

THE NATURE OF REALITY¹

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The current (2013) version incorporates minor edits and updates made by Vijay Vaishnavi & Kulbhushan Vaishnavi.

“It is probably true quite generally that in history of human thinking the most fruitful developments frequently take place at those points where two different lines of thought meet. These lines may have their roots in quite different parts of human culture, in different times or different cultural environments or different religious traditions: hence if they actually meet, that is, if they are at least so much related to each other that a real interaction can take place, then one may hope that new and interesting developments may follow”.

- Werner Heisenberg

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Introduction

Hindu religion encourages its adherents to experience and to ultimately realize the one Reality underlying the varied manifestations in the world and the Cosmos. This Reality is the essence of the universe creating the multitudinous things and events. It is the Reality behind life, energy and matter. This Undifferentiated Reality is known as Brahman in Vedas and Upanishads. In Shiva Sidhānt—Philosophy—it is known as Shiva. It is given the name of Dharmakāya in the Buddhist Literature. There are many other names given to this one Reality. Vedic saying is:

“Ekam Sat Viprā Bahudā Vadanti”

Truth is one; the wise call it by different names.

All the different names, of course, point towards the same Reality: Words are, however, mere symbols used to represent something. The Reality is unthinkable—“Achintya”—and so it is beyond expression, beyond intellectual thinking, beyond language and words. Yet language is the only

vehicle available with man and so we use words for any and everything, howsoever imperfect these may be, to describe the Reality.

Eastern mystics, especially Hindu and Buddhist saints, have always realized that Reality transcends ordinary language. So they have tried to present their findings and mystic experiences in symbols, allegories, etc. In modern times scientists, experimenting with sub-atomic particles, are also confronted with the same difficulty. They are realizing that language is not able to convey what they experience at that level.

For centuries scientists have been searching for the basic laws of Nature and for finding the ultimate nature of matter. It is only in the present times that scientists are able to locate and to observe atoms and their minute parts. They experience that the nature and behaviour of these very minute particles is beyond comprehension and common sense. The knowledge at this level is not gained directly through sense organs and so they are not able to describe fully these experiences in any language because the language is itself the product of sense perceptions only.

Atomic scientists, after many centuries, and mystics both experience the inadequacy of language to describe supersensory experiences.

Scientists are presenting their experiences in mathematical symbols, complex diagrams, graphs and line drawings. Unlike the Hindu and Zen mystics, scientists have not as yet taken recourse to concrete symbols, paradoxes or 'non-sensical' sayings, to transfer their experiences in the sub-atomic world to the world at large: never the less sub-atomic scientists are using phrases and words which are foreign to classical science and which directly go against the world picture conceived and built by a long line of classical scientists. Some illustrative examples of these oft repeated remarks are, "Dancing waves of energy; Transient energy waves; Matter is energy and energy is matter; Emptiness-void is the same as form and form is an area of emptiness; Being what is—is the same as becoming". Remarks and conclusions such as these can very easily be mistaken to be the sayings of an Aryan Pandit or a Hindu mystic.

The modern scientific findings have a live correspondence with the rich Hindu philosophy and religion. That matter and energy are interconvertible is a well-known fact. Modern scientists experience that the minute energy

particles have a sort of superluminal—faster than light—link with one another and that energy particles are engaged in a sort of conscious play. Scientists feel that the fundamental processes of Nature lie outside space-time, and these give rise to events which are located in space-time. Further that the apparently 'separate parts' of the universe are intimately connected at a deep and fundamental level. This leads us to one of the Basic Hindu Principles that the universe is only a play, a dance of consciousness, that 'Para-Samvit' the Supreme consciousness is the only Reality.

Yogis and mystics convey their experiences in symbols, paradoxes, allegories, etc. The symbols, paradoxes, etc., stimulate us to think and ultimately to pass beyond thinking in order to realise the ineffable. The symbols also represent the Divinity. In real terms they consist only of consciousness which has acquired the shape of a transient material object. In real terms, "the cosmos is energy felt as matter", as expressed by Sathya Sai Baba [1]. For the sake of elucidation one of the well-known symbols, Shiva Lingam, is sought to be discussed here. The Reality involved or hidden behind the facade of gross matter-symbol is attempted to be made clear rather in a scientific language. One of the most creative intellects in human history, Albert Einstein, in his last

compilation entitled "My Later Years" wrote "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind". These words summarise in the shortest possible way the interdependence of science and religion. In fact Science without religious idealism and religion without scientific temper are both incomplete. However, in the words of Sir John Woodroffe, "The Indian form of religion and philosophy is that which most easily accommodates itself to modern science".



Shiva

Shiva is the Absolute Undifferentiated Reality. It is Chinmātra-the pure light of intelligence. Shiva is Para-Samvit, the supreme consciousness. It is Self-Existing Pure Consciousness. The fundamental expression of existence is that “It Is”, “It is Being”, “It is Joy” in the infinite field of Consciousness, Sat Chit Ānand.

SHAKTI

In the first ‘Vibratory movement’ towards a universal manifestation Shiva is ‘Chidrupini Shakti’, Dynamic Consciousness. Shakti is the power by which it evolves and involves. “Shakti is that Power aspect of Consciousness in which it stresses and changes as the World order. Shakti is Brahma Swarup Nitya” [2]. She, The Divine Mother, is related to Reality – Being – as heat of fire is to fire.

SHIVA SHAKTI

Consciousness is: It exists, It operates as Power: Shakti, whether to project out of itself objects of varied content or to withdraw the objects back into

itself. Consciousness is not only static, quiescent, but is also dynamic and stressing. It is not only Being but also it is Becoming.

SHIVA SHAKTI AND COSMOS

Consciousness is the content of Illumination Itself. It illumines the whole of Experience. It is unbounded and unrestricted. The total content or the object of Experience is also unbounded and unrestricted. Both are Infinity. "Pure Chit is at par with, neither superior nor subordinate to, the Power-Shakti by which it evolves and involves; and this again is at par with its manifestation. These three aspects: Chit as being, Chit as Power and Chit as Product, comprise the whole fact" [3].

"The Invisible is Infinite, the visible too is Infinite. From the Infinite the visible universe of Infinite extension has come out, The Infinite remains the same, even though the Infinite universe has come out of It".

- *Isha Upanishad*

THE UNIVERSE AS MOVEMENT

The world is Shiva Shakti movement-Not only the world as a whole but the World in its minutest details – big objects, rocks, atoms and sub-atomic particles – are nothing but Being, Consciousness, Bliss in movement.

