

Lesson 16: Online Education in Yoga by Sri Prashant Iyengar. Answers to Questions Raised by Viewers

Namaskar.

So today also we'll be having a question answer session. Ahh - I'm happy to be having so many questions coming up.

The first question is about – I mentioned that we are not unicellular and we are multi cellular and we have a society within us. Now this is with reference to the moral ethical principles the questioner, asks- that if moral ethical principles have only social reference, they're only practiced in social reference, and they should be practiced in social reference, we are in society, we must practice those; then if we have society within us, does it not entail that we must be still practising morality and ethicality, where I said in the internal realm we don't need it.

And of course, it's simple reason that the society outside us is a society, and each member of the constituent of the society, each member of the society, is not related to us, is perhaps not known to us, most of them are unknown to us, and therefore these behaviour aspects comes up. When you are in front of a unknown person, you will put on a mask. And you will not be putting a mask when you are with your familiar people. But the moment you are out in society, something called as decency, we want to be decent, in society. we want to project that we are decent people. So in society outside us, there is a lot of semblance, we have a lot of semblance, we practice a lot of semblance and that should be practiced of course, to some extent we must be practicing semblance, we cannot be not having any semblance and open book to every member in the society.

So out in the society, the moral ethical principles are definitely required. Ummmm, but while we are in the internal realm of yoga, it doesn't entail that morality-ethicality for simple reason that although, we have a society inside, we are some hundreds of trillions of cells within us, the cells of different function, different calibre, different profiles, different purposes, different functions. which is a society in that way, but that is a society of ours. In a way, in the sense, integral to us. The society outside us as a community – say Indian society- It is not integral to every Indian. This society outside, but we say, we are Indian society, we are American society etc. But within the embodiment, it is integral – they are all integrally ours. Even in the case that you do not know the entire embodiment, like an illiterate person or a child, doesn't know that there is an organ called kidney, an organ called heart, stomach, liver, lungs etc. So they will not be knowing that these are our organs so there is nothing like "Kidney Esquire", "Lungs Esq.", "Heart Esq.", but yet they're integrally theirs. They do not know, but it is. They know that it is very much theirs. So illiterate people, innocent people, ignorant people, uneducated people do not know so many aspects in our body, yet they're integrally theirs. So, within us, it is a different society. It is in true sense "our society". In true sense if you are an Indian, the whole India is not in true sense "your society". If you're an American, if you're a British, in true sense, it is not "your society". Although we say "we are all Britishers", "we are all Americans", "We are all

Indians". **In true sense**, it is not there, the integral aspect is not there. Within the embodiment, all those cells which form a huge populous society are integrally, integrally, ours. And then within ourselves, when we are working within ourselves, where is the question of semblance? Does the mind want to cheat intelligence? Does the intelligence want to cheat mind? Does the physical body want to cheat mental body? Does the mental body want to cheat physical body? So such condition is not there within us. And there is no way to have mask. You can't be - your intelligence can't put a mask for your mind, and vice versa. So, putting on mask is not entailed there. And there is no room for it, it is not needed, it is not even possible. Therefore, the society within us is a totally different structure, where we will be very very candid without even iota of semblance. But when we are out in the world, we can't say there is not even iota of semblance while we are moving with people outside. There's enormous semblance. So within internal realm we don't have it. And therefore, these etiquettes, the decency aspects, do not come, or do not even - are not even needed, when we are in the internal society. We don't need to have etiquettes, the mind doesn't need etiquettes to interact with the intelligence, or body with mind, mind with body, breath with body, breath with mind, they don't need all those things - etiquettes, or decencies - it's an open world inside. Inside society is totally open society, and therefore, the moral ethical principles which we need to practice in social life are not needed in internal social life. Because it's totally different society, totally integral to us. Mutually integral to each other - that's why it is a totally different society and therefore, not moral ethical principles, there are ethico religious principles.

Then there is a question on, about, Pratipaksha Bhavana. Patanjali mentions about Pratipaksha Bhavana. What is Pratipaksha Bhavana? Now you see when in our moral ethical life, when we are practicing truth or practicing ahimsa, whatever these normative principles we are practicing, in case they're violated, we're not tormented. As a matter of fact we have justification, we say why did I speak the untruth? Because it was practicable for me and we try to justify our violation. So whenever these principles are violated, in moral ethical realm, it doesn't prick us.

