

Yoga Spirit Academy E-zine

Healing body, mind and spirit
with the wisdom of Yoga, meditation and Ayurveda

January / February 2020

Volume 13, Issue 1

The Benefit of Spiritual Practices By Janet W. Parachin, PhD

This is the first in a new series on Spiritual Practices, one of my most favorite topics to explore. We begin with the WHY, WHAT and WHERE of spiritual practices.

We are spiritual beings having a human experience

I don't know who originally said these words, but the Vedic tradition of which Yoga is a part would certainly agree. We are born into this life at a certain place and time, but we bring into this life a history of which we are not fully aware. Some say these are past lives or karmas we must work out, but however you describe it, we are here to discover, understand and live out our purpose. What is that purpose? It is certainly more than to work and die! We have been given this precious life, this consciousness of life and death, for a reason. Each person has their own reason for being here and now in this great drama of life.

We are born into this world from a state of bliss

Ananda is the Sanskrit word for bliss. In our mother's womb we experienced a state of bliss because we were one with our mother, all of our needs were provided moment by moment and there was no fear of tomorrow. All of this changed once we are born because we experienced cold, hunger, thirst and separation. We begin to worry if our caregiver will come back to take care of us. Losing our memory of the bliss state is not bad thing, however, because we have to experience the world as it is in order to live in the world as it is. Hardship, worry and fear are absolutely necessary to make us strong to face the

world and make our way in the world.

"Spirituality . . . keeps life from being a burden."

I take to heart the words of my teacher Dr. Vasant Lad from The Ayurvedic Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who says "Spirituality is simply moment-to-moment awareness of what is. It is the source of inspiration that keeps life from being a burden. It transforms your whole perception of the world." Spiritual practices help us to return to our original state of bliss through the cultivation of moment-to-moment awareness, also known as mindfulness. They bring us into a fully awake

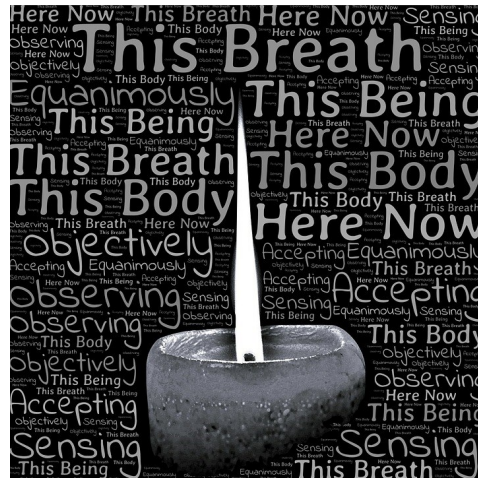
state, even only for a few minutes at a time, to remind us that our true nature is *Ananda*, bliss, contrary even to the appearances of the everyday world.

Regularity in the practices is key

It does not really matter which spiritual practices we undertake, only that we engage in them on a regular basis. Daily is best, although most days of the week might be more realistic. Spiritual practices form us in very specific ways through

their discipline and they hold the promise of "keeping life from being a burden" and "transforming our perception," as Dr. Lad asserts. Choosing a certain time of day and a specific location for those practices is a helpful first start. Next, choose one or two practices to explore, perhaps the prayers of our religious tradition, meditation with an app, spiritual reading, chanting

continues on page two



Yoga Spirit Academy
200-hour and 300-hour yoga teacher training
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Spiritual practices continued

with a recording, or mindful yoga postures.

“Who am I?” – “Why am I here?”

To get you started, I recommend this exercise from Deepak Chopra’s book *The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire*. Self-inquiry is a traditional practice from the Vedic tradition which asks these two questions. The first question can go very deep, so Deepak recommends starting with the second more practical one. Find a place where you won’t be disturbed for 20 minutes. With pen and paper in hand ask yourself the question “Why am I here?” Without thinking too deeply, write 20 answers to that question in quick succession. Use the remaining time to meditate silently on the question and your answers. See if it brings more insight to the first question “Who am I?”

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES with Janet Parachin

6 Friday evenings in January and February from 6:30-8:00pm

\$35 per class or \$175 for the series (one class is free)

Set yourself up for greatness in this new year by exploring Spiritual Practices that will bring balance to your days and reveal the deeper meaning of your life. Each class provides 1.5 hours of continuing education credit or 9 hours for the entire series.

January 17 – Creating Sacred Space in your life for spiritual practices

January 24 – Mantra and Mala: Chanting mantra heals the mind and body through sound, while the energy of the mala beads quickens this process.

January 31 – Devotion and Service: Whatever we give our heart to guides our path in life. Choose wisely!

February 7 – Pranayama, the yogic breath exercises that increase energy and life force

February 21 – Digestive Fire, because the foundation for all health—mental and physical—is healthy digestion

February 28 – Meditation: to master the mind is the greatest gift you can give yourself and the world

<https://yogaspirittulsa.com/workshops/>

Advanced Anatomy for Yoga

January 25 and 26, February 22 and 23, March 28 and 29

\$450 for the 30-hour course

Prerequisite: a basic course in yoga anatomy and physiology from any school

Go beyond the basics of anatomy to explore the biomechanics of the shoulders, hips and spine; common injuries with an emphasis on anatomically safe movements; assisting and adjusting that is anatomically informed; the Ayurvedic understanding of subtle anatomy; and the anatomy of breathing. The course includes lecture, discussion, lots of visuals and hands-on practice. Texts for the course are YogaBody by Judith Lasater and The Key Muscles of Yoga/The Key Poses of Yoga by Ray Long.

<https://yogaspirittulsa.com/yoga-anatomy/>

125-hour Certificate in Restorative and Therapeutic Yoga

In 2020 we will also offer three advanced courses leading to a 125-hour Certificate in Restorative and Therapeutic Yoga. Prerequisite for Advanced Anatomy is a basic course in anatomy for yoga. Prerequisites for all other advanced courses is 100 hours of yoga teacher training from any school or 300 hours of experience teaching yoga.

Advanced Anatomy for Yoga is the first of three courses leading to a Certificate in Restorative and Therapeutic Yoga. The additional courses are

Therapeutic Yoga and Ayurveda (45 hours, classes held May-July)
How Yoga and Ayurveda are used therapeutically to heal and prevent injury and illness, both physically and mentally.

Restorative Yoga (50 hours, classes held September-November)
Prop-supported restorative yoga, Yin Yoga and Yoga Nidra.

For more information, contact the Director or visit our website

<https://yogaspirittulsa.com/300-hour-training/>

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