

APRIL FOCUS of the MONTH

“The natural way of meditation is not to know many things but to forget everything. Then you will know everything.” ~Shri Brahmananda Sarasvati

Our original nature, or enlightened Self lies untarnished - but forgotten, in the abode of the body. The enlightened Self is consciousness as blissful life force moving through all beings. This enlightened Self never abandoned us, disappeared, or faded away but continues to abide in us. This force is the indweller of all living bodies. It is deathless and transmigrates into new bodies when necessary. We experience this original nature during deep sleep and samadhi. The deep sleep experience is invigorating - but forgotten. Samadhi is the remembered identity with original Self. Enlightenment is not something we acquire; it is that blessed moment when original nature is remembered. Our enlightened self is always present but most often forgotten - giving rise to confusion in life.

Compounding the confusion, we misidentify with the obvious – the body. Misidentification means we mistake ourselves *for* the body rather than *our original nature*. We are like a child who mistakes itself for their Halloween costume, or the actor that becomes the character. If you are looking for enlightenment, (or even consistency,) a body is an essential tool, but not the object of the search. If you are searching for perfection without imperfection, Earth is the wrong planet. This misidentification with body and mind can be altered through yogic practices - when true identity is experienced as emerging from the absolute – then enlightenment is remembered. Our essential nature is our enlightened self - our original nature. Yoga is the act of remembering our original nature and a weaning of identification with the body and mind. Shri Brahmananda would say, “I am that I-Am beyond body and mind, although I have a body and mind.”

This does not mean that we don't like our costume (body/mind) a lot! Perhaps we like it a little too much though, and that self-obsession is inhibiting our ability to act freely. Yoga practices reveal our ability to change the restricted prejudices of mind and the resulting bodily limitations by shifting identification toward an unlimited potential.

Each of us has spent our lifetimes acquiring an identity based on distinctions of color, breeding, intelligence, physiognomy, religion and geography. Our whole idea of who we are is based on name and form and we defend that identity to the death. We hide our original nature under coverings and just forget it! Then, like a very old memory, we start to wonder if there is any reality to that foggy vision at all.

The associations that we form based on outer appearances and classifications limits our ability to act within a certain framework that is associated with those classifications. We join groups that affirm our unique and special appearance, (because we look and act like them.)

Or, we are rejected from other groups because of how we look or act. These groups usually solve the question of “who is the better or stronger group?” through war.

Dividing the world into good guys and bad guys, we create Heaven and Hell. In a world where the enemy of my enemy is my friend, we can trust to only one outcome – unhappiness.

Somewhere near Day One of your life someone (parents, hospital, church, school) started the classifications. You were sexed, sized, named, and categorized. What followed was a mind and heart-shaping propaganda campaign to fit you into the selected categories. The unlimited quality of your primordial existence was forgotten and the bliss was lost in an effort to bring you into materiality. The bliss you experienced as a baby was unconscious, like in deep sleep. As yogis we can re-experience the baby’s oceanic point of view - consciously. “Biological development moves from inner possibility to outer activity. Once this plan is complete, we use it to move from outer actuality back into the inner fields of possibility... Nature’s second agenda develops in us the ability to play in the generic interior realm from which the outer world springs, and this is creation itself, the goal of our lives.” – From *Magical Child to Magical Teen*, Joseph Chilton Pearce

When consciousness, existence, and bliss fuse, it is Satchidananda. Yoga practices allow us to deprogram the body/mind and consciously reside in a blissful state remembering and becoming the Self.

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