

Interview with Geetaji

Chris Saudek*

Chris: Geetaji, I would like you to tell us about your formation and development as a yoga teacher. What do you remember from the very beginning, when you were a child, about watching Guruji practice or your thoughts about yoga at that young age?

Geeta: How to say this! You see, it was not that I was completely interested in it or that I was disinterested. I was not a person who never thought of yoga because it was in the family, it was going on. I was seeing it so there were no thoughts against it. And it was only me who was interested in it in the family. I don't think my brother and sisters were interested in it in the manner I was. But, I won't say that I was totally given to it. However, whenever time was there or I felt like doing, I used to do. I was practising in a playful manner but that was not the age to be serious. When you speak of interest, you think of being serious. But if you mean a light interest, then I was always interested. As a child I would watch my parents when they were doing yoga and obviously I had that interest. But if you ask me whether I was sincere, I would say "No" because I was not intelligent enough at that age to be sincere. At that age I was interested in playing with friends and being outside and going to the parks. But at the same time I was never parted from yoga, only the intensity was less until I grew the seed of insight. So I was never completely out of it. It was always around me. I remember very well how I used to imitate Guruji while he was practising. Guruji used to make me bend and twist and make me topsy-turvy on his feet when he did headstand and shoulder-stand.

*Interview done by Chris Saudek, December 1995. Transcribed by Chris Saudek, edited by Geeta Iyengar, Chris Saudek and Francie Ricks. The interview originally appeared in "Yogapushpanjali." Copyright © 1995 by Light on Yoga Research Trust, Mumbai. Reproduced with the permission of the Light on Yoga Research Trust.

Chris: When did you become aware of the fact that your father was so special and how dedicated he was to his work?

Geeta: As a child, when I started understanding life outside, I knew that he was different. Even though he did not have that much name or fame yet, people used to approach him. In 1951 he was teaching Jaya Prakash Narayan and other Indian politicians. Then he taught Krishnamurti. Though I didn't know these people, I knew that they were important people. They were coming, Guruji was teaching them and sometimes he would tell us that he was going to teach them. So we knew that he was doing something special. People were coming and asking for him and seeking his advice, so we all knew he had some special knowledge.

Chris: In, *Yoga - A Gem for Women*, Guruji wrote in the foreword that although you watched him and you saw him teaching, you didn't really show any inclination toward yoga until your illness when he gave you an ultimatum. Did you practice before that except in playing?

Geeta: I don't think I didn't show any inclination. Maybe Guruji remembers it that way. But I was doing yoga from the age of three or four and even before having nephritis I used to do yoga. I was always a sick child, having cold or cough or fever. Though I used to take part in competitions like jump rope, I had little strength. I was weak constitutionally. Before the nephritis, I played a lot doing yoga. I was never lazy but I had many illnesses which were never diagnosed properly. This went on for two years without knowing what the main cause of these illnesses was. My breathing was affected and at night I used to wheeze and get breathless. Later when I became unconscious with nephritis, they diagnosed that it was the cause of all these other illnesses, for all these years. I was already playing at yoga, and then I had to do it because there was no other choice. And I knew that when I did yoga, I felt better. Suddenly I became serious after this illness. But even now I feel I have a weakness and I have to limit myself.

Chris: Did you ever think of your practice as a duty?

Geeta: No. I would not have mentioned about the nephritis in my book if my publisher had not insisted that I point out that yoga had helped my nephritis. But my interest in yoga was intuitive and after the nephritis I took it seriously. There might be people more serious than me, who do yoga day and night. But I take it that not only in this life, but in the next life I will be doing yoga, not as a duty but as a way of life. I won't say it is my life mission; it's my life.

Chris: In the book, Guruji says that the medicine that the doctors had advised for your condition was too costly. Do you think that if you had had the money, Guruji would have taken that route?

Geeta: Actually I don't think so because he had tremendous faith in yoga. As the kidney was affected permanently, yoga was the only medicine.

