



SHIVA

ULTIMATE OUTLAW

Sadhguru

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KAPWING

SHIVA

Ultimate Outlaw

Sadhguru



Breaking the laws of physical
nature is spiritual process.

In this sense, we are outlaws,
and Shiva is the ultimate outlaw.

You cannot worship Shiva,
but you may join the Gang.

- Sadhguru

Shiva – Ultimate Outlaw

Sadhguru

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INDIA

Phone: +91-422-2515345

Email: info@ishafoundation.org

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There is a beautiful incident that happened when Shiva and Parvati were to be married. Theirs was to be the greatest marriage ever. Shiva – the most intense human being that anyone could think of – was taking another being as a part of his life. Everyone who was someone and everyone who was no one turned up.

All of the *devas* and divine beings were present, but so were all the *asuras* or demons. Usually, if the *devas* came, the *asuras* would refuse to come, and vice versa. They just could not get along with each other. But since it was Shiva's wedding, they decided to put aside their differences and sit together this one time. And because Shiva is Pashupati, the Lord of all creatures, all the animals, worms, insects and every other living creature showed up for the wedding. Even the goblins, ghosts and demented beings arrived as guests.

As it was a royal wedding – the wedding of a princess – it was preceded by an important ceremony: the bride and groom would each have their ancestral lineage announced. For a king, his lineage is the most important thing, the pride of his life. So with great pomp, Parvati's lineage was announced. This went on for quite a while, and when they finally finished recounting all the details, they turned towards where the groom, Shiva, was sitting.

All the guests waited for someone to rise and speak about the glory

of Shiva's lineage, but no one said a word. The family of the bride wondered, "Isn't there someone in his clan who can stand up and talk about the greatness of his lineage?" But there was no one. No parents, relatives or family of the groom had arrived because he had none. He had just come with his companions, the *ganas*, who looked like distorted beings. They could not even speak human language and made a strange cacophony of noises. They all seemed to be drunk and in all kinds of different states.

Parvati's father, Parvat Raj, then requested Shiva, "Please tell us your antecedents."

Shiva just sat there silently, with a faraway look, neither looking at the bride nor excited about the wedding. He simply sat surrounded by his *ganas*, staring into nothingness. Repeatedly they asked him, because nobody would give their daughter in marriage to a man without knowing his ancestry. And they were in a great hurry because the auspicious time set for the wedding was quickly passing. But Shiva remained silent.

People of the society, the highborn kings and priests, looked at Shiva in great disdain and the gossip mill began to churn: "What is his lineage? Why is he not speaking up? Maybe he comes from some shameful, low-caste background."

Then, sage Narada, who was present in the assembly, saw the turn that events were taking, picked up his veena and started plucking at a single string of the instrument. He kept playing the same note – "*toing, toing, toing.*" Irritated by this, Parvati's father, Parvat Raj, lost his temper: "What is this nonsense? We want to hear the lineage of the groom, but he just ignores us. Am I supposed to marry my daughter to a man like this? And why are you making that annoying noise? Is that supposed to be an answer?"

Narada replied, "This one does not have parents."

The King asked, "Do you mean to say he does not know who his parents are?"

“No. This one has no parentage. This one has no heritage. This one has no *gotra*. This one has nothing. All he has is himself.”

The assembly was confused. Parvat Raj said, “We know people who don’t know who their father or mother is. Such unfortunate situations can happen. But everyone is born of someone. How can he not have a father or mother?”

Narada replied, “Because he is *swayambhu*, the self-created. He has neither father nor mother. He has neither lineage nor parentage. He belongs to no tradition and does not have a kingdom to back him. He has neither *gotra* nor *nakshatra*, and no lucky star watches over him. He is beyond all that. He is a yogi who has embraced the existence as a part of himself. For him, there is only one lineage – sound. The primordial, non-existent nature, when it began to find existence, the first thing that came into existence was sound. His first manifestation is in the form of a single sound. Before that he was nothing. That is why I am plucking the string.”

**Shiva is described as
a non-being, not as
a being. Shiva is not
described as light, but
as darkness.**

Who is Shiva?

When we say “Shiva,” there are two fundamental aspects that we are referring to. The word “Shiva” literally means “that which is not.” Today, modern science is proving to us that everything comes from nothing and goes back to nothing. The basis of existence and the fundamental quality of the cosmos is vast nothingness. The galaxies are just a small happening – a sprinkling. The rest is all vast empty space, which is referred to as Shiva. That is the womb from which everything is born, and that is the oblivion into which everything is sucked back. Everything comes from Shiva and goes back to Shiva.

So Shiva is described as a non-being, not as a being. Shiva is not

described as light, but as darkness. Humanity has gone about eulogizing light only because of the nature of the visual apparatus that they carry. Otherwise, the only thing that is always, is darkness. Light is a limited happening in the sense that any source of light – whether a light bulb or the sun – will eventually lose its ability to give out light. Light is not eternal. It is always a limited possibility because it happens and it ends. Darkness is a much bigger possibility than light. Nothing needs to burn, it is always – it is eternal. Darkness is everywhere. It is the only thing that is all pervading.

But if I say “divine darkness,” people think I am a devil worshiper or something. In fact, in some places in the West it is being propagated that Shiva is a demon. But if you look at it as a concept, there isn’t a more intelligent concept on the planet about the whole process of creation and how it has happened. I have been talking about this in scientific terms without using the word “Shiva” to scientists around the world, and they are amazed, “Is this so? This was known? When?” We have known this for thousands of years. Almost every peasant in India knows about it unconsciously. He talks about it without even knowing the science behind it.

On another level, when we say “Shiva,” we are referring to a certain yogi, the Adiyogi or the first yogi, and also the Adi Guru, the first Guru, who is the basis of what we know as the yogic science today. Yoga does not mean standing on your head or holding your breath. Yoga is the science and technology to know the essential nature of how this life is created and how it can be taken to its ultimate possibility.

“Shiva” refers to both of these because in many ways they are synonymous. This being, who is a yogi, and that non-being, which is the basis of the existence, are the same, because to call someone a yogi means he has experienced the existence as himself. If you have to contain the existence within you even for a moment as an experience, you have to be that nothingness. Only nothingness can hold everything. Something can never hold everything. A vessel cannot hold an ocean. This planet can hold an ocean, but it cannot hold the solar system. The solar system can hold these few planets and the sun,

but it cannot hold the rest of the galaxy. If you go progressively like this, ultimately you will see it is only nothingness that can hold everything. The word “yoga” means “union.” A yogi is one who has experienced the union. That means, at least for one moment, he has been absolute nothingness.

When we talk about Shiva as “that which is not,” and Shiva as a yogi, in a way they are synonymous, yet they are two different aspects. Because India is a dialectical culture, we shift from this to that and that to this effortlessly. One moment we talk about Shiva as the ultimate, the next moment we talk about Shiva as the man who gave us this whole process of yoga.

Unfortunately, most people today have been introduced to Shiva only through Indian calendar art. They have made him a chubby-cheeked, blue-colored man because the calendar artist has only one face. If you ask for Krishna, he will put a flute in his hand. If you ask for Rama, he will put a bow in his hand. If you ask for Shiva, he will put a moon on his head, and that's it!

Every time I see these calendars, I always decide to never ever sit in front of a painter. Photographs are all right – they capture you whichever way you are. If you look like a devil, you look like a devil. Why would a yogi like Shiva look chubby-cheeked? If you showed him skinny it would be okay, but a chubby-cheek Shiva – how is that?