Shri Aurobindo says:

“All World is a movement of the Spirit in itself and is mutable and transient in all its formations and appearances; its only eternity is an eternity of recurrence, its only stability a semblance caused by certain apparent fixities of relation and grouping.

“Every separate object in the universe is, in truth, itself the whole universe presenting a certain front or outward appearance of its movement. The microcosm is one with macrocosm.

“Yet in their relation of principle of movement and result of movement they are continent and contained, world in world, movement in movement. The individual therefore partakes of the nature of the universal, refers back to it for its source of activity, and is, as we say, subject to its laws and part of Cosmic Nature” [4].

The full Reality or ‘Fact’ is Chit which is Satchhidānanda—Sat-Chit-Ānand. The Chit evolves by its Power Shakti, the world of forms. The supreme form evolves itself into lower and

lower forms until in dissolution they are withdrawn into Itself to be projected again during creation. This is the Great Rhythmical Movement so well seen in various World Phenomena.

Lord Krishna says:

“From the Unmanifested, all the manifested stream forth at the Coming of ‘day’; at the coming of ‘night’ they dissolve, into That called the Unmanifested”.

- *Bhagwad Gita: VIII-18*

Being, Consciousness, as both Power to Be and to Become or evolve is, therefore, the Reality whole, ‘The Puran’. “Time, Space and causality are born in its Womb”, that is, in itself. It is Mahākālī; which means not only that Mahākāl or Infinite Time is the Power, but also that She “Stands upon” Mahākāl who—in a symbol—is depicted to be “At Her Feet”. She produces Time-Space and having produced, plays with it, such is her play—līlā, Her Love-joying [5]. The power-Shakti is above time-space.

NĀD AND BINDU

The Pure Ocean of consciousness develops a field of stress in which power becomes infinitely intensive. This contracts to a point space. This is

called 'Bindu' or a point of contraction. This is a highly condensed potential power aspect of Chit. In this aspect quiescent Chit—Shiva—is in embrace with the Power—Shakti—in the Act of manifestation. This is the potential condition of the evolutionary process. All the varied and variegated forms in the Cosmos get formed. The evolutionary process is never at rest. It is a continuing stress field in which the power or energy forms a basis for all world operations on the planes of life, mind and matter. Bindu is a point universe in the Act of Becoming. In the Upanishads, it is also described as the largest, "Mahato-mahiyān", minuter than the minutest "Anuraniyasam" and also as refulgent as the sun "ĀdityaVarnam".

"Energy must constitute a 'field' and that field must be subject to an actual straining movement, before it can be supposed to be concentrated into a point. Such intensification or concentration presupposes a condition of power in movement which as heard by the Absolute Ear is called Nād, unstruck Melody or Primordial Sound" [6], Nād is referred to as 'The Voice of Silence' by Madame H.P. Blavatsky in her book of the same name.

The Shāradā Tilaka says that from the Lord issued Power, from Power that state which is Nād, and from Nād, Bindu.

Spirit, which is the cause of the universe, is pure consciousness. This is Shiva. Shakti is the Power aspect of the same supreme consciousness. Shakti is the Power by which it creates the universe. Shakti evolves the world and involves the same. The universe and everything in it are Shiva-Shakti in movement. This movement is a Holy Writ. Even the atoms and sub-atomic particles are constantly moving, dancing the dance of Shiva: The Nat Raj.

Chit as Being, Chit as power and Chit as Product – universe – are a Fact. They are infinite.

“The world is the play of the universal consciousness appearing as matter as well as conscious beings. The universal consciousness is Shri Guru Siddhanāth. That consciousness IS Shiva. It is also you”².

- *Lalleshwari: P XVIII*



²An epitome or gist of Kashmir Shaivism: One of the quatrains of Lalleshwari, a Kashmiri woman Saint of fourteenth century, rendered by Swami Muktānanda. (Published by SYDA Foundation. U.S A., 1981)

Manifestation

Can Existence come out of non-existence? Wherefrom has the Cosmos originated? Doubts and questions like these were posed by Vedic Seers and these are agitating the minds of the present day thinkers and scientists.

“How, indeed, could ‘Existence’
Proceed from ‘Non-Existence’ or
‘Being’ from ‘Non-being’ –
The One without a Second” [7]?

The Big Bang theory of Cosmogony tries to explain the tremendous explosion of a very compact and a highly concentrated mass, billions of years back. The scientists are of the opinion that the universe is still expanding. This theory, however, is silent about the source of the highly dense and compact mass which exploded.

Dr Robert Jastrow says:

“What happened prior to the Big Bang is a big mystery. Nor can it be determined. We only know that it happened” [8].

Carl Sagan, Astronomer and space physicist says:

“Why it happened is the greatest mystery” [9].

Dr. Weinberg says,“ does not begin with the beginning” [10].

The universe, in truth, is not ‘creation’; it is a manifestation or a projection of the Absolute Undifferentiated Reality. The universe is 'Anādi' and 'Anantam' or beginningless and endless. It is an Infinite Existence from Pure Intelligence, and the Supreme Consciousness.

Kshemarāja says:

“Independent and self-contained Universal Consciousness with its objective of Universal self-fulfillment is the primal cause of the manifestation of the universe” [11].

And again:

“The Reality, of its own free will, unfolds the manifold universe on the screen of its own consciousness” [12].

“Paramashiva, the only reality, exists in its two aspects” [13].

“One of them is His static aspect in which He is eternal, changeless, limitless, pure and complete consciousness alone” [14].

“The other is His dynamic aspect which is the aspect of Godhead, by Virtue of which He manifests this infinite variety of phenomena. He is Shiva in His static aspect and Shakti in His dynamic aspect. Both these aspects of Paramashiva are equally real and eternal and are, in fact, inseparable” [15].

“Everything is Paramashiva Himself. Even an inanimate object is as much Paramashiva as Lord Shiva Himself, because diversity, being mere reflection of Shiva’s powers, does not exist in reality, siddhas (perfect beings) see everything as God” [16].

A universe of great complexity, order and harmony cannot come into being from a non-living object or blind energy.

Sub-atomic physicists have recently put up the principle of the "Participating Observer". It says that the observed and the observing mind seem to be of the same stuff.

In the sub-atomic World, the observer and the observed, so to say, become one and the problem crops up as to who is observing whom.

Gary Zukav says, "The observing mind and the observed are inter-related in a real and fundamental sense" [17].

Fritjof Capra tells, "We cannot talk about Nature without, at the same time, talking about ourselves" [18].

Brahma Sutra says:

"Because the consciousness inheres all effects, objective universe is experienced by the observing mind which, too, is illumined by the same consciousness" [19].

