

MIP

MAKING IT PERSONAL



FINDING SERENITY · SATSANG ONE

Beyond the Human Roller Coaster

Yogic Remedies for Depression and Anxiety

EDITED TEACHING TRANSCRIPT · WITH TITLES AND STUDY NOTES

Om Namah Sivaya

The human roller coaster

Life continues, while the mind creates one drama after another

Nothing stops. The sun continues to shine, the seasons continue to move in their course, and everything continues to happen. Yet every time, the mind discovers another reason for a tantrum, another reason for a great drama.

From that drama comes a deep anxiety: What will happen? What if? Oh my God - this is the end. I am done. The mind rises into excitement, contracts into anxiety, and then collapses into depression. Again and again, the same movement repeats.

“Excitement, anxiety, depression - and then all over again. We call it the human roller coaster.”

Small crises and absolute crises

With a small difficulty, we may eventually say, “It is not such a big deal. Tomorrow will be another day.” A pimple is not a catastrophe. A disappointment is not the end of existence. But then come the large questions - the situations in which the mind insists that this time it truly is the end.

The Bhagavad Gita begins precisely there. It does not begin with lightweight spiritual exercise. It begins with the heavy lifting of human existence.

What anxiety is

Fear multiplied by an uncontrolled interpretation

Anxiety is basically a form of fear that is getting out of control. Fear itself is an emotional reaction based on apprehension. We do not only fear death; we fear any kind of loss.

The object may be a person, a relationship, health, money, status, beauty, youth, certainty, belonging, or a picture of ourselves. The mind looks ahead, imagines separation from what it values, and then reacts to that imagined future as though it were already present.

“Fear begins with the apprehension of loss.”

The event and the interpretation

The event is one thing. The visceral interpretation of the event is another. When the interpretation becomes total - when it says, “I cannot bear this; everything is over” - fear expands into anxiety.

This does not mean that pain is imaginary. The emotion is a real experience. Yoga asks us to examine the conclusion hidden inside it: If this changes, am I destroyed? If this is lost, is everything lost?

The two movements of loss

Anxiety before the loss; grief after the loss

When loss is anticipated, the mind calls it anxiety. It projects itself forward and suffers a future that has not yet arrived. When loss appears to have taken place, the heart experiences grief.

PERCEIVED THREAT	Something I depend on may change.
FEAR	I may lose what makes me safe or complete.
ANXIETY	The possible loss is lived in advance.
GRIEF	The loss is experienced as present.

The question beneath the emotion

Every fear carries a hidden conviction: “I am what can be taken from me.” The spiritual inquiry begins when we ask whether this conviction is completely true.

“That which can be lost is not ultimately real; that which is real cannot be lost.”

The heaviest existential question

What do we do with death?

There comes a point where reassurance is no longer enough. We may say, “Tomorrow will be another day,” but what about the biggest question? What happens after death? How do we deal with death - our own death and the death of those we love?

This is the crisis of Arjuna. He is not upset about a small personal inconvenience. He stands on a battlefield before teachers, relatives, friends, and loved ones. He sees that death and irreversible loss are possible, and his whole system collapses.

Arjuna's symptoms

His body trembles. His mouth dries. His bow slips from his hand. His mind becomes confused, his moral certainty disappears, and he cannot see a right course of action. Anxiety, anticipatory grief, helplessness, and depression arrive together.

The Gita therefore begins as a teaching for a human being whose ordinary psychological supports no longer work. Krishna does not offer distraction. He begins by changing the level from which Arjuna is looking.

Krishna begins the teaching

Bhagavad Gita 2.11-2.12

Krishna tells Arjuna that he grieves for those who should not be grieved for, even while speaking words that sound wise. This is not a rejection of compassion. It is an invitation to distinguish the changing person from the unchanging Self.

“There was never a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor these rulers of men; and there will never be a time when we cease to be.”

What does not come and go?

Bodies appear, change, age, and disappear. Experiences arise and subside. Roles begin and end. But the light of awareness by which change is known is not itself observed as an object that comes and goes.

Krishna directs Arjuna from the visible form toward the reality that makes all experience possible. The teaching does not ask him to become indifferent. It asks him to act without confusing the temporary form with the whole truth of Being.

Study note

Verses 2.11-2.12 mark the transition from Arjuna's collapse to the Vedantic vision of the immortal Self. The emphasis is not on preserving every form, but on recognizing what is never absent.

The ice animals

Many names and forms, one substance

Imagine animals sculpted from ice: a horse, an elephant, perhaps a swan. We point to them and say, “This is a horse; this is an elephant; this is a swan.” At the level of shape, the distinctions are real and useful.

Then the ice begins to melt. The horse disappears. The elephant disappears. The swan disappears. We may say that the animals have been lost. Yet what has actually happened to the substance? Nothing essential has been destroyed. The water remains.

“Names and forms change. The underlying reality remains.”

Nama-rupa: name and form

Vedanta uses the expression nama-rupa: name and form. The mind attaches to a particular configuration and believes that the configuration is the whole reality. When the configuration changes, it concludes that reality itself has vanished.

The ice analogy invites a subtler vision. We do not deny the horse, elephant, or swan. We recognize that each is a temporary appearance of one substance.

The stage and backstage

Live the role without forgetting the actor

On stage, the drama must be taken seriously. The hero struggles, the family separates, the kingdom is threatened, and a character may die. If the actors do not enter their roles, there is no play.

Backstage, another truth is known. The actor who “died” on stage has not died. The costume can be removed. The relationship between characters does not define the entire reality of the people who played them.

“Play your role fully, but remember the awareness behind the role.”

Engagement without imprisonment

Spiritual knowledge is not an excuse to withdraw from life. Arjuna must still understand his responsibility and act. The difference is that action no longer comes from the panic of a separate identity trying to preserve every form forever.

We care, serve, love, grieve, decide, and participate. But somewhere within, we remember the backstage: the silent awareness that is not reduced to the role currently being played.

Two levels of reality

From relative perception to absolute understanding

At the relative level, the world of distinctions matters. A person is not a chair. Kindness is not cruelty. Responsibilities have consequences. Vedanta does not erase this level.

At the absolute level, the many forms are understood as appearances within one indivisible reality. The relative is not rejected; it is seen in context.

01 · RELATIVE PERCEPTION	I am the body-mind in a changing world.
02 · WITNESSING	I am aware of body, thought, and emotion.
03 · DISCERNMENT	What changes cannot be my deepest identity.
04 · ABSOLUTE REALITY	I am the unchanging awareness in which change appears.

The movement is not from humanity to cold abstraction. It is from contraction to spaciousness - from “I am only this vulnerable form” to “I am the awareness in which the form and its whole story are known.”

Integration

Let the teaching meet your present life

The teaching becomes alive when it is applied to the movement of the mind. When anxiety rises, we can pause before following its entire story. We can acknowledge the fear, identify the anticipated loss, and examine the identity that feels threatened.

Questions for quiet reflection

- 01 What loss is my mind rehearsing before it has happened?
 - 02 What meaning have I attached to that possible change?
 - 03 What part of my identity seems to depend upon keeping this form unchanged?
 - 04 What in me is aware of both fear and calm?
 - 05 If my role changes, what remains present?
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“Feel the breath. Name what is changing. Then ask inwardly: What is aware of this change?”

A three-minute practice

Sit steadily. Let the breath become natural. Name, without drama, what is changing. Notice the fear or grief as a movement appearing in awareness. Do not force an answer. Rest for a few breaths as the one who is aware.