

## *The Benefits of Teaching Yoga*

by *Swami Nishchalananda*

As students and practitioners of Yoga we are all well aware of the benefits Yoga can have on all levels of our being. Teaching Yoga can be a way of passing on to others what we have received.

Teaching Yoga gives us an opportunity to serve others, enabling us to really be of help to others in improving the quality of their lives. Let us remember that service (Sanskrit, *seva*) is an essential aspect of Yoga – fundamental in the process of deepening our understanding and awakening to a deeper realisation of the ground of our Being.

Teaching Yoga puts us in touch with people on a deeper level and gives us the opportunity to respond creatively and practically to their needs. In teaching Yoga, we humbly share our personal experience of Yoga with others – sharing on a physical level by helping people to improve the functioning of their body – sharing on a mental-emotional level by helping people to gain understanding of how their mind functions – and sharing on a sublime level, by providing the space from which students are enabled to see beyond the veil of conditioned everyday perception.

Teaching Yoga also motivates us to learn more about Yoga and deepen our own practice. In this way, we enhance our understanding of Yoga and its vast repertoire of practices, together with a greater appreciation of their effects on our body, mind and emotions. We are obliged to deepen our perception and self-understanding; without this we cannot help others to do likewise. Only through such inner growth, energised by practice, are we ready to share these practices with others so that, with guidance, they too may discover their effects and benefits for themselves.

As teachers, we are required to awaken our intuition and sensitivity so that we know what is appropriate for an individual or for the group. We learn to ‘feel’ a situation and know when it is right to offer guidance and support, when to change tack, when to step back and when to be silent. In teaching, moreover, we are required to develop humility, which is such an important part of going deeper in Yoga. In this humility, we don’t think that we know everything or that we are the mine of yogic knowledge and the students are ignoramuses. Rather we are open to exchange between ourselves and the students – in which everyone learns something – often the teacher more than the student.

Teaching Yoga encourages us to express the positive side of our personality. This helps to override our negativity and inhibitions. For example, teaching Yoga gives us the confidence to express ourselves in public.

By finding inspiration in ourselves, we learn how to inspire others.

Teaching Yoga obliges us to be honest, open and alive.

- \* Honest with ourselves and others
- \* Open to change and our own learning process
- \* Alive to the cosmos and to the energy that moves through us and others.

Swami Satyananda says: *Yoga is the essential need of today and the culture of tomorrow*. By teaching Yoga, you will be helping to usher in a better society, now, and also for our children in the future.

Teaching is a privilege and a joy.