Chris: When you started teaching, did you ever think it would be your life work?

Geeta: I started teaching in 1959, when I was in school. I was practising and the teachers saw me. We had competitions in the schools where groups would perform, giving a demonstration. At that time my teacher asked me to help her with a yoga demonstration. Guruji was just coming into the limelight and there were articles about him in the local papers. So people started recognising him as a yogi who had taught famous people. So my teachers recognised me as well. In the early years when they were doing group demonstrations they had never introduced *Sirsasana* and *Sarvangasana*. So that was the first year that we introduced these poses for a performance. I was the organiser for the teaching of the poses and the formation of the performers to make it an attractive demonstration. I even taught them *Kapotasana* and *Raja Kapotasana*. It was a big success and we received a prize. So that's how I began teaching in school. In 1961 I passed my final exams and started teaching yoga. At first I started because Guruji was going to England and some of his pupils asked him whether I could teach them in his absence and he permitted it. And I kept teaching at my school and some of the other schools started asking me to teach them also. That is how it continued.

Chris: So it just happened. You didn't really think about how to start teaching?

Geeta: No, I never thought about it. I just started like that. I had not planned it.

Chris: So did you ever have any other ideas about any other work?

Geeta: No, except that I had an inclination towards medical studies, but my energy was not sufficient for that. And that interest faded when I developed such a keen interest in yoga. And it wasn't that I was initially interested in treating people with yoga. My interest in therapy came later. As I started teaching, students would tell me about their different problems and for them yoga had to be therapeutic. But my interest is mainly in the whole of yoga. Therapy is a necessary by product of teaching, and it came on its own as I was teaching. Even for my nephritis, I didn't do yoga as a treatment or take it like a medicine. My practice was my practice.

Yoga was my interest and I used to do all the poses from A to Z. I kept Guruji's album of his poses open because we had no book. Light on Yoga came much later. So all I had was his photographs. I used to open it and seeing the pictures I used to perform.

Chris: And there were no instructions?

Geeta: No, and Guruji could not teach me because he was busy with his own work. We hardly ever saw him because when he was home for lunch, we were at school. And he didn't come home until around 8:30 at night, when it was time for us to go to bed. But my mother would tell him how regular I was with my practice. I practised directly after coming home from school. I was quite disciplined not to eat anything after school but to do my practice of 45 minutes to one hour before having something to eat. That discipline came on its own. No one had to force me. And now self-discipline has become my nature. I never had any plans to become a yoga teacher. It too was a natural evolution.

Chris: When did you make the decision not to get married and have a family?

Geeta: I never thought of getting married. I never had an inclination towards family life. My aunts tell me that even sometimes at the age of three I would say that I would go and join an ashram as yogis always did that. But later I never thought of joining an ashram. My interest in yoga grew as I was practising so I just never thought of getting married. I have to thank God for that. If I had had some inclination or desire it would have been like forcing myself to be the other way. Fortunately, that never happened.

Chris: And your parents never said . . .

Geeta: No, they knew how I was. Very rarely do such things happen in a family. Normally you have to push back your wishes but that never happened. When my sister Vanita was to get married, my mother asked me if I was sure about not getting married. Since she is younger, I would have got married first, but I said I was definitely not interested. That was not my goal of life at all. Fortunately, I was not negative either because negativity can also be a forced idea. I just never had any inclination. My mother was very supportive and my parents never tried to force me nor did I have to prepare myself not to get married. It was all luck. But you know, perhaps some yoga students are more sincere than I am. I have taken to yoga as a lifestyle and I have never had any doubts. It is God's blessing that it was very clear.

Chris: When you started teaching do you feel you started practising differently? Did it change your way of practising?

