



Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

August 2024 Teachings Article:

Multi-Dimensionality #8

Doorways Inside

By Gurudevi Nirmalananda

When you get lost in the world, you have not only lost your way, you have lost your own Self.

If you go for a hike and get lost in the woods, after a while you know you are lost. You try to retrace your steps or find a pathway out. But you never get so lost that you think you are a tree. You still know you are a person and that you have a home to return to.

Getting lost in worldly stuff is like thinking you are a tree. You don't remember that you have a home, a place inside where you are already whole, full, complete and perfect. When you are lost, you think you are imperfect and that you MUST have a certain worldly thing or a certain person to fulfill you.

Allow me to assure you that you are not a tree. You are not a worldly person. If you were, you wouldn't be reading this. You want something more than what the world can provide. Bottom line, you are seeking your own Self. You must look inward.

When you look inward, the first thing you discover is your mind. It replays your worldly experiences and reactions. Now, instead of getting lost in the world, you can get lost in your mind. You think, "I am my mind!" But the statement itself proves it is a lie. "My mind" means there is a "me" who has a mind that can be called "my mind." Thus you are not your mind. You are the one who has a mind.

Sadaa j~naataa"s citta-v.rttayas tat-prabho.h puru.sasya-apari.naamitvaat.

— Yoga Sutras 4.18

The mind's activities are always known by you, the Lord of your mind...

The Sanskrit word purusha is translated as Lord, with two meanings. You are in charge of your mind and you are the Divine Lord. Purusha names your Divine Essence, also called "your own Self." Your condition is that your own Self knows your mind, but your mind does not know your own Self.

Yoga's promise is Self-Knowingness. This Knowingness is not a thought. It is an inner knowing, a wordless sense of presence and fullness. It is a feeling but not an emotion. You already know it, for at the deepest level within, you already know who you are, oh Shiva.

Unfortunately you chase after your mind again and again, as it goes gallivanting around the globe. Oh, there are so many ways to get lost in the world! Every one of your senses gives you a way to get lost, just like if you open the front door of your home and wander off.

Every sensory doorway can be opened to let you back in again. Sight, sound, physical sensation, taste and smell – yoga uses all of these sensory pathways to bring you home to your own Self again. Yoga also uses all your mind's capacities: intelligence, focus, will, memory, imagination, identity-creation, devotion and your tendency to cling to things. Yoga gives you Divine things to cling to, which uplift you instead of dragging you down.

A Svaroopa® yoga class is a multi-sensory experience. While your physical openings are easily accomplished, they are powerful experiences. It is a kinesthetic experience when a pose reaches into a tight spot, perhaps uncomfortable. As the tensions gradually dissolve, it is an opening into bliss.

Audio is often part of your yoga class. I prefer to play sacred music, mostly in Sanskrit, but also from other traditions. I also like to add scent. I burn incense for a few minutes before students arrive. The fragrance lingers without triggering anyone's allergies. Yoga uses certain fragrances, like in an aromatherapy session, to soothe your mind and nervous system so you can access a deeper level within.

The teacher's demonstration of the pose gives you a visual of where you are headed. Not only can you see their body angles, but you pick up on the change in their face and their voice as the pose opens them up. Plus you see similar changes in your fellow students, another reason to connect with them. It's a promise of your immediate future.

Chanting is another multi-sensory experience. In addition to hearing the singers and music, you add your voice to the process. This means you are breathing, especially as you inhale before chanting a

line. It takes longer to sing the line than it did to inhale, so you're getting the lengthened exhale that is key to so many of yoga's pranayama (breathing) practices.

As you sing along, your posture automatically lifts and straightens, which improves your health as well as your happiness. Yoga chants are mostly in Sanskrit, an ancient and sacred language that specializes in invoking the inner experience of God.

Both the yoga class and chanting help you bypass your mind, making them excellent pre-meditation practices. Yet in meditation, you are likely to encounter your mind, often dragging you through the mud. This is why yoga gives you practices specifically for your mind, to wash it clean and steer it in a more beneficial direction.

Studying yoga's timeless teachings fills your mind with new and better information. As you gain understanding of your life, your trajectory veers upward toward the heights of Consciousness. The teachings give you the map that shows you where you are headed. Your study includes reading this article, which engages your intellect and empowers you to focus on better quality options.

Repeating mantra is a whole yogic-system unto itself, in which you utilize will and memory along with intelligence and focus. As your mind is vibed up, you get glimpses of a future based in bliss and freedom, imagining a new quality of life for yourself.

Your sense of personal identity becomes based in Consciousness, or at least in the yoga practices. I remember a period where I lost my sense of identity based on my name. I had an inner feeling, even words that would surface occasionally, saying, "My name is yoga." While I still answered to my name, I had an inner feeling of vastness and eternality. It was an underlying feeling that has never ended. Timeless.

And my heart opened. Not only did I feel devotion to my Guru, who gave me all these many gifts, but I found myself feeling love and tenderness toward everyone in the world. Watching the news was an experience of sending love to everyone in the events and stories of the day. It still is.

All these experiences are also practices. The point is to engage the full 360 of your humanness. Enlightenment is not merely like a light bulb over your head, illumining your intelligence. As a tantric system, *Svaroopā*® yoga is about embodied Consciousness. The process engages all your capacities so they become filled with the light of Consciousness.

Yogis ask me, "Why am I not seeing the Blue Pearl?" Having read or heard of the importance of this penultimate experience, they want to reach this level. Hooray! You won't get there unless you want it. But you won't get there if you don't go through some of the other levels. Just like an elevator headed for the 131st floor, you have to go through the other levels along the way.

Along the way, you entrain with the people around you. This is why so many yoga texts emphasize the importance of keeping good company. Their influence uplifts you in subtle and powerful ways, not only affecting what you do but how you think and how you see things. My Baba emphasized spending time with your Guru, saying:

What makes you a Siddha is spending enough time with a Siddha.

I knew he was right, which is why I spent years living and studying with him. And meditating with him. So much unraveled in me during the wordless times I sat with him – thousands of hours. This is one of the reasons I love the internet, for you can deepen inward by connecting in from home.

Yet there is one more sensory doorway available when you come in-person – taste. At the end of every program, I offer a sweet treat called prasad. It is blessed food. You get to eat your blessings! It's another way to do more yoga.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES, "MULTI-DIMENSIONALITY"

To reach our teachers or to learn more about *Svaroopā*® Yoga & Meditation, contact
Svaroopā® Vidya Ashram ♦ www.svaroopā.org ♦ info@svaroopayoga.org ♦ 610.644.7555