



Svaroopā® Vidya Ashram

February 2017 Contemplation:
Exploring Yoga's Multidimensionality #2

It's All for You!

By Swami Nirmalananda & Rukmini Abbruzzi

What if everything in your life were perfectly designed to set you free? According to yoga, it all actually is:

Tad-artha eva drshyasya-atmaa — Patanjali Yoga Sutras 2.21

The purpose of the world is solely for the sake of the Self.¹

The world exists solely to support your spiritual upliftment. This includes all the inanimate objects, other people, your job, and even your own body, heart and mind. There's more: the galaxies, atoms and even the undercurrents in your life you're currently unaware of. It all exists for your sake, to help you discover your svaroopā, your Divine Beingness. Everything is conspiring to liberate you.

You may not experience every moment of your day as a nudge (or shove) toward enlightenment. Instead, life's challenges may seem like they are holding you back from real progress, both the problems you face as well as the differences between you and others. It can feel like there's a big gulf between you and everyone else. You're often dealing with people who don't "get" you, who don't make you happy, who won't do what you want them to do. When it feels like it's you against the world, you're experiencing the duality of this world. This is because you don't yet know your own Self, which makes you feel small, scared and alone.

This is the two-fold map, yoga's sages tell us. Everything is divided into opposites: good/bad, black/white, pleasure/pain, limited/free, me/others. Duality makes you feel separate from everyone else, a sense of self based on limitation and differences.

From that small sense of self, you need certain things and people in order to feel safe, loved and in control. You resist anything that rocks your boat and threatens change, discomfort or pain. You manipulate the world to get what you want. Except that the world is actually giving you exactly what you need for your ultimate and highest growth. Life is propelling you into the knowing of your Divinity.

Everything for your benefit, even when you don't like it. You can prove to yourself that this is true: look back over your life and identify the points where you have grown the most. Those difficult times made you expand into new abilities. They gave you a better understanding of life and of yourself.

When life is smooth sailing, you're not facing your limitations. You're not even happy. Swami Nirmalananda remembers a yogi who described her life as perfect:

She told me, 'My husband and kids were happy. Everyone was doing well. The gardener came every week. The cars were all running. Everything was perfect.'

I asked, 'How long did it last? And how was it!?''

She answered, 'It lasted five weeks. But I wasn't happy. That's when I realized that perfect isn't enough. So I started yoga.'

You must outgrow your limitations, even your limited idea of what will make you happy. But the biggest limitation you have to outgrow is a limited sense of self. That job you lost was probably one that you'd actually outgrown or needed to. The ending of that relationship forced you to become independent. Rukmini shares, "My first baby's giggles and tiny toes gave me joy, but it was her 3:00 am fever spikes and all night power-puking that expanded my capacity to love.

¹ Rendered by Swami Nirmalananda

The tough parts of parenting pushed me past my beliefs about how much sleep I needed, how much stress I could endure, and how compassionate and loving I was capable of being.”

Family is particularly good at providing challenges. “People have told me that their family is a bunch of really tough characters,” says Swamiji. “They say they get along with everyone except their family members. But when I get to meet these notorious family members, I find them to be charming.”

Your family members know you best. They have known you the longest and are very aware of when you bump into yourself. They are trying to help you to get past it, though they’re not always kind or compassionate about it. But they will all be happier when you become enlightened. They want you to be a saint and are doing their best to help you get there. You don’t have to wait for hindsight to show you that they are working on you.

You can see that life’s challenges are for your benefit while the things are going on. Look at the bigger picture. Yoga helps you with this. The poses aren’t merely working on your body. While they re-enliven your body, they also clear your mind, open your heart and open you to the deeper dimensions of your being. This is because a revelatory energy is hidden in the practices, an energy that reveals the greater reality hidden within you. It’s guaranteed.

Svaroopaa[®] yoga specializes in the Divine Unveiling, showing you who you really are. All our practices are doorways to *svaroopavidya*, the experiential knowing of your own Divine Essence. This includes the poses, Ujjayi Pranayama, mantra and meditation, as well as these teachings articles. Your yoga triggers an inner blossoming, the expansion into your own Divinity. This will increase for as long as you continue to take classes or do home practice. Where does it take you? You will recognize that you are the whole of all you perceive, and more.

Right now you see only one part of duality-in-unity. You see all that exists, while experiencing that it is separate and different from you. But the truth is that you are the formless Reality which is being all the forms that exist, including your own. In the same way that you have ten separate fingers, which operate individually, you are the one being many individuals, each one operating individually within the whole.

It’s not you against the world. It’s you being the world: happy/sad, good/bad, light/dark, bondage/liberation. You are whole of Consciousness, dancing your Self into multiplicity, like waves sparkling on the surface of the ocean. You are the One and you are the many.

When you recognize your own Divinity, and thus the Divinity of the world, you live in the unveiled reality, an ecstatic reality. It doesn’t mean you resign from life, or that you passively accept everything that comes your way. When you’re steady in your state, you’re filled full from the inside. Living fully, yet free from desire or expectations, and free from fear. It’s a profoundly meaningful way to live.

You’ve probably already had glimpses of this, especially after a class or a long Ujjayi session. Especially after meditation! And it just keeps getting better. You’ll step into the world with greater clarity and act with more confidence. Enlightened beings are the most fully alive, engaged and effective people in the world. You were born to become enlightened. Everything is conspiring to set you free. Especially yoga.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES ON “EXPLORING YOGA’S MULTIDIMENSIONALITY,” OUR THEME FOR 2017, CO-AUTHORED BY SWAMI NIRMALANANDA SARASWATI, VIDYADEVI STILLMAN & RUKMINI ABBRUZZI.

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