

Radikal Freedom - Yoga as realisation



In The Name Of Yoga

Politicking is part of human nature, the vested interests we sustain whether in our fondly held opinions, ideas and concepts or beliefs can however really stop us from moving deeper into Yoga.

Of course they can also help to create new possibilities that lead to wonderful creative synergy and new potential.

Seeking this balance and working towards a Yoga that is collective the 'yoga sangha' is a part of our responsibility.

Historically the British Wheel of Yoga has been seen as middle England and 'fuddy-duddy' in its approach to Yoga, it has also been seen as disrespecting and misunderstanding the powerful approaches to Yogasana practice such as Ashtanga and Dynamic Yoga.

Times have changed however, having moved on, as many young and dynamic members are now involved in the BWY, which is an eclectic organisation that has truly opened its mind and heart to all practices and all members. BWY has had teachers teaching Ashtanga Vinyasa at its annual congresses for many years now along with every other conceivable style of Yoga.

The BWY is also a charity, it has fully elected committees and all committee members at this point in time work voluntarily and therefore receive no financial benefit for their considerable time and effort to seek to make the organisation work better.

With the vast new commercialisation of Yoga, many seek to jump on to the financially rewarding bandwagon of Yoga with the minimum of training or experience. Regulation is therefore happening and will most likely continue to happen and it is probably in the interests of Yoga that some basic and agreed self-regulation of Yoga teachers and teaching standards happens.

A simple question is this;

Who would you rather govern Yoga standards? A charity with elected and accountable committees who receive no financial benefit, or a group of commercial yoga enterprises who have complete vested interests and no accountability whatsoever?

I know which group I would choose.

On the matter of spirituality, some say the BWY is only interested in the physical aspects of Yoga, then they speak from ignorance. The BWY has every conceivable approach to Yoga reflected within its organisation from hatha to mantra to raja to sahajayna to jnana, you name it, it is there.

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Most commercial Yoga organisations direct themselves purely to the young, fit and flexible. Look at the advertising you see on any commercial site, only fit and flexible bodies, their appeal is solely to this grouping.

Personally I have worked with people with ME, Cerebral palsy, Strokes, Mental ill health, Drug dependency, Age related issues and so on. The BWY trains teachers who may work in such environments and seeks to modify and make the practices work and become accessible for all people, not just the fit, funky and flexible.

I see no commercial organisations seeking to direct their energies at those who have suffered strokes or sit in wheelchairs, no, because it is not yet good business.

What is possible? I don't want to bash vested commercial Yoga interests, after all I have such interests myself and I know how hard it can be to make a living as a teacher.

What do I want to see? I want to see more open mindedness, greater seeking for harmony, unity and a way of working together. In what ways can the different organisations who seek to, in some way, represent Yogic interest work towards greater intelligence and awareness, greater unity and purpose instead of engaging their energies in divisive political bickering that merely continues to perpetuate unnecessary division?

Part of Yoga is the owning and reintegration of the shadow aspects of our being. As a stage in development we love to demonise, we need to demonise others.

So those of us busy demonising other organisations, other teachers, other schools in whatever way we do this, can see that we are still immature in our Yogic development and perhaps then, letting go of this demonisation tendency, can step into greater maturity, greater unity, greater Yoga.

What is possible for us to achieve if we really work together, combine and unite energies for the greater good, let go of old enmities and misunderstandings, what might be possible? I would love to find out, wouldn't you?

Christopher Gladwell