WHAT IN THE WORLD IS YOGA?

By Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani

Having striven to understand the meaning of life for at least 65 of the 70 years I have lived in this body and having been drawn to Yoga as a result of this search, I really cannot say much at all about my present state of consciousness. I relate very much to the great mystic saint of the Kannadiga culture Mahaakka who proclaimed, “I cannot say that I am happy. I cannot say that I am sad. I cannot say that I am content, nor can I say I am discontent. To tell the truth, I cannot really say much about myself at all!”

I too feel that way! I cannot say anything much about myself. I can only know “I am” or rather “something is”. This life experience remains as mysterious and as unknowable to me as it ever has! The difference between then and now, is that I accept this “unknowability” with a peaceful heart.

Though Yoga is everything to me, the fabric of existence, the light in the grandchildren’s eye and the laughter welling up from the belly, I do not know what Yoga is!

All I know is: Yoga is! So much is said, so much is written about Yoga, that I think it is time we all stopped talking about Yoga and just starting living Yoga.

Yoga is wholeheartedness. Yoga is moment by moment immersion in the flow of consciousness. Yoga is keeping quiet. Yoga is awareness, alertness. Yoga is acceptance, perhaps Iswara Pranidhana is the “full stop” when we describe Yoga. Acceptance of what is, with grace and gratitude. Who are we to think we can change the world with Yoga? Can we straighten a dog’s curly tail? Why should we try? Could we be God and restructure the world to our likes and dislikes? Should we? It is too big a job for mortal minds!

Yoga is becoming what we are meant to become, fulfilling our personal destiny, whatever it may be: a butterfly, a worm, a conqueror of nations, a light on the path.

To discover that destiny we must sit still and be quiet. Allow the life force to flow through us and mould us by the Karma of our life events into the shape we must become.

Who am I? What am I? Where am I? There is no verbal answer.

Yoga is the springboard from which we leap into our destiny. Once we have made that leap, even the springboard is left behind!