



March 1999 Contemplation Theme

Wisdom

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

A mother brought her twelve-year-old daughter in with back pain. I spent some time with them both. As they left, the mother remarked, "You are really good with kids." I responded that I raised three of my own. She replied, "Yes, but that would not necessarily mean you would be good with them." In that moment, I realized that it takes experience and understanding together to make Wisdom.

One who has experience in dealing with children, but has no understanding of them, lacks wisdom in regard to children. Experience alone is not enough. Likewise, those who have understanding without experience cannot be called wise. A student described to me that she became a licensed psychologist in her twenties. She listened as those with decades of life experience poured out their fears and needs. She was thinking, "I have never experienced this. How can I really help?" I am sure she did help, just by listening. But the theories she had learned weren't enough for her to feel wise. Understanding alone is not enough.

In yoga, we cultivate understanding and experience simultaneously. In class, the teachers often ask you to notice the differences in your body after a pose, and even to describe them. By putting words to your experience, you develop your understanding. The teachers may say things like, "This is good for your spine. Can you feel it lengthening?" Then you go looking for it in your own body, and you are putting understanding and experience together.

The fullest expression of Wisdom is the simultaneous experience and understanding of Consciousness. The Wise One lives in the knowing and experience of, "I am the Self; divine Consciousness is my essence." The teachings of yoga come from countless generations of such Masters, to help us know that this is inside each of us. The practices help us find the experience inside. This combination of understanding and experience is True Wisdom. It is your destiny!

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Rama'. Above the signature is a small heart symbol containing the Sanskrit character 'Om'.