This is the basis of the 'Participating Observer' principle advanced by sub-atomic physicists.

The Bindu or the point of contraction, referred to above, is the potential power aspect of the quiescent Chit. The power aspect of Chit is in the process of manifestation. The unmanifest Shiva, on its own, through a sort of awakening awareness—Sphurana³ appears as the Primordial Energy or the Ādi-Shakti. A divine desire to manifest itself is the seed of creation.

The Nirguna—without attributes—Shiva, in the Bindu aspect, becomes dynamic and manifests itself as the universe of time, space and causation.

The Bindu—the Primordial atom—is the point source of the cosmos with its galaxies, mind, energy and matter.

The whole universe and everything in it seem to be packed together within a pinpoint in the act of manifestation. The universe evolves from the point source and in due course in dissolution it is withdrawn into itself to be projected again during re-creation.

³ A synonym (derived from Tamil base) for Spanda, used by Sri Ramana Maharishi

“At the end of each aeon, Kalpa, creation goes back to Prakriti—the First cause—and, at the beginning of the next aeon, the cause brings it forth again”.

- *Bhagwad Gita: IX-7*

(Kalpa is said to last 4,300,560,000 years after which another will follow.)

Srimadh Bhāgavatam illustrates the same by means of an analogy:

“As the spider weaves its thread out of its own mouth, plays with it, and then withdraws it again into itself, so the eternal, unchangeable Lord who is formless and attributeless, who is absolute bliss, evolves the whole universe out of Himself, plays with it, and again withdraws it unto Himself”.

- *Shrimad Bhāgavatam*

The universe manifests itself in an endless chain of evolution and involution.

Scientific thinking also seems to conform to this view.

Dr. Weinberg says:

“One of the possibilities is that the present expansion of the universe may have begun at the end of a previous age of contraction and so on” [20].

Sir James Jeans says:

“Our universe must have originated from a source of unimaginably dense concentrated matter in which all the galaxies were packed together within a pin-point at a definite epoch of time some billion years ago” [21].

Abinavagupta says:

“Consciousness vibrates to and fro by its basic nature. The vibration of the infinite consciousness is termed as ‘Spanda’. It is simultaneously inward and outward movement like activity of consciousness, its inward aspect is the Shiva aspect and its outward aspect is the Shakti aspect” [22].

The active phase of consciousness is called “Ābās” shining forth-that is the creation of the universe.

The transcendental phase is technically called 'Pralaya' – "dissolution and reabsorption". During Pralaya all manifestations are dormant in the same way as the characteristics of an oak tree are dormant in an acorn.

The universe expands and contracts alternately and regularly from and to the point source. This is a regular cyclic occurrence and on a macroscopic scale, it can be imagined as a steady time regulated symmetrical process. This is the basis, of the steady state theory of the Cosmogony of the universe.

The steady state theory of Cosmology is advanced by S. Chandrasekhar, a Noble Laureate.

The Big Bang theory of Cosmogony does not seem to fit in here.

An idea or better a general conception of Complementarity introduced by Neils Bohr to give full meaning to many incompatible facts in physics has a wider application in nature. It attempts to give a dynamic balance in arriving at the unity of opposites. It introduces the notion that all opposites are polar, that these can be just two faces of a single phenomenon. The symbolism of Yin and Yang – pairs of opposites – in the Chinese Taoism

finds its full meaning in the unity of the basic reality in Tao.

Nature is full with pairs of opposites: life and death, day and night, good and evil, virtue and sin, up and down, etc., etc. These are said to be different aspects of unitary processes.

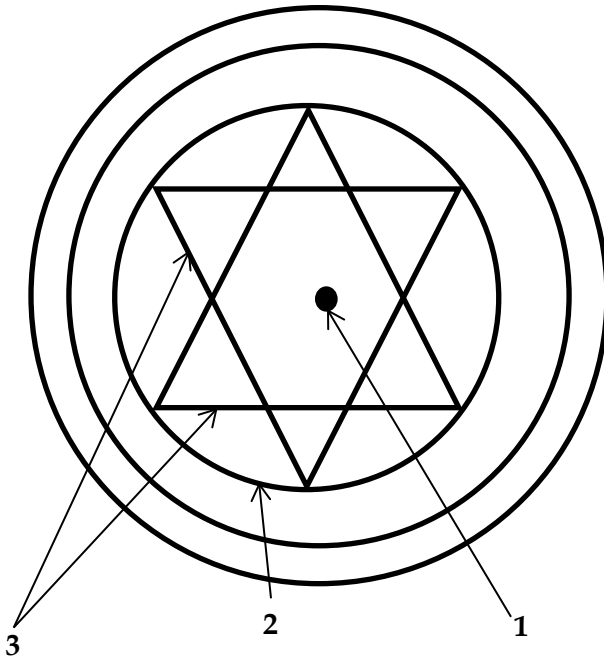
The Big Bang theory of cosmogony looks just like a unitary pole theory. The explosion and the expansion of a highly contracted mass will get its full meaning if it is conceded that in due course by the reverse process of Contraction the Universe will again come to the point source.

These two opposite processes of expansion and contraction of the Universe—evolution and involution—are the active and passive aspects of a single Cause: the Absolute Undifferentiated Reality. The Shakti or the Moving Reality of Shiva creates, manifests, and then absorbs (Ābās and Pralaya) the Universe. This seems to give the phenomenon a "Fundamental Symmetry" which is the modern search in physics.

The steady state theory of Cosmogony seems to fit in only partially with the integral Vedic/Shaiva theory of manifestation and pralaya of the Universe in time bound periods.

SHAKTI – THE COSMIC ENERGY

“Cosmic Energy appears in three principal modes. These are technically called Icchā, the power of will, Jñāna, the power of Knowledge and Kriya, the power of Action. They account for the three fundamental psychological steps that precede the determination of every action. One follows the other in logical succession” [23].



Shri Chakra

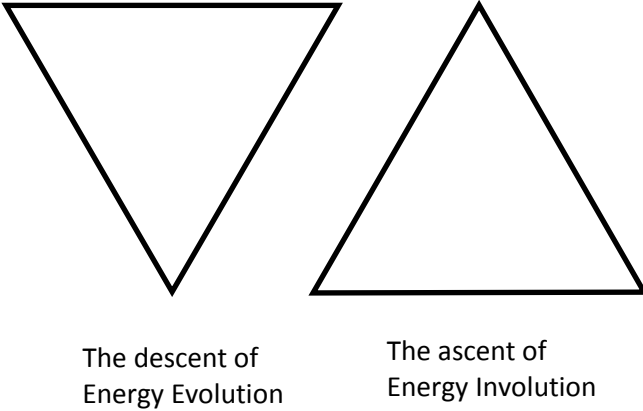
1. Bindu - The Creative Unmanifest
2. Immanence: Cosmos
3. The tool of Creation.

