



November & December 1997 Contemplation Theme

Discovering This as a Continuing Experience in our Lives

By Rama Berch, C.S.Y.T., E-RYT 500

This is the third element of the Master Yoga Foundation's Statement of Purpose, as well as the true goal of yoga. I have been exploring each of these statements. First you discover your inherent longing for the inner experience. Then, you create personal experiences of it. Now, you can consider living in it all the time! Yoga promises that you can live this way and calls it by many names, including "realization."

You may not have been planning on becoming a realized being in this lifetime . . . it is really your choice. But if you consider the alternative, you might get interested. Without moving toward realization, what direction are you going? Begin by considering what your habitual mood is. Everyone has one. It even gets etched into your face after enough years of wearing it. How do you feel when you first wake in the morning? Maybe you are one of those people that we shouldn't talk to for the first hour or until you have had your morning coffee. What is going on inside you that you need that "fix?"

When my children were growing up, one was impossibly cheerful in the morning, awakening with an incredible joy everyday. At first it was just irritating; then it became a concern to me because it seemed abnormal. Now I realize that it truly was abnormal, because the norm is something much less happy. Life seems to promise diminishing returns, particularly at the age that the Baby Boomers are reaching now. It cannot be that life is so limiting. There must be something more. Yoga says that there is!

Just behind the part of your mind that you usually look at is another dimension of your own being. When you look in this direction, you find a joy that does not rely on circumstances. You "realize" that you have always been something greater than you thought. Thus, you become a "realized" being. It means you have found yourself. The alternative is to feel lost. You already know how that feels.

It does not happen all at once. For most people, it comes in stages. First, you take a few yoga classes so that you feel better. Then, you may find that you don't get stressed as easily. You keep studying, practicing, and even read a few yoga books. You learn a new way of setting priorities. You apply a few of yoga's tricks (like a slow, long breath) whenever you notice that you are getting lost in the events unfolding around you. The peace and joy of yoga begin to carry with you everywhere you go, and bit by bit it draws you closer to realization. You have to do your part, but it is easy because yoga always works.

You might be one of those who are in a rush to get to realization. I was. But as the stages develop, you begin to feel so good that there is no reason to rush any more. You can trust yoga's promise that you will know yourself — you will live in that continuing experience all the time. Just take it one step at a time and yoga guarantees it!

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rama'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a heart shape above the 'a'.