

Radikal Freedom - Yoga as realisation



Engaged Yoga (extract from The Yoga of Wealth)

Engaged and evolutionary yoga is Radikal Freedom.

Radical in that it seeks complete freedom in all realms, in all forms, for all beings and thus directly connects the search for 'spiritual' or Yogic freedom to the work of incarnated freedom.

Engaged yoga is Radikal Freedom in that it takes the wonderful line of the chant from the Shantih Path 'Lokha samastha sukhino bhavantu' which means 'may all beings in all realms be happy' and seeks that as an engaged lived reality.

Like the Bodhisattva, the engaged yogi will accept no less than happiness and radical freedom for all, however it is that beings choose to skilfully explore and express such happiness.

Skilfully simply means that the responsible exploration and expression of ones happiness does not harm the movement into happiness and freedom of other beings.

It is each and every beings birthright to have the opportunities to be happy, to have, should they choose, the opportunities to seek Radikal freedom.

Yogic liberation is the absolute freedom of identity beyond the identification with ego, beyond the identification with separate being.

It is identity as pure beingness.

There was a time in history when reality was understood as split into matter and spirit.

The modern use of the word 'spiritual' instantly implies this futile and sterile dualism of 'spirit' and 'matter' as opposite realms or poles of reality.

This unskilful term is rarely used in this book; instead I use the terminology yogic liberation to represent the development of identity and perspective beyond that of the individual ego.

Contemporarily educated beings aware of the exciting uncertainties of quantum reality might be aware of the current search in science for the great theory that will unite all phenomena, a theory of everything (TOE).

I love to call this the Big TOE! Recognising interdependence, recognising the unity of all forces, all realms and universes in the great unity as sought mathematically in the big TOE, there is no space left for such unhelpful dualistic terminology such as spirit and matter that implies a distinct lack of continuity.

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What, if spirit (or consciousness) permeates all, is not spirit? Where does spirit end and matter begin or the other way around? What if, as yogis have consistently pointed to, the basis of all reality, including all of matter is radiant clear-light (the big TOE)? If so then matter is simply this radiance resting in a different vibratory experience as matter.

Engaged yoga teaches yogic liberation as realised through this yoga of wealth.

It is the transpersonal identification with the vastness of the possibilities and potentials of being alive.

Identity, as the enormity of cosmic reality beyond the obsessions and confines of ones individual nervous system or sense of individual being.

Yogic liberation is an evolutionary stance that is totally connected with the economic, ecological, sociopolitical and post-religious freedom of humanity.

Both love of life (biophilia) and all of nature as well as service to the evolution of humanity is a consistent theme in engaged yoga.

Engaged yoga is a model of yogic teaching that allows a framework of practice within which the yogic practitioner realises their transcendent identity beyond ego and yet also deeply engages in the world for the greater benefit of all.

Freedom traditions have consistently evolved and adapted their practices to suit peoples, places and times, responding to the context and needs of the human environment.

Indeed in many such traditions it is considered that practice of yogic development and liberation can only work if it is appropriate for the time and for the culture, suitable for the needs presented in the particular human context.

So what may have been a yogic developmental practice in one culture at a particular time may no longer be deeply relevant in a different context, since we are also contextual beings, we are relational beings developed out of and intimately a part of our contemporary cultural milieu.

The terma teachings of Tibet also reflect this necessity with new teachings appropriate for the time being uncovered by practitioners ready to receive these treasures of development, hidden in space-time by the great Padmasambhava.

One can see how the famous teacher Krishnamacharya also adapted his teachings to suit the varying needs of those he worked with including teaching women, which was not previously done in India.

To some students he gave powerful dynamic practices and yet to others he gave slower practices focusing on deeper breath and chanting.

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Krishnamacharya focused on the need for adapting practice to suit the individual, not adapting the individual to suit the practice.

The Dalai Lama suggests that all practices, methods and systems are designed to facilitate human happiness and that human happiness comes before the method, system or practice.

As the Buddha is reported to have said, “There is no way to happiness, happiness is the way”.

Engaged yoga agreeing with this principle recognises the two difficult nervous system experiences for a being, as pain, which is physical, and suffering, which is psycho-emotional.

Freeing our-selves from psycho-emotional suffering and protecting, as much as possible, all beings from unnecessary pain, engaged yoga cultivates this natural, happy state of being Sri Aurobindo founder of Integral Yoga also considered the verticalist, ascendant strategies of old school religious yoga with its rising above mundane life and its exclusive ascent of attention as incomplete.

The old school ascendant approach downgraded the material world of relativity and form and exclusively focused on the super-mundane absolute as the only reality, with all other experience and perspective as illusory and ultimately totally irrelevant.

Aurobindo in contrast, created Purna yoga (complete yoga).

Purna yoga was not seeking lofty renunciation and recoil from matter but integration with all of what is.

Both the great teacher Vivekananda and Sri.

Aurobindo took seriously the Vedantic saying “All is Brahman”, which can be interpreted as all beings are equally part of the great totality or all is Divine, everyone and everything is the pantheistic reality, the great totality.

Sri Aurobindo wanted to cultivate ascent, beyond ego, to greater realisation of consciousness and truth.

This ascent being matched by the consequent descent as he saw it, or engagement of transegoic super-consciousness, through the presence-behaviour or being-doing of the practitioner, to empower life and create real freedom on earth.

Aurobindo’s yoga relied on the practitioner opening to the divine through personal aspiration, the essence of which was self-surrender.

This self-surrender then in his view allowed grace to do its transformative work.

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The only technique specified by Aurobindo was that practitioners of this self surrender, calling upon this reality beyond their ego (as the divine mother in this case), should seek to focus their attention during their search for deeper identity on their heartspace.

The heartspace has been considered the key gateway to transpersonal reality and identity (the post rational divine) since time immemorial as evidenced in the more liberated texts of Hinduism and in the endogenous traditions of Christianity and Islam (as opposed to the exogenous book oriented, rule bound, dogmatic and highly superstitious versions of these religions).

Engaged yoga is contemporary whilst recognising its roots in tradition; it is conscious evolution.

It is appropriate for our time and culture.

Engaged yoga is integral in that it encourages practitioners to develop and expand their awareness, grow and positively influence all the walks of their life.

Engaged yoga is revolutionary in that it seeks transformation of both the individual practitioner, their culture and their world.

Engaged yoga seeks to make our individual and collective experience of this wonderful cosmos and world of nature as wealthy, beautiful and loving as we can possibly make it.

Engaged yoga as the yoga of wealth, uses the natural resources available to us to co-create the experience of real love, prosperity, abundance and wealth for all.