

The Art of Relaxation

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This morning: "The Art of Relaxation." It's a very important subject, and it really is the art of ridding yourself of tension. That's the point.

Tension has become, "Oh, I read it in the paper, and I hear it on the radio, and, and uh, that seems to be the subject." But very few really know how to get rid of it. "The Art of Relaxation" is, knowing first, what tension is, and then being rid of it, because tension is at the, is the basis of all our trouble. Tension means that within us there is a turmoil going on due to the lack of control of the Consciousness and Cosmic Energy within us. That's all it is; that and the fact that when we think we are relaxed, if you will observe carefully within yourself, you are not relaxed at all. It's like trying to fill a bottle full when you've got it half-full to start with. There's Life Force left within you, that is not controlled, and that is what causes fatigue. Remember that now.

If you're tired, what is the reason? That within your muscles, and tissues, there is a lot of stagnant Life Force that should be gotten out. Then fill the bottle up clean, with new clean Life Force. That is a very important point. Remember, fatigue isn't, many times, what you think it is. It is the fact that Life Force, residual Life Force, remains within your tissues, and that is what causes you fatigue, to be fatigued.

So the definition of relaxation is, according to this dictionary: "to make more lax; to loosen; to slacken." But scientifically, it is, as I have pointed out, "recalling the attention, or controlling the Life Force and consciousness at will." You can, if you'll practice Self-Relaxation Fellowship Yoga, be able to loosen the attachment on you of this Life Force, which keeps you jittery – moving all around – not only in body, but in mind; and it keeps the Soul clouded by the movement going on there. You'll be able to, at will, be calm and relaxed. But it takes practice.

Consciousness and Life Force are the key points in all things. In all of your activity you perform it by the consciousness in you plus the Life Force. Of course, sometimes it becomes automatic. But nevertheless, nevertheless, it was the conscious application of Life Force that formed the habit. And remember those two things: Consciousness and Life Force are the basis of all activity, and

also the control of consciousness and Life Force is at the basis of all relaxation – very important thing. If you put your hand on your muscle, those of you who know it, you can, by will, send the Consciousness and Energy there. That's the key to all relaxation. You can, by control of consciousness and the Life Force, remove the Life Force from that part, or any part of your body, that is half-filled up with Life Force, and is in the state of fatigue. It is a very important subject and point. That's why I'm dwelling on it for just a little.

Now, you sit upright, and you close your eyes. Now you feel relaxed, don't you? But you are not relaxed. The stagnant Life Force within you, unless you're an advanced student, and know Self-Realization Yoga, and know what to do. But you can, by the teachings of Self-Realization Fellowship, remove that stagnant Life Force, and then fill it with fresh Cosmic Energy of God and His Consciousness. That's what you can do. Now, you're sitting there, you feel relaxed. But you observe closely within yourself, don't you feel the tension still there? That's what causes fatigue; that one thing.

Now, by the techniques of Self-Realization Fellowship, you can control the Life Force and remove that, through the simple techniques, which I will not go into, except to say it can be done. But one thing I will point out, as you sit there now, you've lift your consciousness to the Christ Center. You lift it now, fully, as much as you can concentrate there. Let go everything, and you'll feel the Life Force leave the tissues of your body, if you can do it with strength and with will. It can be done, after you're used to it, at will, so that you will never feel that fatigue within you.

Of course, sometimes it cannot be done right off; it takes practice. But it can be done. Why? Why? Because when you put your attention at this point [the point between the eyebrows], where does the Life Force go? I mean when you put it there, having removed the obstructions, and the attachment of your attention to the body, why does it, why does the tension leave you? Because as you look at this point, you contact the Great Attractive Force of God Himself, His Love. And what happens? It pulls the Life Force back into your spine and up through the Supreme Lotus in the brain, and you are thoroughly relaxed.

Now that's something which can be attained, and can be practiced, and can be accomplished, and can be done, by will; but you have to go step-by-step. Unless you have been going step-by-step, and have attained control of Consciousness and Energy, you cannot do it. But, you can feel, if you concentrate, right this minute, enough, and feel, and think of God enough, as the Source of all

Consciousness and Energy; you will feel it leave the tissues of your body, and you feel the Peace of His Presence, showing you that the Life Force has retired to the spine, and is going upward toward God in the cranium, or in the Supreme Center of the brain. That's a point, please do not forget. That, if you wanna be rid of tension, first learn how to control the Consciousness and Energy of God in you. That's His Presence – nothing else. The Presence of God is the Consciousness and Energy made dynamic to your being.

When that Brother Lawrence practiced the Presence of God, he made Divine Consciousness, Divine to, dynamic to, himself. And he felt, he felt instead of his body, with all the Life Force scattered all through it, he withdrew it to the spine and the Supreme Centers of the brain, and he felt the Presence of God. That can be done with the practice of yoga, especially Self-Realization Fellowship Yoga.