If I have spoken an untruth for some practical gain and practical purpose, not only we don't have a prick of conscience, but we have justification for having done that. If you have taken recourse to himsa, asatya, etc. etc. these are ... ashaucha, etc etc. So in moral ethical principles, when you are practicing, and they are violated, not only that there is no prick to conscience, there is also justification for that. We will be justifying, we will be giving a narration as to why it was violated, and actually there was no longer violation at all, we did perfectly right. I spoke the untruth and that was perfectly right. I embraced himsa and it was perfectly right. So, the point is when moral ethical principles are violated, basically there is no prick to conscience and moreover there is justification also. **But when suppose you are** in a vow, you have taken a vow, that today I am not going to break my fast today, I'm not going to eat whole day, and for some reason if it is violated, unaware. For any reasons, or you're trapped and then it is violated, there is a prick, because it was a vow, that I won't do this today, as a vow, as vratha. so when vratha is violated, then that is a prick to conscience, a conscience, and we don't try to justify. We understand that it was a blunder and we were caught into it, or we were forced to

violate it, and therefore it is not a comfortable condition. While moral ethical principles, if they're violated we have justification as well, not only that we don't have prick to conscience, but we have justification to it. So when it comes to vrathas - yama-niyama as vrathas, so for any reason if it is violated, and we know the reasons of violation are mentioned by Patanjali – vitarka himsa dayah, krtakaritanumodita, lobha krodha moha purvaka, mrdu madhya adhimatra, so these are various reason and causes and factors because of which our vrathas are violated, they don't give us a comfortable condition. They give a discomfort to us – they are not comfortable and we are vexed by violation. If you decided that you are going to practice your asanas by come what may, as a vow that you are going to practice, but for some reason , it was violated, you don't try to trace justification, it really pricks, because that was a vow. So vow is a different thing. Vrata is a different thing and these yama niyamas are vrathas. And if they're violated, then there is Pratipaksha Bhavana. What is Pratipaksha Bhavana? Because of this prick to conscience, there is self admonishment. There is self admonishment – that is Pratipaksha Bhavana. Like, you will have self abhorrence, self admonishment. You're angry with yourself. So that is Pratipaksha Bhavana. And Vyasa gives wonderful example – You know when we take a vow, that means we have decided to - be practicing it by whatever - in all possible ways, not allowing any violation etc. but when the vow is broken, what is the Pratipaksha Bhavana that Vyasa explains. He says, “ So,I had decided I would not be violating it, but it got violated. I'm worse than a dog - I am licking my own vomit.” Because if you had decided that you are going to be in vratha, and then if it is violated, it is almost you have vomited your vow. And, the dog is said to be licking its vomit. The dog is seen doing that. It will lick its own vomit. We never do that. Dog does it. So it is almost I have behaved like a dog. What I had abandoned, that I would not be doing this today, and I have done it – that means, I'm licking my own vomit. That is how severe kind of self admonishment – that is Pratipaksha Bhavana. So because of anger, it might be violated, because of greed, it might be violated, because of delusion, it might be violated. It might be directly violated or indirectly violated. It might be in mild degree or middle degree or intense degree – so the violation will take place in various forms, and therefore the admonishment - the self admonishment will be depending on that. For ordinary reason if you have really given up your vow, the prick is greater. But for a very strong reason that you had to violate your vow, then it doesn't prick more. But for petty reason, if the vrata is violated, it hurts more. If it hurts more, then the self admonishment will be very strong; should be very strong. For simple reason I gave up my vow. So that is Pratipaksha Bhavana. Is to self admonish, go for expiation or for atonement. You feel you get angry with you and therefore when you get angry with you, or upset with you, you end up doing what? So that is Pratipaksha Bhavana which comes in yamas and niyamas, because they are vrathas. It depends upon the degree –mild-middle-intense; then also instrumentation of violation – you might have done on your own accord, or it might be due to someone else – instigation of someone else or somebody makes you violate it. So krtakaritanumodita, when we go into that sutra, we will consider that. And the krtakaritanumoditalobha-krodha moha purvakah – why did I violate – did I get angry and got upset? Was it anger which made me violate it, or was it greed that made me violate it, violate it, or a delusion –infatuation that made me violate it? So the Pratipaksha Bhavanam will depend upon the reason why it got violated, instruments through which it got violated and

the degree –the magnitude of it. to the degree it got violated. So that is Pratipaksha Bhavanam.