The three vertices of the triangle are

1. Icchā Shakti
2. Jnyāna Shakti
3. Kriya Shakti

In a monad these are represented by:

1. Emotion
2. Cognition
3. Conation



Shiva, the static aspect of Reality, and Shakti, the moving aspect are in themselves one. All is Real, both changeless and changeful. The Cosmos is the form of the Changeful and these forms are therefore real.

Sir John Woodroffe says:

“Man is that as to his essence the static power-Holder, or Shiva who is pure Consciousness; and, as Mind and Body, he is the manifestation of Shiva's Power or Shakti. He is thus Shiva-Shakti” [24].

Man is thus a replica of the universe. So, whatsoever is present in the 'Anda' macrocosm is present in the 'Pinda' microcosm-the man.

One of the Tantrās, Viśvasāra-Tantra says:

“What is here is elsewhere,
What is not here IS nowhere”.

Nād and Bindu are the dynamic aspects of Reality-Shiva. These manifest and evolve the universe.

Man, a replica of the Cosmos is a grand specimen of the evolutionary process. Shiva the Reality resides in man with its attributes of Nād and Bindu.

Mystics actualize both Nād and Bindu as they try to ascend to the source or try to reach the Shiva-state. At the final stage, Nād and Bindu get absorbed in the Paramashiva as the mystic enters Bodiless Consciousness.



Nād and Bindu

Nād – Primordial Sound

Bindu – Samvit Prakāsh

Shiva is a limitless and self-evident consciousness which is even blissful and playful by its own nature. 'Spanda' or vibration in the Pure Ocean of Consciousness manifests as Nād and Bindu.

Nād or the Primordial Sound is the power of movement in the energy field of consciousness. That indestructible, transcendental vibrating sound is known as Shabda-Brahma or the Sound Supreme in the Yogasikhopanishad.

Bindu is the great Effulgence or Primordial Energy emerging out of 'Sphoorti' or Intuitive self-awareness. It is the seed of creation—the expanding 'Brahmānd'—which literally means the Egg of Brahman or the Cosmic Egg.

NĀD

Nād IS the Cosmic Sound 'Aum' or 'OM'. It comprises and encompasses the whole universe. This is ShabdaBrahman. It is a non-stop-ceaseless-sound and will go on till creation comes to an end. It is 'Anāhata Dhuni' heard by mystics and Yogis. Madam H.P. Blavatsky says that it is the 'Voice of Silence'. She refers to the seven stages through which a mystic passes with the consequent seven phases of Nad [25]. These are:

1. Nightingale
2. Cymbal
3. Shell
4. Vīna
5. Flute
6. Trumpet blast
7. Thunder

In the final stage of involution, Nād melts into silence in the supreme ocean of Consciousness.

The Cosmic sound Nād, as it appears from the ocean of Pure Consciousness, passes through four stages till it assumes the form of articulate diversified speech. These are:

1. Parā-Nih-Shabdat, Consciousness in its Supreme form, is Soundless.
2. Pashyanti, The seeing one in its undifferentiated movement
(Sāmānya Spanda)
3. Madhyama, The middle one in its differentiated movement
(Vishesh Spanda)
4. Vaikhari - The Articulated utterance
(Spashtatara Spanda)

Some mystics reverse the above process and thereby try to contact the sun of Pure Consciousness.

BINDU

Bindu is the Effulgent Primordial Energy. It is the boundless plenum in which the universe is born. It is the one point of Consciousness which becomes the Nām-Rupa-Jagat. It is minuter than an atom, of inconceivable form, brighter than thousands of Suns put together.

“Ek Noor te Sub Jag Upja”

- *Nanak Dev*

The Cosmos has come out of the great effulgence. ‘Noor’ or the effulgence is life

generating, benign, charming, Cosmic soothing light.

A mystic Visualizes Bindu in its various forms by stages. The Cosmic light appears in different colours and shapes and finally it appears in its pristine glory. The mystic becomes one with the light and becomes light.

Sathya Sai Baba says:

“First the light is outside,
Then the light is inside, and finally
You and the light are one” [26].

He also says:

“First I am in the Light,
Then Light is in me.
Finally Light and I are one”.



Description is not Reality

The above description of Shiva, Shakti as built by words and concepts perhaps conveys not much by way of real awareness of the Absolute Reality. Reality and its experience are beyond description. Words and concepts regarding reality can carry a man forward just a little. Beyond this only actual doing of a practice is required. The deep thinkers of the Indian civilization discovered that mere intellectual descriptions must give way to the practice of Tantra. Tantra is a mode of 'Sādhanā' which is something more than worship, upāsana and prayer. Mantra is a formula, a theory or the knowledge, while Tantra is the technique for the actual completion of thought based on symbols into a large arena of awareness. This will then constitute a mystical experience. The essence of this experience is to pass beyond the world of intellectual distinctions and opposites to reach the world of 'Achintya' the unthinkable, where "Reality appears as undivided and undifferentiated suchness".

Lalleshwari, a well-known Kashmiri saint, in one of her 'Vākhs'—quatrains—gives her evidence and testimony to this system of practice. Lalleshwari is also called by the name of LallaDed—Lalla, the mother—in Kashmir.

“Tantra gale ta mantra motse,
 Mantra gale ta motse tset,
 Tset yeke gale kenh ta nā kune,
 Gov Bhur Bhuvaha Swaha veserzit keth”.

“When tantra vanishes, mantra remains,
 When mantra vanishes tset remains,
 When tset dissolves, nothing remains,
 Then Bhur, Bhuvaha Swaha
 Are given a farewell”.

Tset is the last remnant of awareness just before a Sādhak glides into Samādhi.

A short note on Tantrās is appended at the end Appendix A.

The inability of languages to describe Absolute Reality is, of course, in need of a review.

LANGUAGE IS LIMITED

Language is the vehicle for communicating ideas, information, arguments, etc. Language is the

product of sense perceptions and intellect. So necessarily language cannot go beyond intellectual thinking and conceptual knowledge. The ultimate reality is, however, beyond the scope of reasoning or of demonstrable knowledge. It can never properly be described by words because it is not within the domain of senses. Kena Upanishad says about it:

“There the eye goes not,
 Speech goes not, nor the mind.
 We know not, we understand not
 How one would teach it”.

