



Svaroopā® Vidya Ashram

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Multi-Dimensionality #1

Embodied Consciousness

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Primordial Consciousness takes on a body – yours. Primordial Consciousness takes on all bodies – even rocks, mountains, trees and rivers, and the many objects. Consciousness is being the whole universe and all it comprises – including you. Why? Out of the bliss of pure Beingness, Consciousness is overflowing in exuberant creativity. Each thing that Consciousness becomes is a blossoming forth, with the whole contained in it.

The purpose of yoga is to empower your discovery that the whole of Consciousness is hidden within you. Thus you will live in the continuing knowing of Consciousness being you. Consciousness, which we call Shiva, is being your quirks and peculiarities as well as your talents, skills and loving heart.

From Shiva's perspective, it's like light shining through a crystal hanging in the window. The ray of light becomes many colored lights dancing around the room. Shiva is the one light. You are one of the different colored lights. You think you are merely small, a dot of light among many, with each being less than the whole. Yet, when you look into the dancing dot of light, you see that it is made of light. Fully, wholly and completely made of light.

The light of your own Beingness is Shiva. Your Beingness is the One Beingness that is called Consciousness, also called Shiva, also called your own Self. You are made of this essence, which has contracted into materiality in order to become your body, mind, heart and soul.

All beings and things arise from the blissful One. Each is born from the supreme bliss of Consciousness, lives its life, then merges back into its source.

Aanandaat eva khalu imaani bhutaani jaayante. Aanandena jaataani jivanti.
Aananda.m prayantyaabhisa.nvi"santiiti. — Taittiriya Upanishad, section 6

The goal is to discover your own source, so you enjoy the bliss of Consciousness while embodied. Now your life's purpose is fulfilled. You see the world as it is – the embodiment of Divine Consciousness, who is dancing as you and others. Supremely blessed, you share the blessing with others.

But when you haven't yet attained your own Beingness, it all looks starkly different. As an individual, a contracted form of Consciousness, you don't experience the fullness of your inherent bliss and Divinity all the time, at least not yet. You don't know you are made of light. Your dance includes sorrow as well as joy. Your internal GPS has lost its tracking signals, so you are unable to find your true destination.

In this state, you ask why Shiva has become the universe, you want something to explain your pain, confusion and fear. Knowing the reason for pain can make it easier to bear, like with an athlete training for an event or a mom birthing a baby. Yet you can't see the goal. It's like an ant who has climbed to the top of a tree but cannot see the view. You're stuck in your limited perspective.

Your perspective is limited by the three malas, coverings that Shiva took on, to hide himself within you. These are the limitations that make Consciousness able to be merely an individual — feeling incomplete, separate and needy.

Anava mala makes you not know your own Divine Essence.

Mayiya mala makes you look for a superficial sense of self, based on where you are, who you know and what you do.

Karma mala makes you go-go-go. If you're not physically active, then your mind is racing.

I used to experience these three malas kicking in when I woke up in a strange location, especially after traveling late into the previous night. Awaking spontaneously at the auspicious hour of 3:00 am, in a light meditative state, I'd wonder, "Who am I?" Once I figured out my name, then I'd wonder, "Where am I?" The name of a city would arise inside. Then I wanted to know, "What am I supposed to do?" These are the three malas.

But just before the first question arose, who was I? This is the pivotal moment. Who are you before your mind wonders, “Who am I?” Your mind couldn’t ask the question unless you existed. So you existed before your mind asked. Who were you before your mind asked?

This is the you that we call your own Self. You exist, even when your mind isn’t labeling things or coming up with agendas. Your own existence is the One Existence that has always existed, oh Shiva. Shiva has become you, a limited individual, for a two-fold purpose: to have experiences and to rediscover your own Shivaness, your own Self.

All you perceive is for the purpose of providing Self with experiences and with liberation, through the play of the worldly qualities, the elements and the senses.

Prakaa”sa-kriyaa-sthiti-“silam bhutendriy-aatmaka.m bhoga-apavarga-artham
d.r”syam. — Yoga Sutras 2.18

Your mind looks outward, for things in the world, all of which have different qualities. At a snack bar, one person will order a fruit smoothie while another goes for fried onion rings. Perhaps another orders both. You are always choosing what kinds of experiences to have, by choosing how to fill your senses as well as what you fill your mind with. Whether you are enjoying what you’re going through or not, everything is an experience, thus fulfilling one of the two purposes of your life.

Yet when all you do is chase your senses, you feel incomplete and unfulfilled. Karma mala keeps you moving, chasing after things. Mayiya mala uses your experiences to construct a sense of individualized identity. Yet you bump into anava mala again and again, a sense of emptiness, even loneliness and despair. You sense there must be something more, but you don’t know where to look. You don’t even know what you’re looking for.

You’re looking for you. Yoga is dedicated to your quest to know your own Self. This is yoga’s specialty, the opening inward to your inherent fullness, wholeness and holiness. Once you have found your own Self, everything else shifts into place. It all makes sense. It all works.

Because Shiva is the one who installed the malas that limit you, only Shiva can free you. How did Shiva install the malas? He used his own energy to tie himself up in “nots” – the not-knowing of his own Divine Essence, the not feeling fulfilled, the not being good enough, etc.

Just as energy contracts to become matter, Shiva used his own energy to become individualized. Thus you need Shiva’s energy to expand you. That is Shaktipat initiation, literally the placing (-pat) of Divine energy (shakti-) in you. This is the transformative moment, changing your trajectory for the rest of your life, if you allow.

When I got this Divine infusion, I was delighted to have my trajectory changed. I didn’t understand the inner shift at first, but my Baba explained it to me again and again. I needed the repetition. Gradually, as my mind and heart were lightened and lifted, I could see farther and farther inward. I found, as the sages say, that everything you see as being outside is actually within. As you delve deeper and deeper within, you discover the whole universe is contained within you.

We will be exploring this and other mystical truths in my teachings theme for 2024, Multi-Dimensionality. Each month, I’ll introduce more of yoga’s teachings on what you can find within. You will recognize that you truly are more than you think you are. Even now, almost 50 years after receiving Shaktipat from my Baba, I’m still integrating the multidimensionality more and more into my life and my work. What a glorious dance this is! You can discover it as well, simply by doing more yoga.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES, “MULTI-DIMENSIONALITY”

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