Geeta: I don't think it is teaching that caused any change. But as maturity comes, I think practice changes. I didn't change it but it changed as understanding started coming. I tell you, this kind of looking into the pose came to me once in *Kurmasana*. I was doing tortoise pose, and I don't know what made me feel something different. My body was supple and I was just practising and one day I felt something, some life coming. It happened in the early days of my practice. It was then that I realized why Guruji says you have to 'go in', in doing the pose. The stretch of the arms and the stretch of the legs made me feel something inside. I realized I was looking into my pose and I felt as though I was becoming inhibited. I began to understand how to penetrate internally for the first time. And then I realised that that was the way I should do every asana. Also, my problems made me realise how I had to work.

Chris: Just the other day, I saw Guruji teaching you as a pupil. Also you wrote in your book that he taught you as a pupil and not as a daughter. That he was a stickler for discipline and really a taskmaster. Did you ever feel discouraged by that?

Geeta: No, I don't think I felt discouraged because as a teacher, I myself am like that. He is strict with me and I am also strict in that sense. If you want a result from a student you have to demand and they have to work in that manner. People often don't understand this. They think it's too strict, too disciplined, forcing. I don't believe these ideas. On both sides there has to be a willingness. As a pupil you have to have a willingness to learn and the teacher has to have a willingness to teach. So, whenever Guruji was teaching me I always felt that I could do better. I never felt that it was too hard because when he helped me, I felt a change internally, that I have never done like that. I was never discouraged by pain and pain doesn't bother me much. I am not like other people making a fuss that it pains, it pains. If I had a little bit better health than I have, my yoga would have been more expressive. For example, when a spectator looks at my performance it is not so spectacular. I have a limitation in that sense. Another person may do better, and you accept them as a performer, as a doer. Outsiders may question what I am doing and think they are doing better than me. But for me that is not the main thing because as a result they may not be getting anything. When I do, I know from inside that certain changes are occurring which an outsider cannot see. It is true that some may do better than me but at the same time I know that from inside that something is coming to me. On a performance level, I may still go backward because my body has got its limitations but I really never worry about my pains. I am never afraid of pain. I can take it. So even now if Guruji puts me in *Kapotasana* or *Vrschikasana* I am not bothered about the pains. And that willingness has always been there so I

could accept it.

Chris: When your mother died you were left with a lot more to do in the house. We know that teaching and running a house is extremely demanding. What advice do you have for those of us who are trying to balance teaching, practising and having a family? It can be very difficult sometimes.

Geeta: It is difficult. My mother's death came exactly in the middle of my life, when I was really marching ahead. If she had lived, I would have had more time to practice and I would have continued to do as I was doing. It has brought a limitation, that is true. But at the same time, when there is such a strong interest what can be done? There are two ways of looking at it. For outsiders, I might appear to be a failure when they look at me. But for me, it is okay. I have to accept it. And I know very well that this was not my original condition. In my performance I was good. The lack of practice has put me back a little. Sometimes I have missed my practice. I won't say that I was absolutely regular. The demands on me have made it impossible to be completely regular. Whenever I have free time, I make full use of it because I never know what problem might present tomorrow. When guests come we have to be there in the kitchen and cook for them. I can't be strict. For men it is different. They can be strict with their program. They make a schedule with time to practice, office hour or work hour or whatever and they can go according to the plan. They can do this because there is somebody supporting them, to help them maintain that timetable, such as their wife or mother. Ladies help men to maintain their schedule. For ladies it is a bit difficult because the demand is such that anytime you have to be ready for any demands that may come. When Prashant met with an accident we had a hard time. He was very dependent at that time since he was seriously injured. We were under stress, not knowing what would happen, and we had to look after him in the hospital.

Chris: But that kind of sacrifice is part of yoga, isn't it?

Geeta: Yes, that is life and you have to accept it. What can be done? That's why I say I cannot be absolutely strict with my timetable. But when there is time, you have to use it well. Today, to give you an example, this morning I did pranayama but otherwise I have not practised. There are so many things on my table now I don't know how to clear it off. It goes on and on. Now on Wednesday, I had household things and other work. So I came to the practice room at 8:30. And 9:15 is the class. So I did only *Janu Sirsasana* because I was tired. You might ask me what kind of work I have. Since I am not going to the office and just in the house, people question what kind of work I do. For the past few nights I have

been going through the Yoga sutras and correcting the cassettes until 12 midnight and this morning, I finished it so Guruji can send it off. I was also checking the translation of Light on Pranayama in Hindi and in Marathi. And there are so many letters.