- *Kena Upanishad: 3*

Knowledge of absolute Reality is really an entirely non-intellectual experience. This experience arises in a non-ordinary state of Consciousness which is possible only when mind is quietened in a meditative state. When the mind is silenced, there arises an extraordinary awareness. This is a mystical state. In this condition a direct experience of Reality or Shiva Shakti is gained. An experience like this cannot be put in words and transferred to others. Can anyone describe and transfer even the experience of happiness, or for that matter can anyone describe the sweetness of sugar? A description thereof can only be in symbols.

In the direct description of Reality, Saints, Yogis, enlightened persons, mystics and others are confronted with the limitations of language. Lord Buddha maintained silence about the ultimate reality. A Buddhist philosopher D. T. Suzuki remarks like this:

“The contradiction so puzzling to the ordinary way of thinking comes from the fact that we have to use language to communicate our inner experience which in its very nature transcends linguistics”.

Werner Heisenberg, a reputed German scientist, gives expression to the same sort of difficulty in putting in words the experiences of atomic research. He says:

“The problems of language here are really serious. We wish to speak in some way about the structure of atoms ... But we cannot speak about atoms in ordinary language”.

Ashvaghosha says:

“All things in their fundamental nature are not nameable or explicable. They cannot be

adequately expressed in any form of language" [27].

THE WAY OUT

That Reality is beyond language was realized much early by the Eastern mystics. So the mystics and philosophers of the east have gone beyond logic and reasoning in order to convey subtle truths. On the other hand, logic and reasoning are the main tools of the Western philosophies. And according to Bertrand Russell the same tools are used in the development of the Western religious philosophy.

Several different ways have, however, been developed specially in the East to deal with this problem. The Eastern viewpoint is that the entire cosmos is active and dynamic and ever in motion. It is material but in real terms it is spiritual.

In consonance with this view, mystics and Hinduism, in particular, have developed different ways to convey their findings. The subtle truths are put in the form of myths, symbols, similes and allegories. Mythical language is not subject to logic and so it uses paradoxical situations and suggestions. The mystic experience is conveyed rather in a free and unrestricted manner by means of poetic images and imaginative situations.

According to Ananda Coomaraswamy, "Myth embodies the nearest approach to absolute truth that can be stated in words" [28].

Krishnaprem from his own practical experience has this to say:

"The more one goes on in this path the more one feels the limitations not only of speech but of thought. The mind is too heavy, too coarse. It will not respond, or responds but imperfectly, to the subtle vibrations that as it were come to it from above. The highest truth must needs be presented in symbols. Fichte, the German philosopher, said that if he had to live his life over again the first thing he would do would be to invent a new set of symbols but, alas, it is not so easy. Symbols are born, not made. They descend from above and cannot be artificially manufactured From below one can compile only allegories, real symbols are given from above. But when given, one can learn far more from them than from words" [29].

Zimmer (1890-1943) a great German thinker, connoisseur of art and also a savant of Indological studies says, "Most Indian artistic forms are but

visual aids, imbued with symbolic implications for the attainment of spiritual experience. The form, use and purpose of the sacred images, both figurative and non-figurative, are attuned to the worshipper's everyday life" [30].

Zimmer also made an in-depth study of the proportions and the language of signs, in the Canons of Indian art, and about the exalted place of the sacred images, both visual and textual. He says that it is necessary "to learn and appreciate the relationship between visualization, expression and comprehension of symbols and images" [31].

The Chinese and Japanese mystics have, on the other hand, tried to use factual language to convey the uncommon truths. Taoists used paradoxes in order to avoid the limitations inherent in verbal communication. In Zen Buddhism paradoxes assumed the shape of riddles commonly known as Koans. Koans are non-sensical statements which the Zen student has to ponder and meditate upon for much time in order to experience the non-verbal nature of reality. Some of the Koans are like this:

You can make the sound of two hands clapping. Now what is the sound of one hand?

What was your original face—the one you had before your parents gave birth to you?

In Particle physics there are many koans. One of these is:

Picture a mass-less particle.

This is a paradox and/or a puzzle from research in 'external reality' as against Zen Buddhism koans from internal reality. Both demand passing beyond our conceptual knowledge and reasoning.

In an attempt to describe the very essential nature of things, language is of limited use. The description nearly always assumes the shape of a symbol, a myth or a paradox. Mystics in the East recognized this thousands of years back, and it is now becoming a problem in science. In modern experimental particle physics delicate and refined instruments explore the deep sub-atomic world. This is very far removed from the common macroscopic environment and experience. Here the knowledge is not gained through ordinary sense experience. So it is becoming more and more difficult for research scholars to put their findings in ordinary language which is born of and controlled by sense perceptions.

In 'Bharat Dharma', the word coined by Sir John Woodroffe for Hinduism, abstract truths are interwoven in myths, historical and imaginary stories and presented as such, mostly in Purānās and other sacred books. Symbols and poetic pictures are freely used. Divinity is given a pictorial representation. Pictures are adorned variously to depict the attributes—'Vibhūtis'—of the Divinity. In Vedas and Upanishads, allegories and paradoxes are employed to depict subtle truths. These, of course, become clear on deep thinking and then intuition gives a direct experience.



A Symbolic Representation of the Reality

The symbol very much prevalent for Shiva—The Ultimate Reality—is a stone ellipsoid. This is known as Shiva Lingam. Shiva the Creator is the pure light of intelligence, 'Chinmātra'. Shiva is Para Samvit—the Supreme Consciousness. In the first Vibratory movement towards a universal manifestation Shiva is Life-Prana. An investigation into the symbol, its shape, meaning and the main idea conveyed by the Lingam is attempted here.

LINGAM

The literal meaning of the word linga is symbol. Shiva Linga is a visible sign of something invisible: The Creator. It is the materialisation of the subtle 'Idea' of the creator, creation and the cosmos.

SHAPE OF THE SYMBOL

The linga is of an elliptical shape. It is generally made of black stone picked up from mountain streams. The ellipsoid so chosen remains quite stable in weight, volume and shape. In this aspect it is the material symbol of *unchanging* Shiva.

It is very difficult, in fact impossible, to convey the idea of the creator, who is formless and unchanging, but who at the same time is everything and contains and maintains everything, and who is Being and Becoming, both. The idea of such a complexity is rather very difficult to be grasped easily. The Linga represents and crystallises this very idea. It denotes something which has neither beginning nor an end. The curved surface of the ellipsoid if touched and followed will lead a person nowhere in particular. All the points on the ellipsoid can become starting points for the survey of the whole, and so no one spot on it has any special value. In a shapeless infinity anyone place or centre can be the starting point for a voyage of such discovery but because of

its curvature the discoverer will find himself ultimately at the starting place.

