



July 1999 Contemplation Theme

## Inspiration

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

It cannot be denied. When the inner prompting arises — the song must be sung, the painting painted, and the newfound clarity spoken aloud. You have these moments, when everything shines brightly and the colors of the flowers (and even the passing cars) are crisp and clear. There are, of course, the other kinds of days. Artists and musicians despair when the flow dries up. Writers go to workshops on “Getting Past Writer’s Block.” You live in quiet despair, wondering what life is all about, or filling up your days with endless activity to entertain the mind (translate — to distract you from your misery).

Inspiration is the outpouring of the Self from within, and you love it! Life makes sense. You fathom the “more” than what life seems to be on the surface. What if you didn’t have to wait for the mercurial muse — if you could tap into the flow of creativity or establish mental clarity any time you wanted? When would you choose to be out of that flow? You think that inspiration is temporary and fragile. Yoga says that it is your Self. Your connection with that is tenuous. It can be strengthened through practice. Practice means that you establish the inner connection again and again. You practice until you get good at being Self, which is Consciousness-Itself. Then you live from the inner wellspring of Being, and every word and every action is inspired. Do not settle for less!

Inspiration is not the same as imagination. Imagination is an activity of mind, which can be a creative delight or something much less positive. Most people use their imagination to construct an endless stream of worries (imagining all the bad things that can happen), or to fantasize about the future (imagining what you would do with your lottery winnings), or to think about all the bad things people are saying about you (this form of imagination is called paranoia), etc. You can even create paintings, music and poetry from your mind. But the most moving creations are the ones that come from beyond the mind. There must be an inner surrender, so the inner prompting may arise and command your mind.

What if you could speak to that inner source and ask it to fill you? What would you call it? Yoga calls it “Saraswati,” the Goddess of Wisdom and Learning, the Fount of Creativity, the “Patron Saint” of poets, scholars, artists and musicians. She is the energy that arises within you as that flow of inspiration, lifting you to new levels of your own potential. By giving this energy a name, you are able to ask for Her blessings and support. The traditional puja ceremony is a way to we invoke Her presence in a tangible and powerful way. As a teaching institution, every class we offer is an expression of her generosity and blessings.

Yoga practices clear away the blocks that impede your experience of inspiration, Saraswati’s blessing. Whether you lie in Shavasana for a relaxation, take a few slow Ujjayi breaths, or do some yoga poses, you feel different afterward. Meditation dissolves the blocks even more powerfully, as does karma yoga (offering your service to others). Many students find they become more creative when they practice yoga on a regular basis. May Saraswati’s blessings inspire you to greater experiences and deeper understandings.

Namaste,

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