations in the mind, just as there is nobody who is made of glass. So you are treated by an antidote that is called *vairagya*. The withdrawal is what is called renunciation; and you go to a chapel, or a monastery, or a desert, renouncing everything. That is an antidote you are giving to this wrong feeling that something is yours. When you come to the consciousness that you are not the body made of glass or that you are not the building, tree, etc., you are in the second stage. You realise that you are a human being made of flesh and blood. But afterwards, that medicine of renunciation is not necessary. You need not repeat the injection.

So once you come back to the realisation that things are what they are, the attitude of renunciation becomes irrelevant and is not applicable any more. What are you renouncing? You have already renounced the wrong idea, and the right idea has come, and so further renunciation of things is not called for. Thereafter you live under normal conditions. The first stage is wrong thinking, the second stage that of medication—not meditation, but medication. The third stage is the normal realisation.

Now, in which condition are you? Each one should understand that for himself. We are mostly in the first stage, with a little of the second stage mixed in. Some seventy-five percent is the first stage, and twenty-five percent is the second stage. The third stage has not yet come, and it may not come in this birth. God knows in which birth it will come. We think wrongly, and are in need of an antidote. That antidote is this medication in the form of spiritual study, going to *satsang*, good company,

renunciation, etc.—all that is usually called the religious life. We always make a distinction between religious life and secular life, just as we say there is a difference between the medication and the illness. But that difference exists only as long as there is illness, and when the illness goes, the medicine does not come into question at all.

So you have a tremendous hope of transcending the first stage, where you believe that this is only a building. You cannot say it is but a building. You may read any scripture, but you cannot get out of the idea that this is a building of bricks and that it is your house, your garden, your plantation. Who can renounce this idea? However religious you may be, however spiritual you may be, however God-fearing you may be, you will still say that this is my garden, etc. This idea will not go. So for most people in the world, real religion has not started yet. It is still in the preliminary stage of spirituality. But when you come to the decision that this is not correct and you require a rectification of this idea, you decide to undergo the tremendous discipline of the practice of yoga.

Now you are in the second stage. Even the practice of yoga is not a healthy condition, just as the necessity to take medicine is not a healthy state. The medicine must be continued because you are still sick, but you cannot say it is a natural condition and go on taking it indiscriminately. Likewise, meditation and yoga are not natural conditions. They are necessary as an antidote, as a counteracting element for your earlier mistake. These clash with each other and cancel each other. Then there is neither illness nor medicine. So is the case with the practice of yoga and

meditation. You don't go on meditating that you are the daughter of so and so. You know that, so there is no need to meditate on it. Why were you meditating? To make this clear. If a thing is clear, then you don't need to meditate on it. Why meditate on the fact that it is daytime? It is very clear that it is daytime. Are you going on meditating—it is day time, it is day time, it is day time? Why would you do that? It is foolishness. Only if a thing is not clear, then you need to think it out. If a new vision comes in, no renunciation is needed, for there is no attachment, and when the third stage comes and everything becomes so clear, then no practice of yoga is necessary. No meditation. No God-realisation. No *bhakti*. No devotion. Nothing. They are all only methods, like medicines and drugs.

This is what the Zen master said. In the beginning it is a tree—a mistaken notion. In the second stage it is not a tree; withdraw yourself from the idea. You are now in the third stage and so, due to the new vision that has come, a tree is a tree. You are seeing the same person, but now with the idea “I am not glass, but a human body.” The mistaken idea has been rectified; your question has been answered. The Viswarupa is only the second stage, where it is a counteracting force for Arjuna's wrong notion. Things are not different from one another. They are all integrated in a Cosmic whole. That is what is shown in the Viswarupa. But afterwards, what happens? You have to continue to live in the world. When that Cosmic consciousness tells you that nothing is separate from anything else and that there is no need to abolish that duality, because that duality does not

exist, then the idea of duality has gone completely from you, and you are free after this realisation.

Suppose your eyes are microscopes instead of the physically normal eyes that God has given you; then you wouldn't see bricks and trucks, you would see only atoms. If nature had made your eyes like microscopes, you would not struggle to get out of the idea that everything is just atoms. You would have eyes with which you could see things as they are, and there would be no question of having to practice yoga to get that vision because it would be your normal condition. This is what has been said in the last six chapters of the Bhagavadgita which state that we are on a dangerous path because we are asked to see the spirit—the soul—through everything, and be spiritual. Spirituality is a dangerous path, in view of the desperations you have to pass through while traversing it. If you think of it, you will not even go near it; it is such a terrible thing. “Namaskar, I go my way!” you will say.