Chris: I was wondering what a typical day for you might be but it sounds like there is no typical day.

Geeta: No, there is no typical day. But on Saturday and Sunday I work on these things. I am also rewriting all the question and answers that Guruji has done while abroad. There are nearly 200 questions that we have ready for print and there are two more sets on my table now, to finish this month.

Chris: What time do you usually get up and go to bed?

Geeta: I get up at 4:30 and go to bed at the latest by 11 p.m. It is not much sleep and can be a bit of a problem.

Chris: So what you practice depends on what your day is like?

Geeta: Yes, absolutely.

Chris: But often we feel that if we take our practice as part of our work that we should have a schedule of what to practice, when. How do you suggest we organise our practice in a typical week?

Geeta: This is quite a big question! I have never felt this to be a problem. I sometimes wonder why people question what and how much to practice. Then I have to think. Whereas in my way of practising it has always come from my heart. I have never thought I should practice this or that. The moment I start my practice, it just comes to me. While practising, certain things like the sequential order come from inside - how these asanas are connected and why after doing this asana why another asana came better; if I do one asana in between what happens. It is not done by calculation, it just comes. I enjoy my practice. I never calculate that this day I will start with *Bakasana* or whatever. There may have been some imitation of Guruji earlier. On Monday Guruji used to do balancings so I also used to do that. I used it as a guideline but it was never an imitation.

Chris: Well, one reason people try to organise their practice is to work on the lists of poses for certain levels of certification. But it must be hard for you to think like that since your practice always comes from your heart.

Geeta: Yes, but there is always a method. Even in the classes I have said that first in the week you start with standing poses, then forward bends, then inversions, then backbendings, etc.

Chris: When you practice, do you try to practice things that you plan to teach? In other words is your practice affected by your teaching?

Geeta: No, my practice is absolutely separate in the sense that I never plan that I will teach something so I need to practice it. That never happens. But what I learn in practice I will teach some time. Now, today I took standing poses with the arms over the head. I didn't do standing poses like that recently. But there is a reason why I took them in that way today. There are many newcomers this month. I purposely took them against the wall for these first two days so that they have support and the fatigue is less. They do not need to grip their legs so much for fear of slipping. I know if I make them do the poses in the centre there will be less control and they will feel it is slippery. They were also tired from travelling and it is winter so they have to get used to the weather. That is why I used the wall. I also asked them to stretch their arms overhead every time to get the vertical extension and lift the sides of the trunk. That gives them the grip even in the legs and helps the life come in the cellular body. But I didn't practice that way this morning. The idea came to me because one lady said it was slippery. I saw that she has scoliosis and that the grip on the root of the thigh was not enough. So I made everyone do against the wall and nobody complained about slipping. I have done the way I taught today, some time back. But when I stepped into the class I didn't know that that would be the way I would do. That doesn't work for me to plan like that. It is good for others that need strict discipline in the teaching process.

Chris: How can we learn to penetrate deeper in our practice?

Geeta: It is a difficult question to answer but there is a way of looking inside. I gave my example in *Kurmasana* where I could stretch my arms and legs and I felt that I was going totally inside. Though the stretch seemed to be on the outside, I was going in. Now this is something one has to experience. If you go on practising and don't experience what is happening inside, what can be done? That cannot be taught. It is an art. And the clues have been given so many times. I don't think that this question really should arise. I don't think that anyone can teach the way we are teaching to help you penetrate deeper inside. Like I said in the class a few days back, if I am not explaining but I am making you stand in *Tadasana* it doesn't mean that it is leisure time for you. You have plenty of time to look inside. If I teach the poses one after the other, you have no time to penetrate. But suppose in *Sirsasana*

you are standing there. You wait for the instructions to come from outside. In those five minutes, you have a chance to penetrate inside, to look at your shoulders, your neck, your spine, your back. You have to travel within and if you don't, how will you penetrate? Penetration will certainly be less compared to Guruji's penetration. You may wonder why can't we penetrate that much, when he penetrates so much. Somewhere you have to go into the process of penetration. But if you don't enter in, if you do mechanically, if you just follow instructions, it doesn't come.

