



YOG A

What have they done to my song?

Have you noticed that Yoga is big business? It seems to be everywhere you look; from tv commercials to glossy magazines. Products of all descriptions seem to sell if they have an OM or attach some spiritual connection.

Don't get me wrong; I love YOGA and any expansion of its beauty and knowledge is welcomed.

However what is being purported to be YOGA is now more a system of bodywork, exercise or pseudo-health/spiritual practises. The question asked by most new students is

“What type of yoga do you do?”

Unless the ‘teacher’ has real depth of personal practise and experience of the essence of the ‘song’, s/he will describe the notes which make up the ‘song’ and the seeker will not hear the melody or the harmony nor the beauty of the whole ‘in-sperience’ which is YOGA.

I question that YOGA is just a 'job' and that like most teaching nowadays is not recognised as a vocation. It has led to competitiveness between students, teachers, yoga 'businesses' and yoga governing bodies. It threatens to push out the simple soul who passes on their love of yoga to others in the age old system of 'teaching' to those who ask because it now requires them to conform to 'set standards.'

I do not condone sloppy practise or lack of real personal study and inquiry on the part of would be teachers but I suggest that anyone who has been to a yoga class would soon acknowledge that they vote with their feet if the teacher is not competent or is not suitable for them. There are already in place criteria which one must pass to get insured and to teach in formal settings which adequately protect the student. I further suggest that the escalating proposed bureaucracy is more to do with governmental control and private personal interest groups. These interest groups encourage greed and sharp practise as the monetary gains become higher.

I do not feel that you can 'teach' Yoga to another. Yoga is a personal journey where the 'one', the individual becomes indivisible ; the one melts into the whole:

Bliss Ananda Joy

So what do I 'teach' and why? At the beginning of this phase of my life journey – 'the yoga teacher' slot – I became more aware of an emptiness, a feeling of loss and disconnection from what was going on in my life. This was present from childhood but had been pushed down and buried. My personal practise of yoga was the only time I felt whole and complete. All the rest made 'no-sense' was 'nonsense'. Being the good child, good friend, good mother, good worker were all meaningless and seemed to lead inevitably to conflict situations as I tried to make it alright for everybody. Something was drawing me away from the conventional way of living. It did not feel like living to me; more like dying.

All the promptings from intuition and wisdom from the body were ignored until they could not be ignored any longer. Crisis after crisis and I began to listen ; really listen and through the fear and panic (perhaps because of the fear and panic!) I finally 'Let go'. I 'Let in' another way of living which was a state of being, of awareness in each moment and I found Peace. How would it be possible to sustain this peace amidst all the confusion and 'busy – ness' (business) of life?

I began to share yoga with others because they asked me to teach/guide them and because they noticed how I had changed. Just friends and family at first and we learned together. I remembered long forgotten times with my ayah in India where I spent the first seven formative years of my life.

Yoga as a way of life and not just a gym class.

This community and space was amazing; it fed us all and enabled us to sustain that peace even out of the yoga setting so it became that way of life again. I saw the value of offering this practise wherever a group wanted to open up and be their true authentic selves. Asana, pranayama, mantra or whatever are all ways to this state of beingness and each person would explore and feel into what was appropriate for their bodies and mental and spiritual development. It was their choice to listen or not listen to what I suggested. I love this empowerment of the individual in a group setting and the amazement in a student's eyes the first time they disagree with what the group is doing because they realise it is not right for them and they have the courage to listen to their inner voice and flow from within. MAGIC!

This is not to say that the person you have chosen to listen to and to learn from is challenged all the time. We all have to digest and follow some instructions from wise and tested truths. We use our powers of discrimination and discernment to assess who we allow to guide us. "By their fruits shall ye know them". Discipline in personal inquiry is essential for this way to flower into a true awakening and not just rebellion and ignorance.

However, I look for potential shepherds not sheep. It is not important whom I have read and to whose workshops I have been although I will be eternally grateful to all my teachers. What I have learnt will show in how I behave and in how you perceive me. What you learn is your responsibility and you will be led to the right books and teachers as you remain open and surrender to 'what is'. You will become your 'self' not a copy of whom you follow for a time.

So what do I teach?

Apart from what I have already said about personal example and that includes my human faults as they arise and which cause much humour to myself and others as I contradict and make a fool of myself and have to go back to the original teachings, masters and silence again and again for clarity and guidance;

I do also teach some Asana - bodywork to open tight places and release physical restrictions.

Some Savasana/yoga nidra/meditation (deep relaxation) to open to other sensations and connect with other realities.

Some teachings of great visionaries to encourage more personal reading and questioning. i.e. self study (Svadhaya and Jnana yoga).

The beauty of opening the voice and mind through nada yoga and devotion. i.e. mantra/chanting.(Bhakti Yoga).

I encourage action (Karma yoga) to help those less fortunate and to develop love and gratitude in our state of being.

And why do I teach? I could give you all the trite answers from my limited conscious awareness:

- * to share with others this gift which has helped me so much to live in Joy amidst the chaos and illusion;
- * to continue to learn more about my true 'self' until I reach that state of beingness and connection with the source in each moment ;
- * for the community and friendship of like minds.
- * to Serve.

But really I do not know.

Why do I breathe?

Do I breathe at all or does something breathe me?

Om shanti shanti shanti

Om Peace Peace Peace

Sammi

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Feel free to pass on this article to anyone you think may be interested.