Yoga Just Is

by Tracy Cook

Yoga Citta Vritti Nirodha

Yoga is the cessation of the modifications of the mind. – Patañjali, Yoga Sutra 1.2

After years of travelling a yogic path, twisting myself in crazy poses, riding a beautiful cosmic wave colorful, fractilian energies, breathing deeply, sitting for hours in silent stillness … and playing around with different forms of what we term as *yoga*, the ideas of what we perceive the *practice* to be, are shifting and changing.

Yoga just IS. It is the great union of body, breath, mind, spirit, in harmony with the Earth, all cosmic energies, and the Universe … and the magnificent merging of each egoic self with the Grand Divine Totality of All Life. It is ever-present within each and every one of us, comprising guiding and surrounding each and every moment.

We do the sādhana [spiritual training]: āsanas [postures], pranayama [breath-work], and meditation as a preliminary *practice* to cleanse, detoxify, and strengthen the body and to clear the mind in preparation for a re-awakening into the experiential KNOWING of this union. We examine the Supreme Question, "Who am I?" to look at and witness the inner, intricate workings of the mind, all of its twists and turns and dances of ego and emotion, in order to ultimately transcend all process of thought and rest in a state of ego-less peace.

This moment of the awareness and experience of this *knowing* is unmistakable … that slicing through the heaviness and chaos of the egoic mind to an instant where there is no thought, no mind-based identity, no time, no *Me*, in order to glimpse and merge with the magnificent essence of all that is. These moments can often be triggered within the *practice* itself … like coming out of a shoulder stand and having that indescribable feeling of peace and harmony, which goes beyond anything words could describe – holding a newborn baby for the very first time, or simply just realizing the absolute miracle of living within the beating of your own heart. It is in these glimpses that we are reminded of that precious essence which is always there in every emotion, every thought, and every experience … the realization of the sacred magic of being alive. And a reminder also of the innate, precious beauty within ourselves.

The experience, awareness and deep knowing of this Grand Union – this is yoga. And it is just the beginning.

Once the *slice* in the ego is made, there is a maturing of the experience and we can rest more and more comfortably and 'at home,' in the space much deeper than thought, cradled in this Divine Essence. Thoughts arise still, although less and less from the egoic mind and more from a space of clarity, peace and Ultimate Truth. Thus, actions are also more aligned with this Truth, creating an awareness in our

individual lives as sweet drops in the One Divine Ocean, expressing and experiencing fully and lovingly with the awareness of the essence of being alive, in all its infinite forms.

This is the grace. Each breath becomes a lifetime, each experience a gift. All extremes we experience arise from the same essence: The Totality of All Life, and the more we align our awareness with this sacred dimension of being, the richer and fuller each moment seems to become. We begin to watch, experience, feel, allow, act, and react from a space deeper than the egoic mind and thought, a space of Supreme Wisdom, arising from the Totality of All Life – from the Highest form of Love.

The knowing arises that each and every moment holds the entire Universe – all we need to know and have ever known, all wrapped up in the colorful, vibrant package of NOW … in whatever form NOW takes.

And from this arises a deep, wordless gratitude. As the Earth silently thanks the Sun, so we too thank this vast Ocean of Being for the gift of each experience, in whatever form it is delivered.

> *Underlying all pain is the longing to "come home." To rest in the warm embrace of knowing that we are infinitely more than what we think, feel, or experience.*

One of my favorite quotes:

> *You'll never reach a point in your life where everything is solved, all neatly tied up in a bow. That's the point. There is no 'final scene', only the on-going adventure movie, forever unresolved. You learn to live with the mess of life, its constantly changing nature, its unpredictability.*
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> *And you stand as the immutable silence in the midst of the storm, the wide open space in which joy and pain, ecstasy and agony, boredom and bliss can arise and subside like waves in the ocean.*
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> *There are no problems when you know yourself as the space for it all. – Jeff Foster*