The fashioning of the Linga in the form of an ellipsoid is, however, a mute question. Why give this shape to the shapeless? Let us have a look at nature. Perhaps a form will get suggested. The ellipse may be the ultimate shape of the manifested Brahmānd. It is the shape given to objects under the force of running water. Rain drops falling under the force of gravity assume an elliptical shape. A drop of oil in the centre of whirling water also assumes this very shape.

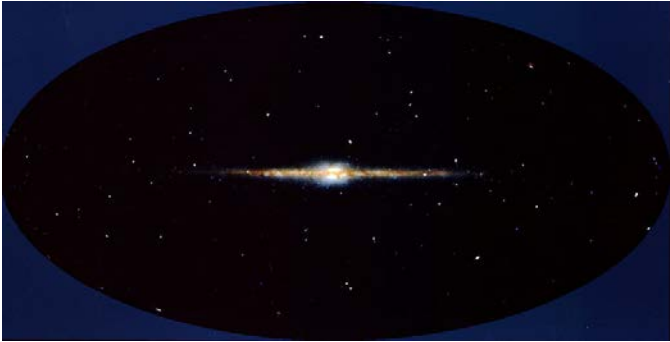
It seems that the elliptical form or the ellipsoid plays a fundamental part in the structure and working of the universe. The basic particle of matter is the atom. This is the primary building block with which everything is built. Electrons revolving round its central mass, proton and neutron, describe ellipses of various shapes. The atom as a whole is a very real minute ellipsoid. We will, however, have to look beyond an atom for a possible answer. Something bigger and beyond should suggest the elliptical shape of the linga. Why have Rishis, Savants and profound thinkers represented Shiva in the form of a linga—an ellipsoid?

Our earth which is moving on its orbit round the sun describes nearly an ellipse. The earth itself is a big ellipsoid. All the planets in the solar system also describe ellipses round the sun. They have their points of perigee and apogee. Moons around planets and comets round the sun and other heavenly bodies describe ellipses of varying forms. The solar system as a whole is elliptical in shape. Perhaps even this may not suffice to impress. So let us move out of our solar system. Our solar system is a minute part of a very big group of stars forming a galaxy. The shape of this 'Milky Way' galaxy is nearly an ellipse. There are infinite numbers of galaxies stretching in infinite space. The shapes of well-formed galaxies as observed from earth are also nearly ellipses. All the galaxies look like big drops suspended in space.



The Andromeda galaxy, one of the nearest galaxies to our earth⁴. It is over two million light years away and is twice as big as our galaxy.

⁴(Public domain NASA picture from:
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Andromeda_galaxy.jpg)



Our galaxy - Milky Way - seen edge-on⁵

The solar system is towards one end of the galaxy.



⁵(Public domain NASA picture from:
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:COBE's_View_of_the_Milky_Way_-_GPN-2002-000111.jpg)

Space: Aukāsh or Ākāsh

Space has no limit, no frontier and no boundary. Human imagination fails to get full conception of space. Near and beyond, location and direction all lose their meaning in space. And who can delimit space and arrive at the conception of its shape? The shape of the great universe, the great 'Brahmānd' is beyond human understanding but space is the seat of creation of galaxies, solar systems, planets, etc. Space is the source of life and life eventually merges into it.



Cometh Albert Einstein

The greatest scientist of the present age, Albert Einstein, says that the space is curved. He arrived at this strange and amazing conclusion through his deep mathematical studies coupled with his ingenious, thought experiments. The many scientific truths in his special and general theories of Relativity have been substantiated by scientists and the process is on. This can lead anyone to imagine and merely imagine, however faintly, that the space comprising our part of the universe—the Milky Way Galaxy—the Brahmānd, that is the egg of Creation, is an ellipsoid. The space is a great void, very much empty. Emptiness surrounds and extends in between and beyond the heavenly bodies. The space-void is filled with darkness.

The Absolute Reality: Shiva is a harmonised and a balanced Suchness. It is beyond pairs of opposites and it has no polarity. So Shiva is given a symbol which is mathematical in conception and shape. It is represented by a well-balanced figure, the sphere.

If and when the centre or the focal point of the sphere divides and falls apart two ellipsoids are formed. A universe, a Brahmānd, or an Egg of Creation comes into existence, a pair of primary opposites is thus formed from the original harmonious one and a principle of polarity is introduced. The principle of polarity works throughout creation. It is seen as a condition of disequilibrium in Nature in pairs of opposites such as light and darkness; pleasure and pain; high and low; up and down; positive and negative; hot and cold and so on. It is seen in the elliptical shape of the smallest particle, atom as also in the big well developed galaxies.



An Eternal Curiosity

Ever since man has had the ability to reason, he has speculated upon the universe about him. The nature of the earth and stars and their origin have been described thousands of times in different tongues, in pre-history and history. How creation took place, when did it occur and how did we reach our present state of being? These, of course, are questions for the mature intellect. The genesis of our part of the Milky Way Galaxy from the birth of the stars to the evolution of the human mind is, indeed, a fascinating study.

THE SCIENTIFIC VIEW

According to scientific knowledge the beginning of our portion of the universe in which the sun and its orbiting planets are an almost infinitesimal part occurred about twenty billion years ago and the earth started to form a hard crust some three billion years ago. Scientists agree that in the beginning the universe was a void, without form and darkness was upon the face of the deep. They also agree that something moved upon and within to produce heat and then light. This in course of time gave birth to stars, suns, planets, etc.

RIG-VEDA SAYS

“Darkness first there was
 In darkness concealed.
 All this indistinct and diffused;
 A great void it then was.
 By the great power
 Of ‘Tapas’, was
 The One – the universe – produced.

“Death was then not,
 Nor immortal was there aught,
 To mark off, was there no sign,
 The night from day. The one,
 The breathless breathed,
 By His own Nature,
 Apart from Him was there

Nothing whatsoever.

“All this we see
 Created duly
 By God was. And He is it
 Who preserves it,
 Having disintegrated it
 At dissolution time, makes it
 Disappear. And goes He on
 Repeating this
 Over and over again.

“Exists the creation entire
 In Him. Everywhere
 Pervades like space He.
 O, friend “Jiva”, Man,
 Who knows Him, He
 To the bliss highest attains.
 But, he who knows Him not:
 The Object of highest desire
 Of men all, Consciousness All,
 Bliss, and Eternal All,
 Knows Not,
 Verily, Obtains not,
 The Highest Beatitude”

- *Rig-Veda: 10-129*



Hindus give a Figure to Space— Shoonya

The universe comes into being from empty space, a formless void, from Shoonya that is nothingness. Deep studies and much insight enabled the Hindus to represent space in the form of '0', nothingness—zero, meaning thereby Shoonya. In fact giving a form, a figure to Shoonya, is considered by scholars as a great feat of ingenuity. The numeration and notation which is again a gift from India followed the zero notation.



