



February 2001 Contemplation Theme

Namaste

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

I honor the place in you where the entire universe dwells. I honor the place in you that is love, truth, light and peace. When you are in that place in you and I am in that place in me, we are one.

— attributed to Ram Dass

All of yoga's teachings are contained in this one word. Your experience at the end of each class is more than mere relaxation, an experience of something beyond words. This inner experience is the point of this greeting, Namaste. When you speak this to another person, it reminds you of that dimension of your own being, a way of naming the unnamable. At the same time, it addresses that deeper dimension of the one you greet. As hard as it can be to remember the Namaste place in yourself, sometimes it is even harder to see it in others.

Our biggest challenges in life come from our relationships. Sometimes it is a family member or friend, and other times it is simply the driver in the car beside yours, but it is a relationship nonetheless. The key factor in all these relationships is you - which is the good news! Because you are the only one you can hope to have any control over. All the schemes and strategies to control others, to straighten them out, to put them on the right track, to show them once and for all, or to help them finally get it - they are all doomed to failure. Because even if your manipulation succeeds, there will be something else that bugs you. You can even change your life around to get rid of the people that disturb you the most, by changing jobs or even changing spouses, and there will still be something that bugs you, maybe in the same person or even in the new people in your life.

Looking within to find your Namaste place is essential, but it is only a beginning. You must begin to see that everyone has Namaste as their inner essence. There is one light shining through every person's eyes; one Self has become the Self of all. This is what you recognize when you look deep into someone's eyes. You just have to remember to look.

You have been trained to look at the surface level. In interactions with others, you probably look at their hair, their body and clothes. You watch their lips as they talk. You focus on their behavior, obsess on their words, structure your whole life around their desires. You replay old conversations in your mind and structure "what-ifs" endlessly. When are you going to look at their eyes -- not at the surface of their eyes, but really look inside? There is something irresistible there. It is there in your loved ones, and it is there in everyone. Sometimes it is actually easier to see in a stranger than in someone close to you.

Namaste. Where is the Namaste place in you? Is there a place of love and truth, light and peace, a place where the entire universe dwells? Does the person next to you have a Namaste place -- where is it? Look for it. Look beyond the surface. You don't have to wait for them to find it before you see it. You can acknowledge it even if they don't know. The result is a change in you, and that is the only change that matters.

Namasté,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Rama'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small heart symbol above the 'a'.