And one wonderful thing is, if you can control one, if you can control the Life Force, the Energy, the Consciousness travels right along with it. Isn't that a wonderful thing? So, if you can put your consciousness at this point [between the eyebrows], with determination of will, the Life Force will run right back to the spine and up to God. They both go together. They are never separated; no more than you can separate the fire and the burning power. You cannot do it, can you? You cannot.

So can you separate God? Of course, His Manifestations are many. Look at those beautiful poinsettias. But they came from the Consciousness of God plus the Burning Power, or His Energy. So it is within us: Consciousness and Energy go together. That's the key to the practice of yoga; control the Life Force in the body, and your consciousness, instead of being trapped in outward things and in this bodily vehicle, returns home to God where it belongs. Self-Realization Yoga is very important, very wonderful.

And so, many people are filled with tension, because of worries, and frustrations, and such things. Why? The balance is too much on the duality side of existence, and not enough on the Spiritual side. We live too much in worldly consciousness. We must live more actively associated, and in contact with God's Consciousness and Energy within. That's our Divine Nature. Just that little difference makes you either a human being, or a Divine Being. Now, which do you want? You can only want one thing, if you are at all sensible. That is to consciously know God, His Presence within you, as His Consciousness, plus His Life Force or Energy.

Now, to be able to do what I have just pointed out to you, that is to lift your consciousness, and, at this point [the Spiritual Eye], and with such determination and will, it requires what? Concentration; it requires concentration, that's all. Yoga gives you that power. Self-Realization Fellowship Yoga gives you the power to force more Life Force into your muscles and tissues, or withdraw it. Release the attachment, so to speak. That's the whole thing. And this applies especially to mind, which I will come to in a moment, and to the mental aspect of yourself.

What is the trouble there? When your mind is restless you have not controlled the Life Force and Energy, and it stagnate, and underneath is growing a little jitteriness all the time, keeping you in misery. That's why Master emphasized so much, "The lake of the mind must be stilled." "The lake of the mind must be stilled." None of this oscillation, which makes us run around, subject to its rules and the dictates of your mind. That isn't what we should do. We should be able, at will, to look at this point, and still the waves of the mind, and be one with the Infinite Presence of God expanded all over. It can be done. It can be done. If you want freedom from tension, learn to do that. Learn to do that which is your birthright; to know, instantly, the Stillness of God's Presence, and not be bound by this little bodily vehicle.

And that's what the definition says, "recalling the attention." That is, it's all out through our body, through everything, and we think we are this body. But when we are able to loosen the attachment, recall it to the spine and brain where God dwells, then we will know as long, as Lord Shankara says, "I am He, I am He, Blessed Spirit I am He." That's why in our prayer we always say, "I'm not this body." We say it over and over and over again. And why? Because, we still think we are, that's all. And gradually, it'll permeate through our consciousness and we'll make the effort. Then we will know, instead of being this body, we are the Infinite Presence of God within. That's "The Art of Relaxation." Releasing the attachment of consciousness, which makes us seem to be this body, and then applying it where we want to apply it – on the Presence of God within. Concentration is a very important thing.

And so, to do what I pointed out means, we must develop concentration. And by the developing of concentration, we can free our attention from not only the body, but from the mind, and, finally, from the deep organic processes within our body, which tie us so securely, that we think we die. These are facts. These are important facts. When you have loosened the attachment of the tension to your body, and then from the mind, and then, finally, so deep do you

concentrate that you loosen it from the organic aspect of your body, deep within; then you'll be without breath, or the internal functions; you'll be, then, fully alive. That's real relaxation. That's what we can do by simply following those, the Great Sages, who attained that relaxation, and, especially, our Master, who was an adept at it. Not only at that, but was one with God. So we have a wonderful teacher, let us not forget that.

And, also, one other thing; not only will we be able to free our attention from the body, but from the mind; which is so terrible at times, keeping us attached, taking away our freedom and our peace. And lastly, we can remove that consciousness, which makes us feel that we are this body, and keep, keeps us in ignorance, as to what we truly are. That is what we must do; and to know that is "The Art of Relaxation."

I have a reference, at this time, from our Master, which I'll give you, pointing out that the Recharging Exercises of our Work, the relaxing exercises, will help you to free the body from tension. The other exercises of our Work, which I will not take the time to tell you about, will help you to release tension from your mind. And the final techniques, especially Raja Yoga, will help you to once and for all free your attachment to this body. Then you can say with Lord Shankara, "I am He, I am He, Blessed Spirit I am He." So, follow, if you wish to be free from tension and fully relaxed to the Presence of God. Follow; follow the teachings of Self-Realization Fellowship. They come from ancient times. Yoga is age-old. But, if you follow it, then you'll know. Do not take my word for it, or anybody's word for it. Follow, practice; then, you will know. But that you *will* know; I can assure you, and there are many in this room who can assure you.