Chris: So when you are doing your practice it is not a matter of thinking, but it is a matter of experiencing?

Geeta: Yes, when experience comes, thoughts come later. Thinking or formation of thought, how to present it to students comes much, much later. The clarity of explaining to others comes later. But in my own practice, I am not really questioning. I am just in it and I understand the difference and why the disparity is there. You have to adjust, that's all, and bring parity. You may make mistakes when you look at things. I may tell you to lift your right shoulder and you may have thought you needed to lift your left. But did you first reach there, from inside? That much you have to see.

Chris: As you say, it is not an intellectual process but an experiential one. That's what is hard to teach.

Geeta: And even though I have to miss my practice sometimes, whenever I practice I am going in. Even if I am in *Supta Virasana* I am observing from inside, what is going on, how the breath is moving, why the breath is less on one side, etc. So when I practice, I penetrate. That first step of penetration has to come. The amount of time you practice is irrelevant but if you have more time, you penetrate more. To anyone looking from outside my *Janu Sirsasana* might not be much to look at because I have to keep a bolster, blanket, everything for my head. But when I spent the forty-five minutes before class, it came better on the inside every time I repeated. I felt the difference. In the sense of "performance" my practice is a failure. But still I am practising and I continue with it because it is taking me somewhere inside. If it had not taken me to such depth I would have said goodbye to it. Others also can say, like Geeta, we also can't do so we will limit ourselves. But they may not be going inside. If I take them further than what they are doing on their own, they have to realise that they did not reach deep enough.

Chris: I am always impressed by what you know about women, the stresses in their daily life, about pregnancy and childbearing, about being a wife etc. And you have not experienced all these things. You hardly go out of the house and the

Institute. How have you learned all these things? Do you experience them through other people?

Geeta: I don't know how it comes to me but it comes. I really can't say how it comes but certain things do happen and I get it. That is the fact.

Chris: You seem to have an intuition as to how each student feels. Like today, there was a woman with depression and you seemed to know exactly how she felt.

Geeta: Yes, I told her to lift her eyes and that helped. I see that opening the eyes, opens the mind. It comes because there is an inner connection. Then you forget the past and come to the present. Otherwise you are brooding, you are in the past. Even in *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana* I told the students today to look at the ceiling and lift the chest so the whole cellular body goes upward. Yes, I have to admit that it is intuition which guides me to a great extent.

Chris: I know Guruji has said that in the medical classes when he has students with various ailments, he has to create the problem in his own body to see what to do. Do you also do that?

Geeta: Yes, to some extent that kind of imitation is there. But it is a feeling and I can't say that it is just penetrating into the body. Suppose you are complaining of ankle pain in standing poses. When I am practising, the depth is so much that I see that when you are complaining of your ankle pain what is likely to be happening. More than technique it is the feeling which is there that gives me the knowledge from inside, how each person has to be treated. Even in the case of a liver or gallbladder problem, I feel it from inside of my body. There is a sense. Suppose in forward bends someone says their abdomen is getting pressed. I feel it from inside where it is getting pressed. And the other day in class you may have seen this woman who complained of lumbar pain. I felt that her problem was in the shoulder blade and you saw that the moment the shoulder blade was taken inside, she was free from the lumbar pain. So how it comes, I can't say. But it is the penetration in the pose that tells us what is happening in certain parts of the body when we are doing the pose. It is just a freedom of the mind, you can say. And sometimes I explain in the class but I don't know to what extent you people understand. Even if I shout, there is a reason behind it. If I am strict with someone or losing my temper, outsiders might think that it is only at that level. But then they are not really understanding. I am just asking them to penetrate inside. It is so subjective that people will never understand without experiencing. Sometimes people talk about the sweet-talking teachers and we can't even imagine like that because we

can't cheat. When you are seeing in front of your eyes that something is going wrong, you can't cheat.

