

Kundalini and Drugs

Here, Swamiji mentions the ancient method of awakening kundalini through herbs and explains why it is no longer being used. He also talks about his own experience with drugs, the photographic memory he lost through it and the reason why he believes drugs will never awaken kundalini. Taped at the Scandinavian School of Yoga and Meditation, Stockholm, Sweden in May 1980.

In the tantras, various methods are recommended to awaken the kundalini. One of them is by means of herbs. However, this does not mean drugs. The word used in the texts is 'aushadi', which is translated as herb. In the Vedas and in the history of India and the Aryans, you may have come across references to a substance called soma. People used to extract the juice of a particular creeper plant called soma and take it to induce spiritual experiences. The creeper was only plucked on certain days during the dark fortnight of the moon, then it was placed in an earthen pitcher and buried underground until full moon. On full moon night the pitcher was removed and the juice was extracted and drunk. This brought on visions and experiences of the awakening of higher consciousness.

Similar to soma, there were a few other herbs known in India, but in the course of time they were misused by people who were not prepared to use them correctly. So, to eradicate this danger, knowledge of aushadi was withdrawn. Today we still know about certain herbs for mind expansion, but we do not propagate this knowledge because it is prohibited.

Although so many people are craving kundalini awakening, man does not have sufficient mental, emotional, physical and nervous preparation and control to do so. If he uses drugs, his kundalini might be shaken and it could suddenly wake up, but if his mind and emotions do not cooperate with him, he could have a very harmful experience.

Traditionally, knowledge of aushadi was passed on from guru to disciple, but today gurus do not even teach this subject to their closest sannyasin disciples. Some day, when the nature of man changes and we find better emotional, intellectual, physical and mental responses in him, then the science might again be revealed.

So far as drugs are concerned, I have read and heard a lot about them. The only involvement I ever had with drugs was with marijuana. I did not take it for the sake of awakening kundalini, as I have always firmly believed that marijuana or anything like that cannot really awaken kundalini. However, when I was taking marijuana, or ganja, as we call it in India, I had a definite purpose for it. At that time, I was not in Rishikesh at my guru's ashram. I was living in Gangotri, 10,000 feet above sea level, where the Ganga river emerges. There it snows almost nine months of the year and the water is completely frozen.

I lived at that place for nine months, and every day I smoked ganja and I practised pranayama for seven to nine hours because it was so cold. After some time, it became unbearably cold, and I was forced to come down from the mountain because I didn't have any money, and the room I was staying in was cold and damp. When I finally came down it was discovered that I had tuberculosis. In the course of time I had that treated through natural means, however, due to the use of marijuana, I lost one of the finest gifts nature had endowed me with.

By birth, I had the finest photographic memory, and I was very proud of it. With eyes closed, I could see and read passages from books in the same way you read with your eyes open. If anybody gave a forty five minute lecture in Hindi or English, I could remember each and every word, accent, full stop and comma. I could even reproduce it on the typewriter. That memory was superior, and it was fantastic to be able to reproduce a whole conversation, even including the laughter and accents in brackets. Because of this memory, I was able to learn so much from the ancient texts. However, after my involvement with marijuana, I lost that photostat memory completely. Today I still have a good memory, but it is just average. Therefore, personally, I do not have a very good opinion of drugs.

Sannyasins, sadhus and fakirs in India take ganja from time to time. They put it in a chillum (small clay pipe) and smoke it. They have found that by using ganja, the sexual drive is either eradicated, sublimated or disintegrated. Even householders use ganja for this purpose. I also believe marijuana has many medicinal properties and can improve some aspects of one's health. However, I can assure

you that it is pointless to try and awaken your kundalini through the use of this drug.

Kundalini is an unconscious force and only those methods which dive deep into the unconscious must be employed. Soma could arouse subconscious experiences and could explode or release a range of archetypes in man, but I don't believe that even soma could awaken kundalini.

Supposing you have a bomb. You can't explode it unless you detonate it. There is a particular method for exploding a bomb; it is a science. The same applies to cartridges and bullets. If you forcefully throw a bullet in the air nothing is going to happen. It is only when a particular process is employed that the bullet will detonate and fire. Similarly, awakening of kundalini does not take place by the use of drugs, because they cannot detonate it.

Kundalini is lying dormant in the unconscious layers of the mind and drugs can only penetrate the subconscious layers. Whatever is in the subconscious mind can be brought out, whether it is archetypes, visions, knowledge, telepathy or anything else. However, one has to be able to delve into the unconscious layer of the mind to awaken the kundalini.

