

Lesson 8: Online Education in Yoga by Sri Prashant Iyengar

Namaskar, all of you

For this new session on Education in Yoga, through yoga, by yoga, about yoga. This is so paramount in classical approach to yoga, rather than the modern approach to yoga, which is quite consumeristic, anyway.

In the last couple of sessions, we were delineating more on the theory and philosophical aspects of yoga, but today let's embark upon the practical aspects of it. So, get prepared to be doing, getting into some asana as now we commence.

The point is I have been telling you how postures are *not yoga*. Now today I would like to highlight how what we do, how yoga can come in there, how yoga can be coming in our postures to make the postures *yogasanas*. So rather than going by a negative analysis as to what is *not yoga*, why something is not yoga, why postures are not asanas, why posture is not yoga, now let's try to have a positive approach in understanding how, where, when, yoga comes in. Even in those postures, the postures themselves become *yogasanas*, and at this point in time I want you to be clear about the mix up between asanas and postures.

Postures are major requisition for asanas, however they are not asanas by themselves. So let's see how asanas can come in and in what form the yoga comes for you and me, neophytes, where yoga is not really actualized, perhaps yoga is not even traced. We don't trace yoga in what we do; perhaps, let's see how yoga comes in. So get into position, I would suggest you to get into Sirsasana, Salamba Sirsasana. Alternately, somebody can be going for Utthita Hasta Padasana, Padangustasana, Utthita Hasta Padangustasana as you call it, or simple sitting Bharadvajasana. I open out these options because some of you may not be able to go for Sirsasana for the sake of studying. Therefore I have given an option of a standing position such as Utthita Hasta Padasana, or, as you call it, Utthita Hasta Padangustasana or Bharadvajasana. So get into your positions and I won't be suggesting change of sides. You'll be doing on your own like in Bharadvajasana and Utthita Hasta. You will be changing on your own. In Sirsasana you can be staying straight for some while and then you can be also proceeding to variations on your own. So get into your positions.

So the moment we get into the posture, we become posture-aware, we become posture-aware, posture-conscious, we become postural-active and we try to get our posture, position, proper position. So go for that where you are body-aware, body-active, body-sensitive, body-mobile and that's how we commence our postures. So now, I would call this as being in position. You are in a position, through a posture, or position of a posture. Now in what way the yoga comes in here? The indoctrination is to just be doing the posture where you are skeleto-muscular aware, you carry out certain bio-mechanics, you activate your body, body matter, muscles, joints, bones, skin, flesh, all body matter, we try to activate it. Put it into position properly and we go on correcting it, improving it, evolving it, adjusting it. So anyway, reach a workable posture, which will take some time.

Now, how does the yoga commence here? For us at 'neophytes' level become connected in limbs and trunk. Become connected in limbs and trunk. Become connected between lower body and upper body, back body and front body, surface body and inner physical body. So establish these connectivities. Get connected between one part of the body and other parts of the body, each and

every part of the body with every other parts of the body. So get connected. So this connectivity, getting connected is also one of the connotations of yoga.

There are several connotations toward yoga, there are so many compatible connotations, suitable connotations; at different hierarchies, the connotations would change. So at our hierarchy let's get connected between limbs and trunk, between back and front, between outer and inner physical body matter, between the sides and front and sides and back. So let's get connected.

Then let us get connected between our breath and body. The breath and breathing with our body matter, body parts, body aspects, body facets, body factors. Let's get connected between the mind awareness and body. So the body, mind, breath, these three things are coming together and they are getting connected and we try to create a network between body, mind, breath; body, mind, breath, senses; body, mind, breath, senses, organs. So firstly, let's get better and better and more and more connected between body, mind and breath. When they are mutually connected with each other, they have different work culture, they have different activity culture, so this is the aspect of literacy, this is the aspect of education, get educated. What does the breath do now in your position? Let me remind you that you will be changing your sides as and when you need. And now try to incorporate what I'm trying to say and see how the theory is being fit into practicals of yoga.

So, how does the body work when it is associated with rest of the body? One part of the body with other parts of the body. In connected conditions, even we work differently: we work differently, manifest differently in different connectivities, so any part of the body will work differently by connectivity with other parts of the body. Association with other parts of the body. Related conditions to other parts of the body. So also the breath. Breath will work differently rather than breath just working as a respiratory process. It is more **than an** active force within; the breath is internal conative organ, internal cognitive organ, internal sensitive organ, internal perceptive organ. So from motor activity to ideo-motor activity, the breath will contribute. The mind will similarly contribute. In associated conditions with the breath and body, try to understand how the mind works.

