

## Asana

by cleaves *Sunday, Jan 16 2005, 5:03am*

international / personal development / article

Asana is a divine gesture assumed by the body but performed (or pre-formed) by consciousness; this 'gesture' acknowledges the relationship between the personal and infinite in particular characteristic 'form' or expression. For those who fail to spontaneously understand the above description the following brief explanation is offered.

Yoga cannot be understood or appreciated by Western modes of thought, particularly those stemming from the perverse Judaeo-Christian ideology of 'subduing the earth' – the full implications of this biblical statement are horrendous. Inherent in this ideology is the exclusivity born/e of divisionism, which in turn breeds violence, chaos, disharmony and all notions of control. In contrast, the Eastern approach is subtle, yielding, intuitive and generally aware of the harmony or at least the importance of the interrelationship of all things.

The analogy of a seed in which all the potential for a giant tree is contained is often utilised in the East to impart teachings of human potential. If we view this 'seed' from Eastern and Western cultural perspectives, the required sensitivity for Yoga practice may be understood.

The vanguard of Western 'civilisation' is science; this limited discipline, strict to its methodology, would take this seed as a separate or distinct object and measure its physical properties (chemical composition etc) in conformance with empirical analysis. Regardless of the results of any empirical analysis it would fail to locate the causative factor that creates a tree! The simple reason is causation is only partly contained within the seed, other necessary factors are located elsewhere. Life is not particular – it is (One) universal, inclusive, interconnected, interrelated, continuing whole.

A seed is a specific connecting medium; it 'unites' other elements in the environment (water, nutrients etc) to become a tree – it also 'surrenders' its particular identity (as seed) in the process. If it remained isolated with its seed identity intact, it would forego the opportunity to become a fully developed aspect of universal expression. The seed's beneficial qualities can only be realised as a fully developed tree, which (in turn) supports the environment in the form of oxygen production and support for myriad other aspects (birds, insects etc) of the One Living principle – the whole process is harmonisation. When the seed 'realises' its full potential as tree it becomes a fulfilled 'expression' of the totality of Life. This Living principle has constantly eluded scientists due to their inability to understand that All is One!

In a similar sense the complexity that is a human being cannot be understood by analysing the formative cells of a sperm and ovum. The complexity that is a human brain develops from various external stimuli in the immediate environment together with the genetic and nutritional aspects of its formation. The developing Life that becomes a fully functional human is the result of the grandest 'symphony' on this plane of existence. However, the vast majority of physically developed humans remain in 'seed' state (relative to their full potential.)

Yoga practice, as a means to achieve full realisation, has been developed and fine-tuned over thousands of years by the Sages and Rishis of India; it is a superb method, notwithstanding its

cultural specificity. However, those from other cultural backgrounds are not precluded from deriving benefits. The degree of success achieved would be conditional to the amount of 'cultural baggage' willingly abandoned. Any attempts to merge Western values, mindsets or disciplines with Eastern Yoga would be as unsuccessful as attempting to mix oil with water.

The benefits of asana are well known, they target the endocrine centres, stimulate the nerve ganglia, tone and invigorate and allow the free flow of the healing vital principle to course through the system. For those perfected in Yoga these are secondary benefits, asana remains a 'form' of physical prayer - all movements and 'gestures' become an expression of universal harmony - practitioners focused in this way cannot fail to achieve Realisation.

Footnote:

Coincidentally, this discourse was written during the Easter period; it took an unintended turn - so be it!

It is [also] hoped that a deeper understanding of the symbolism of Christ's 'death' and 'resurrection' can be elicited from the above analogies.

John 12:24 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Mark 4:30-32 "And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it."

Om Tat Sat

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