

Online Education by Sri Prashant Iyengar – Lesson 3

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Today, we are meeting for third session on education about yoga. There is a problem that you will face, that you have been indoctrinated that yoga is a practical subject. And you are overwhelmed thinking that it is activity, and it is something to be performed, it is something to be done, but I want to introduce to this yogic perspective that there is lot of education in yoga, we need to know something before do something. There are two ways, one is do and then learn, there are certain realms of knowledge where you do and learn, but then there is something like learn and then do. And in this education it is important that we try to know something about yoga and then see how we go about doing it.

And I will be stressing on the distinction between posture and asana. So let me say that the postures commence with biomechanics and the postures culminate with biomechanics. So true and true, there are biomechanics in postures. Where is yoga come in postures? The postures are necessary. You must learn the postures; they should be workery posture, proper posture, good posture. And through such postures we need to learn yoga.

But let me, let's try this. You can settle down in Virasana. So if it is a posture, how will be go about keep your feet turned out properly, rotate your top muscle inside out, rotate your thigh muscle outside in and then sit properly, sit straight, sacrum concave, open your chest, lift your spine, shoulders back and true and true will be just link about to biomechanics, with reference to different parts of the body. Then where the arms position can come, arms, back, Namaskar at the back, Parvattasana arms over the head, Gomukhasana arms at the back or Garudasana arms in front. So you can be doing all these postures and variations.

So you can do that in the posture, Gomukhasana arms, Namaskarasana arms at the back, Parsva Namaskarasana, or Gomukhasana arms. Now I will be telling you about skeleton muscular parts of the body, there are actions what should go down, what should go out, what should go in, what should be stretched, what should be strenghten, what should be harden, what should be soften, like elate the pelvis, elate the diafragm, lift your chest, roll the shoulders back, shoulders blades in, dorsal in, the dorsal back in. So these are all biomechanics. So you commence in biomechanics and you also end with biomechanics.

So the posture is like a starter for a vehicle. When you start your vehicle, you don't dabble with your starter dynam again. So similarly the posture is like a starter, and then, and you have to see that, the proceeding for an asanic condition. Now if it is an asanic condition, now let's try to understand the implications and the options. The body, mind, breath awareness, as I told you about in the first session. Now, in your Virasana, there are paradigms, you can do the Virasana, which can be called, hip, buttocks, sacroiliac Virasana. So that's the porthole from where you will try to negotiate your Virasana. So find out how do you do it, where there should be the launch point at the sacroiliac region, sacrum, tailbone, coxis, hips, buttocks, anal mouth, pelvic region, on the anterior below the navel, pelvic floor to navel, abdomen, so this how with this paradigm will be doing about.

Now, that can be changed to shoulder blades. It can be shoulder blades measure Virasana. So find out how you modify the dynamics, how you reset the dynamics, between buttock bone sacrum centricity, to shoulder blades centricity.

Then, from shoulder blades centricity to chest centricity, diaphragm centricity, abdomen centricity. So you have various negotiations possible. Like you drive a car, you do not start a car, you drive a car. So you will be driving the asanas. There are different schemes to drive an asana. This told paradigms in asanas, in yogasanas, which doesn't come a posture. Posture is a general addressal to an entire body, skeleto-muscular physical body.

Now in your Supta Virasana, in your Virasana, sitting Virasana, you can be doing the Virasana as an exercise adventure, skeleto-muscular exercise, find out how you can exercise the skeleto-muscular body, by your Virasana which can be in Parsva Namaskarasana, Gomukhasana, Garudasana arms in the front, Parvattasana arms over the head, so theses are all provided where you activate the body differently and that's how it becomes physical culture.

Now, in yogasanas you have to identify how you are, not only doing the skeleto-muscular movement, but how you can use a profound breath, a profound inhalation, a profound exhalation, volume exhalation, volume inhalation, sharper inhalation, thicker inhalation, so and so, sometimes in the posture can be do retention, uddhiyana kriya, uddhiyana mudra can come. So you will make the negotiations more profound, by applying the breath on your skeleto-muscular body.

So I say you can apply your mind on your skeleto-muscular body which will significantly contribute such as by will, by volition, by resoluteness, if you are going to exercise the body you require a typical mind culture to be exercising skeleto-muscular body. So you can use that aspect of mind that intend to exercise skeleto-muscular physical body. So, find out how the breath will contribute, the mind will contribute. In an associated condition how they will contribute.

Now if you do this patch and this way, again it is a physical culture, you are using the body, mind, breath for the benefits of the body. You are using the body, mind, breath combinations for skeleto-muscular physical body. So, again you can be in physical culture. In yoga we need to go beyond physical culture. If it is yogasana, its use to go beyond physical culture, not just get stuck as physical structure or physical culture rather.

Now, in yogasana you find out how you will get different perspectives. While you are doing Virasana, let's say Parvattasana arms, you are in Parvattasana arms, interlocking your fingers over the head, and then trimming the arms, strengthening the elbows, extending the arms pits, etc. Now we are use to doing this for the body, for the corporeal body, for the skeleto-muscular body, for the body matter. Now use that position, and start addressing your breath, taking the breath as a beneficiary rather than a benefactor, which are all on the real base. And find out how you can be using the voluntary breath, deeper breath, and you benefit to breath by Virasana chest, by Virasana back, by Virasana spine, by Virasana abdomen, by Virasana pelvis, by Virasana hips, buttocks, ilium, perineum. So the breath should be a significant beneficiary which I said is the breath set addressal.