Suppose you have to suffer like Christ. Will you like to pass through that stage? You will say, “I don't want to go. Maybe next time, but not now. Now I cannot undergo all this suffering.” But it is absolutely necessary. You cannot escape it if you want God. He comes like fire, like the Ocean, like the wind, and you cannot stand the wind or the ocean or the fire; it is not possible with your ordinary human strength. You would like a very delicious cup of coffee or a glass of apple juice. But He does not come like that. In the beginning—in the first stage—everything is satisfactory for the body. The body and the ego are our enemy. We have no

other enemy in the world. These two will not want to give themselves up in favour of spirituality and God.

Visitor: But the body exists only because of the ego.

Swamiji: Yes, the body is the outer expression of the ego. The body is a gross form and the ego its subtle form. These are your two troubles. Hunger, thirst and sleep are all problems of the gross form, the physical body. Who can bear them? If these three attack you, you cannot resist them; nor can you exist without them. That is the body ego problem. You know what the ego is. If everybody called you an idiot, you would not like being called such names. You would think that it is better to go away somewhere, instead of continuing to live here. But at the time of going, the going is with such force that it looks as if the disease is made worse—like in Homeopathic treatment.

This is the same case when the need arises to surrender to God in every instance, like Jesus did. You cannot understand this ordeal by reading any book on philosophy, because philosophers are not saints. They are only expounders of the logical implications of your problems. If you read the lives of saints, you will come to know how to meet such problems. Read about Buddha or Christ, and about the Desert Fathers. You must have heard of the Desert Fathers, who lived in the deserts of Egypt. The worst that can confront you is not to be wanted by anybody; it is the worst experience you can imagine. Even hunger and thirst are not as bad as the feeling that nobody wants you. You cannot live with it even for a day longer. You cannot understand what such a wretched feeling means, unless you go through that stage. You know what hunger is by being

hungry. You won't know what hunger means, what poverty means, by reading a book. Only a poor man knows what poverty means. A rich man cannot read a book on poverty and understand it. You would rather go to hell than live a life where no one wants you. You would pray to God to throw you into hell, which you would say is better.

Do you now understand why? Why doesn't God come, though you pray so much? It is because you do not want that kind of God who gives such wretched problems. You want a God who speaks nicely, smiles, and is motherly. Your illness is so intense that the medicine must be equally intense. It has become chronic, and it is such an illness that no medicine on earth can cure. It requires surgical operation of a divine type as makes you pray God to give hell rather than this type of help. And God is prepared to help you if you consent to be treated thus and surrender yourself to Him and accept His ways. Nothing will be achieved through the ordinary routine meditation, because you have a subtle lurking feeling that you belong to this world still, and you don't belong entirely to God even when you meditate. You say, "God, I will meditate on you, but still don't take me away from the world!" That is the ego speaking; that is the desire of the ego to exist without an end—never to die.

Visitor: Are the world and God not different?

Swamiji: Yes, they are! You always make a distinction. You cannot say they are identical. If they were identical, it would be even worse for you. You cannot believe that people are God to you. You would rather divide them as separate from God, and keep the meditation for the temple and the world

for shops, etc. If you believe they are identical, you have to behave with the shopkeeper as God Himself would. It is very difficult to imagine what that would be, and you are not prepared to undergo that ordeal, which is a great experience. What you say is worse than the alternative. To behave like a judge in the Court and a father in the house is better than to be like a judge everywhere. You cannot exist like that. It is a very difficult thing to do. If you are a judge even to your wife and children and to the shopkeeper, they will say that you are a horrible man. A judge is an ordinary customer to a shopkeeper even though he is a judge in the Supreme Court. Of course, if you can become like that and you can bear the consequences of behaving like the Divine Being—the same everywhere and with everything—wonderful! In that case, you are immediately in the soup, in one second. Your identity is in God, and you don't want to slip back all that quickly. But slowly, perhaps?

