



July 1994 Contemplation Theme

Svaroopo[®] Yoga #2

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Your body is a gateway to consciousness. By working with your body, you can open your awareness to the subtler levels of consciousness that are your true form, svaroopo. This is the goal of yoga: your own inner experience of your own being as Consciousness-Itself.

Tadaa drashtuh svaroope 'vasthaanam

Then you are established in your own essential and fundamental nature.

- Patanjali Yoga Sutras 1.3

You are alive, but your aliveness is something different than the aliveness of an insect, a bird or even a dog. This quality that is unique to human beings is called consciousness, and it can be experienced directly. Your own inner experience of it is called svaroopo, your true form. It is always there, even though you may not be experiencing that bliss of your own being all the time.

There are many ways to turn inward and access that inner level. Different practices of yoga work with your body, your mind or your heart as a way inside. Working with your body through Svaroopo Yoga is one of the easiest ways to gain direct access to svaroopo. That profound inner experience is deeply healing. It will heal your body. It will also heal all the hurts stored in your heart and memory, while it frees you from the repetitive tendencies of your mind.

However, there is a hazard in the practice Svaroopo Yoga. You can get caught up in trying to perfect your body. You can obsess on making your body match some internalized image of how it "should be" that bears no relationship to reality. Actually, these internalized images are often the cause of problems, even in other areas of your life, especially in relationships.

When you are doing a pose, if you are trying to place your body in the "perfect" pose, see what guideline are you using for that image of "perfection." You have probably internalized an image based on a photo, a video, or someone else's demonstration of the pose. Is that what your body needs? It is possible that your body is not supposed to be like their body. Do not let that image become your goal!

Svaroopo Yoga is a way of working with what your body really needs, instead of with how you wish it were. It brings you right back to reality, starting with your physical form. Your experience of that outer level of reality will link you to the deeper inner level of Reality, svaroopo. We teach you to find that deeper reality by beginning with your body.

The physical aspect of every pose has an external component and an internal component. You can see the external physical component, which is how the pose looks. It is the least important. You cannot see the internal physical component, like your tailbone. You must feel it. The areas in your body that you cannot feel correlate to the areas of consciousness you cannot access. When you use the poses to create gentle and reliable opening through the deep levels of musculature (which you cannot see), you open the gateway to the inner levels of your own consciousness. Then, as Patanjali says, you will experience svaroopo. It is so easy. Do more yoga.

Namaste,