Chris: Were you always interested in yoga for women or did that evolve?

Geeta: I can't really say because Guruji had already written *Light on Yoga* so another general book would not have attracted people. So I wrote for women. If you want me to write for men, I can also write that without any problem. I don't accept the opinion that asanas are mild so they are good for women and men need something stronger. I can make it strong for men if they wish. Yoga has such a vast scope. So I would say that it evolved; I did not aim at it. Being a woman I could understand women's problems. And there is the answer for your earlier question. That's why you can read the mind. When we read our own mind - it's not actually reading the mind - but as you penetrate you understand the weaknesses of your mind. Then you need to see that this weakness doesn't become the cause for your downfall. So you have to see how you can overcome it, how you can cross it. That very process makes you understand. The person who knows his own mind, will better know the other's mind. And the more you penetrate in your mind you will know how you have to make the students penetrate in their mind.

Chris: So we might all have a particle of the weakness we see in someone else and thus be able to think that if I have even a slight weakness like that, what would it be like to have more of this. Do you think your own difficulties with your health have made you more understanding of other people's problems and perhaps compassionate?

Geeta: Compassion is always needed. But we think that compassion means to be soft. If you are a sweet-talker, you are good to others. Suppose there is a polio case. If you have compassion, are you always going to carry the child? Your compassion is that you make that polio-affected child stand, walk, or do something so they don't become negative. Whatever little life is left, you make use of that life. And yes, perhaps my own suffering helps me understand the suffering of others.

Chris: You have told me that you went through a period of tremendous stiffness in your hips. And through that you may know what women are feeling when they complain of the same thing. But you are not going to tell them to avoid certain things; you are going to teach them how to work through it, aren't you?

Geeta: That's right. As I said, I don't worry about the pain. And you know if you really reach deeper then there is no pain. As in the class this morning when we did

Virabhadrasana and everyone just bent the legs half way and stayed there. That invites more pain. Face the pain and bend! Then you know how the relief comes.

Chris: But you know it is very difficult in the West to explain to people that you have to go through a certain amount of pain to get some relief. They may even tolerate the pain but they often don't want to actually face it.

Geeta: That is what is the problem in teaching. How do you convince them? If you don't make them penetrate, it will all be a failure. Take the example of a ballet dancer. Ballet dancing can be painful. But suppose because of that they don't do ballet the way it has to be performed. Would you appreciate that? Would you call it a good ballet program? Wouldn't that bring the standard of ballet down? Would you allow that art to die in that manner? Now ballet is just art for the sake of art, it is not a healing art. But with yoga, if you say it is painful and you keep going on bringing the standard down and under doing, is it going to lead you where it should? The intuition and penetration we have been discussing will not come unless we reach that depth.

Suppose from here you have to go to Pune city. In between there are many roads where you don't want to walk. They may be dirty; there may be bad traffic or whatever. But still you have to reach there. And once you reach the city those dirty streets or traffic are behind you. In the same way the crossroads in yoga will be there. So who has to cross them? We have to. You have to convince your students. Of course some may leave and give up. But this psychology you can't leave. The crossroads will be there. And it's not only a question of body pain. Mental agony will also be there. But how long can you hide? Suppose I want to look younger so I go on using make-up and polishing my nails. How long can I hide? You have to face the truth. If one does not face the pain in the present, the pain is stored for the future. It will be worse by that time.

Chris: Has your training in Ayurveda influenced your teaching?

