



Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

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Multi-Dimensionality #5

The Formless Being Form

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The four-fold model of Consciousness details how the One, being formless, manifests into form. As one of his honored names, Shiva is called jagat-sharira, universe-bodied.

Like water becomes ice, yet is still water, Shiva becomes the universe. But he is not limited by it. Nor is he limited to the universe, for he is beyond the universe as well as being in it and being it. You are a form of the formless as am I and everyone you know.

Shiva is also being everyone you don't know, as well as being everything that exists. Shiva is also everything that doesn't exist, for if you can think of it, your thought is made of Shiva.

How does this come to be? He coalesces into physical matter through four dimensions. We look at this because my Baba urged us to understand the physical and subtle principles from Shiva to the earth. This gives you mastery over the world as well as a pathway to follow inward.

Shunya — the Void is Shiva's way of hiding from himself. Since he is Beingness-Itself, he masquerades as Nothingness. In the vastness of his own being, he appears as non-being, like a vacuum. Yet when you experience the void, you are the one who is in it, so it isn't really empty. You can sense the vastness, which is a hint of Shiva's presence.

Prana — Shiva is moving within Shiva. There's nothing to see. It's all happening within the seeming emptiness, yet something is happening. Prana is the energy of aliveness, bringing everything into existence.

Puryashtaka — prana shapes itself into energetic templates that coalesce into physical forms. This includes your subtle body, your energy body. It has eight elements, giving it the name puryashtaka: puri = site, ashta = eight. These are your mind, which has three functions, plus your five senses.

Sthula-Sharira — your physical body, which is material, has density, shape and form. The Sanskrit word sthula comes from sthaa (enduring or stable) and vara (meaning enclosed by). You are contained within a specific location by a physique that conveys the qualities of your mind and senses. While you are Shiva, you are now fully individualized.

Your meditative process unravels all this so you discover who you are. You are not your body. You are not your mind. You are not your energy. You are not the void either. You are Shiva, who is being all of these while being you.

When I first experienced the void, I felt like I had come home. I relished the deep peace I found in the profound vastness. Yet some new meditators experience it as being scary. So what do you do? If it is scary, simply start up your mind again, but apply it to mantra. This way you won't lose the inner depth, but will discover who you are at this level within.

This four-fold map makes it wonderfully clear that you don't lose your body when you discover your own Shivaness. You don't lose your mind or your pranic energy. You continue to have a life after you are enlightened. The yogic goal is to know your own Shivaness while you are alive and participating in the world. Shiva is functioning within all four dimensions by being you.

In getting enlightened, yoga's tools meet you where you are. If your body needs help, the Svaroopa® yoga poses and breathing practice will take care of you. If you tend to live in your mind or your energies, chanting will transform both, especially chanting the mantra you get from the Guru.¹

If you feel a deep pull toward God, maybe to the "great unknown" or the "formless beyond form," cultivate your relationship with the Guru. How do you do this? I did it by moving in. I wanted the intimacy that everyday interactions provide. It fed me on a deep level that needed it.

If you're at a distance, participate in online programs. Visit in-person frequently. Devote all your actions to the Guru in the midst of life, even your thoughts. How? Repeat the Guru's mantra all the time.

¹ To receive mantra from Gurudevi, go to www.svaroopa.org/mantra-card

Why is the mantra so important? It is because words are important. The words you hear, the words you say and especially the words you think are very important. The energy of words is called matrika, the Divine Energy that underlies all the forms Shiva is being.

Because the universe came into existence through a process of densification, your use of words usually pours into limitation and negativity. Mantra reverses the process. When you receive an enlivened mantra from the Guru, the words and the energy begin unraveling your internal contractions. This evolves inward through four levels of speech, another of yoga's four-fold models of manifestation.

After my first Meditation Teacher Training, I opened one of Baba's meditation centers in my home, offering weekly programs. The morning after my first program, I sat for my early morning meditation. As always, I began by repeating my mantra. Instantly, the mantra shifted, deepening into a more powerful level within. It glided from my tongue into my throat, then vibrated in my heart with every repetition. After a few minutes it shifted lower, to my navel level, then beyond.

I was experiencing the four levels of speech, which also correspond to your four bodies as well as visual experiences you may have in meditation. It is Shaktipat that opens up these levels, though you have to do your part by exploring inward.

Vaikhari is speech at the level of your tongue, which you know so well. Repeating the mantra aloud or placing it on your tongue in silent repetition focuses the matrika energy in your physical body. At this level, you may see a red aura, indicating the healing and purification happening for you.

When you've repeated mantra enough times, it glides downward into your throat. This is the madhyama level, corresponding to your subtle body. This is where your mind, chakras² and nadis³ are located. You may see a white thumb-size flame, as your mind and energies are being uplifted.

After more mantra repetition, the mantra descends to pashyanti, to your heart. Here you may see the black pearl, which is the size of the tip of your third finger. At this level, your causal body is being purified. Here, your karmas are stored, causing you to take another birth. This is the body of your soul, which reincarnates from lifetime to lifetime.

Deeper, the fourth level is paraa, corresponding to your supracausal body. First the mantra lands in your navel region, though you find it truly pervades everywhere. Here is revealed the blue pearl, which is the size of a sesame seed. It is the body of your own Self, which seems tiny until you discover it actually encompasses all.

Baba revealed all these mystical details to us, in-person as well as in his writings. Much of it had been secret prior to his teachings, or written only in poetic or veiled teachings. As an example, the great poet-saint, Tukaram Maharaj said:

Tila evadhe bandhuni ghara anta rahe vishvam-bhara.⁴

God, the nourisher of the universe, lives in a house as tiny as a sesame seed.

All this and more unfolds within when you step onto the path of the Great Masters. This is why I studied with Baba and why I bring his teachings and practices to you. Where are you going with them? It all opens up when you do more yoga.

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

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² Energy centers

³ Energy flows

⁴ tilaa eva.dhe bandhuuni ghara aanta raaha vi"svambhara.