Similarly you can do for your mind, objectify your mind, understand the state of mind, like usually we are use to do in a pose, so you are camera conscious, lens conscious, you know what a lens catches, what a camera catches and therefore be justified that. Position to justify the camera lens, let's call photogenic-icity.

Now imagine that there is an instrumentation to monitorize your breath, whether you are activating the breath, whether you are giving benefit to breath, whether the breath is a beneficiary, exhalatively, inhalatively how the breath is beneficiary by this Parvattasana Virasana. In another pose, it will be different, different benefit to the breath, so not only use the breath, but also make application towards the breath. This is implied in an asana.

Similarly your mind set. Imagine that there is an instrument, which is catching your brain waves, alfa, beta, and gamma waves of your brain. The brain functioning, as in an encephalogram going on, monitoring the functions of the brain, monitoring the benefits to the brain, so you can use the brain and we can view benefits to the extent to the brain as well. By yogasana, in posturing doesn't happen, it is not considered so much, but in asana you can view the benefits to brain as if there is encephalogram, there is a brain scan going on, somebody monitoring your brain, monitoring as to how the brain is getting an advantage.

So these are body, mind set addressal. Today let me introduce a new dimension here. What it is this new dimension? Usually you are familiar with the condition, you say 'I am doing Virasana'. What is the syntax 'I'm doing Virasana'? Try to understand the noun, verb, predicate in the syntax. Now if I suggest, go for a condition where the syntax will be 'I am doer of Virasana'. What changes are you going to effect between 'I am doing Virasana', 'I am doer of Virasana'. Are you really doer at a pointing time? Other pointing time are you doing Virasana? 'I'm doing Virasana' has two meanings, which we overlook, the sentence has two meanings. One meaning is with a tone that you are the doer, you are executor, you are playing executor role and you are executing Virasana, so you become doer. So, there's the shades to the meaning of the statement I am doing, of the nature of I am doer, your will, your subjective entity, your volition, your intent, your perceptions, your sensations, so you are doer of Virasana.

Another meaning to the syntax is that you are instrument. You can be instrument when you say 'I am doing Virasana', you can be instrument of accomplishing Virasana, executing Virasana. So if you play instrumental role, find out how are the dynamics, if you are playing subjective role, find out how are the dynamics.

Then there is the third syntax, which says 'I am being done', 'I am being done'. So, Virasana is being done on me. So subjective entity is sculpted, is carved, is cultured. So you learn to render this syntaxis and understand the dynamics of it. 'I am doer of Virasana', 'I am doing Virasana', and 'I am done by Virasana'. When I say 'I am done', I am not referring to tense, it is not past tense. So the done here comes here as a noun, I am done entity, Virasana is a tool, Virasana is an instrument, Virasana is an object, and I am the beneficiary of it. My subjective entity is the beneficiary out of it. So you learn to render these syntaxes and try to understand the difference in negotiations.

This is implied in an asana. Now if you are subjective entity, I am doer. Understand again the shades and nuances here. You can be doer when you identify yourself with your body. That you are body, you are corporeal body, you identify yourself with the body, and then you say I am doer, how do you go about?

Then identify yourself with your breathing, and then you are breathing, you are breath entity, you are identifying yourself with the breath. Understand how the negotiations will change. Thirdly identify yourself with your own mind. I am mind. If I am mind, what do I consider?

So you have three different considerations, I am body, what will I consider? I am breath, what will I consider? I am mind, what will I consider? Now these are nuances of

yogasana, these are not nuances of a posture. Because in postures you'll identify yourself with the body, you say I am straight, actually body is straight, I am firm, and actually body is firm. So in postures when you identify yourself with the body, understand the corporeal influence and gravity. When you identify yourself with the breath, it'll be different negotiation. So get your education here, how the negotiations change, how the considerations change, and as students of yoga you must be able to identify yourself not only with the body, but also with the breath and with the mind.

Then I am doer of my Virasana is antithesis of yoga. You are supposed to be a beneficiary, subjective entity that must be sculpted and carved. If you are doer, you are involved in activity of it. At your level get the witness activity in yoga you are supposed to be witnessing. Therefore the other day I told you, allow the interactions of body, mind and breath, and keep watching interactions. Then you will be soon getting on the track of witnessing. Phenomenum in asanas, this is very important fabric of the asana, that you are not a doer, you are not even doing, you are not even done, you are witness.

If you are doer, doing, done, it is a materialistic culture. If you are witness of the phenomemum of body, mind, breath interacting with each other, then you get the witnessivity. And that will be more closer to the core aspects of yoga.

So, I want to first help you overcome the misunderstandings about yoga and asanas and postures, we don't really see distinctions between the two, posture is asana, asana is posture for us. But that is not true. Get this education, and then, you will know what are the dynamics of asanas.

Similarly there is a misconception about yamas and niyamas and which I am going to touch in the next session. Yamas and niyamas are considered as model ethical practices. When the script of Patanjali when it comes yama and niyama, they are not moral ethical practices, they are not moral ethical principles. They are called ethico-religious principles. Then this needs disillusionment because of the most of us believe that these are moral ethical principles, which are not. This I'll resolve it for the next session. What are yamas and niyamas, why they are not moral ethical practices? why they are not moral ethical principles?

Thank you for your patience.
Namaskar