There is another thing. Sometimes you would like to do something to get out of all these confusing problems, but in trying to do that something, you don't know whether you are acting out of your volition or whether God is impelling you to do it, and this becomes another problem for you. You cannot immediately make a distinction between God's impulsion and your ego. You will say, "Well, I am going to the mountain top for meditation. I am not going to live in this terrible city of noise and foolishness." Now, who is telling this? If God is ordering you to do it, very good; he will help you at the top of the mountain. But you may be doing it for some other reason. It may be that you are unable to bear the pain of living in the midst of anti-social

persons. It is a pain, isn't it? And you are trying to avoid the pain. That will be a subtle psychological reason behind your getting out of the city and wishing to sit on a mountain top. But it is possible that there are worse things on the top of the mountain. So are you going to the mountain top because you want God, or is it because you don't want pain? Which is the reason? These are all very subtle matters which cannot easily be left out on the basis of simple assumptions.

Visitor: But Swamiji, God is supposed to want to receive us with open arms. He is pulling us to Him all the time.

Swamiji: He wants to receive You, with a capital Y; He does not want the lower y. He wants you, the real you. He doesn't want the legal you or the social you or the gender you—the masculine or feminine you. That is not the real you; it is the unreal you. You ask only for the unreal God when your prayer is conditioned by the footnote “provided that...” The proviso of the law usually takes the edge off the law. Yes! Now it is clear why God does not come when you pray, “I am thine” etc, is it not?

Visitor: Yes, now it is clear why God does not come.

Swamiji: You want God. Who are you? Tell me. When you do *japa* by rolling the beads, God will tell you to mind your business and not trouble Him unnecessarily!

Visitor: And will He also tell me what my business is?

Swamiji: (*laughs*) When you tell a man “mind your business”, your intention is to get rid of the man. Mind your business is an idiomatic way of speaking. He does not tell you what the business is. He means, “I don't want you to talk to me. Don't interfere with me unnecessarily.” There

is no mystic greater than God. He is the highest mystic. That is why Lord Krishna is depicted as a tremendously naughty boy. Otherwise, why would the incarnation of God be depicted as mischievous and naughty? That is how Vyasa depicts Lord Krishna. He could have depicted him as a wonderful, beautiful, sympathetic person instead of as a very mischievous and troublesome element! It is a spiritual interpretation of God's attitude towards us that the author has given us. He married a thousand wives, He was a householder, and yet He is described as a Brahmachari. Every social law is broken in His life. He has His own law, and His law is a super law, with which social laws have to be consonant.

Visitor: How can yoga practice get us strength?

Swamiji: Your affiliation to God is your strength. It will save you in this life, and in your future life also. What I am telling you is yoga, without giving it a label, yet it includes all the yogas. You want a living yoga which is helpful in your practical existence, not a yoga only for demonstration or for an institution. This is a thing with which you can exist and keep yourself balanced and happy and without any complaint against anything. The yogi sees everything in its proper place. When you see a thing misplaced and then complain, it is not yoga. Yoga is nothing but a comprehensive outlook on things. Yoga is not just the Bhagavadgita; it is not just the Upanishad. You may call it by any name you like. But because of the weakness of the mind and the incapacity of the understanding to grasp all aspects, you cannot be a comprehensive person. You always miss some points, and then say something is wrong. If you

see every point, you will say that everything is okay. You will have perfect peace. Your peace will spread as an aura of peace around you. You will become a magnet of completeness—radiating strength, energy and peace. But if you are a partial being, you become wretched yourself and make others around you also wretched.

Visitor: All right, accepted. But how do I take my pains? Saying that cosmic balance is being set up, that does not help.

Swamiji: Your suffering is due to lack of understanding! Ah yes! It is the philosophy of Madhusudan Saraswati. Have you heard of this man? Madhusudan Saraswati was a great scholar and saint who lived about a hundred or two hundred years ago. He was a master of philosophy, and also a great devotee of Lord Krishna. He was a *jnana* yogi and a *bhakti* yogi. He believed only in Krishna and in nothing else.

Visitor: The intellect and heart joined together.

Swamiji: Everything; that is the sign of greatness. He can be reconciled with anything; he is not an irreconcilable personality. He never refuses anything. He never rejects anything. He does not disbelieve anything. He does not say anything is wrong. That is the sign of greatness. Everything is okay and in its proper place, at the proper time, in the given circumstances. So this is, again, yoga.