Creation Comes out of Shoonya

Shoonya the great void is the starting place of creation. Accordingly the most subtle idea of the creation from Shoonya by the Lord of creation is crystallised in the Shiva Linga. This is a Brahmānd – an ellipsoid – emerging out of space.

Language often fails to make clear a highly subtle thought. Very often symbols, graphs, illustrations, models, sculptures, etc. explain much without using words. A scene, a painting, a statue appeals to the heart, it arouses our emotions. It very often arouses a sensation of awe and wonder in us. And awe and wonder makes a man understand in a subtle way, though this cannot be described. The experience of wonder is a sort of a message that the underlying idea is being understood instinctively. The real meaning of the symbol – Linga – is understood intuitively. It is this which inspires the spirit of worship and self-surrender. So, this symbol tells us the full story of creation and its creator. It tells us that universe gets manifested from Zero – Shoonya – and the Lord God the

Blissful Shiva is the creator. Shiva is Chaitanya-Chit-, the Para Samvit, the Supreme Consciousness, the Supreme Lord. The Universe in the form of an ellipsoid emerging from curved space—zero—is of the form of Prān Shakti—Energy and Matter or Mass. Mass is not something different from energy and energy possesses mass. In the words of Einstein, “Energy has mass and mass represents energy”.



12

An Overview of Matter, Energy and Consciousness

The modern science of atomic and subatomic particles lays down that the ultimate stuff of the universe is only pure energy. This is what Einstein theorized in 1905. And Energy is ever in motion, it is never at rest.

Atoms form molecules. The molecules build this, our world. The world, in reality, is dancing energy that is everywhere. It is continually assuming different forms. What we know as matter is constantly in flux, in a state of change. The minute particles of matter are constantly created, annihilated and created again. There is no distinction between 'something' which is there and 'nothing' which is not there. Empty and not empty lose their meaning.

We, in our ordinary thinking, conceive a world of fixed fixtures and land marks. On this basis we have developed our own picture of the earth and heaven. It is not easy for an ordinary rational man to change his preconceived ideas. There are, however, seekers of knowledge and reality who

through speculation, experimentation, through insight and intuition have found that the reality underlying matter, molecules and atoms is beyond all forms. This reality cannot be given any form. It is, therefore, said to be formless, empty or void.

Buddhists also call the ultimate Reality as Sunyata, that is emptiness or the Void. Taoists say that the Tao of Heaven is formless and empty.

Chāndogya Upanishad says:

“Brahman is life. Brahman is joy, Brahman is the-void, Joy, verily, that is the same as the void. The void, verily, that is the same as joy”.

- *Chāndogya Upanishad: 4-10-4*

There is a Sutra called the Heart Sutra in the ‘Prajñāpāramitā Sutrās’ of Mahayāna Buddhism. It is like this:

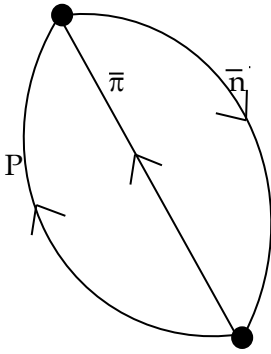
“Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Emptiness is not different from form; form is not different from emptiness. What is form that is emptiness, what is emptiness that is form”.

The fact is that the two categories of emptiness and form are not true. It is from emptiness that the form appears. The objects like people and trees seem to us to be real. It is simply because of our limited Vision and Awareness.

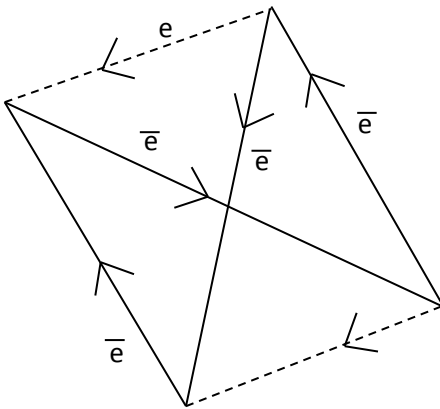
Modern physics has shifted our thinking regarding matter from the visible: atoms and sub-atomic particles, to the underlying entity, the field. The field is conceived by scientists to be a continuum in the Cosmos. It is a field of energy. It is this field from which particles of matter rise and into which they disappear. So, according to the field theories of modern physics, there is no distinction between material particles and the field. This field is a big void. The quantum field theory and Einstein's field theory of gravity show that the field always exists and that the particles cannot be separated from the space surrounding them. The space is a vacuum but it is not empty. Particles always rise from the vacuum and then also vanish into the vacuum. The vacuum is a living void in which processes of creation and destruction are going on endlessly.

A Chinese sage Chang Tsai says:

“When one knows that the Great Void is full of Chi, one realizes that there is no such thing as nothingness” [32].



Vacuum diagram
of three particle
interaction



Vacuum diagram of six
interacting particles

Line drawing: A specimen

Scientists' way of depicting dissolution and
creation of particles

“As the wise people of the East have written, form is emptiness and emptiness is form”.

- Gary Zukav

The empty or void does not mean what we generally understand by emptiness. Rig-Veda says:

“Creation comes out of the Void, the great pervading principle of the Universe”.

The void has an infinite creative potential. It gives rise to, sustains and reabsorbs an infinite variety of forms.

Chândogya Upanishad says:

“Tranquil, let one worship it as that from which he came forth, as that into which he will be dissolved, as that in which he breathes”.

- *Chândogya Upanishad: 3-14-11*

Rig-Veda says:

“The Void was filled with primordial stuff and the force of the Great Lord of Creation acted on it and put it in motion”.

- *Rig-Veda: 10-81-7*

The phenomenal World, that is, 'Samsār' is a World of continuous birth and death. These are the temporary materialisations of the Void as the things in this world have no exclusive existence.

Mystics disclose that in a moment of insight, and in a state of Samadhi, everything, all the separate parts of the Universe are perceived to be the manifestation of one whole Reality. The Reality is whole and unified. Modern physics is also arriving at this startling truth.

There is, in fact, a basic reality underlying the experience of all phenomena in the world and Cosmos. The cosmos is seen to consist of a web of inseparable relationships only. This ultimate indivisible reality is Brahman or Shiva. It is given the name of Dharmakāya or Tathāgata—Suchness—in Buddhism and Tao in Taoism.

