



February 2006 Contemplation Theme

## Physics, Anatomy & Yoga

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Your body is made of atoms, just like every other physical object. Those atoms consist of subatomic particles, which are tiny bits of contracted energy swirling around in vast amounts of empty space. The subatomic particles that make up your body are the same subatomic particles that make up everything else, including what you are sitting or standing on, the air you are breathing, the meal you ate recently, etc. These particles include protons, neutrons, electrons, quarks and mesons, which move in different patterns to become everything that exists, including your body.

If we saw a chart of these patterns, we would see a map of the energy flows that produce the human body. The ancient yogis called these flows *nadis*. Acupuncture calls them meridians, to define the primary flows that affect your health. Medical science doubted their existence until machines were invented, about 15 years ago, which are sensitive enough to measure and map these subtle flows.

Thousands of years ago, yogis mapped all of the 720,000,000 nadis. They all branch out from the primary flow, which is through your spine. Your nervous system is the physical condensation or contraction of the primary flows, with all the nerves branching off from your spinal cord. Your spine controls your whole body. At the same time, your spine is much more — your spine is the conduit of consciousness.

While the physical tensions in your spine block the flow of this energy, the most powerful blocks are the ones you create with your mind and emotions. You know that you can think yourself into exhaustion. Similarly, you can tighten your whole body with a single thought or by ruminating over your reactions to life's prior events. This also works the other way — your *Svaroopa*® yoga practice untangles the deep internal tensions in your body, and unravels your mental and emotional patterns simultaneously.

You know how this works by your own experience. You feel better after just a few poses, though it is not merely a physical change. The inner opening is not just the decompression of your spine; you can tell because your state of mind and the inner quality of your being open up at the same time. Ultimately yoga describes that the fullest potential of a human being becomes available through this inner opening, specifically through opening of your spine.

Your spine is the “conduit of consciousness.” This phrase is very important, and contains many levels of meaning. First, it means that the energy which has become the universe is a conscious energy. The One that existed before this universe existed, decided to bring this universe into existence, and got it started with a big bang (*spanda* in Sanskrit) is called *Shiva*. Yogis recognize that Shiva's decision to manifest the universe means that Shiva has free will. This means that Shiva is conscious — more than merely conscious, Shiva is Consciousness-Itself.

Secondly, Shiva contracted to become the energy and atoms that make up this world, including your own mind and body. You can visualize this process like a bolt of lightning that strikes the earth, except that the earth doesn't exist yet in our cosmological map — the lightning strike brings the earth into existence. On a personal level, that lightning strike is your spine. The earth that is brought into existence is your body, which forms around your spine. This is both figuratively and literally true, as the formation of the embryo begins with the spine. Even the brain comes later, growing like a mushroom cap on top of the spinal cord.

The entire process is one of contraction. Einstein named it in his famous formula,  $E=mc^2$ . Shiva contracts to become the universe, forming matter out of energy. You are an individualized form of Shiva. Your body is the most contracted level of your being, while your mind is a more subtle level that pervades your whole body, though many of its functions are concentrated in your head and heart. Your spine is the key to the whole thing.

Third, the momentum is toward contraction. From the time your body was formed, you began contracting in accordance with your experiences, even when you were in your mother's womb. Your early life shaped your brain and body. As you mature, your life choices continue the process of contraction, until you begin to shrink with age. Your spine shortens while your world gets smaller and smaller. This is the classical description of aging, a shared human experience, and a prediction of your future. The momentum is toward contraction.

Fourth and most important, the decompression of your spine turns the whole thing around. Through core opening, the momentum toward contraction is reversed; technically, it is boomeranged. The release of tensions in your tailbone turns the contraction back on itself, like a boomerang returning back to its master. Once you get a certain amount of inner opening, the energy in your spine is amped up, with a higher frequency moving through. In other words, once you get enough release at the tailbone, a profound current of energy begins to flow through your spine.

In the beginning, it is a periodic surge that works on dissolving the blocks you had so carefully installed. As you open more and more, this profound current of energy becomes a continuous flow, expanding your knowing of your own being and of the world. The stages along the way are profound transformations, which help you uncover your deeper identity. This is an inner blossoming of your own essence; you feel you are becoming more and more yourself. This gives you an inner ease in your own being, and an ability to move through life fluidly, adapting to its quirks and changes as they occur — even laughing at them or learning from them more easily.

The signs that this current has begun to flow along your spine include:

A flare of inner heat or a wave of heat that climbs your spine

Beautiful inner lights/colors, inner visions or inner sounds during meditation (or even in a short seated pose in class)

Spontaneous realignment of your spine during a seated pose or during meditation

Spontaneous physical movements or breath movements

Deep and profound realizations during yoga poses or meditation

A deep inner absorption in Shavasana or meditation, from which you arise fully refreshed and knowing that you were “in there somewhere,” in a place that is both timeless and vast

A growing sense of inner knowingness, with a deep inner trust that needs no external support

A realization that you cannot go back to the way you used to be.

*Svaroopa*® yoga specializes in this inner awakening. This is the promise of *Svaroopa*® yoga — that the conduit of consciousness gives you access to the knowing of your own essence. This is the goal of all yogas, though it is rarely stated openly. Only recently have I decided to describe it more openly, to help you recognize what is happening so you can understand and cooperate with it. This is the fire of yoga, which opens up the radiance of your own being, so that you can know your own essence and recognize it in everyone and everything that exists.

Your interest in yoga may be motivated by simpler things — healing an injury, improving your health, reducing stress, ending your back or neck pain (or other pains), finding an inner tranquility that carries into your life, etc. How wonderful that you get whatever you came for — and you get to decide how much you want. You make your decision by how much yoga you do.

Namaste,



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