Otherwise in the temporal condition, empirical condition, we can imagine what the mind does: Mind thinks, mind perceives, mind feels, mind senses, mind imagines, mind recalls. So mind does so many functions: perception, cognition, sensation, memory, recollection, imagination, mind can go to the past and can go to the future. So we can understand how the mind works in a temporal plane, in empirical world. Now, here ¿how the mind works while it is associated with the body? All the body, mind, breath, senses etc. will become mutually compatible, mutually becoming benefactors and mutually becoming beneficiaries.

Now this is the aspect of literacy and education. How each one of them is working as a benefactor? How each one is working as a beneficiary? What are the gives and takes in body, mind and breath? In case of posture, we merely do it, posture has to be done but now mark here, there is interaction, they interact, they become mutually considerate. When you are considerate with a person, you have a kind of thought process which won't be there if you inconsiderate about that person. So when body, mind, breath are mutually considerate, how do they work? What do they do?

So, this is an aspect of education, we have to get educated in the realm of our own embodiment. So the yoga here comes for us in the form of getting connected, becoming mutually related, becoming mutually activating each other, activators of each other, activated by each other. There are dispensations and receptions; there are gives and takes and not just doings. In posture there is

merely doing. Have you done here? Have you done there? Have you done this? Have you done that? So it's all doing and doing and doing. Whereas in asanas, now you will come across this condition that they are working for each other, mutually for each other, they interact. They have interplay. When they are related to each other now, their relationship is being actualized, is being encouraged, and when that relationship is encouraged; the other day I said, we are quite atrocious, we want all of them to be related to us, but we don't want them to be mutually related, which is an atrocity.

Now see how we are going for fraternity. Affiliations are established and therefore they start working for each other. That is also a connotation of yoga. When they work for each other, when our things are working for our things that is also a connotation of yoga. When you are working for your things and your things are working for you, when you are working for things in you, things in you are working for you; things in you are working for yours. This kind of associated condition, affiliated condition, also is connotation of yoga at our hierarchy.

I again remind you that you are going for your own changes. Change of sides. Now in asanas, we are not just supposed to be doing, we are supposed to be staying, we are supposed to be maintaining and I have told you about the whole path: doing, staying, maintaining, efficacy, access, penetration, freedom, intensity of freedom, getting settled condition. So those are negotiations. So, now have these points and requisition list, that you are not just supposed to be doing what you are doing, you are supposed to be staying in what you are doing, you are supposed to be maintaining. You are supposed to develop efficacy, intensity, access, freedom and then settled condition. So proceed for all these on your own.

Now I want you to have a spinal paradigm, back paradigm, as if the back is *generator* of body activities, precisely associated body activities, associated mind activities, associated breathing activities, breath activities. So the spine should be porthole; from that porthole, you must have your observations in place. Now decipher the process; unlike in asanas which is just doing, doing, correcting, perfecting, accomplishing. Now watch here, you are not only doing, you are *observing*. There is much to observe when body, mind, breath, senses, interact, interplay. So the spinal column is becoming like an observatory, to observe, the body, mind, breath interactions, interplays. So in an asana we are creating an observatory. Then we are creating a laboratory, asanas are not merely done by technical prescriptions. We come across this fact that we will have to customize, devise, each day, every day, every time. So there has to be experimentation so there is also a laboratory, a spinal laboratory for asana. So spinal observatory for asana, spinal laboratory for asana, then spinal academy for learning.

Because in asanic processes, as I told you there are two channels: doing, staying, maintaining, intensity, access, efficacy, freedom, getting settled. There is another track that we need to be training with is: doing, learning, studying, understanding, comprehending. Otherwise without that you won't be experimenting. Even in observatory processes, you just don't observe. Observations give you some perceptions and by that you learn, you have scope to study.

So, on the other channel of asana, negotiation of an asana you are doing, learning, studying. There is observatory for you to facilitate the process, there is an academy for you to facilitate the process, there is a laboratory for you to facilitate the process. So there are lab processes, observatory processes, academy processes, rather than specific set of techniques, which is there for postures. So identify the educative material that you have from the spinal porthole, in your position, in your

asana. So the body processes must be generated by the spine, from the spine, through the spine, in the spine, by the spine, with the spine; and I say spine, spine and back, both.

The breathing process is also initialized by back and spine. Watch how much the back and spine is a breathing organ, how much it is conditioner of your breath and breathing. So also the mental processes: sensation, perception, cognition, thought, it is also generated spinal breed. It is spinal breed of thought process, so it is spinal breed of breathing process; it is spinal breed of physical processes, corporeal processes, so watch how the things are taking place.