In the yogic culture, Shiva is not seen as a God. He was a being who walked this land and lived in the Himalayan region. As the very source of the yogic traditions, his contribution in the making of human consciousness is too phenomenal to be ignored. This predates all religion. Before people devised divisive ways of fracturing humanity to a point where it seems almost impossible to fix, the most powerful tools necessary to raise human consciousness were realized and propagated. Every possible way in which you could approach and transform the human mechanism into an ultimate possibility was explored thousands years ago.

The sophistication of it is unbelievable. The question of whether people



In the yogic lore, Shiva is not seen as a god, but as the Adiyogi, the first yogi, and the Adi Guru, the first Guru.



were so sophisticated at that time is irrelevant because this did not come from a certain civilization or thought process. This came from an inner realization. This had nothing to do with what was happening around him. It was just an outpouring of himself. In great detail, he gave a meaning and a possibility of what you could do with every point in the human mechanism. You cannot change a single thing even today because he said everything that could be said in such beautiful and intelligent ways. You can only spend your lifetime trying to decipher it. This transmission of the yogic sciences happened on the banks of Kantisarovar, a glacial lake a few miles beyond Kedarnath in the Himalayas.

Dawn of Yoga

Over 15,000 years ago, Adiyogi appeared in the upper regions of the Himalayas. No one knew where he came from or what his origins were. He just came and went into intense ecstatic dance upon the mountains. When his ecstasy allowed him some movement, he danced wildly. When it became beyond movement, he became utterly still. People saw that he was experiencing something that nobody had known before, something that they were unable to fathom. So they gathered around him wanting to know what it was. But no one had the courage to go near him because he was so intense, like a blazing flame of fire. So they waited, hoping something would happen.

Nothing happened.

He did not even seem to know that they existed. He was either in intense dance or absolute stillness, paying no attention to what was happening around him. So people came, waited a few months, and left because the man was oblivious to the presence of others.

Only seven hardcore seekers stuck on. These seven were insistent that they must learn from him, but Shiva ignored them. They pleaded and begged him, “Please, we want to know what you know.”

Shiva dismissed them, “You fools, the way you are, you are not going to know in a million years. You need to prepare. A tremendous amount of preparation is needed for this. This is not entertainment.”

But they hung on. Seeing their perseverance, he said, “I will give you a preparatory step. Do this for some time. After that, we’ll see.”

So they started preparing. Days rolled into weeks, weeks into months, and months into years; still, he ignored them. Then, one day, after eighty-four years of *sadhana*, when the sun’s run with relation to this planet was shifting from the northern run to the southern run – known in this tradition as *Uttarayana* and *Dakshinayana* – Adiyogi happened to look at these seven people and saw that they had become shining receptacles of knowing. After eighty-four years of intense, involved *sadhana*, they had built their systems to such power and capability

that they were absolutely ripe to receive. He could not ignore them anymore.

He watched them closely for the next twenty-eight days, and when the next full moon rose, he decided to become a Guru. That full moon day is known as Guru Pournami because the Adiyogi transformed himself into the Adi Guru – the first Guru was born on that day. He took the seven disciples to Kantisarovar and started a systematic exposition of yoga in a scientific manner. He began propounding the whole mechanics of life to these seven people, not intellectually as a philosophy, but experientially. He explored every nut and bolt of creation with them. He brought forth yoga as a technology with which every human being can evolve himself. For every human being on the planet, there was a way. This is the science of the human mechanism, to be able to dismantle it or put it together.

The transmission went on for a long period of time. After many years, when it was complete and had produced seven fully enlightened beings, who are today celebrated as the Sapta Rishis, Adiyogi sent each one of them to different parts of the world. One went to Central

Asia. Another went to North Africa and the Middle East, where certain schools exist even today. Another went to South America, and that is one culture that imbibed it in a deep way and made something big out of it. One went to East Asia. His work is never mentioned anywhere, but he remained with his eyes closed all his life and did a very subtle

A reminiscence of this knowledge can still be seen in various forms and distortions in anything that you see as religious or spiritual on the planet, whether it is East or West. If you look deep enough, it was all taken from this basic body of knowing which was created by this one being.

form of work. One stayed right there with Adiyogi. He just sat, because his path was such that he became utterly still, and his presence exuded across the Himalayas. Another one came to the lower regions of the Himalayas and started what is known as Kashmiri Shaivism. Another one went south into the Indian Peninsula. This one is very important for us because he is Agastya Muni. Of the seven Sapta Rishis, Agastya Muni has been the most effective in terms of bringing the spiritual process into practical life, not as a teaching, philosophy or a practice, but as life itself. It is the benefit of what he did that the Indian people are still enjoying because he produced hundreds of yogis who were like fireballs.

He made the spiritual process a part of everyone's life. They say he made sure every human habitation in the region was touched. You can still find the remnants of his work in every family in this country. They are unknowingly doing some kind of yoga, though it is in distorted forms sometimes. If you look carefully at an Indian family, the way they sit, the way they eat, the way they do many things, whatever is being done traditionally are the remnants of Agastya's work.

The Sapta Rishis became the basis of the seven basic schools of yoga. Even today, these seven schools are still distinctly there. Adiyogi created this spine of knowledge, not in the form of books or teachings, but as an energy-based knowledge. If one knows how to access it, it is always there. A reminiscence of this knowledge can still be seen in various forms and distortions in anything that you see as religious or spiritual on the planet, whether it is East or West. If you look deep enough, it was all taken from this basic body of knowing which was created by this one being.



The Presence of Shiva



THE PRESENCE OF SHIVA

Here are four of the most important places in the Indian subcontinent where Shiva has spent time, leaving his immense energy footprint. Each space has been a place of pilgrimage for thousands of years, and the abode of many mystics and yogis.

KANTISAROVAR

Region: Garhwal Himalaya

Importance: Shiva imparted yoga to his first seven disciples.



KAILASH

Region: Trans Himalaya

Importance: Abode of Shiva. Significant to 5 religions.

KASHI

Region: Gangetic Plain

Importance: Kashi is Avimukta, or never forsaken by Shiva.

VELLIANGIRI

Region: Western Ghats

Importance: South Kailash, where Shiva spent 3 months.



KAILASH

Kailash is the greatest mystical library on the planet. Shiva himself stored everything that he knew in Kailash.

So Kailash is held as the abode of Shiva not because he is sitting on top of Kailash but because everything that he knew, he stored in this mountain. Information has been stored here in the energy form for thousands of years. All the mystics and yogis, what they could not share with anyone, they stored in this particular mountain.



KANTISAROVAR

Lake Kantisarovar is about 5kms above Kedar. The first yoga program happened here 15,000 years ago.

In the yogic lore, Shiva is not seen as a God but as the Adiyogi, the first yogi, and the Adi Guru, the first Guru. He explored the yogic sciences here with his first seven disciples, the Sapta Rishis. The legend goes that Shiva and Parvati lived on the banks of Kantisarovar, and in Kedar, many yogis lived whom Shiva and Parvati would visit.



KASHI

No one can decipher the date of Kashi. The lore says it is 12,000 to 15,000 years old.

The legend of Kashi goes one hundred percent by the fundamental that Shiva himself lived here. This is his winter place. He lived as an ascetic in the upper regions of the Himalayas, but when he got married, he decided to move to the plains and took the effort to consecrate the space into a powerful field of energy that still lives.



VELLIANGIRI

Velliangiri is called Kailash of the South because Adiyogi spent a little over three months upon these peaks.

When he came here, he was in distress and anger within himself. So he went up the mountain to settle himself and sat in a very intense form. The energies of who he is, are still very much a part of this peak. Later, many yogis followed him and made use of this space and energy for their sadhana.

