



June 2010 Contemplation Theme

Creative Power

– Swami Nirmalananda

The purpose of life is for you to uncover your true capacity and use it to the fullest extent. This includes your creative capacity among many other capacities. Your creative capacity is your ability to bring new things into existence as well as to bring them into full fruition. Whether it is a project in your garden, in your kitchen, on your job or in your life, you have an amazing potential. Yoga says you have the creative power of consciousness intact within you. The energy that has manifested the universe is lying hidden within you. This is especially important to understand when you consider “going with the flow,” which I wrote about last month.

I’ve heard yogis say, “If it’s not flowing, I’m not going.” This is a huge misunderstanding of “go with the flow.” It leads to a lifestyle where you are always looking for the easy path. Then someone else is always in charge of where you go and what you do. But you are in charge! You are not in control, yet you are in charge.

The reality is that life is not always going to be easy. Among other things, karma insures this. Yoga teaches that the flow is within you, and that you must find it there so you can pour it into your life and your relationships. If you forget this key point, you look for events and situations in your life to flow easily. This is a trap, a very seductive cul-de-sac, a total dead end. Remember:

Life is not about “easy.”

Finding your Self, which is the spiritual journey, is not about “easy.”

Yoga is not about “easy.”

Especially yoga is not about easy, because yoga is designed to get you into the hard stuff you usually try to avoid. This is very easy to see with *Svaroopa*® yoga. The asanas (poses) are designed to get into the tight spots in your spine. To accomplish this, we sometimes use the props and the pose angles to hold you back from your most extreme pose angle, because the pose is not about going as far as possible. It is about getting the deepest effect. Thus *Svaroopa*® yoga poses are not very photogenic, which is why the models on the covers of yoga magazines are not doing *Svaroopa*® yoga poses. *Svaroopa*® yoga asanas are not about moving the parts of your body that already move easily – they are designed to move what is stuck.

As you discover the layers of tension in your core, you may experience some aches and pains while you are in the asanas. Or you may experience relapse, which is when you feel awful on the day after getting some new core openings (in class or in your own practice). What is happening is that your muscles unfortunately revert to their habitual tensions, but you can now feel how terrible that really is. We call it relapse, which means you need to do more yoga, to open up those spots again. They open up more easily each time you angle into there, and eventually these areas learn how to stay open. Thus, yoga practice has some hard parts.

Life has some hard parts to it. Even if you try to set everything up perfectly, events beyond your control happen. You are forced into your blind spots. You are pushed into your resistances. You are propelled beyond where you think you can go. You are forced to grow, to see things you were trying to avoid seeing, and to know yourself more and more deeply. You can do this willingly, or you can kick and scream all the way. How do the other members of your family handle these things? These were your first role models, and may still have a big effect on how you look at life. They may still have a big effect on how you look at yourself.

I learned this the hard way. Ten years ago I was being pushed beyond my then-limits by one of Master Yoga’s big growth spurts. The many hours I was working simply didn’t meet the need, so I resorted to working through the night two or three nights per week. Obviously, the years of yoga I had been doing were what gave me the stamina that made this possible.

Late one night I realized that all the urgent stuff was something that I had created. There was no one to blame for this insanity but me. I called one of my lifelong advisors, my Vedic astrologer, and whined, “I’m overworked. I’m too busy. This is really hard.” He said, “In our last meeting, I told you that these several months would be very stressful. Even though it is hard, it is perfect. You have to do all this stuff.” I brought up the trump card, “But none of this is imposed on me by anyone else. I created all these projects. I did this to myself! If I hadn’t started up all these things, it would be so

much easier right now.” I was shocked by his response, “If you hadn’t started up things you wanted to be doing, you would have had other things happen that would have been hard on you. This is a time for you to do the hard stuff.”

It is not all going to be easy. Some of it will be hard. Yet you can choose where the hard stuff will show up in your life. You have to use your creative energy. You have the power that created the universe hidden within you! You must let it blossom forth.

The creative power of consciousness has brought this entire universe into being. Beginning from nothing, this universe exploded into expansiveness and multiplicity. The physicists cite the beginning moment as the Big Bang. But any curious person, any thoughtful person, or any yogi will ask – what banged? If this universe began with a big bang, what was there that could bang?

Yoga’s ancient texts have a name for the ever-existent all-pervasive beginningless Reality – *Paramashiva*, often called *Shiva*. *Shiva* decided to bring the universe into existence. *Shiva* manifested and is still manifesting the multiplicity that exists. What tremendous creativity! Not only does *Shiva* have an ability to dream up with an amazing variety, but *Shiva* has the capacity to bring them all into tangible existence. This universe is real, says the yoga teachings of Kashmiri Shaivism – not an illusion, but really real.

The creative capacity of consciousness has brought forth whales and minnows, turtles the size of small coins and giant turtles weighing over 500 pounds, chimpanzees that share 98% of their DNA with the human being, and Amazon monkeys that are 5” tall at full growth. That creative capacity lies intact within you. You are *Shiva* and you have all of *Shiva*’s powers intact within you, though you currently only use a small percentage of these abilities. This is described in the Pratyabhijnahridayam:

Tad parijnyaane svashaktibhir vyaamohitataa samsaaritvam. (Sutra #12)

Being an individual, you get caught up in repetitive cycles, because you don’t know the
truth of your own powers, which is because of your inner
unknowing of your own Self.

As your yoga and meditation practices open you up, it isn’t just your spine and breath that open. Your mind and heart open up as well as the deeper levels of your own existence. This inner opening clears the way for your creative capacity to blossom forth. Of course, you must work within certain practicalities and logistics. Water still flows downhill. You cannot drive to Hawaii. *Svaroopa*® yoga still has certain teaching protocols. You still have to eat, bathe and brush your teeth regularly.

When you find the source of the flow within you, you must decide how to use it. You can build buildings. You can plant a garden. You can teach, paint, write, cook and/or lots of other things. You can find a new way to deal with a difficult person – that’s real creativity! You can join with others in accomplishing something that matters to all of you, or you can decide do something on your own and simply get it done. You can even turn the flow back in on itself and dive even deeper into the source within you. You can do it all. But some of it is going to be hard.

Whether something is hard or easy is therefore not the deciding factor in what you are going to do. You can and must choose where to pour your energy. Sometimes it will be easy. It will just flow along, almost effortlessly. Sometimes it will be hard. It will require that you work really really hard to accomplish the tiniest little bit of progress. This is life. This is yoga, too. The determining factor in what you are doing is not based in how easy or hard it is – it is based in who you are while you are doing it. Base yourself in your Self, and let the flow overflow into your mind, your heart, your relationships, your work and your life. Do more yoga.

With love & blessings,

Swami Nirmalananda

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