



October 2014 Contemplation: Body, Mind & More #10

## Unraveling: Tail-to-Top

by Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati & Vidyadevi Stillman

The universe is constructed in a spiral. The energy that becomes the atoms that become matter moves in a spiral. You see the spirals in the sky: over 100 billion galaxies spiraling into existence. From the macrocosm to the microcosm, it's all spirals: consciousness even spirals into matter by becoming your DNA.

First just enjoy the marvel of it! How incredibly beautiful! How incredibly powerful! How incredibly Divine! Consciousness becomes everything by spiraling into contraction. You see it outside and inside; your body, mind, emotions and even your spiritual process are based in the spiral. You can even see the cyclical patterns in your life.

The spiral also shows up in your spine. Your spine unfortunately has a little curvy twisty spiral, which becomes a side-to-side curvature called scoliosis. It's created by the compression and the twist in your spine, which starts at your tailbone. The core opening of *Svaroopa*® yoga lifts and lengthens your spine, unraveling the twist just like you would unravel the twist in a garden hose by lengthening it out. Any chiropractor or osteopath can explain how this improves the condition of your internal organs, your nervous system, your Immune system, your breathing, your vision, etc. Along with your internal organs, the twist in your spine even affects your brain. Everyone has their own little kinks and peculiarities; you might call it a different twist on things. Yet you know that most of these are not beneficial. You can create self-inflicted pain by twisting your mind, by tying yourself up in knots, whether it is over stuff that happened today, yesterday or years ago, or maybe never happened and never will. Core opening unravels the knots in your mind and emotions as well as your body, giving you the ability to grow past the stuff that you use to get stuck on. From yoga's perspective, this is the transformation of small "s" self.

Everyone knows they have some work to do on themselves. That is why the self-help industry is so huge. Most people are working on their self (small-s self), the superficial sense of identity that affects how you see the world and (most importantly) affects how you see yourself. While the changes you get from core opening do help you with your mind and emotions, yoga says there's a point where you need to address your mind and emotions directly. This is more complicated than simple body-stuff.

Swami Nirmalananda says, "I have recommended to many yogis that they go for marriage counseling, for psychological or psychiatric counseling. I have seen them get the support they needed to get past stuff that was tying their small 's' self up into knots. I consider them to be spiritual warriors when they tackle that toxic waste dump in their mind and emotions."

When you experience your own Self, it feels so familiar. This is because you have accessed your own Divinity so many times, by using reliable external triggers, like a beautiful view, a walk in the woods, the sky, the ocean, or the taste of chocolate, freshly brewed coffee or any other favorite food. You love these things because they stop your mind; when your mind stops, you experience your own Self. Yoga teaches you, instead of looking for external triggers, how to stop your mind directly, so you can live in the ever-arising bliss of consciousness that is your own Self.

Yoga explains that seeking happiness from outer things works for you, but it works indirectly:

tadaa dra.s.tu.h svaruupe 'vasthaanam — Patanjali's Yoga Sutras 1.2

In the moment your mind stops, you experience the bliss of svaroopa.<sup>1</sup>

Let's say you are visiting someone and when you arrive, you smell baking chocolate. Mmm! You ask, "What's going on in the kitchen?" They bring out a plate of warm, fresh homemade chocolate chip cookies. As the cookies come closer to you, you start getting happy. Does happiness

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<sup>1</sup> Svaruupe is a form of svaroopa, meaning your own Self, your Divine Essence. Sutra rendered by Swami Nirmalananda

emanate from the cookie, as if “happy-molecules” were traveling through the air? No, the joy arises within; it’s an inner experience.

Look more closely at how the experience occurs. Your mind is fixated on the cookie as it comes toward you, “Cookie! Cookie! Cookie!” Then you take hold of a cookie and your mind stops. When your mind stops, the joy arises from its inner source, which is svaroopā, your own Self. Your joy does not come from the cookie; joy does not spread through your mouth. You think it is about the cookie, but it’s not. Actually what happened is that you just found a way to quiet your mind.

The happiness that you think comes from an external object is actually an inner experience, the experience of capital “S” Self arising within you. Arising from inside, it blasts your mind and heart open, even if only for a moment. This is why people love hiking, their pets, certain songs or anything else. The yogis promise that you can live in the inner arising all the time.

The most powerful way to get there is through the flow of consciousness that is ever vibrating in your spine. To open up the full flow is the purpose of all the *Svaroopā*<sup>®</sup> sciences, to uncoil the coiled energy that is anchored just below the tip of your tailbone. That energy is Consciousness-Itself, installed within you, in a specific form that uplifts and transforms you completely.

As Consciousness spirals everything in the universe into existence, it spirals down in the human being (from top-to-tail) into a coil of 3½ spirals, rooted at the tip of your tailbone. This specific energy now is named Kundalini because “kundala” means coiled. The Grace inherent in the practices of *Svaroopā*<sup>®</sup> Yoga and *Svaroopā*<sup>®</sup> Vidya unravels the contraction, so this energy of Consciousness now arises within you, from tail-to-top.

This is the specialty of the *Svaroopā*<sup>®</sup> sciences. Some yogis want to go for that inner opening directly, so they get the mantra and learn to meditate, or they come to a Shaktipat retreat. Other yogis wait until their poses and practices trigger that bolt of illumination to climb their spine. Do you suppose this could already be happening for you? If you have experienced heat when you’re in a well-propped, well-aligned pose, especially a seated pose or reclining pose, the answer is yes. You are not “working out,” so how can you be getting hot? It is important to know that it is not a hot flash (for females of a certain age). The inner heat is one of the earliest signs that Kundalini is awakened and is beginning to do your work for you.

This inner energy of upliftment works most powerfully in meditation. Vidyadevi describes, “In meditation, I feel Kundalini climb from the base up, unraveling my spine and giving me a lift and a lengthening. She opens an inner doorway for me to settle deeper and deeper into my own Self.”

Everything comes into existence by spirals. Consciousness ravel into form — your form. There, Consciousness is coiled, ready for the inner unraveling. While you may be focusing on your physical tensions, the real problem is that they slow the flow of consciousness through your spine, in the same way a river with lots of curves has a slower current than a straighter river. Unraveling your spinal compression is very beneficial: to make your body function more effectively, to make your mind function more powerfully, but also to open up a greater spiritual depth within.

*Svaroopā*<sup>®</sup> yoga opens up access to your own inherent spirituality. You get all three at once: body, mind and Self. You find your own wholeness by working in all the dimensions simultaneously; it works no matter what practice you do. This tantric interweaving is the secret power hidden in the *Svaroopā*<sup>®</sup> sciences. You do a single practice, but you get benefits in multiple dimensions simultaneously. Do more yoga.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES ON “BODY, MIND & MORE,” OUR CONTEMPLATION THEME FOR 2014, CO-AUTHORED BY SWAMI NIRMALANANDA SARASWATI AND VIDYADEVI STILLMAN OR RUKMINI ABBRUZZI.

To reach our teachers or to learn more about *Svaroopā*<sup>®</sup> Yoga & Meditation, contact: *Svaroopā*<sup>®</sup> Vidya Ashram:

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