- Sadhguru

ELEVATION

The reason why most places of power and grace have always been on mountain tops is because by the time you reach there, whatever ideas you have about yourself should fall apart. There is no pilgrim place on Everest because it shouldn't be impossible for you. It is doable, but who you are should be gone. Only then you can know this.

- Sadhguru



PILGRIMAGES

Distances are approximate

KAILASH

Kailash Parikrama

Open: May - September

100 km

53 kms

Manasarovar Parikrama

88 kms

KANTISAROVAR

Gauri Kund to Kantisarovar

Open: May - November

100 km

19 kms

KASHI

Panchakroshi Yatra

Open: Year Round

100 km

89 kms

Avimukta

52 kms

Antargriha Yatra

35 kms

Nagar Pradakshina

25 kms

VELLIANGIRI

Shivanga sadhana

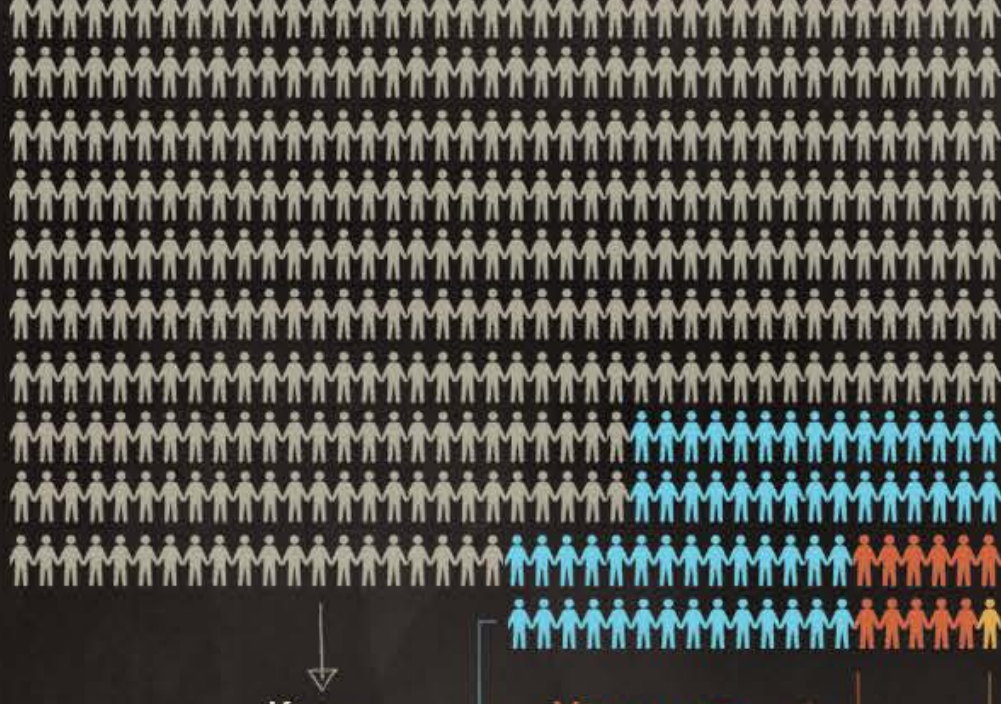
Open: Year Round

100 km

8 kms

PILGRIMS

1 person icon = 10,000 PILGRIMS



KASHI

3.5 million (2010)**

KANTISAROVAR

Few individuals

575,000 at Kedarnath*

VELLIANGIRI

Lakhs a year. Thousands on Mahashivarathri*

KAILASH

1080 allowed from India**

Rough estimate, data for pilgrims from outside India not available.

Sources: *Official Website of the Badrinath & Kedarnath Temple Committee (2012)

Figures are before the 2013 floods.

**The Hindu Newspaper, 26 July 2002

**Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India (2013)

***Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology University (2010)

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Whatever temples and places may be there in the world – and I have been to many truly sacred places and seen many powerful beings – when I bow down to them I am genuine, but I bow down to them a little less than I would bow down to my Guru, always. When I bow down to Kailash, I bow down to it the same way I would bow down to my Guru. Never before have I done that to anything or anyone in my whole life.



The strangest of the strange, the weirdest of the weird I have seen in my life. But Manasarovar was well beyond anything that I have seen till now. “Sarovar” means “lake.” “Manas” means “mind” or “consciousness.” Manasarovar is a Lake of Consciousness. Energy-wise, I see a very deep connection between Manasarovar and Kailash.



The idea of creating a whole nation dedicated to spirituality and human consciousness and not to physical well-being is a very unique thing in the world. Tibet and Nepal are probably the only nations which happened like that. Both these countries imported all their technology from India and tried to establish and dedicate the whole nation just for this purpose.

Kailash – Mystic Mountain

When Adiyogi found that each one of the Sapta Rishis had grasped one aspect of the knowing and he could not find another human being who could grasp all seven dimensions, that is when he decided to deposit his knowing into Mount Kailash so that all seven dimensions of yoga, all seven dimensions of knowing the mechanics of life are preserved in one place and one source. Kailash became the greatest mystical library on the planet – a live library, not just with information, but alive!

This is why in the Hindu way of life, it is said that Kailash is the Abode of Shiva. It does not mean he is still sitting up there dancing or hiding in the snow. It means he deposited his knowing there.

When a person realizes himself and his perception goes far beyond what is considered normal perception, what he has perceived cannot always be transmitted to people around him. Only a small part of it may be transmitted. It is very rare for any master to find people to whom he can transmit all of himself. Most masters go without ever being able to transmit what they really want to. I would say even in my life, what I am doing in terms of imparting is just 2% of what I am. If I can increase it by one percentage point before I fall dead, that's a great achievement.

So where do you leave all this? You don't want this to become lost. So for thousands of years, realized beings always traveled to Kailash and deposited their knowledge in a certain energy form, using the mountain as a basis. It is because of this that South Indian mysticism always says that Agastya, who is the basis of this form of mysticism, lives in the Southern face of Kailash. The Buddhists say three of their main Buddhas live in the mountain. The Jains say Rishabh, the first of the twenty-four Teerthankaras, lives in Kailash. He came to Kailash wanting to grasp all that is there and take it to the world. Rishabh planned a three-month trip but the three months stretched into seven years. He endlessly gobbled the stream of knowledge that is there. He was never satisfied. He wanted to take it all. He made a phenomenal effort, but when he tried to take all of it, it took him. That is the only way it could happen. You cannot contain it, but it can easily contain you. In my opinion, no individual

human being can ever grasp all of it. It's too much. We can take quite a substantial amount, but not all of it. The only way to grasp it all is to become one with it.

