



Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

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Self & Self #12

Wholeness

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It is the inner fragmentation that is so painful. Yoga calls this “the human condition,” and promises wholeness instead. This is a profound state of deep peace, with inner dimensionality that extends to infinity. You get there by doing yogic practices to invoke your inherent wholeness of being. Like with anything you practice, you get good at it. Thus you’re able to live in an easy inner constancy. Yoga calls this “Self,” spelled with an upper-case “S.”

Fragmentation is also called “self,” but is spelled with a lower-case “s.” It’s like a crystal hanging in a window, which fragments a beam of sunlight into many dots of dancing light, each one analogous to a small-s self. Who you are as a daughter or son is different than who you are as a sibling or friend. You have many small-s selves, some based on your occupation and your avocations, with others based on your geography. Your many selves can make it hard for you to make choices or follow through on them. Worse, the arguments you have with yourself can be demoralizing.

Every small-s self requires effort to sustain it. If you are a skier, you have to buy and maintain equipment, plan winter trips and join ski groups. If you skip a couple of seasons, or even discover that yoga makes you feel better than skiing, there’s a point where you say, “I used to ski.” Your small-s self has changed because you poured your energies in a different direction. Your small-s self is like a mirror, reflecting everything you’ve seen and done. Thus it is ever changing.

Your Capital-S Self is your unchangeable Essence and Beingness. You find Self by looking inward, behind the mirror of your mind and the many selves it constructs. When you know your own Capital-S Self, you are you, no matter who you are with or what you do.

In Baba’s Ashram, we did a long chant daily before lunch and ate in silence. Afterward, I was in a joyful state of expanded awareness for my ten-minute walk back to my room. I reveled in the beauty of the gardens as well as enjoying the fluid sensations of walking. One day I walked back with a friend instead of alone. I noticed that my stride was short and my breath was shallow. My field of awareness had narrowed to my friend, specifically to who I was when I was with her. I was caught up in my small-s self and had lost Capital-S Self.

I started picking a different person for the short walk every day. I was surprised to find that my walking rhythm was different with every person. I had a different small-s self for each of them! I decided to cultivate my ability to walk with ease and freedom, no matter who I was walking with.

The only way I could do this was by becoming a good listener. I had to give up my reactions and opinions in order to cultivate the inner steadiness of Capital-S Self. It took me months to figure out how to do it. I used my mind to find my own Self while I was in the midst of activity.

Tat-parij~naane cittam-eva-antar-mukhii-bhaavena cetanaa-pada-adhyaarohaata citi.h.

— Pratyabhij~nah.rdayam 13

Knowing the Divine source of action, by looking inward, the mind itself becomes Consciousness by ascending to the plane of pure Consciousness.

How exalted can your mind become? It ascends to the plane of pure Consciousness by your practice of looking inward to your Self. This is especially powerful when you are in the midst of action. In other words, small-s self looks inward to Capital-S Self in the midst of life. This practice leads to enlightenment, which I am describing as wholeness.

Yogic sages describe this as pouring yourself into life fully, without holding anything back. This incredible generosity of spirit is fueled by an inner depth and surety that carries you through all that comes your way.

Mahatma Gandhi addressed the British Parliament in 1931. He also spoke to church groups, community organizations and unions, often doing 2 or 3 presentations a day. Interviewing one of

Gandhi's attendants, a reporter asked, "How does he do it? He speaks to such different groups of people, always meeting them where they are at. He never has notes, yet he always speaks so movingly and touches people so deeply." She answered, "What he thinks, what he says and what he does are all the same."

He was free from the inner fragmentation that plagues most people. Too often, what you think and what you say are different. Diplomacy is important, but you don't have to sacrifice integrity in order to make other people happy. Yoga is about integrity, an integrated way of living, which makes you able to express yourself powerfully, yet lovingly at the same time.

This is about the dynamic between your small-s self and Capital-S Self. We've been exploring this theme for a whole year of Teachings Articles, with this as the last in the series. Have you sorted out who you are yet? The essence of tantra is that you know your own Capital-S Self while you are doing all the things that your many small-s selves do. Without inner depth, you get lost in the ups and downs of the day, like a duck bobbing on the ripples of the lake, but never going anywhere.

Meditation gives you this depth and dimensionality. In the beginning, meditation is a process of looking inward, seeking your spiritual essence. As your practice develops, meditation becomes a process of resting in your own essence, while seeing the world from a deeper vantage point.

It explains why I loved to be underwater when I was a kid. In our local pool, I sat on the bottom for as long as my breath would last, then I'd surface for a breath and dive back down again. From that deep place, I watched everyone in the water and even observed what was going on above water. It was deeply peaceful and endlessly fascinating.

In a similar way, in meditation you settle into your own Self. Receiving Shaktipat makes this more easily and quickly accessible. From this inner depth, you forget all pain and suffering. You become whole. You forget your frustrations and inadequacies; all your imaginings about past and future dissolve away. You are free.

The goal is to live in this sublime dimensionality instead of the fragmentation you've known for so long. Your own Self guides you through the twists and turns of life, always providing the inner answers you need. Your mind is filled with the light of Consciousness, ever shining from within. All that remains is for you to choose where you want to pour your energies.

Yet you are still you. You have your own name, where you live, the people that you care about and the things you've chosen to do. You walk and talk, you manage your resources and share with others. You plan for the future; you laugh and cry. When you get enlightened, you don't lose your personality. It does become less convoluted and quirky. Why? Because you become reliably friendly and helpful. Your own Capital-S Self is shining through your small-s self, so you glow.

You already know how this feels. You have experienced this wholeness, certainly in the best moments of your life. I want you to experience it all the time. Wholeness comes from the word "holos" and lies at the root of the word "holy." In your wholeness, you know your own holiness. You live in the sacred space of pure Beingness, which is your own being, your own Capital-S Self. And you see the sacred in all that exists.

While being Capital-S Self, you use your small-s selves to move through the world in a way that spreads the light of Consciousness. Everything you have ever done has contributed to your ability to do what comes next. Everywhere you have ever gone and everyone you have ever known has contributed to your ability to love, to care and to share. You don't lose your small-s self when you become Self. You are you, at all levels of your being. But there's only one of you here. For that, you need to do more yoga.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES, "SELF & SELF"

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