Then another question came up about when we were dealing with the karma and dharma. The astrological factors, whether do they really influence us and why are they there. If destiny is there, then why those factors should be coming. As a matter of fact, they come to complement your destiny. They come to help your destiny, and astrological factors are very much the factors which decide on whether we will succeed and to what extent. And whether we will fail and to what extent. And when will we succeed and when will we fail. So, the astrological factors are really a force to reckon with because they're adidaivik aspects in us. Because there are adi daivik aspects which I explained you, the astrological readings tell you about daivik influences - these are daivik influences. These are all daivas. Your fate is really actualised because of the planetary conditions. We are given the bhogas and the bhogas will fructify because of astrological conditions - whether you know astrology or not, and whether you have taken reading of it or not. These times, that's why sometimes we say it was a good time, it was a bad time, or sometimes you get success but that time was not so suitable so you really can't enjoy your success, the success comes at not very suitable time. When success comes at a suitable time, you have greater enjoyment, greater delight, greater accomplishment. But if the success comes at a wrong point in time, it's a little bitterness in our mind - "Oh, not this time, I should have hadthen", some at other point in time. So the time factor is so important. We want the things to happen at a particular time, point in time - what is this point in time? So this point in time is a thing that astrology speaks about. Whether it is a good time, or not so good time, or very bad time, not so bad time. So our bhogas will be really working in a full fledged manner if they come at right point in time. If there is a mismatch between the time and the consequence, or the fruition, then it is not that much effective. Like somebody wants to become very very rich and affluent person. Now when should the rich come to the person - when the person is in youth, prime age. But suppose someone gets that, when somebody is on deathbed, waiting for death moment to come at any point in time; so the fortune then coming at that point in time, is not really fortune. It is not that much a fortune. But if the fortune comes at right point in time, in right place, the time-space situation we speak about - so when it comes in right space, time-space situation, it has greater fructification, greater fruition. So we speak about bad times and good times. What are these bad times and good times? When do you want to have bad times? When to have, what do you want to have in your bad times, what do you want in good times? There are certain things that you want to have in bad times. There are certain things that you want to have in good times. What are these times? These are all astrological factors. The guru dasha, the surya dasha, shukra dasha - so the astrological factors really contribute in a big way for fruition to take place at right point in time. What is that right point in time? It is not that you desire it, what you desire the time is the right time. When the fruition is magnified, maximum fruition, when it is positive, that's the right time. When it's negative fruition, it's a different time when it should come. If you're already in a big sorrow, a small sorrow coming in is not a big problem. Or you have lot of pleasures, lot of delights and small sorrow is coming in, that also will be assimilated. So sometimes we assimilate and sometimes we don't assimilate, it depends upon what is in our plate. Is there lots

of delights or lots of sorrows? When there are lots of sorrows, we want certain things to come in. Preferably. And when there are lot of delights, we want certain things to come in our plate. That is astrological factor. So it is very much there in karma siddhanta and that's also part of our experience in life. We vaguely speak about good times and bad times. Why are there good times and why are there bad times? Astrological factors are one of the important things there.

Then, I spoke about in asanas - benefactor- beneficiary relationships. Body- mind- breath will be mutual benefactors and mutual beneficiaries. The question is with regards to- how do I identify what is benefactor and what is beneficiary?

