



Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

November 2019 Teachings Article:

Quick Fixes #11

The Inner Sky

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I have always loved to look at the sky. As a kid at summer camp in the mountains, I looked through the trees to see the blue sky enticing me upward. Now I see that it was like a promise that I could one day elevate my state. In the California desert, the sky was always blue, stretching from horizon to horizon; at the beach, the sky met the blue of the sea in a fascinating way. Only after I learned to meditate did I understand why we love to look at the sky.

Your quick fix for this month is to remember the sky. Even if there are currently clouds, or perhaps even buildings, obscuring your view of the sky, it's still there. You've seen it so many times before. Simply remember the sky. This comes from a sutra:

aakaa"sa.m vimalam pa"syān k.rtvāa d.rṣṭi.m niraṅtaraam
stabdhaatmaa tatka.sa.naad devī bhairava.m vapur aapnuyāa.

— Vij-nana Bhairava 84

Remaining perfectly still, fix your gaze on the pure (cloudless) sky
to experience your Shiva-nature.

The sutra documents the experience that has enticed me since I was a child, saying it gives you a pure yogic state. This is not just for yogis. This happens for everyone. This is also why we love to look at the view from the top of a mountain as well as why we love rocking chairs so much that they're putting them in airports. In other words, everyone needs this inner experience and looks for outer things that will prompt it. Only yogis do it better. Yogis look inside.

You cannot wait for a cloudless sky, especially in the fall. It might not be happening right at the moment that you need it. Or maybe you can't go outside and the view of the sky you have from the nearest window just isn't doing it for you. That's why the next verse amps up the practice for you, making it a mystical, tantric practice — all internal.

liina.m muurdhni viyatsarvam bhairavatvena bhaavayet
tatsarvam bhairavaakaaratejastattva.m samaavi.set.

— Vij-nana Bhairava 85

Contemplate the sky as contained within or dissolved inside your head,
to experience the inner infinity and
to feel the entire universe being bathed in Divine Light.

The first few times you do this, it will take a few minutes. Once you've got the knack of it, you easily install the sky inside again. This is truly how your mind works, reflecting the object you focus on. If you were looking at a sky, your mind would reflect it inside: expansive, wide and open. Thus you can simply install the inner reflection any time you choose.

Sit with your spine comfortably upright and imagine the sky filling the inside of your head. Let your breath be easy. Use a wide vast cloudless sky, like you would see from the desert, out on a boat or from the top of a mountain or building. Perhaps it's like you see the sky inside, or more like you feel it. You could even be thinking the sky into your head. Any way you do it will work. Fill the inside of your head with the sky... Stay with it for a bit... Then let the sky expand to fill your mind...

This is called surrender, a mystical surrender into your inherent vastness and beingness. The translator of the text explains that the sky is a symbol of the infinity of Shiva, who is both the sky and beyond the sky. When you let the sky fill your head, even being dissolved inside your head, you discover that the universe is bathed in Divine Light, including you. This Light of Consciousness is not only bathing the universe, it is being the universe, including you. This is a way to discover your inherent Divinity, Oh Shiva.

How glorious that you can use your mind to go beyond your mind. This meditative practice is yoga, one of the most advanced of the ancient sages' practices, for the sole purpose of revealing your own Self to yourself. It works because it does the exact opposite of what your mind is usually doing to you. Your mind chops things up into little bits, then compares them with each other, finding fault with all of them, especially the bits that make you feel like you. It's called Maayaa, the delusive power that creates fragmentation and separation, leading to the inner experience of being alone, as well as lonely and in despair. Maayaa does this by splitting the one into many, especially in your mind.

It's like the vast American prairie, originally open land, inhabited by peoples who lived off the land, just like your ancestors. When European settlers moved in, they fenced the land with barbed wire, chopping the prairie up into little bits. Your mind does that inside, like you're installing barbed wire fences in the sky. Except you cannot really fence the sky. The sky has a greater capacity, just like your mind. It cannot be held in those little squared off bits of blue.

This contemplation is called a bhavana, meaning you feel your way into it. Bhava means feeling. Even when you start with a visual or an idea, it becomes a feeling, which means it touches your heart and spreads through your body. It becomes real, an experience of embodied Consciousness, which is what you really are.

It isn't just the sky that will do this for you, though that is the quick fix I'm offering. This ancient text documents many other familiar bliss-bits from your life, including the bliss of being completely comfortable as well as the experience of twirling or spinning around and then falling to the ground, which you did when you were a child. In addition, the text offers more sophisticated methodologies, designed to give you immediate access to your own inherent Divinity.

"Bhairava" is the name given to your experience, which means the "Annihilator." A name for Shiva, Bhairava is the one who annihilates your sense of limitation, dissolves your inner fragmentation, freeing you from Maayaa's spellbinding play.

Each verse describes a different way to access your Inherent Essence and Beingness. That inner experience of your own Self is so deeply fulfilling and profoundly nourishing that you lose all your neediness and fear. In this way, Bhairava destroys who you think you are, so you can experience who you really are, setting you free.

You may not be able to apply yourself to this meditative technique like the disciples of long ago. Instead of meditating day and night, you're busy managing life's realities. Thus you can do it on the fly, as a quick fix. It will give you a taste of freedom every time. Simply place the sky inside your head. See, think or feel your way into it. Let it expand, like a vast open cloudless sky, filling and dissolving in your head. Then take a deep breath, turn your focus to the outer world, and get going again. But remember, you're always under that vast sky. Beyond the clouds, it's still there.

So are you. Do more yoga.

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

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