Now identify that there is a weave of activity and thought. Are you merely activating an inner activity in your Sirsasana or your Bharadvajasana or your Utthita Hasta? No, there is invariably, because of your awareness, sensitivity, observations; you have *a state of mind*. The state of mind, as I said in the last lesson, invariably has some underlying thought. You cannot have a mental state without a thought pattern, without a thought content, you can't be thoughtlessly in a good state of mind, you cannot be thoughtlessly in a negative state of mind. If it is a negative state, positive state, desirable state, undesirable state, clement state, inclement state, there is always a thought present there. There is a thought; there is a thought process. So try to understand the thought process that is in place. So you're not merely in a posture. You are structuring your mind, mindset, consciousness; state of mind is being structured and when you go through different phases of asanas or one channel of doing, staying, maintaining, etc., the second channel of doing, learning, studying, comprehending, understanding, analyzing, synthesizing, mark the thought process there.

So understand as I said the other day that it is a *weave* of activity process and thought process. Try to become aware of the activity process and the thought process. Activity weave, the activity thread in the weave and a *thought* thread in the weave. Because in textiles the fabric is always a weave-tag, weave of horizontal and vertical threads. So these are two threads, which have activity and thought, which will weave an asanic position, condition, state, caliber, etc.

So merely activity process will not give you graduation in your posture. The thought fabric is also important. As a matter of fact, the thought fabric is more important for you to be graduated in your asana. That is implied in an asana, it's not just activity, improved, corrected, adjusted, set right, monitored, under scrutiny; but the thought process as well. Now while you are doing this "backified" Sirsasana or Bharadvajasana, if I may say so, understand how the mind is participating, how the mind is receiving, how the mind is dispensing, what is the activity of the mind? What is the profile of the mind? What is the function of the mind? Because it is working internally for other aspects of you. It is not only working for your body, it is working for your breath, breathing, it is working for your all-mental functions.

So the spine or back being the locus or sprout hole of awareness, consciousness, consciousness flow; it will address the mind also. So find out how the thought process is different when it is body-set-addressals, ¿how is the thought process when it is a breath-set addressal? ¿How is the thought process when it is mind-set addressal? And understand that much activity also will be changing. So these are nuances of asanas, that you must be body-set addressal, breath-set addressal, mind-set addressal. So you are supposed to be rendering this, the body-set addressal, the breath-set addressal, the mind-set addressal and understand how the activity changes and how the thought process changes.

Now, in the realm of thought, because in the previous session we were discussing with meditativity, see the potential for you to be meditating. You open up any book, all books will not have meditative potential. There are some books, some subjects where there is meditativity potential. You can't open up a newspaper and try to trace meditative potential in a news item there. However, you can open up a book such as Gospel of Rama Krishna, Life of a Sage, Life of a Saint, a book on Adhyatma, a book on philosophy. You will get lot of matter for you to be meditative. There will be a meditative potential in that matter, that's why the other day I said the thought should be suitable for you to be meditative. Any thought will not allow you to raise up a structure for meditativity. Now find out how much there is potential for meditativity. Because your thought process can end up in pensivity, reflectivity and meditativity.

One more interruption here: if you want to change the posture, you can change the posture. If you are done in Sirsasana, you can go to Bharadvajasana or you can go to Uthhita Hasta or you can interchange your positions, you can be changing your postures for further explorations. But maintain this spinal paradigm, back paradigm. Find out how you can refine the fabric of your thought; refine the fabric of your activity. So, refined activity and refined thought will definitely lead towards a meditative state. It will have meditativity potential, meditative potential. And your asanas will give you plethora of it. So find out how, as I said, during that session which we dealt with the meditation.

I told you there are three aspects: there is a thinker, there is a thought, there is thinking. So try to catch hold of the thought behind your state of mind because in asanas we are supposed to go for a state of mind, we want a quiet state, serene state, sublime state, noble state, unalloyed state of bliss. So we will be going for a positive state of mind in asana, we don't go for a negative state of mind in an asana, we want to improve the state of mind and how that is a thought structure behind improving your state of mind. So try to highlight the thought process as you are going for refined states of activity and refined states of thought. Identify the thought content. See how the thought content will change in body-set addressal, breath-set addressal and mind-set addressal. Try to catch it, how the thought content will change?

So thought about the thought, this proposition which I mentioned can come very handy here. Carry a thought about the thought, don't just go for state of mind in yoga, that is consumerism, that you want to do yoga and you want to feel quiet, serene, sublime, sedate, pensive, little transcendent, seventh heavenly mind, that is consumerism. Try to understand the underlying thought and the structure of thought for sublime states. Let us not be consumeristic. Let us see how is the thought structuring for sublimation. What is the raw material of the thought, underlying thought on which such structure is raised up?