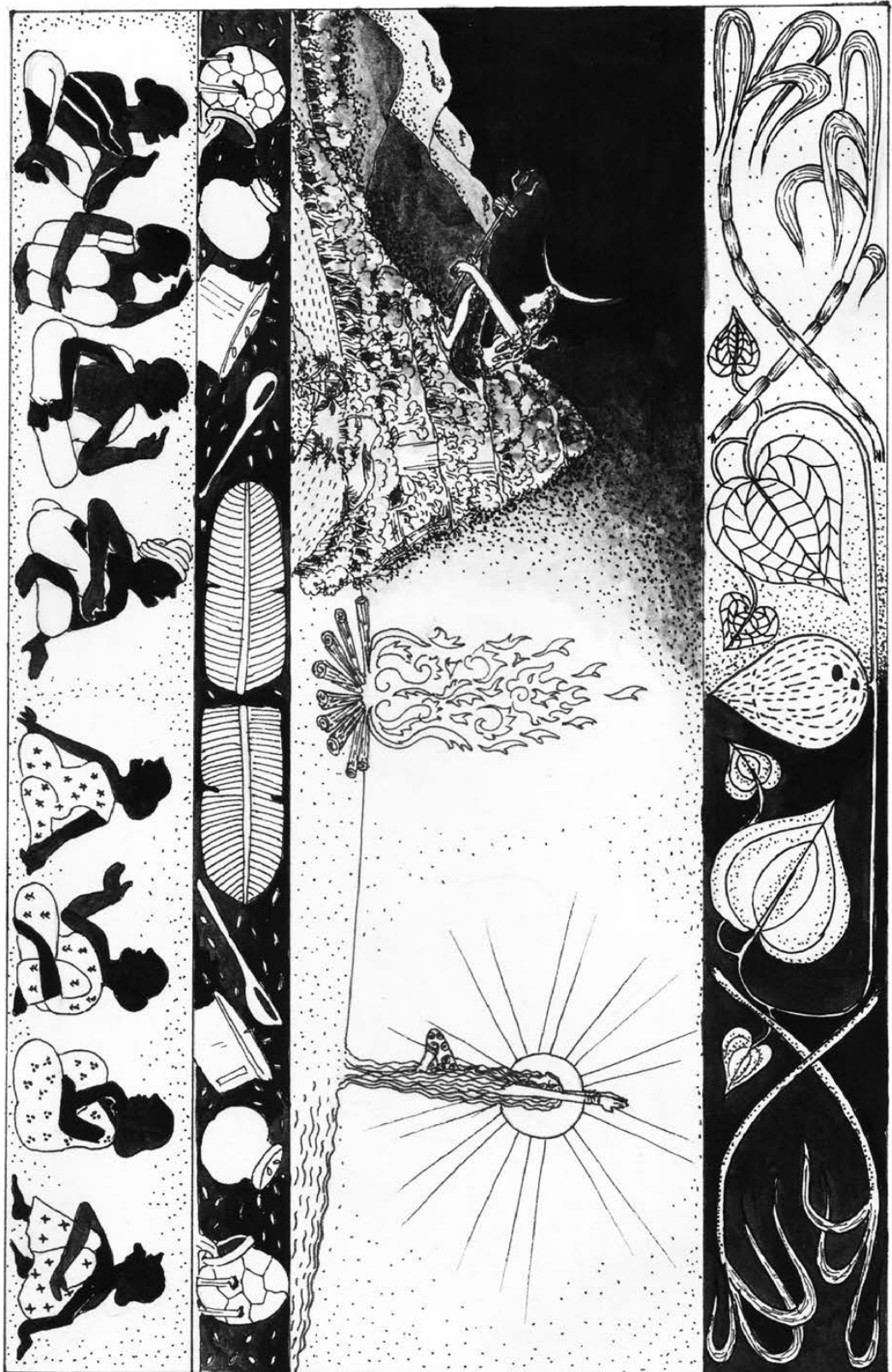
For a spiritual seeker, Kailash is like touching the ultimate source on this planet. For one who is in pursuit of mysticism, this is *the* place. There is no other place like this.

Velliangiri – Kailash of the South

Very close to where we are in South India, we have another repository of mysticism – the Velliangiri Mountain. This is referred to as the Kailash of the South. It is a phenomenal space. The biggest heap of knowing is Kailash. But various mystics and yogis in the South used Velliangiri when they wanted to store knowing. Nothing is comparable to Kailash as a library in terms of volume, but in terms of quality, Velliangiri is just as good.

The mountain is known as the Seven Hills because if you climb, there are seven undulations that make you feel like you are going up seven hills. The last peak is totally wind-blown – nothing grows there except grass. There are just three very huge boulders that have formed a shelter between themselves that is like a little temple with a small linga. It is an incredibly powerful place.

For many, this mountain became sacred because a long time ago, there was a young maiden in the southernmost tip of India who aspired to hold Shiva's hand as his wife. Her name was Punyakshi. She was a woman of great perception and an oracle in her society. She started working towards making herself suitable to draw him, and she remained absolutely focused upon him. She set up a deadline: "If I am not married to him by sunrise on this day, I am going to leave my body." Shiva came to know of this and started hurrying down to South India. But all the elders of her village conspired. They did not want to lose her oracular abilities. So, when Shiva was just a few kilometers from the place where Punyakshi was, the village elders created a false sunrise by setting up





Right from my infancy, there were always certain mountains in the background of my eyes. When I was sixteen years old and discussed this with my friends, they said, “You’re crazy! Where are mountains?” That was when I realized no one had mountains in their eyes except me. It was only much later when a whole flood of memory came back to me, and when I was looking for a place to establish the Dhyanalinga, that I started looking for that particular peak in my eyes.



The very idea behind a pilgrimage is fundamentally to subdue the sense of who you are. It is a way of getting yourself out of the way. If you do not budge, it is a way of wearing yourself out. It is to become nothing in the process of just walking and climbing and subjecting yourself to various arduous processes of nature. A process of destroying all that is limited and compulsive and arriving to a boundless state of consciousness.



Velliangiri's lap has been more than my mother's
for many lives has kept me nurtured and
above all focused upon my master's will.

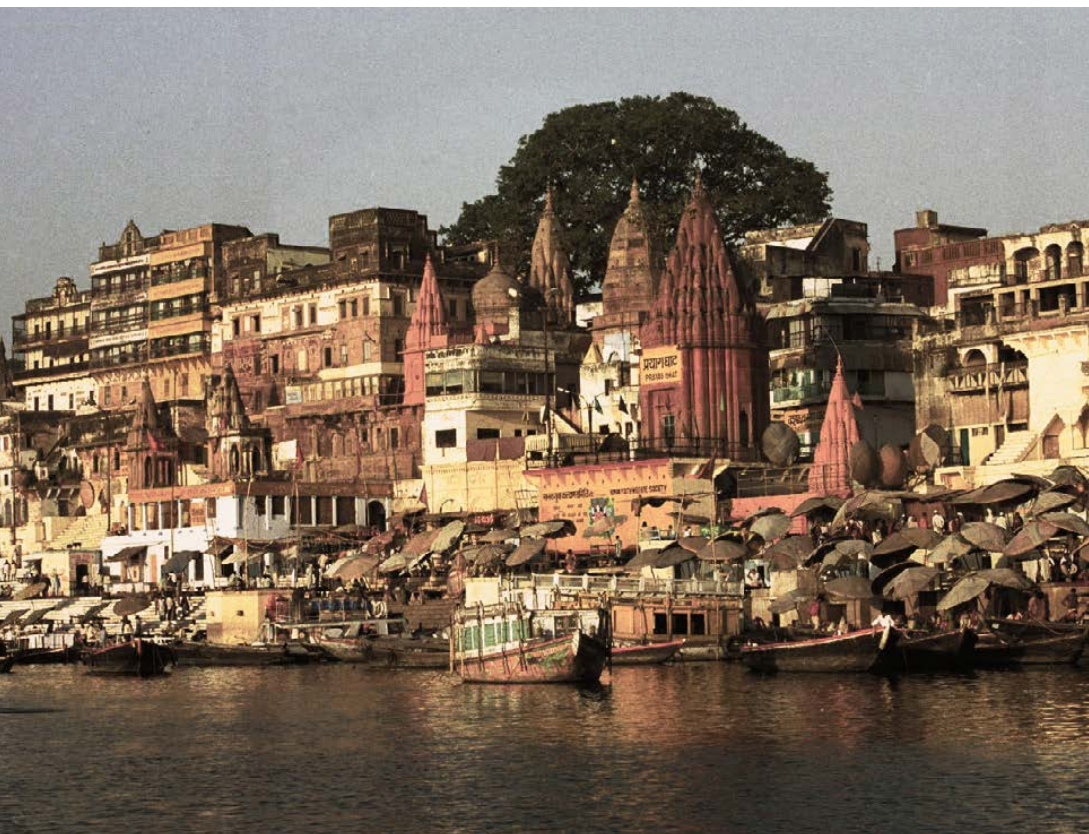
a huge mound of camphor. When the mound lit up, the early morning dew acted like a magnifying glass and multiplied the light so that it looked like the sun had risen. Shiva was so close, just 22 kilometers away, but he thought it was over and turned back. When she heard that he wasn't coming, Punyakshi was furious and heart-broken. Being an accomplished yogi, she walked to the edge of the land and left her body standing. Even today she stands as Kanyakumari. There is a shrine at the very tip of the Indian landmass which is the maiden's shrine.

