



Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

June 2019 Teachings Article:

Quick Fixes #6

## Serene & Luminous Experiences

By Sadguru Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati

You've had extraordinary experiences here and there along the way. Yoga's sages say you gauge the quality of your life by the frequency and depth of the serene and luminous experiences you have. These are the most fulfilling moments of your life. One yoga text catalogues 112 wonderful ways to trigger such an inner experience, some of which you have already found to work:

- Gazing at a cloudless sky,
- Wordless enjoyment of an expansive view,
- Getting lost in a meaningful piece of music.

Any of these can trigger a transcendent inner experience, a moment beyond time and space, an inner expansion that is full of peace and bliss. Once you've had it, you try to recreate the circumstances, though they might or might not work for you again. Yoga says you're focusing on the wrong thing. You're focusing on the outer event when you could be focusing on the inner experience.

On remembering an object or experience,  
ignore the event and fix your mind on the inner experience...  
you will experience pure Consciousness.  
— Vij~nana Bhairava 119<sup>1</sup>

Those events are memorable because they triggered an inner shift, deepening you into the Consciousness that you already are. It is the experience of Consciousness that was so fulfilling. That's truly what you want to repeat, not the activity that triggered it. You can prove it to yourself by gazing at the same view or listening to the same music again; some days it works for you and some days it doesn't. *Svaroopa*® yoga specializes in these inner experiences.

Our sutra explains that, when you look for external things to trigger your inner experience, you're ensnared. Just as if you were wearing handcuffs, you can do little to help yourself. Dependent on good weather to see a cloudless sky, you're in the dumps until the weather clears. You plan a vacation for later, so that in a few months or some other time, somehow, somewhere, hopefully, possibly you'll have a serene or luminous experience. Yoga's sages clearly describe these expansive and profound experiences as the purpose of life. Better, they give you a way to access them any time you need or want. No substances required!

If you've been practicing *Svaroopa*® yoga, you've already had many profound inner experiences. The poses give you reliable spinal decompression, tail-to-top, guaranteeing an inner opening to the vastness within. When you come up from your Guided Awareness in Shavasana, or simply sit for a few moments after doing both sides of Seated Side Stretch, you're whole again. You are more you.

Does that mean you have to do a 90-minute class to get such a moment of bliss again? No. While another class will do it for you again, this inner experience is quick and easy to access. Once you know what you're looking for and have been there before, it's easy to get there again. Everything works this way. The main difference is that yoga is teaching you how to find your way inside. Simply stated, this sutra says, "Remember!" It's a matter of choosing what you will bring to mind.

In every moment, your senses are bombarded with millions of triggers. What you pay attention to is a matter of choice. Too often you're choosing to focus on pain or unhappiness. You could choose to pay attention to something else, even while the pain or unhappiness is still there. You have the ability to choose what you're focusing on.

Right now, you're looking at the page or listening to the audio. Turn your gaze to your left and focus on something. Pay attention to it for a few moments. Then turn your gaze toward your right and focus on

<sup>1</sup> Summarized by Swami Nirmalananda

something different. Now remember something that happened yesterday. You have proven that you are the master of your mind. You have this amazing ability to fill your mind with whatever you choose. Choose to remember one of the serene and luminous experiences you've had. I remember watching a sunrise at the beach. The wide horizon line was shrouded by clouds, making me think I wouldn't see much. Then, when the sun was part way up, a hole opened in the clouds and a single beam of light shone down onto the ocean. I sat and watched it for a long time.

I am able to remember the beach, the clouds, the time of day, the temperature outside and even the ants on the ground. I can remember the beam of light shining through the hole in the clouds. But when I remember the inner feeling, it all comes flooding back: the sudden stillness, like time itself stopped; my body relaxing and breath slowing; the hairs on my arms standing up in ecstasy... and here I am, in the experience again. This is not an experience of the sunset, this is the experience of Self.

Your experience is not dependent on a beautiful sunrise, fortunately, not even limited to a yoga class. It's simply a matter of what you focus your mind on. Remember, you get to choose what your mind is doing. You've already proven you can do that.

Research studies have proven this, calling it "Positive Psychology." One study split their volunteers into two groups. One group did nothing special. The experimental group practiced "savoring the moment." After only two weeks, the experimental group had a significant decrease in their negative moods and feelings. How wonderful!

The researchers marveled that their subjects did not show an increase in positive moods and feelings, simply a decrease in the negative. Why is that? Yoga says that your inherent beingness is experienced as peace and bliss. So when you experience these positive states, you don't report them as being anything special; you're just being you.

It's when you're not experiencing the peace, vastness, bliss and infinity of your Self that you need help. When you use your mind to undermine your inner state, you experience pain, unhappiness and worse. Thus, when you direct your mind out of its self-defeating loop, you return to your inherent state, the bliss of your own Beingness. Now you feel like you again.

This inner experience is essential to your health and well-being. It is pivotal to your quality of life. It is not merely positive psychology, it is a mystical discovery within. Remembering one of the great and luminous experiences you've had creates another mystical moment. Practicing this is like hitting your reset button. How many times a day might you need it? Go for it.

There's a trick to making it work. The researchers have found that you need to hone in on two or three experiences you've had, not try to catalogue them all. It's not about listing the different dates or places. You don't have to draw the sunset with the ants on the sand. It's about remembering the inner experience you had, not where, when or who you were with.

By remembering the feeling, you reinstate it. It works because your mind directs your body. Whatever you are thinking, that is what your body is experiencing. When you remember the experience of receiving Shaktipat, a great meditation or grounding into the inner infinity, you experience it again.

Lately, I've been replaying a phrase that my Baba said again and again. I replay it in my head, like an audio recording set to repeat. Each time, I feel again what he was saying:

Sab ko bare samman ke sath prem sehardik svagat.

His translator would then say, "With great respect and with great love, I welcome you all, with all my heart." Now, as I replay it in my head, I only hear Baba's voice. I don't hear the translation because I don't need it. More than hearing his voice inside, I feel his respect and love. Yet I have yet to find the extent of his welcome, and especially his whole heart. I'm still exploring it.

Remember your serene and luminous experiences! It's another way to do more yoga.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES ON "QUICK FIXES"

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