Visitor: But, Swamiji, it is said that Lord Krishna's ways, his *lilas* in his *avatar* were all a breaking of social norms, so to speak. And that was said to be a spiritual interpretation, an explanation of God's attitude to man. How can it be a spiritual interpretation?

Swamiji: Because, to say that the water of the Ganges is very cold is just a human attitude. But God does not say it is very cold, because it is not cold. It is cold only to your skin. To the fish in the Ganges, it is not cold. So is Ganges water really cold? Tell me. Now you can very well see that your statement is not correct; for any statement society makes is partial. How can God take it as perfect? You may be right from your skin's point of view in saying that the Ganges water is cold, but the fish do not say it is cold. The fish do not want a blanket or a quilt, because they have adjusted themselves to the atmosphere. You cannot adjust yourself to it in the same manner. And if the temperature of your body is the same as the temperature outside, you will not say it is winter. So all social laws, personal predilections are judgments made on the basis of experiences from the point of view of your present state of personality, and they need not be correct. They cannot be correct, because they are partial.

You will not see things as before. If you have a microscopic eye, you will not see the wall in front of you. You will not see the building; you will see only vibrations. You will see electrons and protons, and if I tell you it is a building, you will ask where the building is. You will not be able to see any building. But God has given you a very gross eye, and so you see a large structure. So, who is correct? Is the microscope correct or are you correct? The circumstances are different and you speak from different levels of being. God speaks from all comprehensiveness.

Visitor: What is the ear or the eye with which we should see His *lilas* so that we understand His purpose?

Swamiji: You understand your level of existence first. You speak from your level only. Do not overestimate yourself and try to see as God sees at the comprehensive level.

Visitor: You mean to say, what I cannot understand I should leave alone?

Swamiji: You should not try to disturb your present feelings. The disturbance arises on account of the fact that you try to overcome the limits of your feelings. Whether they are right or not is a different matter. They may be right. They are right only as long as they are incapable of transcendence. When they are capable of transcendence, they become wrong. When you are dreaming, the objects that you see in the dream are real. But now they are not real, because you have transcended them. So when I say it is real or unreal, it depends upon the point of view, the level of being from which I speak. You cannot get over the idea that you are a human being. But it is not true that you are a human being ultimately. You are something else. You are a unit in the Cosmic Force; but you cannot understand it. It is no use talking about it. So what is your present state? I am a human being. You cannot forget that you are an Indian. You cannot forget that you are a woman. All these are false notions ultimately. But when you realise that you are not a woman, then your law changes and you speak in a different language and you experience different things.

So long as your feelings and your conditions are inseparable from your present level of understanding, you have to follow only that law. That is what Bhagavan Krishna says in the Gita: Do not disturb the present state of affairs nor speak to others from your point of view of God. Their point

of view may be quite different; do not disturb that. You have to go stage by stage, from one level to another. All yoga is transcendence and not negation. You do not negate anything; you transcend it. You should understand the difference between negation and transcendence. You do not negate the nature of a child, but you transcend it when you become an adult. When a child behaves in a particular manner, you do not call it a stupid behaviour. It is a valid behaviour on that level. But if you now behave like a baby, it is invalid. You have transcended it. Work on that level till you transcend it. And when you fulfil the law of that level, you will automatically be liberated from that bondage, which would mean that you have taken to another level. And then you work on that level. Like that, you go higher and higher until you reach the Absolute. You should be a happy person at every level. You must always be friendly and happy and balanced and coordinated with every type of atmosphere; that is your wisdom, the wisdom of life. Never reject, never disagree, never become irreconcilable and never be intolerant.

Visitor: It is very difficult to decide at what point one should act. I increase my sufferings which could have been forestalled if I could have had...

Swamiji: That is due to ignorance. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. Every law is a kind of system which has a reaction.

Visitor: Swamiji spoke of intolerance. That is exactly the point I want to know. Up to what point should you tolerate?

Swamiji: No limit to tolerance. Christ also suffered due to his goodness. But you cannot say he did a wrong thing. And you will be taken care of by other forces which will not let you feel at ease. If because you follow a system of perfection and due to that you suffer, well, really you will not suffer; it is a mistaken notion. If you follow the law from the level on which you are, then you will not suffer.