



July 1996 Contemplation Theme

The Goal

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Yoga recommends that you set your goal at the highest attainment a human being can reach: being a fully enlightened being in this lifetime. To set your any lower is to settle for so much less that you can never truly be happy. All the other goals of life can be wonderful experiences, but without "Going for the Gold" of enlightenment, you would always feel that something is missing. However, yoga says you must also practice contentment, *santosha*. How can you do both, to go for the highest and to be completely content when you have not yet attained it?

The secret is through understanding yoga's description of the goal of human life. What we call "full enlightenment" is a misnomer, better termed as "self-realized." Upon attaining the highest consciousness of which a human being is capable, every great Master has said that they realized they had always been Consciousness-and-Bliss. You do not become it. You already are it. The key is to simply realize it.

The realized being describes his/her experience as a sublime and continuing experience of supreme contentment. Therefore, to practice contentment now is to place yourself already at your goal. However, there's a Catch 22. If you are content, will you continue to strive for the goal?

There must be a balance between your commitment to the goal and your contentment in the moment. You still must have the zeal that drives you forward into increasing levels of awareness and joy, while you have patience and self acceptance for the ways in which you are not yet enlightened. You need unwavering focus on your goal, while you enjoy compassion and camaraderie with the others who share the path with you.

A great teacher once said that you must let go of all desires on the path to enlightenment, except one. You're allowed to keep your desire for enlightenment itself . . . but only until the last moment. Then, you must let go of even that desire, or it will keep you from seeing that you already are the Self. You need only realize that you are already Consciousness-and-Bliss. Until then, practice contentment. Or simply do more yoga.

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rama".

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