



July 2000 Contemplation Theme

## Balance

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

I cannot believe those 2 weeks of vacation balance out 50 weeks of work every year. Besides, most full time jobs are not 40 hours per week any more – they are 50 or 60 hours, even at a yoga academy! If balance is the goal, most of us are failing miserably. Fortunately, yoga is not about balance, it is about integration.

Balance means that you need some recovery time after a hectic day, so you have a glass of wine, or a nap on the couch, or a couple of hours of stupid television shows. Balance means you spent a lot of time with people, so you need some private time to make up for it. Balance means that you spend a lot of time doing things for others, so now you expect them to do nice things for you – or you go spend lots of money on yourself instead. Balance is compensation: getting something to make up for how hard it was or how bad you feel. What makes you feel bad, anyway?

Integration means that you have an inner reservoir that sustains you throughout your hectic day, so you don't feel exhausted when you get home. Integration means you don't get lost in other people's idea of who you are, even when you are with them all day long. So now you don't need the private time to reconstruct your sense of self. Integration means you do things for others out of the inner fullness, which loves to serve and loves to share. Now you don't need for them to make it up to you. Integration means you make choices about what to buy based on clarity and purpose instead of need, greed or compensation for feeling bad. Integration means you take your Self with you wherever you go.

We include training in integration at the end of every yoga class. The contemplation quote or question is to help you carry yoga into your life. Yoga Mudra, the energy seal at the end of class, is to "top off your tank," so that you carry that inner fullness with you. Our special programs, "In the Company of the Truth" and "Members' Night", provide trainings and group discussions to help you apply yoga principles to your real-life situations. Even the guided awareness in Shavasana, "Notice your toes..." helps with integration: the interweaving of your awareness through your body and, ultimately, through your whole life.

Yoga gives you a completely different kind of balance. You have inner balance. Your own inner sense of yourself is found in a deep inner center that is always balanced. Nothing can topple you, because you are anchored so deep in your core. That essence of Being is your support. You are like an ice skater that leaps, twirls and lands on one foot, because there is an inner sense of balance that does not depend on the outer circumstances. Life is no longer a balancing act; it becomes a beautiful expression of your inner essence.

Find your balance point inside. Anchor your sense of self in your core. Let the inner Reality be your support. Then you won't *need* that 2 weeks of vacation to make up for the 50 weeks of struggle, but you'll really enjoy it!

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Rama', with a small heart symbol above the 'a'.