



June 2001 Contemplation Theme

## Support

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This primary principle of Svaroopa Yoga is often expressed in the phrase, "Support equals release." When you put that extra blanket underneath your knee or learn how to stand by leaning into your bones, you experience the reliable and extraordinary release of internal tensions, which creates that delicious feeling of openness and freedom that extends through your body and beyond. The corresponding mental and emotional tensions melt away, and that deeper dimension of your own essence shines through your eyes, fills your body and extends into your life – all from support. The effects of support are not limited to the body.

Support works its magic in relationships, as well. I am sure you can tell the difference between pressure and support when you are the receiver of such attentions from your spouse, parents or other significant people in your life. In difficult times, would you rather get support or pressure from your loved ones? However, to discern the fine line between support and pressure when you are the one who is offering is another matter. For this, you have to let go of your version of the script and let the others in your life write their own destiny. What support can you offer that will help them find clarity about who they are and what they need to do in their life? How can your love and support speed and smooth their process of blossoming into the most fragrant flower that only they can be? Support makes a big difference.

The same applies to your yoga teacher. While each of us teachers has chosen to make our work an offering of support to others, there are times that we need your support. For Master Yoga Academy in La Jolla, this is one of those times. Your continuing presence is already an important form of support. Your participation and the accumulated power of your yoga practice provide the field in which the teacher can plant yoga's seeds, and then watch their growth and ultimate harvest in the beauty of your own blossoming life. Your payment for those classes makes many things possible, including the physical facility as well as your teachers' ability to provide for the necessities of their own life (and maybe a few luxuries?).

In addition, your questions offer support to your teacher, providing opportunities to expand the base of teachings offered. Your enthusiasm and personal stories of yoga's profound effect feed your teacher's heart and soul. Your gratitude inspires them to give their life even more fully to yoga, and thus be further uplifted by their own practice as well as inspired by their own gratitude to the teachers who have preceded them on the path.

In times of change like this, it is easy to go find your own version of "the cave" to hide in. But for us, at this time, that is a withdrawal of your support. We cannot make this happen without you. I am reminded of a phrase that moved me in the 60's, "What if they gave a war and nobody came?" Well, what if we gave a yoga class, and nobody came? After a few attempts, there couldn't be a class any more.

Teachers offered yoga's teachings for free in ancient India. In modern America, you have to pay for your classes. There is a reason for this difference: in ancient India, the teachers were renunciants. They decided they did not want their own home, a car (camel?), a family, or a summer vacation. They gave up everything and devoted their whole life to the study and practice of yoga in all its varieties and increasing subtleties. They were (and are) the most revered members in their culture and society. People support them by providing them with free housing, by bringing them meals every day, and by providing them with free medical care and all the other needs of human life. So the yogis can give their teachings for free.

In America, no one has approached me recently to offer me a free home, meals, or medical care, nor a building in which to teach. I must pay for these. The culture of America combined with modern economic realities means that your yoga class must have 10 or 20 people in it in order to survive. The

current reorganization of Master Yoga's classes in La Jolla reflects that reality. Now, you must decide if those other people in your (necessarily) larger classes are intruders or if they are a form of support.

Ultimately, anyone who is practicing yoga is potentially one of the most wonderful people you could ever hope to know. If you get to know them, and if you work with them to provide support, your teachers will thrive and will be able to support you. Isn't it wonderful that we cannot do this alone? We must do this together.

Please consider how you want to support your yoga teachers, especially in these next few months. Maybe it will be by continuing to come to class and by offering your questions, your suggestions, your energy and support. Or you may be able to offer more, through our volunteer program or your tax-deductible donations. We need your support in order to be able to serve you. Thank you.

Namasté,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nama". Above the letter "a" is a small heart symbol. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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