So you will have a thought about the thought; the thought will be under scrutiny. The thought will be under assessment and by that you will be able to improve the thought process. Then also you can have consideration of the thinker, you are all thinking. You have a thought, it cannot go by saying that there is no thinking but there is a thought. So when there's a thought, there is a thinker, when there is a thinking, there is a thought. These are three dimensions of one concept. Don't go by literal meaning of the thought or thinking. These are three-dimensional worlds. You cannot be having a thought without thinking, you cannot be thinking without a thought, you cannot be thinker without thinking, you cannot be thinker without a thought, so these are three dimensions: thinker, thinking

and thought. Asanas give you wonderful condition to have clarity with respect to these three dimensions, to study, identify and then study what is thought, what is thinking and what is thinker.

So there will be possibility, probability for you to have a thought about the thought, thought about thinking, thought about thinker. This is important in meditative process and see the enormous potential for meditativity in an asana. So I told you about meditativity in a previous session and I told you also about yamas and niyamas, see how your thought culture, your thought process, your mind, psyche, consciousness; what is its profile?

As I said the other day, not committing himsa does not mean you are in ahimsa. Not being in untruth doesn't mean you are in truth. To be in truth you must be in truth, to be in ahimsa you must be in ahimsa. You can't say: "I am in ahimsa because I am not in himsa". To be in asteya, you must be in asteya, you can't say that I am not in steya, therefore I deduce I am in asteya. I am not in abramacharya, therefore I am in bramacharya. No! These are all not negative states. Now see, no doubt you are not in himsa, you are not committing any himsatmac activity or activity of the nature of himsa. Nor there is a thought of the nature of himsa, but that is not all, you are going beyond. You are encouraging the apratipaksha of himsa. The himsa etc. are manifestations of shadripus. Ahimsa, etc. are manifestations of shat sampatti .

So what is prominently there in your mind? Activity of body, mind, breath, is not absence of himsa, absence of asatya, absence of asteya, absence abramacharya , absence of parigraha but presence of its their antagonizers: shat sampattis. There are the noble material has surfaced in the consciousness: Shama, Dama, Titiksha, Uparatti, Jnana Vairagya, Shanti Samadhan. So it is implied for ahimsa, satya, asteya, bramacharya, aparigraha, saucha, santosha, tapas, svadhyaya, Ishwarapranidhan; the raw material of it is not just preventing ourselves from himsa, asatya, etc. but encouraging and reaping harvest of Shama, Dama, Titiksha, Uparatti, Jnana Vairagya, Shanti Samadhan or, with reference to Baghavad Gita 16th Chapter "Daivi Sampada" 16TH Chapter speaks about 'daivasura sampad vibhaga yoga' study that chapter; understand the demonic potentials and godly potentials.

So in asanas you are evolving saintly potentials, godly potentials. A saint is not merely refraining from himsa, asatya, etc., he is established in opposites of it which he earns by sat sanga, shastra sanga, sadhana sanga, sattvic aahar vihar vichar, that is Shad Sampatti: Shama, Dama, Titiksha, Uparatti, Jnana Vairagya, Shanti Samadhan, see how these things are churned out by your asanas. Even simple asana like Sirsasana, which is deemed to be a physical posture, or bharadvajasana, deemed to be a physical posture, or Utthita Hasta, deemed to be a physical posture it is a generator of noble qualities. That is the Samudra Manthan aspect in the microcosm through Yoga.

So all noble qualities are surfacing. So when noble qualities are on surface or sumptuously present, there is no chance of you going to himsa, asatya, steya, abramacharya, parigraha. Not only that you will be away from them, you will be engaged in their opponents: Dharma. Their opponents are dharma tattva, so you will be established in dharma tattva, so see how the yamas, the very material of yama is being churned out. We try to live in yama; we don't try to turn out material of yama. See in asanas you can turn out material of yama. That's a yogic mind, if you look into Guruji's book, small booklet on yogic mind, so you will understand how yogic mind can be turned out from what you are doing.

So I have tried to bring in the theory, which we discussed for nearly two-three sessions, in practical aspects of it. So, for you to understand how postures become asanas and how asanas have yoga, that's how yoga comes in asanas. Therefore, they are called yogasanas. So today I have made an attempt to combine the theoretical precepts and the practicality for you to construe. Those ideas about meditation, meditativity, ideas about ethico-religious principles, the achar dharma principles, aachar niti dharma principles. So to understand them, how we are having generators of this through our asanas, yogasanas, through our pranayama, through whatever thing we do. See the dynamic meditativity, dynamic meditation in place where you consider the thinker, where you consider the thinking, not just the thought. Rather than (what you call) going round, hovering around a thought and saying that I am thinking, we also thought about thinking, we also had thought about thinker, and that is major component of meditativity.

So that should be enough for the session.

Thank you very much for your patience. Hope this is also a fruitful session.

Namaskar, thank you very much.