It's quite easy. When you are doing for your legs, asanas for your legs, the legs are beneficiaries. If you are doing for your waist, the waist is beneficiary. If you're doing for your back, the back is beneficiary. If you're doing for your chest, your chest is beneficiary. So, beneficiary is that for which you are doing. So you have to ask the question - why am I doing it - for what am I doing it? I am doing to comfort my mind; I am trying to ease out my mind, then the mind becomes beneficiary. I want to ease out my body, I want to have a limbering in the body, flexibility in the body, freedom in the body, then body becomes beneficiary. Now one who gives that benefit, is benefactor. Suppose your body, your legs is beneficiary, you want to do it for legs, then all that your back does, the spine does, the chest - trunk does, what your mind does, what the breath does - they are all benefactors. Because they do, you get the benefit. So these are the instruments with which you can give benefit to your legs. When you are giving benefit to your spine or back or waist, all that contributes for that, all that is instrumental, becomes a benefactor. The body- mind- breath aspects can become benefactors to waist. So to identify who is the beneficiary - put a question - for what's sake am I doing? Where do I want advantage? Where do I want benefit? So where you're trying to give benefit, that becomes beneficiary all that you do therein, that becomes beneficiary. If it gets benefit, it's a beneficiary. And one which gives benefits, that becomes benefactor. So you can easily identify benefactor body and beneficiary body.

Not only in the body but in the breath, sometimes you want to give benefit to your breath. Suppose you have done a lot of hill climbing and you're panting for the breath. Where do you want to recover first? You want to give benefit to breath. You want the breath to recover first. So whatever you do for you, for your breath to recover, come out of that panting, they're all benefactors. And when the breath recovers after a while, couple of minutes, when the breath recovers, comes to normal, that means the breath was beneficiary - you did something, you rested, you sat somewhere, you sat quietly somewhere - whatever you did for your breath to recover, the breath becomes beneficiary, and all those agencies which worked for it to recover, become benefactors.

So it is not difficult to identify who is the benefactor lobby and who is the beneficiary lobby while you execute an asana. In body set addressal, you will see that the body aspect are part or factor is somewhere beneficiary, then other parts of the body, other aspects of the body also will be benefactors. Like you want release your waist, you have to use your arms in twistings. Arms become benefactors, waist becomes beneficiary. So, when you want to give benefit to

particular location, particular aspect, identify that and then all the dynamics which are being constituted – they will be benefactors in body, benefactors in breath, benefactors in mind. They will contribute for the beneficiary. So it is easy to identify benefactor – beneficiary aspects

Then there is a question on - about kapalabhaati agnisaar kriyas, which was not part of delineation that I made but somebody has asked this question – how many kapaalabhaatis should one be doing? That means they want that number – whether 25? 30? Or 100 or 200 or 500 or 1000 – whatever the number. The point is since this was not part of delineation, I need to say certain things. That before going to kapaalabhaati kriya or agnisara kriya – in classical approach - you first of all have to go for uddiyana kriya. So in various asanas, do the uddiyana kriya as often as you can. It can be any asana – it can be standing pose, it can be forward bend, it can be backward bend, it can be twisting pose, inversion, variations of sirsasan, variations of sarvangasana - the uddiyana kriya must be attempted.

Exception being somebody having tummy upset, or somebody having a clinical condition, somebody is pregnant, somebody is menstruating in case of women, or somebody had diarrhoea - dysentery, stomach - clinical diagnosis of the abdomen, say that it is not a normal condition - in that case, it should not be attempted. Otherwise, udiyana kriya should be attempted . That's the first thing before you go to kapaalabhati - agnisaar. Uddiyana kriya, uddiyana mudra is important.

And this uddiyana mudra as just now suggested, should be done in various asanas. Then if you are doing kapaalabhaati agnisaar kriyas, you also - it is not just you have to do as it is shown in the texts, classical books, that you take a particular position – that you sit or you stand up and slightly lean, keep your hands on the knees, etc., and do kriyas. That is not the way to learn the kriya. Agnisaar, kapaalabhati kriya – you must learn those in suitable postures. So be in suptavirasana, in bhaddakonasana, suptabhaddakonasana, supta virasana, matsyasana, lying down positions and try to do agnisaar - kapaalabhaati kriyas. Jatharaparivartanasana, try to do agnisaar -kapaalabhaati kriyas. So you will get benefit of kapaalabhaati - agnisaar kriyas, in various positions. You can be doing shashankasan, i.e. what you call as adhomukhavirasana, there you can be attempting kapaalabhaati - agnisaar kriya. Rather than trying the way it is mentioned in the texts.