Now, kinds of relaxation, just briefly; there are many kinds of relaxation. You come and flop in a chair. You say, "Oh my, what a day!" You are not relaxed. Within you is that tension I spoke of. Now, there are two, many kinds of relaxation. First is "physical relaxation." Two kinds: incomplete and complete. Incomplete is what? Well, I just spoke of it. Flinging yourself down in a chair; and feeling – feeling, at least – better than when you were running around full of tension. But there is still tension there. Sleep is another way of partial physical relaxation. And fully, full physical relaxation is attained through the techniques of Self-Realization Fellowship, where you withdraw the energy, consciously, from the body parts – all the body parts – and then you are fully relaxed physically.

Now there is “mental relaxation.” You have also there the two factors: partial and complete; partial and complete. Mental relaxation, partial, is sleep. That’s an automatic state. But are you fully relaxed in sleep? If I stick a pin in you, or even just touch you, you’ll wake up. You’re not fully relaxed. But, by the practices of Self-Realization, you can attain conscious relaxation of your mind so that there is no movement in it. Conscious relaxation, not automatic, as in sleep; but you can consciously withdraw the energy so the mind is still. And that relaxation is far greater, far more important to you than sleep, because you fully relax the mind; fully withdraw the Consciousness and Energy – not partially – fully. So those of you who are troubled with insomnia, if you can’t seem to get that sleep to come, if you’ll just do this particular exercise, and consciously control the Life Force, you’ll be more refreshed in the morning than as if you had what you call “a good sleep.” So, relaxation is very important, especially of the mind.

Then we come to the third, the third type of relaxation which is called “metaphysical relaxation,” because it takes in relaxation of the deep organic parts of our body: the heart, the circulation, the lungs, and such things. Those can be relaxed. How can you feel good, if you’re going around puffing away [Doctor breathes heavily into the mic] all the time, and your heart’s pounding away all the time. No wonder ya feel tired. There’s a lot of Life Force left within your heart and your lungs. But by the practices of yoga, especially Raja Yoga, you can withdraw the deep energies within you that control your vital processes, giving them a rest, giving them a rest so that they can heal, if they’re worn out, or becoming worn out, so, at least, they can rest. So, metaphysical relaxation is very important. It is the deep, deepest relaxation; and it is attained by Raja Yoga, especially, the part of Self-Realization Fellowship known as Kriya Yoga.

Kriya Yoga relaxes you deeply, deeply within. It is called “conscious, sensory-motor, organic relaxation.” That’s too much for you to remember. Remember it is called “conscious death.” Now, you won’t die, in the ordinary sense. You’ll be more awake than you ever were. Why? Because you have withdrawn the Consciousness and Energy – not only from the body, with the muscles and bones and so forth – but from the deep internal organs, allowing you to rest, and allowing you to place that consciousness in the spine, and up in the Supreme Brain where God and His Angels dwell. That’s the complete relaxation; and that’s the final relaxation until you do die. But die, for heaven’s sakes, consciously! Not be pushed into death; but die conscious of the process of death. You can do it right in this life. Why wait until we’re thrown out into death, and then in an unconscious way.

We are children of God, made in His Image. Why not learn to die consciously? There's nothing to be afraid [of]. How can God die? How can you die, being a part of Him, being His children? You cannot die. You're afraid of it, that's all. Let's not be afraid any longer. Let's practice these great techniques, which help us to remove the Life Force and Consciousness from our body, giving us conscious contact with God, giving us Conscious Realization, that we can never die, that we are Divine in Nature. These things are possible. Don't say those are things are imaginary. They are not. They are conscious, they are possible, and can be accomplished by will.

Now, at this time, say just a word about "mental relaxation." Mental relaxation is very important, because, I think, in these times it is that tension which people feel. If they could just get rid of that tension, if they could just still the waves of the mind, and have, that some say, "If I could just have one moment's peace." Well that's a fact, because their mind is restless. Mind is nothing but the operation of Consciousness and Energy in a certain definite way. Your mind is nothing but the action of your own consciousness plus the Energy within you as the faculty called mind. Now, if you can control it, you will have peace. If you cannot, you'll have misery. So, the mental detachment, as I have called it, is very important. And I know you all will agree with me on that one particular point. Mental detachment is absolutely necessary. With the mind restless, confusion there, you cannot have peace. But it is possible, by following the techniques which I have spoken about, just briefly. It is possible, at will, when you are mentally like that, and restless, and wish you were some other place than where you are, you can lift your consciousness to the Christ Center, and, at will, be one with the Infinite Presence of God, as Peace and Bliss. There'll be no mental restlessness. You cannot beat it. There'll be no tension.

