

## **SPIRIT GUIDES by Danny Paradise**

To me, personally, it's an honour and privilege to be able to help pass on the teachings and practices of Yoga to communities around the world. Yoga is an ancient scientific process that acts as a foundation for living life to its fullest potential and creating constant evolution. Evolution in its highest sense is the understanding that we are eternal, unlimited and totally free. The practices may possibly have been created tens of thousands of years ago and represent a means of creating personal responsibility, aging with vitality and an ever-expanding view of the Sacred and the Sacred nature of existence. One of the definitions of Religion is to "move with great speed into enquiry." (Krishnamurti) Yoga can be considered the "Science Of Religion"...Or the "Science of Enquiry"...

The origins of Yoga and most religions are in Shamanism, and can be seen as a means to help guide us to mastery of our dream...Our dream of life. Yoga is about personal empowerment and responsibility for all the things we create in our own lives. A guru is a recent phenomenon and is really an anomaly of the true ancient purposes and teachings of Yoga. The necessity to have gurus no longer exists. Yoga was created for the purpose of helping people heal themselves, restore and preserve their energy and come back into contact with the life forces that created the Universe. The ancient evidence and symbol of Yoga is the image carved in stone of the Yogi sitting in silent meditation. He didn't have anyone beside him telling him what to think or what to do. The connection back to the Spirit is represented by this solitary figure making his personal connection and dialogue with the Great Spirit. In the beginning there were no intermediaries to the Spirit, no guru, no priest. As I see it, there are no authorities on Yoga other than each individual practitioner. The techniques are designed to make each person their own and only authority on their personal evolution. A Yoga teacher really represents someone who perhaps has a little more experience in the field of practice than you may have and can help pass on techniques, suggestions and views from their personal experience.

The physical practices of Yoga can be considered self-correcting and self-teaching after a certain number of classes are attended. The faster I can help guide someone to their own personal practice, the better I feel about my work. The true purpose of a teacher is not to have lots of students...but rather to create as many masters as possible. Mastery in Yoga does not mean perfection of technique, flexibility or strength. Rather it is the recognition of the Sacred nature of existence and the self-responsibility that comes with finding our purpose on earth. As ancient guidelines for living, the teachings of all Shamanic traditions, of which Yoga is part of, lead us to an understanding that Nature is our Spiritual Guide and Teacher. The teachings of Yoga are known to have arisen from the observation of nature. Our purpose is to help restore, preserve and protect the natural world, or at the very least to recognize the process that the Universe is going through and not interfere with it. The Earth and Universe are living beings...This has been understood for tens of thousands of years by all indigenous cultures around the world.

The physical practices of Ashtanga Yoga and all forms of Hatha Yoga occupy a small percentage of the day. Some may spend 20 minutes at Yoga and others may have a practice, which is 2 hours or longer. As the years go by in these practices it becomes apparent that they are also preparations for aging and the approach of death. As a proven science, Yoga can add 20 or 30 years of active energy onto people's lives. At the same time the teachings can help eliminate the fear of death and consequently all fears that prevent us from following our dream.

The grass roots movement of Yoga in the west is a constantly expanding circle that has grown to become a cross-cultural family of friends throughout the world. All who enter this circle are accepted and cared for. Yoga has been evolving for tens of thousands of years and will continue to evolve and expand. Every generation adds their own ideas and expressions to the science of Yoga. This is the beauty of its evolution. Everyone has a different way of describing Yoga and what it means in their lives and what it is about. It is a proven Wisdom Trail that has been explored by countless generations investigating natural law...It is part of what the Cherokees call the Beauty Trail.

The only master of Yoga ultimately is you. As the Buddha said: "You are your only master." There is not one better way or path in Yoga. The various lineages and techniques represent different ways that all suit different individuals. They are all parts of the same path and many combinations of the techniques can be adopted. The guidelines have been around for many millenniums and are perhaps as old as mankind. The techniques themselves can be understood very quickly and though aspects of flexibility and strengthening will take time, other aspects of the practice can be grasped immediately. This is especially true when a teacher is compassionate, observant, experienced and has no agenda other than to pass on practices that one can eventually learn to do oneself. This self-empowering aspect of Yoga, to help people fulfill individual destiny as well as create as wild a dream of life as possible, is what I feel continually draws people into the magic circle of these practices.

Through Yoga you are able to step out of the regular wheel of life and take a constantly expanding view. True spirituality is ultimately about learning to think for oneself, learning to make the connection to the Great Spirit oneself, to create happiness, well being and peace in oneself and then help spread the messages of Love and Peace. The Native Americans say a Spiritual Warrior is someone who creates a world of balance and harmony for coming generations on a continuous basis. So the appeal of Yoga is vast because we all want to be independent, free and totally empowered to create and meet all our responsibilities. Who doesn't want to be fearless and super-conscious? If you want it you can have it. With well being and peace we can have endless potential to connect with the Heart of the Universe, Inherit the Universe and do the work the Great Spirit wants us to do.

Peace and Blessings, Danny Paradise  
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