The text say how it should be done, asana pranayama etc., kriyas, etc., how it should be done. No text will ever tell you about how it should be learnt - this is tradition. So traditionally, it is learnt by being in different positions, suitable positions. Agnisaar -kapaalabhaati kriya, you can do even in your janusirsaana. Agnisaar - kapaalabhaati kriya, udiyana kriya, udiyana mudra. So in various asanas, suitable asanas, it should be attempted. Because we have to learn it. You know today, because of this consumerism, and because yoga has come on counters, they tell you do ujjayi, do this asana, do that ujjayi pranayama, do this naadi shodhana pranayama, suryabhedana pranayama, anuloma-pratiloma pranayama, or do udiyana kriya, do kapaalabhaati. No! We should learn.

We are trying to do all these things in the present scenario, yoga is being done without learning it and nobody teaches how to learn. They will teach you how to do. This is not right in educative process. It is ok in consumer packages. You are taught to do so many things. But how to learn it? So agnisaar kriya, basically udiyana kriya, udiyana mudra first one - that comes first. Then comes agnisaar kriya. And then comes kapaalbhaati. So this should be attempted in various asanas, so you will get different processes of these kriyas. And that will help you to become more and more profound. In Bharadwajasana you can be doing udiyana mudra, you can do agnisaar and kapaalbhaati. So that will work differently because of the rotational aspect in it. The number is not important. Basic indication is that in agnisaar kriya you have to hold the breath and give the strokes. So as long as you can retain the breath, you can do it. In case of kapaalbhaati, if you lose the force, then you should not do it. Because the belly has to move like a bellow. Now, if the force of the bellow is dwindling, and it is not there, what is the point in going for, of targeting, some number - 25-30-45? So you'll have to monitor this - whether there is that force in kapaalbhaati bellow. If the force is there, it can be done. When the force is lost, there is no point in dragging. Number is not important. It all depends upon capacity. Young one, old one, weak one, strong one, you can't stipulate- that agnisaar kriya everyone should do 25 or 45 or 100 or 200. It is because of these conditions - strong, weak, young, old so number is not important.

So hope that answers the question.

Then, the question came about - I said that dhyana is for everyone. It doesn't need any qualification. So somebody has put a question that I made a statement in the initial sessions that yoga is not for one and all, but more importantly I made a statement that there is something for everyone in yoga. Yoga has something to offer for anyone, everyone. Strong, weak, diseased, healthy, man, woman, young to very very old - yoga has something to offer, whether you are atheist or theist, whether you are physiocrat or you're not a physiocrat and you're intellectocrat. So yoga has something to offer. So the statement was that yoga is not for one and all, it was a sweeping statement, blanket statement, made these days, to popularise yoga. Factually, really, there is something in yoga for everyone. But that doesn't mean that yoga is for one and all. So when coming to this dhyana, see the problem behind the question is that, one has lot of, kind of imposition, of meditation on dhyana, dhyana means meditation. This equation is fixed in the mind of modern man. Dhyana is meditation. But I have said that more than few times that dhyana is not meditation, meditation is only an aspect of it. Like rose has several petals, meditation is just one petal. If you remove one petal from the rose, the rose still remains a rose. Is that right? So meditation is just one petal of that rose which is dhyana. Dhyana comes in so many ways. It doesn't need to have the conditions such as "sit straight, erect, firm, steady; spine - neck - head straight, relax your mind and see that you are absolutely steady, and now meditate". That is meditation - for meditation you need to take such a position. For meditativity you don't have to take such a position. For meditation, it implies. So, dhyana is understood as meditation and therefore one doesn't reconcile with the statement I made that dhyana is for one and all. Because dhyana comes in so many ways. As I said, Patanjali says, when the mind is in doldrums, you want the mind to come to