Shiva, having turned back, was despondent and frustrated with himself for not having made it in time. He started walking back, and needed a place to sit and work out his despondency. So he climbed up Velliangiri and sat at the peak. It is a very strange kind of place because he was not sitting there in blissfulness, he was not sitting in meditation – he sat in a certain kind of despondence and anger about himself. He stayed there for a considerable amount of time, slowly settled himself, and left. But he left his energies here.

For thousands of years, those who came seeking used these energies as a way to know. The yogis and *siddhas* who came down this mountain were completely of a different kind – extremely fierce and intense people. So many beings – the kind of men that gods would be envious of because they lived with such grace and dignity – have walked this mountain. These great beings let the whole mountain imbibe what they knew, and it can never be lost. This is also a mountain where my Guru walked and the place he chose to shed his body. So this is not just a mountain, this is a temple for us.

Kashi – Eternal City

Essentially, there are two fundamental ways of looking at the existence. One way is, people believe there is a god somewhere and when he has nothing to do, he will create a creation. This is one kind of belief system. In other words, that which people refer to as God is transcendental. It is not associated with creation; it is something that he throws out.



If you have the necessary technology, you can make the simple space around you into a Divine exuberance. You can just take a piece of rock and make it into a God or a Goddess. This is the phenomenon of consecration. An enormous amount of knowledge about this dimension of life was perpetuated in India, and this was held as the most important thing.



Kashi was the center of rituals. These were for people who did not know how to do anything with themselves, but they knew enough that something needs to be done with them. When that is the case, an instrument like this is very useful. But there is nothing as sure-fire as doing something internally. That is the best way. Once you have been initiated into a process, that is more important than anything.



Another name for Kashi is Mahasmashana – the great cremation ground. The core of Kashi is Manikarnika, where at least one corpse will always be burning. The point is that the necessary atmosphere was created for those who died and for those who were burnt there because people were looking at life and death as a means of rising beyond the elemental play created in the form of the individual body and the cosmic body.



Another way of looking at the creation is that it is cosmogenic. The word “cosmogenic” comes from two words, “cosmos” and “genesis.” *Cosmos*, in Greek, literally means, “made to order.” Or in other words, it is made to a plan, not a random happening. It is not something that fell out of somebody’s mouth or hands, but something that is consciously created. Anybody who pays a little attention will clearly know that it is not happening haphazardly. It is in a process of genesis or evolution, always from within itself.

When the yogis saw the nature of the cosmos – as to how it is evolving from within itself, and how its ability to evolve is quite limitless – they were tempted to make their own. In Kashi, they built a kind of instrument in the form of a city that brings a union between the micro and the macro. This little human being can have a phenomenal possibility of uniting with the cosmic reality and knowing the pleasure, ecstasy and beauty of becoming one with the cosmic nature. Geometrically, Kashi is a perfect manifestation of how the cosmos, or the macrocosm and the microcosm, can meet. There have been many instruments like this in the country, but to create a city like Kashi is a mad ambition. And they did it thousands of years ago. There were 72,000 shrines – the number of *nadis* in the human body. The whole process is like a manifestation of a mega human body to make contact with a larger cosmic body. It is because of this that the whole tradition came up: “If you go to Kashi, that is it.” You don’t want to leave the place because when you get connected to the cosmic nature, why would you want to go anywhere else?

The legend of Kashi goes one hundred percent by the fundamental that Shiva himself lived here. This was his winter place. He lived as an ascetic in the upper regions of the Himalayas, but when he got married, he decided to move to the plains and took the effort to consecrate the space into a powerful field of energy that still lives. There are stories about how he sent people to Kashi, one after another, and they never came back because it was so fantastic. But maybe the story is saying that he sent people to build it, and they took a long time. After it was built, he came and he liked it, and decided to stay.

People have been travelling to Kashi from across the world for thousands of years. Gautama came here to give his first teaching. The Chinese travelled here after Gautama's arrival. Nalanda University – which is recognized as the greatest place of learning – is just a small drop of knowledge that fell out of Kashi. All the people that you hear of, like Aryabhata and so many others, came from this region, all generated by the culture that was alive in Kashi. This level of intelligence and human competence came because of this instrument, which allowed them to make contact with dimensions that are not usually available to a human being. It was not something that they logically thought of. They saw the existence the way it is. By seeing the nature of the creation, human intelligence matured in ways that nobody had ever imagined possible.

In the last few centuries, Kashi was razed to the ground thrice. How much of it is alive today is a question mark, but definitely something is still on – it is not all gone. It is a misfortune that we were not alive when it was in full glory. It must have been the most phenomenal place to have drawn people from across the world.

We have survived the past, but the question is, will we survive the future? When I say “we,” I am not talking about a particular religion. I am talking about those populations on the planet who are willing to look at life the way it is, not trying to impose their opinion on someone else. The world does not need dogma, philosophies or belief systems. What it needs is for human ability to go beyond our sense organs and be able to perceive something that is right now considered “beyond.” This is the only way a human being will know. This is the only way human consciousness will expand. This is the only way a human being will evolve beyond the narrow divisions that have happened in human societies.

Kantisarovar – Lake of Grace

Many years ago, I used to travel alone for a month or two every year in the Himalayas. The first time I went to Kantisarovar was in 1994. Kantisarovar is the lake that burst out and came to Kedar during the 2013 floods.



For a person who is seeking some kind of spiritual uplift, Kedar is a boon whose proportions you cannot imagine. That is how it is, if one is open to this. It is very difficult to explain to you what it means. After all, it is just a mountain, an outcrop of rock. But it is the type of people who lived here and what they have done to the space for these thousands of years that makes the enormous difference.



Ganga is not just a river to people, it is many more things. Certain parts of the river were consecrated over a period of time by certain people, and if you are open to it, it can be very powerful. Though my approach to spirituality and the inner dimensions of life is very scientific, still, I cannot help being emotionally associated with the Ganga because of the nature of how the river is. This is not something that can be described. A person has to experience the river as a live force.

Today, it is being called Gandhi Sarovar. It is actually Kantisarovar. *Kanti* means grace, *sarovar* means a lake. It is a lake of grace. The legend goes that Shiva and Parvati lived on the banks of Kantisarovar, and in Kedar lived many yogis whom Shiva and Parvati would visit.

Kedarnath itself is a tremendous space. The utterance of the sound “Shiva” attains a completely new dimension and significance in Kedar. It is a space which has been specially prepared for this particular sound. It is not right to say this, but it is almost like on this planet, the sound “Shiva” emanates from this place. For thousands of years, people have experienced that space as a reverberation of that sound.

When I got to Kedar after a long trek, I heard about Kantisarovar, so one afternoon, I decided to go there. I set forth around 2 or 2:30pm and got there in a little more than an hour’s time. There was the lake and snow-capped mountains around it. In terms of nature, it is fantastic – this huge lake of absolutely still water, no vegetation and all the snow-covered peaks reflecting in the totally still water. It was an incredible place.

