



Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram

December 2023 Teachings Article:

A Yoga in the World #12

Sharing Your Happiness

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The common denominator in most conversations is complaints. But after a yoga or meditation session, you may find that you have fewer words. That is because, when you are in bliss, your mind is quiet. When you are in bliss, you no longer need outer things to make you happy.

Yogic bliss is reliable; happiness is not. Bliss is more fulfilling than happiness. It fills you from the inside. Since bliss arises from within, you can bring it with you everywhere you go. Yogic bliss is more portable than worldly happiness.

When you base yourself in the deeper dimensions of your own being, bliss is ever arising. Your neediness and fear disappear as though they never existed, like dark disappears when you light a candle flame. Now powered by Consciousness, you have lots to give.

I remember when I was needy. I couldn't be generous because I always felt empty. Fear was what kept me moving. Whether money or relationships were motivating me, I worked hard at measuring up. Yet when things went well, my success didn't ease my fear. It's like I lived on red-alert. Until yoga, that is.

Yoga taught me how to relax. Yoga taught me how to breathe. Yoga taught me how to be present inside my own skin. It was my first step toward yoga's promised state of constant bliss.

If you're not yet established in yogic bliss, you can access it anytime with just a few minutes of yoga. This is not about doing sweat-yoga, nor acrobatic yoga, as valuable as these approaches can be. This is *Svaroopaa*® yoga, also called "bliss yoga," because its purpose is for you to experience svaroopaa, the bliss of your own Beingness. It happens in every class. It happens in every meditation program. Yogic bliss is reliable.

I remember one student who always got a private yoga therapy session on the day before a family gathering. Her extended family was challenging, so she used the therapy session to fill up her bliss tank, which carried her through. That's what you want — something that carries you through.

When you are no longer fueled by anxiety, doubt or guilt, you have more space inside. And lots more energy is available to you. You have the freedom to make different choices, for your inner depth gives you a surge of curiosity, even creativity.

What used to feel threatening is now merely challenging. What was challenging is seen for the opportunity it always was. And you realize that opportunities abound! You can pick any of them, or even do all of them, just as an artist might incorporate paint and string along with twigs and feathers on one canvas. But you are still the one who paints the canvas. That's called self-effort.

Yoga pairs self-effort with Grace. Self-effort is like a bird extending its wings to soar into the skies; Grace is the wind lifting it higher and higher. Self-effort is you putting yourself into it; Grace is God meeting you, always more than halfway.

This combination of self effort and Grace is unique to tantra. Other yogic systems urge you to withdraw from the world or to care less. Tantra recommends you do more, care more and share more.

Svaroopaa® yoga is a tantric yoga, the yoga of Grace. Grace is like the wind which blows away the clouds, thus revealing the sun that had been blazing all the time. In this analogy, the sun is your own Self, shining from within, the source of the bliss arising within.

Yet self-effort is necessary. You have to do your part if you want your inner sun revealed all the time. If your mind is belching factory smoke into your inner sky, the sun will be hidden. Then, when you look inward, all you see is the familiar patterns of contraction and the pain they cause. Consider changing the patterns. No matter where they came from or how they got there, you can change them.

If you think of your mind like a kaleidoscope, you can see that the ever-changing patterns are caused by a few little colored bits, tumbling around inside a mirrored wheel. In a river, an ever-new supply of water swirls around the same rocks in the same patterns. Even cement has been laid out in certain

shapes, perhaps with someone's initials carved in. Yet all of these can be changed, even the cement. In other words, if you don't like what you've got, you can change it.

It is the seeker's effort that brings this about.

A seeker is one who makes an effort.

Prayatna.h sadhaka.h.¹ — Shiva Sutras 2.2

You are in charge of your bliss tank. You decide how empty or full it is. You already know how to do things that deplete it. Yoga offers you many ways to fill it. When your tank is full, you are healthier and happier. As your bliss deepens and expands, you begin to overflow. Your words are more genuine. Your actions have more heart in them.

As I expanded into these new levels of being, I found I needed less me-time. Previously, after some time with a group of people, I needed isolation. I had lost track of me while trying to be what others wanted. Once I began meditating, I didn't lose me, not even in the midst of life. Shaktipat initiation gave me a deeper sense of selfhood which supported me in everything I did.

This took the pressure off, both inside and outside. I was genuinely warm and caring, as I was less needy. I listened more. It was a great freedom! I was present with others in a new way, giving me the ability to enjoy them while simply being me.

Yoga gives you authenticity and wholeness. This empowers you. Consciousness arises within and overflows into your life, becoming an open-heartedness that motivates your actions. You may find that you want to give more, to do more, to share more with others. Now you are truly a yogi in the world. Your happiness no longer depends on others seeing and appreciating you. The inner deepening in you is specifically for you – it's not about them. Yet your deepening makes you able to love them more fully, even if your priorities have changed. I remember when my extended family tried to adapt to my new-found vegetarianism at big holiday feasts. I simply said, "No worries. I'll eat the salad and have the mashed potatoes with butter on them. And I'll have pie, of course."

Your priorities will become yogic. You will choose to do things that reinforce your deepening into Self. That's the self-effort part, doing practices that help you settle deeper and deeper within. Yoga has given you a new inner experience, one you want to continue, so you choose to do things that support it.

What are those things? Most important is meditation – meditate every day. Yogic breathing and poses also help. Their greatest value is that they help you meditate by improving your body and settling your mind before you begin your meditation period. Chanting and mantra repetition make you able to carry your yoga through your day, so you never get too far away from your own Self.

And leave this world a little better than you found it. Give a little more than you get. Go the extra inch, maybe even an extra mile. As a yogi, you've got deep inner reserves. Keep your bliss tank full so you can give more, do more and share more with others. You're a tantric yogi. You bring your yogic bliss into your life.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES, "A YOGI IN THE WORLD"

To reach our teachers or to learn more about *Svaroop*[®] Yoga & Meditation, contact
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¹ Prayatna.h saadhaka.h.