



## Reflections on Writing *"Sun, Moon and Earth"*

By  
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A year ago today, my book *Sun, Moon, and Earth: The Sacred Relationship of Yoga & Ayurveda* was released by Lotus Press. I was elated to have finally completed a project that reflected over 20 years of study and service in the Vedic field. The book presents a number of bold themes that I feel are pertinent to bringing greater understanding to the yoga and Ayurveda traditions.

To begin with, I wanted to endorse a unified relationship between yoga and Ayurveda in practice and lifestyle. In the commercial sense, many yoga enthusiasts have associated yoga with fitness and have failed to recognize its spiritual and lifestyle aspects. I explain that in order for yoga to truly be effective, one must embrace a number of important principles such as self study (svadhyaya) as a form of inner reflection, establishing discipline (tapasya) between the mind-body relationship, and learning the highest principle of yoga — surrendering (ishvara pranidhana) to the Divine within all living things.

### **Integral Yoga**

Integral yoga is about cultivating a living relationship with the Divine force or maha prana that abides in all things. The task of yoga is to link us to these higher and subtler forces often hidden within the material or mundane world. The basic premise is that existence on planet earth has a much higher purpose (than what we currently see) in that life on earth provides us a wonderful opportunity to explore, enjoy, and learn about ourselves — and so, the earth itself can become a great

teacher or guru to us. Such a theme is aimed at promoting our relationship with nature (prakriti) and her laws as essential means to health, wellness, and spiritual evolution.

## **Power of Relationship**

In telling the fascinating story of yoga and Ayurveda, I begin with how these sciences are born of the movements of the sun, moon, and earth. These three planets reflect the trinity of life with the sun being linked to the soul, the moon with the mind, and earth with the body. Planets also share a binary relationship, which produces a similar effect for us living on earth in that relationships of all types are sacred to us. However, personal relationships are the most valued in that they can bring us great joy and ultimately provide us with our greatest lessons.

Relationships link us to a family tree, a culture, and a geographical area. In this regard I explain that yoga lineages are crucial to both the preservation of yoga and especially to its efficacy. When we study yoga from a lineage (sampradaya)-based tradition, it links us to its Kriya-shakti or power of consciousness, which magnifies our awareness and promotes our spiritual evolution. This is an important consideration for yoga teachers and practitioners who are finding themselves challenged with mental boredom and redundancy. A true lineage roots us in the power of an integral practice, keeping us ever growing in our search for Divine love.

Today, many practitioners of yoga asana are motivated by its therapeutic value. However, any practice of yoga as a therapy is actually related to Ayurveda. As the sister Vedic science to yoga, Ayurveda is mainly focused on balance of the body (tri-dosha) through balanced digestion for the promotion of ayus or longevity. Yoga is actually a scientific means for managing the ongoing war between the ego and our true inner being (soul).

## **The Real Benefits of Yoga Asana**

I wanted to educate readers on the fourfold benefits of yoga asana. First, the mythological meaning and symbolism of the most common postures can provide deeper insights into the nature of the mind to overcome its complexities. Second, asanas have a direct influence on the doshas and their respective organs and systems. Postural yoga along with pranayama (breathing techniques), when practiced correctly massages the inner anatomy, thus stimulating the organs and keeping them vital and healthy.

Third, instructions are given as to how to perform these signature poses to gain the greatest benefit. Lastly, I explain the mystical influence of asana yoga and how each posture can be used to promote sensory withdrawal (pratyahara) to enhance meditation, the highest limb of yoga. Yoga works quite efficiently as a complete system to balance our entire being by bridging the mind-body relationship and then

establishing a deep enough state of relaxation to lead us into the multitude of benefits from the practice of meditation.

### **True Meaning of Ecology**

Much to my surprise, one of my favorite chapters was the last one on Spiritual Ecology, which educates readers and students of yoga and Ayurveda on the underlying basis for ecology as a spiritual practice, a term I coined as spirit-ecos. The basic idea is that ecology is not merely a practice we do for sustainability of the environment with the idea that we need preserve the world for our children and grandchildren; ecology is about spirit. God is nature and He exists in all living things and by cultivating a compassionate relationship with nature, its elements, animals, and its many qualities it nurtures the law of attraction within.

Yoga is founded on the magnetic power of the soul; and the relationship we share with nature is born of the cycles between the sun, moon, and earth. The mind-body complex is continuously striving for balance; however, in the whisper of the soul, we can all find true contentment, love, and happiness.

Ayurveda teaches us that how we treat the planet is a reflection of how we care for ourselves. Together, yoga and Ayurveda provide us with the highest prospects for health and wellness with the intention of seeing the unity behind diversity, which essentially proclaims that there is no one way to health and happiness. May we all find our own unique cycle to align with a grander power and the potential of the sun, moon, and earth.