I just sat there, and the serenity, silence and purity penetrated my consciousness. The climb, the altitude and the desolate beauty of that place left me breathless. I sat in that stillness on a small rock with my eyes open, imbibing every form around me. The surroundings gradually lost their form and only *nada* – sound – existed. The mountain, the lake and the whole surroundings, including my body, did not exist in their usual form. Everything was just sound. Within me a song arose: “*Nada brahma vishwa swaroopa.*”

I am somebody who always avoided learning the Sanskrit language. Though I like the language very much and I know the depth of the language, I avoided learning it because the moment you learn Sanskrit, you will invariably end up reading the scriptures. My own vision has never failed me in anything even for one moment, so I did not want to clutter myself with scriptures and all these traditions. So I avoided the Sanskrit language.

While I was sitting there, my mouth was definitely closed and my eyes open, and I heard this song in a big way, in my voice. It was my voice



Nada Brahma Vishwaswaroopa

Nada Hi Sakala Jeevaroopa

Nada Hi Karma Nada Hi Dharma

Nada Hi Bandhana Nada Hi Mukti

Nada Hi Shankara Nada Hi Shakti

Nadam Nadam Sarvam Nadam

Nadam Nadam Nadam Nadam

singing, and it was a Sanskrit song. I heard it clearly, loudly. So loud, it was like the whole mountain was singing. In my experience, everything had turned into sound. That is when I perceived this song. I didn't make it up, I didn't write it – it just descended upon me. The whole song flowed out in Sanskrit. The experience was overpowering.

Slowly, after some time, everything fell back into its earlier form. The fall of my consciousness – the fall from *nada* to *rupa* – filled my eyes with tears.

If you just give yourself to that song, there is a kind of power to it. It has a power to dissolve a person, if you really throw yourself into it.



Shiva's Adornments

SHIVA's Adornments

why he wears what he wears

The moon is referred to as soma, the source of intoxication. Shiva has the moon because he's a great yogi who is intoxicated all the time, but he sits in great alertness. To enjoy intoxication, you must be alert. That's how yogis are – totally drunk, but fully alert.

• MOON

The most significant aspect of Shiva is that he opened his third eye. What it means is, through these two eyes you can only see that which is physical. So this arousal of a new dimension of perception, through which one can perceive that which is beyond the physical, is referred to as

• THE THIRD EYE

The snake indicates that Shiva's energies have reached the peak. Snake is a symbolism for kundalini, the unmanifest energy within you. A coiled-up snake is hard to see unless it moves. Kundalini is also such that only when it moves, you realize there is so much power within you.

• SNAKE

Trishul symbolizes the three fundamental aspects of life. This can be called Pingala, Ida and Sushumna or man, woman and divine. These are the three basic nadis – the left, the right and the central – in the energy body of the human system.

• TRISHUL

• NANDI

Nandi symbolizes eternal waiting. One who knows how to simply sit and wait is naturally meditative. Nandi is sitting, very active, full of alertness, full of life, but just sitting that is meditation.

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Third Eye

Shiva has always been referred to as Triambaka because he has a third eye. The third eye does not mean someone's forehead cracked and something came out! It simply means another dimension of perception has opened up. The two eyes can see only that which is physical. If I just cover them with my hand, they cannot look beyond that. That is how limited they are. If the third eye opens, it means another dimension of perception, which is inward-looking and looks at life completely differently, has opened up and everything that can be perceived is perceived.

If your perception has to evolve and enhance itself, the most important thing is that your energy has to evolve and enhance itself. The whole process of yoga is to evolve and refine your energies in such a way that your perception is enhanced and the third eye opens. The third eye is the eye of vision. The two physical eyes are just sensory organs. They feed the mind with all kinds of nonsense, because what you see is not the truth. You see this person or that person and you think something about him, but you are not able to see the Shiva in him. You see things the way it is necessary for your survival. Another creature sees it another way, as is necessary for its survival. This is why we say this world is *maya*. *Maya* means it is illusory. We are not saying that

existence is illusory. We are only saying the way you are perceiving it is illusory. So another eye, an eye of deeper penetration, has to be opened up. The third eye means your perception has gone beyond the dualities of life. You are able to see life just the way it is, not just the way that is necessary for your survival.

There is a scientist who recently published a book where he talks about how much of the physical existence is visible to the human eye. He says 0.00001% is all that the human eye sees of the physical existence. So if you look with the two physical eyes, you will see what is manifest. If you look with the proverbial third eye, you will see what is yet to manifest and what could manifest.

In this country and tradition, knowing does not mean reading books, listening to someone's talks or gathering information from here and there. Knowing means opening up a new vision into life. On Mahashivarathri, somehow, nature is bringing that possibility very close. It is possible every day, it is not that we have to wait for this particular day, but on this day, nature makes it more available to you.

Nandi

Nandi is a symbolism of eternal waiting, because waiting is considered the greatest virtue in Indian culture. One who knows how to simply sit and wait is naturally meditative. Nandi is not expecting Shiva to come out tomorrow. He is not anticipating or expecting anything. He is just waiting. He will wait forever. That quality is the essence of receptivity. Nandi is Shiva's closest accomplice because he is the essence of receptivity. Before you go into a temple, you must have the quality of Nandi – to simply sit. You are not trying to go to heaven, you are not trying to get this or that – you simply sit.

People have always misunderstood meditation as some kind of activity. No – it is a quality. That is the fundamental difference. Prayer means you are trying to talk to God. Meditation means you are willing to listen to God. You are willing to just listen to existence, to the ultimate



“Even outside the Dhyanalinga, we have set up a big bull. The message is very clear, ‘You must leave your “bull” outside and then go.’ Even Shiva did it. You also do the same thing.” - Sadhguru



nature of creation. You have nothing to say, you simply listen. That is the quality of Nandi – he just sits, alert. This is very important – he is alert, not sleepy. He is not sitting in a passive way. He is sitting, very active, full of alertness, full of life, but just sitting – that is meditation.

Meditation essentially means the individual person is not doing his own thing. He is just there. Once you are simply there, you become aware of the larger dimension of the existence that is always in action. You become aware that you are a part of it. Even now you are a part of it but becoming aware that “I’m a part of it” is meditateness. Nandi is the symbolism of that. He just sits and reminds everyone, “You must sit like me.”

Trishul

Shiva's trishul represents the three fundamental aspects of life. In the yogic tradition it is called Rudra, Hara and Sadashiva. These are the three fundamental dimensions of life that are symbolized in many ways. They can also be called Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. These are the three basic nadis – the left, the right and the central – in the *pranamaya kosha*, or the energy body of the human system. Nadis are pathways or channels of *prana* in the system. There are 72,000 nadis that spring from the three fundamental ones. These nadis don't have a physical manifestation. If you cut the body and look in, you will not find them. But as you become more aware, you will notice the energy is not moving at random, it is moving in established pathways. There are 72,000 different ways in which the energy, or prana moves.

The Pingala and Ida represent the basic duality in the existence. It is this duality which we traditionally personify as Shiva and Shakti. You can simply call it masculine and feminine, or it can be the logical and the intuitive aspect of you. It is based on this that life is created. Without these two dualities, life wouldn't exist as it does right now. In the beginning, everything is primordial, there is no duality. But once creation happens, there is duality.

When I say masculine and feminine, I am not talking in terms of sex – about being male or female – but in terms of certain qualities in nature. Certain qualities in nature have been identified as masculine. Certain other qualities have been identified as feminine. You may be a man, but if your Ida is more pronounced, the feminine may be dominant in you. You may be a



woman, but if your Pingala is more pronounced, the masculine may be dominant in you.