Geeta: I don't think that Ayurveda has influenced my teaching. I was teaching before I did my Ayurveda. It helps to understand the constitution of a person and why they are behaving in a particular manner. Or when a disease is there you can understand in which way *vata*, *pitta*, or *kapha* is moving within to cause this kind of disease. If you are a patient we teach you certain things to help your problem. If you know Ayurveda, you can then relate it to yoga by knowing why a certain asana helped a specific problem. That is later, more theoretical work. While teaching I don't think of Ayurveda but I know that the very approach helps me to understand.

Chris: So would you say that through yoga you understood more about Ayurveda but that Ayurveda didn't necessarily teach you about yoga?

Geeta: That's right. I don't think that any Ayurvedic doctor can know from his work what we are doing in yoga. His limitation will be there. Don't think that an Ayurvedic doctor will be a better yoga teacher. That's not possible. And an allopathic doctor also cannot say that he will be a better yoga teacher. A teacher should necessarily be an honest and thorough practitioner of yoga. One needs the penetration to go inside and understand. Suppose you have a headache. I can give you the reason from an Ayurvedic point of view, why *Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana* does not give relief but *Swastikasana* bending forward gives you relief. Or how *Janu Sirsasana* gives relief but not *Marichyasana*. But these are later calculations. Even if I had not known Ayurveda I would certainly not have given you *Ardha Baddha Paschimottanasana* for your migraine. If the heel is pressing the area below the navel, which is *apana vayu*, it is going to get pushed upward and that will disturb the nerves.

Swastikasana and *Janu Sirsasana* do not disturb the nerves. In migraine the vata goes up and you need to release it downward to relieve it. Other sciences can be related later. Like what happens to your pituitary gland in head balance, that is a later calculation. But head balance has to be experienced in that manner and then you can know.

Chris: Many of us are wondering what you see for your future. Sometimes you talk about wanting more time for your own practice and work. And now that Guruji is retired you have such a load. Of course we, your students, hope you will teach forever! But how do you see the future? You are the teacher here now. What will happen if you don't teach so much?

Geeta: Some day I have to retire, that is true. But when I don't know. There are many youngsters who will come up; they will teach.

Chris: But isn't it hard to turn things over to the youngsters who don't know what you know and who may not be as devoted?

Geeta: Some day it has to happen. And when I was young, I was not a perfect teacher. Gradually perfection comes. If they are honest in their approach they will pick up the knowledge. If they are not, what can be done? This is the world. It is all up to the upcoming teachers. God takes care of his creation. When I will retire and what will happen, only He knows. I need not worry about it.

Chris: You have had so much contact with Westerners and many of us are teachers. You have seen us. What do you think we need to do to improve as teachers? What do we need to work on?

Geeta: We have just talked about it. People set their limitations, they refuse to do, they are afraid of pain. They are afraid to face the obstacles. I think you have to take a bold step there. You can tell them if they don't want to do, then don't come. And you have to be sure about it. When you are teaching you have to be sure about it. You have to have that confidence, that firmness, that perfection. Not just for the sake of forcing someone.

Sometimes I tell a student okay, today you don't have to do. But tomorrow or after one month you will have to do. I will prepare the person who is afraid of doing *Sirsasana* physically and mentally to build up the courage. I won't inform them that I am preparing them. Gradually I will build it and then I will say, see how the courage came. That is what is needed. Otherwise there is no faith in the method.

Chris: Anything else you'd like to tell us?

Geeta: There are lots of things to be practised to be known. To become a good teacher one should be open-minded and sensitive. First of all, one has to keep the ego aside and accept the teaching of a senior and experienced teacher like Guruji. He has more to give than anyone else. His experience might not be grasped by juniors but one has to wait and see, practice and experience, and then the truth will be revealed.

Years back sometimes even I could not understand Guruji when he explained certain things but now I realise how correct and how true he was. Because of our ignorance we may not adopt his knowledge and understanding straight away. If we don't grasp immediately, that does not mean he is wrong. It may not come easily. We have to open our minds and rub our intelligence to experience his experienced and realised knowledge. Then there is a chance for us to become good teachers.