UN-HOLY YOGA
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Can one remove “wholeness” from Yoga and still have “wholeness”. Can one take something apart and claim a single piece is that complete object? Can one remove the steering wheel from a car and claim it is the car?

Well! Large numbers of people are attempting to do just that. Little bits and pieces of the mighty ageless Yoga science are being scavenged and packaged and promoted as “Yoga”. The promises are utterly amazing. One Mantra chanted daily 1008 times for ten years (ten days? Ten months?) will get you Samadhi, money, peace of mind, health, happiness, a better sex life or what thou wilt!

A few huffs and puffs per day will increase your intelligence quotient. A set of 27 Asanas will give you Jada Samadhi (Body Bliss) Don’t waste time trying to understand the whole. Just, grab a piece of the cake and enjoy right now!

Some years ago I attended a National Seminar on Kundalini at a reputed Yoga Institute in Bangalore. (Why I was there was another story). After my presentation, a middle age man a bit fat and chubby, but exuding aura of wealth and authority came up to me. “Look” “he said” I am a Non-Resident Indian living in London. I have lots of money but I don't have lots of time! You have spent 25 years doing Kundalini Sadhana. Can’t you just sift through all your experience and come up with a technique which can give me all those benefits in a ½ hour practice daily? Yogis are supposed to be compassionate and help others!”

This is a common mindset. “Just give me the accumulated wisdom and Tapas of decades of Sadhana in a pill or package. It is your duty to save me! Of course, I will pay you well!”

I have pondered this over decades. Can Yoga be taught in pieces! Can Yoga be taught on demand? Can Yoga be achieved without developing qualities of character? Without discipline, self knowledge, without austerities? Without self effacement and hard work!

The advertisements in the top pop Yoga mags say “yes”. My experience is the opposite. But, dare I voice my opinion? I will be misconstrued as an elitist, or a fascist, or worse still, Anti People and Anti-Democracy So, I try to keep quiet most of the time!

I see and hear of people teaching Kapalabhati in a two hour seminar. It took us six months of solid Sadhana before Swamiji got us to the place, beyond the foundation Asana, Kriya and Pranayama work, to even be introduced to Kapalabhati let alone master it. Now I see it even being taught in “Yoga Columns” in magazines and newspapers like this “Breathe forcefully in and out through the nose several times this is Kapalabhati” The same thing I have seen in regard to Ujayi Pranayama. It took us six months to build the foundation to be aware and skillful enough to be taught this practice. Six months of ten hours a day Sadhana. Now I hear people instructing others, “Breathe in making a sighing sound in the throat”. Is it possible?

Yoga in parts makes it possible! Just as an apple is no longer an apple, having been coloured, waxed, preserved, injected, transported thousands of miles till it only looks and feels like an apple but does not taste or smell or nourish like an apple, Yoga looks like Yoga, but it is not Yoga.

The part cannot be the whole. But the whole can be taken apart.

It seems to me that the whole of Yoga must be learned, absorbed, studied, assimilated, digested, practiced, understood as a living, organic, way of life. Each practice, each concept, each idea, each principle, each technique must be understood in context with the whole. The relationship of all of the parts must be understood in a wholistic vision, as a field, a Kshetra

Once the whole of the Yoga science is experienced through sincere Sadhana and competent instruction then it can be practiced in parts. One has understood the basic mechanism of the breath, the Mantric quality, the effect of timing and number on breathing mechanics, the use of inter-costal,
diaphragm the conscious use of all segments of lungs etc. then one can practice Kapalabhati or Ujayi as a Pranayama in its own right. The part is then firmly rooted in relationship to the whole. But, the part cannot be removed from the whole and taught as a separate technique! It just won’t, can’t work in the long run. And Yoga is “Long Run”. In the short run there may be the adrenaline high to accomplishment, or a stimulus from the sudden use of body parts unused decade But that soon fades.

**But, the depth of the practice can be experienced only when the technique is rooted in a conscious awareness of the whole.**

One may have to learn so many things. Then that practice will have power because the whole has been experienced, so the part is connected to its source. It is plugged into the cosmic currents and the power can flow.

If on the contrary, one learns only ten Asanas in isolation as a package, those “parts” will have no connection to the “Greater Whole” of the spiritual concepts of Asana and hence will have no more effect than some good keep fit exercise”

But! Who has the time for wholeness? Who has the patience to digest wholeness! The intelligence or Vision to perceive wholeness?

Ay! That’s the rub! As the ancient Dane rued.