

# Éric Baret: Yoga and Contact with the Ground

Just a few words on the contact with the ground. When you stretch a leg, when you unfold the back... in all positions, the hardness is in your reaction. The pain is in your reaction.

Depending on whether you find a "strong" ground, that reaction to the apparent hardness—that haste to protect oneself—generates a contraction in the pelvis and, by rebound, in the spine. That's why I spend a lot of time exploring the contact with the ground. Whether in the seated position, with one or two legs stretched, or in the standing positions... we can study and really experience this. Heels, calves, thighs, buttocks. Let the heels lean. Let the legs be deposited.

If you let the legs stretch and lean, the hardness of the ground is eliminated. The shoulders are freed. At that moment, the entire frontal line of the upper body is freed from the pelvis. In all yoga poses, it is only about this relationship between the pelvis and the spine. The arms and legs are always anecdotal; the only important thing is the pelvis-spine alignment.

Even when you move, the slightest pressure on the heels already generates a reaction in the shoulders. For that reason, deposit the legs even more. Let them stretch. The legs, the arms, the back, the subtle body... it's the same. Accentuate the letting go of control (*\*lâcher-prise\**) of the arms.

And explore it. There is nothing, there is nothing. And suddenly, the ground appears again. You are going to return and you are going to cover the zones of tension again. If you realize that tension appears, do not retreat; simply let something let go. Feel the whole front of the body. Visualize your favorite tree three meters away and welcome it.

The body, from bottom to top and from top to bottom... the front widens. The border moves away. The legs are deposited, the arms are deposited. The hands stay in their place. It's like an immense bird that unfolds its wings and perches on a lake.

Explore it. Again, the ground appears. Return very sensitively. Perhaps that's enough and the ground is no longer there. The frontal sensation, an immensity of space instead of the rigid ground. The shoulders unfold, let go, melt. And keep

exploring. The ground appears, return a little. And again the shoulders are freed. Again let the feet go down. You have to really work like that.

The contact with the ground is not a modern invention. It is mentioned in the \*Vijñānabhairava Tantra\*. It is suggested to sit as if on a very soft cushion, so that you are there without feeling the ground. Because the ground is what creates weight. It is the sensation of contact that creates weight. You have to "cross" the contact.

It's like an energy that descends to the ground and, when something descends, something rises; there is an energy that will rise from the ground. When the energy rises and falls simultaneously, we are like on a cushion of energy. That means \*niralamba\*: without reference, without support, without security, without past, without future.

This is extraordinarily important in all poses: eliminate the contact with the ground. Eliminate it completely. Like a tiger that walks: when the tiger supports its paw, it doesn't clash; the paw enters the ground. When the buttocks enter the ground, something else rises. You have to find that elasticity of the ground. The ground is not fixed, it is not hard.

You explore that. It is one of the technical bases of the work. It is not a fantasy; you have to be creative. One day you will see that the pose will be set without problems, but that has no interest. What is important is not the pose, but seeing the \*resistance\* to that pose. If there is tension in the hip, in the shoulder, in the back, in the mouth or in the neck, it is a psychological resistance. It is a resistance to life that is fixed there.

That's why I feel constantly aggressed by life: because I feel "touched" by the ground. The ground is not hard, life is not hard; it is my reaction that is hard. That's what must be understood. Understanding it intellectually is of no use; you have to feel it. That's why we do yoga. When you realize physically that it is your pressure that creates the hardness, that is going to be transposed psychologically. You will see that the situation that apparently so much aggressed you... you will be able to see that resistance that aggressed you.

Situations are neutral. It is the imaginary that turns them into wonderful or dramatic things. By working the body, you discover this neutrality. Relaxation is not "good" and tension is not "bad." Relaxation is relaxation, tension is tension. Both appear in listening. That generates a transposition in everyday life, and that transposition is the only thing that interests us. If not, it's just gymnastics like any other.

Thank you for having come. May God bless you.