



Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

August 2015 Contemplation:
Understanding Yoga — Understanding Life #8

Creativity & More

By Swami Nirmalananda & Rukmini Abbruzzi

Understanding yoga helps you understand your life, which includes the goals and stages of life we've been looking at this year. Yet whatever stage of life you are in, yoga says you are more than that. More than your stage, more than your age. You are Consciousness-Itself. The purpose of all yoga practices is to reveal your inherent Divinity, which you discover when you look deeply within. This Self-discovery is called Self-Realization.

As Consciousness-Itself, you have all five of the cosmic powers intact within you, succinctly described in this sutra from a yogic text:

Aabhaasana rakti vimar.sana bijjaa-vasthaapana vilaapana-tastaani —
Prathyabhijnahrdyam 11

Consciousness performs five actions: creation (Brahma), sustaining (Vishnu), destruction (Shiva), concealment (Maya) and revelation/grace (Guru).

The first three, creation, sustaining, and destruction, are familiar to Westerners due to our background in the prophetic traditions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam). God is described as creating heaven and earth as well as sustaining and upholding your life and everything else. God is also the destroyer, particularly in the Old Testament, where He strikes people down and destroys cities. But yoga describes two more cosmic processes: concealment (Maya) and revelation/grace (Guru). Let's start where East & West overlap, and delve into all five powers over the next few months. The first is creation which, in Sanskrit, is personalized as a form of God, Brahma.

The One ever-existent self-luminous essence of beingness, which yoga calls consciousness, is named Parama-Shiva (called Shiva, for short). Shiva created and is creating the universe and everything in it. Shiva is choosing to manifest Shiva's own presence into form. The One Formless Reality is blissfully dancing into form; consciousness is amping down, concentrating into all that exists, including elephants, dolphins, butterflies, pythons and puppy dogs, and even you.

This means that Shiva is being Brahma, the Creator. You can understand this because Shiva is being everyone and everything on earth, as well as in all the other realms that exist, including the celestial realms. This is often misunderstood, with the different gods and goddesses seeming to be polytheism, but they are actually all forms of the One, which makes the tradition monotheistic. Just as Shiva is being elephants, puppy dogs and you, along with millions of other people, Shiva is being all the divine beings too, all at the same time. Shiva's creativity is astonishing!

Because you are Shiva in an individualized form, all the five cosmic powers are inherent within you. This is clearly described in another sutra:

Tathaapi tadvat pa~ncha-k.rtyaani karoti — Pratyabhijnahrdyam 10

Even while being contracted into individuality, you perform all five cosmic actions.

Pancha means five. Krtya means action, coming from the same root as does karma: kr, which means to do or to make. While these five are Shiva's cosmic powers, these are also your powers because you're Shiva. You currently use them in a limited way: to plant a

garden, to decorate your home or your body, or even to bring a new life into the world. Creativity is blissful! This is why there are so many arts and crafts stores with so many options for you to explore and enjoy.

Rukmini remembers how much her children loved to be creative: “They’d come home from pre-school with more drawings and paintings and macaroni art than could ever fit on the refrigerator, excited and happy to share each one with me.” Do you remember the joy and pride of showing your mom, “Look what I made!” Being creative feels wonderful, because in your own small way you’re being Brahma. You’re experiencing the flow of Consciousness, being Shiva and manifesting something from your own being.

Some people base their livelihoods on their creativity, including musicians, artists and writers. Everyone is creative, even if you don’t think of yourself that way. For example, coming up with a solution to a problem is creative: that moment where you think, “Oh! I know what to do about that.” That aha moment is an inner arising; it bubbles up just as joy and happiness do. You have an amazing potential hidden inside you. So how do you tap into that potential and become more creative?

Swami Nirmalananda says, “When my Guru was living and teaching in Los Angeles, we held many programs on creativity, which were well attended by actors, screenwriters, producers, cinematographers, musicians, set designers, etc. The famous and the wannabes came. They wanted to tap into their creativity and Baba showed them the way to the source of their creativity — inside.”

Your *Svaroopā*[®] yoga and meditation practices progressively dissolve your creative blocks. Energetic blockages in your spine keep you from your own creativity and worse, keep you from experiencing the source of your creativity — your own Self. Especially once Kundalini is awakened, your yogic openings clear the way for your creative capacity to blossom forth from within, along with the radiance and bliss of your own being. Meditation is particularly effective because it is the direct route to your own source, plus it clears and reconditions your mind, so the light of creative consciousness can shine into your life and into the world.

Don’t allow yourself to get sidetracked along the way. It’s easy to lose track of your goal to know your own Self when a solution to a problem, an idea for a song or other creative impulse bubbles up during your meditation. Your mind has a catcher’s mitt, so you start catching the arising bubbles, which makes your meditation be merely about your life, a way to solve problems or make money. This is a trap.

Remember the goal — to know your own Self as Consciousness-Itself. Meditation will take you all the way in, but you have to put down your catcher’s mitt and meditate longer. Get past the rising bubbles of creativity to find the source they’re coming from — your own Self which is Consciousness-Itself. You will not only get one answer from there; you’ll find all answers there. You don’t merely have the capacity to be creative for a few moments. You are the Source of creativity itself. When you base your life and being in that inner reality, you live in an endless flow of creativity that never dries up. You won’t have to wait until you meditate. You will live in the experiential knowing (*svaroopavidya*) of your own Divine Essence.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES ON “UNDERSTANDING YOGA — UNDERSTANDING LIFE,” OUR CONTEMPLATION THEME FOR 2015, CO-AUTHORED BY SWAMI NIRMALANANDA SARASWATI, VIDYADEVI STILLMAN AND RUKMINI ABBRUZZI.

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