Bringing a balance between the Ida and Pingala will make you effective in the world; this will allow you to handle life aspects well. Most people live and die in Ida and Pingala. Sushumna, the central space, remains dormant. But Sushumna is the most significant aspect of human physiology. Life really begins only when energies enter into Sushumna. You attain to a new kind of balance, an inner balance where whatever happens outside, there is a certain space within you that never gets disturbed and cannot be touched by outside situations. Only if you create this stable situation within yourself, you will dare to scale the peaks of consciousness.

Moon

There are many names for Shiva. One name that is very commonly used is Soma or Somasundara. *Soma* could literally mean the moon, but soma essentially means inebriation or intoxication. If one does not get inebriated, not with outside substances but with the life process itself, the simple process of waking up in the morning, attending to your body's needs, eating, earning your living, protecting yourself from all the predators around you and going back to bed every day can take such a big toll. That's all that is happening to most human beings right now. The simple process of life has turned into a hell. This is simply because they are just trying to live life without drinking from it.

The moon is referred to as soma, which means the source of intoxication. If you have gone out on a moonlit night somewhere where there are



no electric lights, or if you just look at the moonlight, slowly, you will get lightheaded. Have you noticed this? We can do it without the moonlight also, but moonlight does it very well! It is because of this quality that the moon is referred to as the source of intoxication.

Shiva uses the moon as a decoration because he is a great yogi who is intoxicated all the time, but he sits in great alertness. To enjoy the intoxication, you must be alert. Even when you drink, you try to stay awake and enjoy the intoxication. And that is how yogis are – totally drunk, but fully alert.

The science of yoga gives this pleasure to you to be internally drunk all the time. Yogis are not against pleasure. It is just that they are unwilling to settle for little pleasures. They are greedy. They know if you drink a glass of wine it just gets you a little buzz, and tomorrow morning, you get a headache and the works. They are not willing to settle for that. With yoga, they can be totally drunk all the time, but one hundred percent stable and alert. This cannot happen by drinking something or taking in a chemical. This can happen only if you are producing and consuming your own narcotic! And nature has given you this possibility.

There has been a lot of research in the last couple of decades, and a particular scientist found that in the human brain, there are millions of cannabis receptors. If you simply keep your body in a certain way, the body will produce its own narcotic, and the brain is waiting to receive it. It is only because the human body produces its own narcotic that feelings of peace, pleasure and joy can happen within you without any stimulus from outside.

When the scientist wanted to give this chemical an appropriate name, he went through various scriptures around the world and could not find anything that he was satisfied with. Then he came down to India and found the word *ananda*, or bliss. So he called it Anandamide. If you generate a sufficient amount of Anandamide in your system, then you can be drunk all the time, but fully awake, wide awake.



Serpent

In the yogic culture, the snake is a symbolism for kundalini, which is the unmanifest energy within you. The nature of kundalini is such that when it is still, you do not even know it exists. Only when it moves, you realize there is so much power within you. Until it moves, it is almost non-existent. Because of this, kundalini is symbolized as a snake, because a coiled-up snake is so hard to see unless it moves. Similarly, you do not see this coiled-up energy unless it moves. If your kundalini is aroused, miraculous things that you cannot believe possible will happen with you. An unleashing of a completely new level of energy begins and your body and everything behaves in a completely different way.

This is the reason for the symbolism of Shiva and a snake. It indicates that his energies have reached the peak. Mysticism and snakes cannot be separated because this creature has come endowed with a certain dimension of perception. This is a reptile that must be crawling on the ground, but Shiva has got it over his head to indicate that it is above even him. The indication is that in some ways, the snake is even better than Shiva.

The snake is one animal that is very comfortable with you if you are at ease. It just won't do anything to you. A snake is also very sensitive to certain energies. Shiva has the snake around his throat. It is not just symbolic. There is a whole lot of science behind it. There are 114 chakras in the energy body. You can see them as 114 junction boxes or

the confluence of nadis. Out of these 114, people are usually talking about the seven fundamental chakras in the system. Among these seven fundamental ones, the *vishuddhi chakra* is located in the pit of your throat. This particular chakra is very strongly associated with the snake. The vishuddhi is about stopping poison, and a snake carries poison. All these things are connected.

The word vishuddhi literally means “filter.” If your vishuddhi becomes powerful, you have the ability to filter everything that enters you. Shiva’s center is supposed to be vishuddhi, and he is also known as Vishakantha or Neelakantha because he filters all the poison. He doesn’t allow it to enter his system. Poisons are not necessarily that which you may consume through food. Poisons can enter you in so many ways: a wrong thought, a wrong emotion, a wrong idea, a wrong energy or a wrong impulse can poison your life. If your vishuddhi is active, it filters everything. It saves you from all these influences. In other words, once vishuddhi is very active, that person is so powerful within himself that whatever is around him does not influence him anymore. He is established within himself. He tends to become a very powerful being.



Ultimate Outlaw



Generally, in most parts of the world, anything that people refer to as divine is always referred to as good. But if you read through the Shiva Purana, you cannot identify Shiva as a good person or a bad person. Nobody can be more horrible than Shiva! The worst possible descriptions have been given to him. There are descriptions of Shiva having walked around with human excrement on his body. He went through everything any human being could ever go through. A complex amalgamation of all the qualities of existence has been put into one person because if you can accept this one being, you have crossed life itself. The whole struggle with one's life is we are always trying to pick out what is beautiful and what is not, what is good and what is bad. But you would have no problem with anything, if only you could accept this man who is a terrible combination of everything put together.

He is the most beautiful, but he is also the ugliest. He is a great ascetic, and also a family person. He is the most disciplined, but also a drunkard and a drug addict. He is a dancer, and he is also absolutely still. Gods, demons and all kind of creatures in the world worship him. The so-called civilization has tried to conveniently eliminate all those un-digestible stories, but this is where the essence of Shiva is. There is nothing that is repulsive for him. Shiva sat on a dead body to do sadhana as an *aghori*. *Ghora* means “terrible.” Aghori means that which is “beyond terrible.” Shiva is an aghori – he is beyond the terrible. The terrible does not touch him, nothing repels him. He is an all-embracing kind, not out of compassion or any other emotion as you might like to think, but simply because he is like life. Life is naturally all-embracing. The problems of whom you can embrace and whom you can’t are only psychological problems, not life problems. Even if your enemy is sitting next you, the life in you has no problem. What your enemy exhales, you inhale. Your friend’s exhalation does not feel any better than your enemy’s. The problem is only psychological. Existentially, there is no problem.

So an aghori is not in a state of love. The spiritual process in this part of the world never taught you about being loving, compassionate, kind or anything like that. These not even considered spiritual – these are social aspects. Being kind and smiling at people around you is a family and social business. A human being is supposed to have that much sense, so no one thought it was necessary to teach such things. An aghori is an embrace with the existence, not out of love – he’s not so superficial – he is in a life embrace. He treats food and his excrement the same way. He treats the dead and the alive the same way. He treats a well-preserved body and a rotting body the same way simply because he wants to become absolute life. He does not want to be trapped in his own psychological process.

Some time ago, I had a guest from Australia. I was driving him around in Mysore to show him a few places. The way this person was, if I drove fast, he would say, “Shit!” If I braked, he would say, “Shit!” If he saw something beautiful, he said, “Shit!” If he saw something ugly, “Shit!” If he liked something, “Shit!” If he didn’t like something, again, “Shit!”

I was just listening to this, thinking, “Why do they go on chanting this like a mantra throughout the day? Maybe they are constipated and they are trying to invoke themselves? That should be over in the morning, why are they dragging it through the day?” Then I observed this person. When he was worked up, he said, “Shit,” and he settled down. So I did not want to disturb it. Anything that is working for anyone, I do not want to disturb it. If it works, it is fine.