stasy, normal state – the measure and means, justifiable measures and means that you take up, is dhyana. You might listen to some wise man, wise man's words comfort you - that is dhyana. Somebody gives a counselling - that is dhyana. Or you have your autocounselling, you have your own thought process and by that you comfort yourself - so that is dhyana. Dhyana is also thought. It doesn't entail that you must be sitting straight, firm, steady etc. focus here and there, no focus is needed. You can't even focus your mind when your mind is in doldrums. So, dhyana comes in so many ways. When you are petrified, will you go for meditation? When you're timid, will you go for meditation? When the mind is in disarray, will you go for meditation? When the mind is devastated, do you go for meditation? No – but you can go for dhyana. Take the name of God – that is dhyana. Recall your revered ones, recall your loved ones, which will comfort your mind – that is dhyana. So dhyana is a wider concept. Don't try to look at it from the spectacles of meditation. Meditation is just a meagre aspect of dhyana. There are so many dhyanas again. Say dhyana of a devotee - bhakta. What will be the dhyana of a bhakta? The dhyana of a jnani? So there is a kind of dhyana for jnana marga, another kind of dhyana for karma marga, another kind of dhyana for bhakti marga, another kind of dhyana for yoga marga. There are N numbers of dhyana sadhanas, so don't have this condition that you must sit straight , erect, firm, steady, don't allow any wandering of the mind. There are certain dhyanas which will come then when the mind is steadied, can be steadied, another, there is one kind of dhyana when the mind can be steadied easily, or the mind is already steady, then one kind of dhyana comes. When the mind is in a disarray, meditation doesn't come - dhyana comes. Because it offers you a solace. It offers you a solution. It can be just a thought, it can be just a memory. Recall something which will comfort your mind. Then that also becomes dhyana. If it has raised your mind from that substasy to come to stasy, it becomes dhyana. So this conditioning that dhyana is meditation, must be first overcome. Otherwise this is going to create a problem for your mind. because you think dhyana is dhyana. Patanjali has mentioned the third dhyana for which I did not make reference. Then that dhyana requires qualification, which comes in the ashtanga yoga, the antaranga sadhana aspect, the antaranga sadhan of yoga – dharana-dhyana - samadhi – that is, that dhyana needs qualification. It is not for anyone. That is for a yogi actually. One should be a yogi to be going for dharana-dhyana- samadhi and that dhyana

I did not mention that. I did not delineate on it, because it is an educative process. Otherwise today you can get guided meditations on YouTube. You will get guided meditations. I am not going for this guided dhyana kind of thing. Because, in educative process, you just can't cater what consumer wants it. Today the whole world wants something, some meditation, that's why the masters of yoga today are catering to guided meditations. They tell you something and you want to embark upon it – you do it and you get it ... you try it etc. and maybe you think you get it. But if you go by formal process, Patanjali says, while dealing with pranayama, the effect of pranayama is dharanasu ca yogyata manasah. That means the mind becomes qualified for dharana - dhyana. So there is a pranayama process – we've not still touched pranayama at all. So, I'm not qualified to be going for delineating on that aspect of dhyana, because we have not touched pranayama at all. So we will have to first touch pranayam , we will have to first understand something about pratyahara – now we have not really brought in to preview at all, we've not

circumscribed pranayama and pratyahara, then I don't qualify. I don't have right to tell you about that dhyana. Which is the third kind of dhyana which comes in third chapter of Yoga Sutras. Tatra pratyaya ekatanata dhyanam. I have just mentioned two "dhyanaheyah tadvrttayah". "Yatha bhimata dhyanat va". I mentioned only 2 dhyanas. Not the third dhyana. Because to mention 3rd dhyana, we will have to go for understanding pranayama, little education about pranayama, little education about pratyahaar, then only we qualify to understand what is dhyana. And let me tell you, such dhyana never ever there will be guided dhyana – guided meditation for antaranga sadhan of yoga. Antaranga of ashtanga yoga, there can never be a guided process. So, just I want to end with that statement, I don't want to further delineate on it, because I am not qualified to do that, because I have not spoken about pranayama and pratyahara. So let us see when we get to that in our education, then I will hint you at how dhyana actualises as antaranga sadhana of ashtanga yoga which is the seventh limb of ashtanga yoga, how does it actualise. Then, I qualify to tell you and you qualify to hear that.

So, I think with that I have sufficiently satisfied the questioner. Thank you very much. Enough for today.