Now, if tension bothers you enough, you wanna be rid of it, do these things and you will prove this to yourself. Mental detachment is the thing we must understand – mental detachment. And that comes, of course, from nagging worries, consciousness of duty, and a million things. Why? Because you do not control your mind, that's all. You do not control the Life Force and Consciousness that's operating. And all these things come in upon us. I don't need to enumerate them. You know them. There are a million things: the mind with all its memories of ages; not only ages, lives, and lives. As our Master has

said, "The thoughts of all men, past, present, and future are there (sic)."¹ What a job we've got to control this mind. But it can be done easily, if you break the Dream of God. He is Dreaming this thing, and our mind is a part of it. If you break the Dream of God, really break it, like you break your own when you wake up in the morning, there'll be no Dream – only God's Consciousness, His Great Peace and His Bliss, freedom from all tension. These are facts. They're worth working for.

And I will give you a reference, at this time, from our Master's Autobiography of a Yogi. A wonderful reference! I want you to listen carefully. "Yoga is a method of restraining the natural turbulence of the thoughts..."² All men are born in delusion. "All men walk the earth wholly deluded."³ Think of what the scriptures say. What chance have we? But in the next line it says: "O Arjuna, get out of my delusion." We can get out of it. "Yoga is a method for restraining the natural turbulence of thoughts, which otherwise impartially prevents all men, of all lands, from glimpsing their true nature. The goal of yoga science is to calm the mind, that without distortion, it may hear the infallible counsel of the Inner Voice."

You see what an important thing it is to relax the mind. You now, as you're sitting here, feel very peaceful. Why not take it with you in everything you do? You can do it. It takes a little practice, but, if you start, and then give up at the first obstruction, naturally, you won't attain. Make up your mind. "I'm sick of this business of being separated from God." "I want to know I'm one with God every moment." Then, carry it through. And so, these things are very important.

And finally, the highest form is, as I have said, of relaxation, is "metaphysical aspect" wherein you loosen your attachment to this bodily vehicle, which cause, causes so much trouble; and to your mind, which you cannot control most of the time; and, finally, you release your Soul from bondage to freedom, which it is, which it is entitled to, freedom of God's Presence. That's the greatest thing. And with that, what happens? With that comes the Realization that you were never apart from God. You only thought you were. And you realize that you are not

¹ Autobiography of a Yogi, Paramhansa Yogananda, Revision 1951, Chapter 14, Page 153, from the Poem "Samadhi," Line 15, "Thoughts of all men, past, present, to come"

² Ibid, Chapter 24, Page 232, "Yoga is a method for restraining the natural turbulence of thoughts, which otherwise impartially prevents all men, of all lands, from glimpsing their true nature of Spirit."

³ The Bhagavad Gita or The Lord's Song, by Dr. Annie Besant, 1939, 7th Discourse, 27th Line, "By the delusion of the pairs of opposites, sprung from attraction and repulsion, O Bhārata, all beings walk this universe wholly deluded, O Parantapa."

apart from Him – not separated. And in that, you will find fulfillment of all things you could ever think of, or want, or desire.

Everybody is there, because there is only one God and His Consciousness. All your relatives are there; but this delusion makes you think that they are not there. They're there, there, there, and there. They're in the Presence of God. There's only One Consciousness; but you have to break the Dream to realize it. Metaphysical relaxation will help you break the Dream that you are apart from God. And it'll help you realize, on the positive side, that you never were apart from Him. He is; and you are. There's only One God and Consciousness; and that's your birthright, that's my birthright, if we will but really want it, and do something about it.

I'd like to give you another of Master's reference here, references here. Listen carefully. "When the walls of a reservoir are destroyed," the Master said in his little book, The Master Said, "...the waters rush out in all directions. Similarly, when the limitations of restlessness and delusion are removed by meditation, the consciousness of man spreads out to infinity, and merges in the Omnipresence of Spirit." How wonderful! Just by a little control of Consciousness and Energy, of which I have been seek, speaking; just by fully relaxing yourself from attachment to this vehicle, with separation from God, as our Master says, then by meditation, "...the consciousness of man spreads out to infinity and merges in the Omnipresence of Spirit. Blessed Spirit, help me to subdue the incessant ripples of the little wave of my life that Thine Oceanic Vastness spread over me."

And in that state, when you break the Cosmic Dream, as Master says, you will realize: "Gone forever are the fitful flickerings of mortal memory (sic).⁴" Think of it. "Spotless is my mental sky – beneath, in front and high above, eternity and I, one united ray, the little bubble of ego has become the sea of bliss itself (sic).⁵"

⁴ Autobiography of a Yogi, Ibid, Page 154

"...Gone forever, fitful flickering shadows of mortal memory;
Spotless is my mental sky, below, ahead, and high above;
Eternity and I, one united ray.

A tiny bubble of laughter, I
Am become the Sea of Mirth Itself."

⁵ Ibid.