

NAMASTE All,

Occasionally I get doubts from students as to why I teach this way rather than that way.

I am very thankful for people who raise such doubts because then it gives me a chance to explain. Because many people might be having such doubts and it is just that only one or two might really raise it up or talk about it to others.

From the very beginning, my idea is to teach yoga. Now, then we have to look at, what is my idea about yoga?

For me yoga is basically the wisdom teachings contained in the various texts of yoga and that is what I want to share and convey here.

Then of course, there are the shapes. The shapes in the original text and the number of shapes given are very little. They are just mostly basic fundamental,... some of the postures which you do. The remaining,... everything has been added on down the centuries by different people who at that point of time thought that this would be useful, that is all. And they just added it to the repertoire of the yoga practices.

Sun salute was never a part of the yoga practice as given in the text. But it developed as an individual practice. Sun salute was an individual practices done by some people. At some point of time, yoga practitioners just pulled it in and made it part of their practice. And that is the way it should be.

The sun salute was available, the yoga teachers were not stuck with "Oh, I will only teach what is in the text." They looked at the sun salutes, they thought that, "This is useful" and they added it on, because they know that essentially yoga teachings are wisdom teachings.

It is not like if you add sun salute, it ceases to become yoga. They just added it and then sun salute is yoga because they are doing it in that kind of context.

There is also no text referring to doing something on a chair, or hanging from a rope, nothing! That, at another point of time, another genius teacher thought that it would be useful to make the postures more accessible whilst giving one more time to contemplate on the nuances of the poses. So then, the props became part of yoga due to that particular genius's idea. Now, yoga props are accepted in mainstream yoga.

Similarly, another genius thought instead of having separate time for doing *Pranayama*, *Bandha* and *Tratak* and all those things, why not integrated everything into another set. *Ashtanga Vinyasa* is something like that.

We all as teachers are taking in what is useful for practice and integrating it into whatever we call as practice. For me, the focus is not to make you all contortionist or acrobats or gymnast. There will be that element but that is not the focus.

Many years earlier when I was teaching at 27 years of age in Malaysia, and many of you who are still with me now, know that I taught differently back then. Back then, I would take Khor up into a handstand every time, and Julie as well. All of that, I have done before.

But down the years, now in any of my class, the majority or at least 65 to 70% of the students are well over 40. I myself am no longer the 27-year-old guy I was back then. I am now 50 plus and I need to think more about the way I practice. I've got a lot of injuries, meaning this body has got a lot of injuries but still I can approach the postures by changing the sequence of it.

Right now, my emphasis is to share more bio mechanical knowledge and more awareness of the movements. And fundamentally most of our movements involve the hips and shoulders. Leg movement is basically hip movement. Arm movement is basically shoulder movement. These two are ball and socket joints so rotation is a very key element for shoulders as well as hips. Without adequate rotation, if you just focus on linear movement

then we are really pushing the deep structural tissues and we can create damage. As the years go by, I find that, it is not just me, but many of my regular students are also facing different kinds of injuries. We cannot simply go on a faith system, and just do the system as it is, hoping it will all be okay. No, that is not the way I teach the yoga which I think is yoga.

I am imbibing whatever knowledge is available to me in this moment and practicing it on myself. Right now I can do the handstand. But I never just go and simply do handstand. I do a lot of rotator cuff shoulder movements, a lot of wrist preparation, lot of hip, shoulder, and the abdomen movements because that helps to prevent my back injury from inflaming. It is in that way, that it all shapes my current teaching so that you all will become more knowledgeable about the joints, more preparations and that makes it safer.

We are not here to serve any system. We won't just do whatever that system is says, whether we get injured or not... we are not like that.

If that was the case, right at the beginning I had opportunities from all three major systems of that time to represent them in Malaysia. However, I was not keen because I did not want to be stuck teaching only the way specified by the systems.

In 2005, I really considered accepting the role of being the Malaysian representative for a renowned system purely from the business point of view, but then my wife Sandhya strongly told me "No, stick with your insights and full intuitive teaching." That is what I've been doing until now.

I know some of you might think that recently there is too much of joint work and you would like to just go into the flow of it. In *Ashtanga* at least, some you are hoping to just jump and flow,... but I beg to differ. Straight jumping into a *chaturanga*, or just going into foot behind, for me is not the appropriate way I feel I can share the teaching. There will be a lot of hip rotations, and I hope that somehow you get that this is kind of information-based movements (information in the formations of forms), you connect to something and not just the externalized shapes.

I am just hoping that what I am telling you, gives you an understanding in case you are wondering, "Why can't we just straight away just jump and do the system?"

I am not here to serve or uphold any system for that system's sake. I am only here to share wisdom and serve you in the best way possible and I am teaching from the point of view of what I think your body needs. I feel that your joints need more preparation before I challenge it with more load bearing or extreme flexions or extensions. It is on that basis I teach. It is not like I want to teach something for the sake of it. Basically, I feel what your body needs. Your mind might want something else, but I can teach only from the basis of what I feel is best for you. That is all, I just want to share with you.

Namaste.

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