We say Shiva, he says, “Shit!” The difference is only cultural. “What? Are you equating Shiva and shit? This is the highest, that is the lowest. Are you equating these two?” I am not equating the two. It is just that in your mind, can you store Shiva in one place and shit in another place? In your mind, everything is together, especially if it is stored alphabetically, Shiva and shit must be next to each other.

It is with a very deep understanding of life that we have arrived at the sound that we call as Shiva. We know the sounds “*Shi-va*” can do incredible things to you. If you are receptive enough, this sound can be explosive – just one utterance will explode within you in such a powerful way. It has that kind of power. This is a science that has been understood from a very deep experience within ourselves. We have looked at it in great depth.

The sound *shi* in “Shiva” fundamentally means “power or energy.” In the Indian way of life, we have always symbolized the feminine as power – Shakti. Somehow, the English language found the same word to describe the feminine as “she.” *Shi* fundamentally means Shakti, or “energy.” But if you just go on doing too much *shi*, it will take you off balance. So *va* in the mantra is added as a damper to slow it down and keep the balance. *Va* comes from *vama*, which means “mastery.”

In the mantra “*Shi-va*,” one energizes it and the other balances or takes control of it. Undirected energy is of no use, it could be destructive. So when we say “Shiva,” we are talking about directing the energy in a certain way, in a certain direction.

The word “shit” also starts the same way. Somehow, accidentally, they discovered the word and held onto it. We have looked at it in great

depth as a science and we know the sound can do incredible things to you.

So when you say “Shiva,” it is not about religion. Today, the world is divided in terms of which religion you belong to. Because of this, if you utter something, it looks like you belong to some “party.” This is not religion, this is the science of inner evolution. You don’t have to worship Shiva. I don’t. I am worshipful towards everything, but I have never said a prayer in my whole life. When I say “Shiva,” for me it’s everything. When I utter “Shiva,” whatever I wish to know is here for me. If I sit here long enough, just with one word I will know the whole existence. It is because of this that I walk through life with such ease – just Shiva. You must know the strength of that. Don’t get lost in your logical mind. This is not that kind of nonsense. This doesn’t belong to that genre. This is a way of going beyond where you are. This is a way of stepping beyond the boundaries that human beings are supposed to stay within.

We are vagabonds who will not go by the rules set by nature. Nature has set some laws for human beings – they have to be within that. Breaking the laws of physical nature is spiritual process. In this sense, we are outlaws, and Shiva is the ultimate outlaw. You cannot worship Shiva, but you may join the Gang.



Mahashivarathri

A RAPTUROUS NIGHT WITH THE DIVINE FEBRUARY 27

2014
ISHA YOGA CENTER, INDIA

Mahashivarathri is celebrated at Isha Yoga Center during February/March of each year. The special nature of the day and the night of Mahashivarathri present us with a unique opportunity to make use of the forces of nature for our wellbeing. Also in the yogic lore this night celebrates the Grace of Shiva, who is considered the Adi Guru or the First Guru, from whom the yogic tradition originates.

This year, Mahashivarathri falls on 27th February. Over 600,000 people will gather at the Isha Yoga Center for the nightlong celebration. Sadhguru's discourses and powerful meditations will be interspersed by folk music from Rajasthan Roots, versatile classical renderings from Ashit Desai, and a concert by Pandit Jasraj, the doyen of Hindustani classical music.



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Question and Answers with the Master

February 27th 2014

6 pm - 6 am IST

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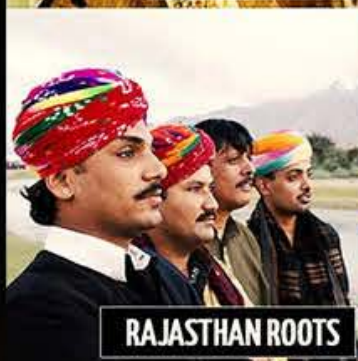
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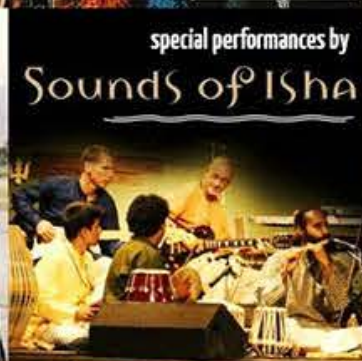
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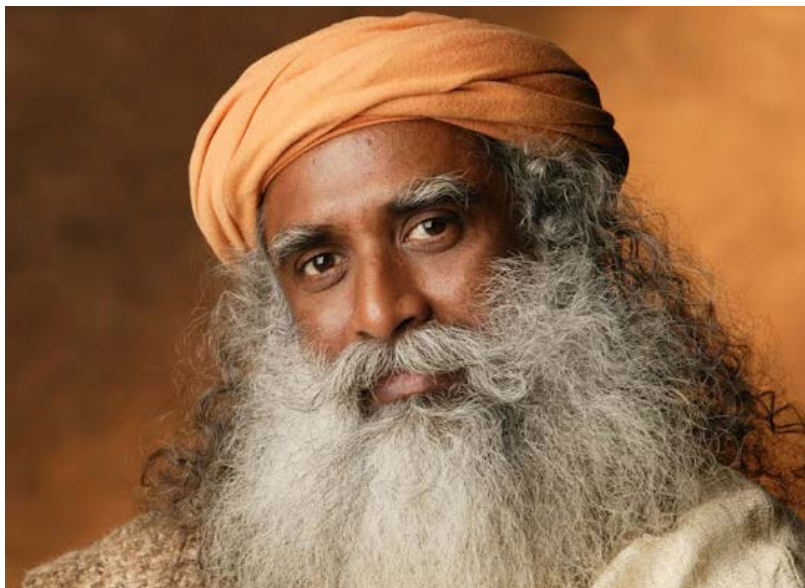
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About Sadhguru



Yogi, mystic and visionary, Sadhguru is a spiritual master with a difference. An arresting blend of profundity and pragmatism, his life and work serve as a reminder that yoga is not an esoteric discipline from an outdated past, but a contemporary science, vitally relevant to our times. Probing, passionate and provocative, insightful, logical and unfailingly witty, Sadhguru's talks have earned him the reputation of a speaker and opinion-maker of international renown. With a celebratory engagement with life on all levels, Sadhguru's areas of active involvement encompass fields as diverse as architecture and visual design, poetry and painting, ecology and horticulture, music and sports.

Sadhguru is also the founder of Isha Foundation, a non-profit organization which has been dedicated to the wellbeing of the individual and the world for the past three decades. Isha Foundation

does not promote any particular ideology, religion, or race, but transmits inner sciences of universal appeal.

[Sadhguru's Official Website](#)

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Isha Foundation

Isha Foundation is a non-profit human-service organization, supported by over two million volunteers in over 150 centers worldwide. Recognizing the possibility of each person to empower another, Isha Foundation has created a massive movement that is dedicated to address all aspects of human wellbeing, without ascribing to any particular ideology, religion or race.

Isha Foundation is involved in several path-breaking outreach initiatives: Action for Rural Rejuvenation (ARR) enhances the quality of rural life through healthcare and disease prevention, community revitalization, women empowerment, the creation of sustainable livelihoods, and yoga programs. Isha Vidhya empowers rural children with quality education. Project GreenHands (PGH) initiates mass tree planting and creates a culture of care for the environment to keep this planet liveable for future generations.

Isha's unique approach in cultivating human potential has gained worldwide recognition and reflects in Isha Foundation's special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)



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