



June 2002 Contemplation Theme

Let Yoga Change You

Let yoga change you.

You have hopefully already experienced the tremendous benefits you get from releasing the tensions in the muscles connected to your tailbone. In Svaroopa® yoga we always begin with poses that reach the tailbone, for it is the key to your whole body and mind. Of course, we continue on with poses that release tensions through the other areas of your spine, to create the “Core Opening” that is the cornerstone of our practice. However, I have recently become aware that most of you are not doing enough poses for the tailbone. I am quite concerned that you are trying to do something that is destined to fail — trying to change other areas of your body without getting the foundational opening. More importantly, if you don’t get enough release at the tailbone, you will be trying to change your body without changing your mind. Yoga is not yoga without the related opening in your mind.

The release in your tailbone does give you immediate physical and mental benefits. Your body and breath open up while your mind becomes calm and expansive. More of this release reliably deepens your state, until you find that deeper sense of being that is Beingness-Itself. You discover that you are more than your mind, because you have the experience of the Self, the inner depth and radiance that is the goal of yoga. You discover that your own Self is Consciousness-Itself.

Let’s approach it from another direction. Consciousness contracts to become you. Everything that exists is made of contracted consciousness. The Pratyabhijnahridayam describes this in the fourth sutra:

Chiti samkochaatmaa chetano’pi samkuchita vishvamayah

Consciousness, by assuming contraction, becomes both the universe and the individuals...

This is relatively easy for us to understand, because the physicists agree. Their explorations into the atomic and subatomic levels have proven that matter is made of contracted energy. They now also describe that the subatomic particles are conscious of each other. Everything seems to be in conscious communication with everything else at the subatomic level. Yoga says that consciousness has become you and all that exists. Science restates it — that which contracts to become everything (including you) is conscious.

The essence that existed before the Big Bang, yoga calls Shiva. The Big Bang initiated movement. Moving essence is called energy. Energy moves and contracts to become matter. Everything that exists is made of this contracted energy. The subatomic particles that make up the chair you are sitting in are identical to the subatomic particles that make up your own body. The only thing that is different is the patterns in which they move.

People are different, yet we all share primary physical characteristics. We all have two eyes, one nose, one mouth, two legs and feet, etc. We can easily come up with the template of the human body. Yoga’s sages mapped the template in detail thousands of years ago, both physically and at the atomic level. Their atomic map forms the foundation of the medical treatments of acupuncture as well as many significant yoga practices. Svaroopa® yoga works with this map in a very precise way.

Think of it personally. Essence or substance (Shiva) contracts to become you. To think of that essence, your mind must reach out to the broad expanses of all that exists in the whole universe — and beyond. This is because the stuff that has contracted to become you is actually the same stuff that has contracted to become the whole universe. Thus, it extends through the whole universe — and beyond. So your mind has to expand out in order to get its best understanding of what that essence is. You could even extend your arms up in the air to get a sense of that expanse through an outward-upward reaching.

Essence contracting into matter is an inward movement. You can pull your arms inward and downward, until your fists close into little balls representing the contraction of energy into matter. In the human body, this happens in the core — your spine. Your spine is the conduit of consciousness. Consciousness contracts from the all-expansive Is-ness and beingness to become you, by contracting inward and downward. The point of the greatest contraction is at the tip of your tailbone. It is there, where the energy is most concentrated, that you get locked down. It is there that you must begin the process of expanding again.

Modern medical equipment can show the structure of your body through x-rays, MRI, CAT scans, etc. The physical structure would resemble drawings in the books on anatomy and physiology. But, if we could put your

body in an electron microscope (or some other equipment that a physicist uses), we could see the atomic map of your body. We would find that your spine and nervous system hold the highest concentration of energy in your whole body. They are the physical manifestation of a concentration of energy that is the basis of your whole body. In embryonic development, the spine forms first. The whole rest of the body forms after the spine. In yoga's terms, cosmic intelligence crystallizes in the spine first, and then directs the formation of the rest of the body, including the brain which grows out of the spinal cord like a mushroom cap getting larger and larger. In *Svaroopa*[®] yoga, we open up the tensions you have been carrying in your spine. When we do a particular pose to release tension in muscles connected to your tailbone (or some other part of your spine), we are working with the physical map of your body. You become progressively better at feeling those deep inner structures as they release and open. The angles of the poses reach in to make reliable changes in that physical structure, but they are also working on the more subtle levels, to open up the atomic level as well. The more subtle that something is, the more powerful it is.

The mind is included in the atomic map of the human body. Your mind is not physical. It is a more subtle level of contracted energy than the physicists can currently measure. Energy contracts to an extraordinary degree to become matter. Einstein calculated it as $E=mc^2$. The 'c' in this formula is the speed of light, which is 186,000 miles per second. Squared, it means that energy contracts by a factor of 34,596,000,000 to become a subatomic particle. Consider, when the energy is contracted only part way down — maybe by a factor of 14 – 16 billion, what is it? It is not a particle yet. At this partially contracted level, energy manifests as your mind. The same energy that is being your body is also being your mind — body and mind are two different forms of manifestation of the one energy. In the same way that water can be solid (ice) or a vapor (steam), energy can manifest at many levels, except that energy can do multiple levels simultaneously. One yoga text promises that there are 35 levels of which a human being can be aware.

When you open your tailbone, you also open your mind. It is a needed change. In fact, if you do not get this opening in your mind, your old mental patterns will impose the old physical patterns in your body. This means you will get relapse, the retightening of tensions you had just opened up in your yoga practice. It does not feel good to go back to those old tensions, and it is amazing how you can simply think your way into them again. For you to be able to keep your body open, there must be an opening and change in your mind.

As you open your spine, your mind and personality begin to change. You become less anxious and worried. You are more cheerful and have great clarity of mind. You won't be able to hang onto your familiar negativities. The old memories cease to define you. You let go of your old resentments and fears. You become more creative, more compassionate, more understanding. *Svaroopa*[®] yoga guarantees that you will be happy, even when life is imperfect.

Let yoga change you. Let it change more than just your body. Without realizing it, you may have been resisting the opening of your mind, simply by not doing enough tailbone poses. If you are not sure whether this applies to you personally, then assume it does. Double your tailbone poses. You could even triple your tailbone poses! Try it for three weeks and see what happens. As a quick reference, there are three primary *Svaroopa*[®] yoga poses to release your tailbone: Prasaritha Padottanasana (Slow Motion Dive), Pawanmuktasana (Alternate Leg Pose) and Kurmasana (Tortoise Pose).

This month, I am asking all the teachers to include more tailbone poses in your classes. You can do the same in your own yoga practice at home. You will be amazed and delighted with how fast your body and your mind can open. I often close my article with, "Do more yoga." But that directive is not precise enough. So, now I have to say, "Do more tailbone poses!"

Namaste,



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