The fundamental feature revealed by the atomic physics is the universal inter-connectedness of things and events. David Bohm and Basil J. Hiley confirm this fact most clearly:

“One is lead to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existing parts We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent 'Elementary Parts' of the world are the fundamental reality we say that inter-connectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality” [33].

From his own mystic experience Aurobindo, like an atomic physicist, gives expression to the same fact:

“The material object becomes something different from what we now see, not a separate object on the background or in the environment but an indivisible part or even in a subtle way an expression of the unity of all that we see” [34].

The statements of the two atomic physicists, Stapp and Heisenberg, in their turn look like mystic experiences:

“An elementary particle is not an independently existing analyzable entity. It

is, in essence, a set of relationships that reach outward to other things" [35].

"The world thus appears as a complicated tissue of events, in which connections of different kinds alternate or overlap or combine and thereby determine the texture of the whole" [36].

One of the Upanishads says that the Brahman is the underlying and unifying fact in the Cosmic web:

"He on whom the sky, the earth and the atmosphere are woven and the wind together with all life breathes, Him alone know as the one Soul".

and

"In Him are woven the sky and the earth and all the regions of the air and in Him rest the mind and all powers of life. Know him as the ONE and leave aside all other words. He is the bridge of immortality".

- *Mundaka Upanishad: 2-2-5*

David Bohm, Professor of Physics at Berbeck College, University of London says on the 'so-called conscious' play of Sub-Atomic particles:

“Parts are seen to be in immediate connection with the state of the whole system and, indeed, on that of broader systems in which they are contained, extending ultimately and in principle to the entire universe. Thus, one is led to a new notion of ‘unbroken wholeness’ which denies the classical idea of splitting of the world into separate and independently existing parts” [37].

Bohm further says, “The world view is so different from the one that we are using that its description is totally incompatible with what we want to say. It is so because the thinking in the west and with classical scientists is based on ancient Greek mode of thought. According to this mode of thought, only Being is. Therefore, non-being is not. Actually, non-being also is. Both Being and Non-Being are that - which is. Everything, even “emptiness” is that which is. There is nothing which is not that-which-is” [38].

This opinion of Bohm looks like a reiteration of the Advaita Vedanta of the great philosopher Shankrāchārya.

Perhaps the present day Physics is realising that there is only one Reality behind all the physical

phenomena and the sub-atomic particles of matter. And this cannot be realised with the classical technique and language of science.

RabindraNath Tagore sometime back gave the same sort of advice to scientists:

“For, the world is not atoms or molecules or radio-activity or other forces; the diamond is not carbon, and the light is not vibrations of ether. You can never come to the reality by contemplating it from the point of destruction”.

The world of modern Science is, however, becoming more and more interesting, more practical and therefore more spiritual, though it is still concerned with matter. We are on the threshold of this great world of science, and who knows the wonders the mind of man can discover.

It is possible that the new Physics would so advance as to blend the thought patterns and mental attitudes of east and west in a pleasant symphony.

That matter and energy are two different entities is, of course, a western concept. The Old Testament depicts a man as a handful of earth-matter into

which God breathed energy. The truth that matter is merely a frontal appearance of dancing waves of energy and that these energy particles have a sort of consciousness is, again, the product of western thought, through the medium of modern science.

Research in sub-atomic world shows a dynamic nature of matter. The sub-atomic particles exist as integral parts of an inseparable network of interactions. These interactions involve a ceaseless flow of energy resulting in the creation and destruction of particles without end. The particles vanish in the field – Void – and appear again in the form of different particles. The continual variations of particles with the necessary energy patterns give rise to stable particles, atoms. The atoms build our material world. The atoms are also dynamic structures. In an atom, electrons dance round the central particle, the protons and neutrons. This dance or the movement of electrons is so rapid and so uncertain that it is not possible for scientists to locate an electron and to ascertain its speed at one and the same time. This electron dance is a puzzle and a great scientist like Julius Robert Oppenheimer – the father of atom bomb says:

“If we ask, for instance, whether the position of the electron remains the same, we must say ‘no’, if we ask whether the

electron's position changes with time we must say 'no', if we ask whether the electron is at rest, we must say 'no', if we ask whether it is in motion we must say 'no'" [39].

The subatomic particles not only dance but these particles also sing a song. Sound is a wave motion with a certain frequency. Subatomic particles with different wave patterns also produce sounds of various frequencies. "According to the field theory, each particle does indeed perpetually sing its song, producing rhythmic patterns of energy (the virtual particles) in dense and subtle forms" [40].

A clear description of song and dance of atoms and its clusters is presented by Alexandra David-Neel in her 'Tibetan Journey'. Such a view of matter was given to her by a Lama who was a 'Master of Sound'. It is like this:

"All things are aggregations of atoms that dance and by their movements produce sounds. When the rhythm of the dance changes, the sound it produces also changes Each atom perpetually sings its song and the sound at every moment creates dense and subtle forms" [41].

The Lama seems to be an adept in the various forms of the Primordial sound or the unstruck Melody called Nād referred to earlier.

The cosmos can thus be seen as nothing but the dancing patterns of energy which show consciousness. The rhythm and dance is manifested in turn of days and nights, in the turn of seasons as also in the birth and death of living creatures. Modern physics has shown that it is the very basis of inorganic matter also. According to quantum field theory all interactions between the components of matter take place by means of emission and absorption of virtual particles. The subatomic particles also self-interact by emitting and absorbing virtual particles. So, the dance of destruction and creation is at the basis of matter.

The sub-atomic particles are in reality dancing and pulsating packets of energy involved in the rhythmical dance of destruction and creation.

This energy dance is the dance of Shiva. This is represented by Natrāj. Photograph of a bronze sculpture of Natrāj is shown here. In the words of Coomaraswamy, Shiva's dance is "The clearest image of God which any art or religion can boast of" [42].

The bronze sculpture representing Shiva's Cosmic dance is a figure of elegance, poise and balance. It graphically expresses the rhythmic unity of life. Heinrich Zimmer describes this in eloquent language:

“His gestures wild and full of grace, precipitate the Cosmic illusion, his flying arms and legs and the swaying of his torso produce- indeed, they are the continuous creation-destruction of the universe, death exactly balancing birth, annihilation the end of every Coming forth” [43].



Natrāj⁶

⁶(Public-domain Los Angeles County Museum of Art
www.lacma.org picture from:

The Great Shiva is, however, beyond existence and non-existence. Isha Upanishad says:

“It moves. It moves not. It is far, and it is near. It is within all this. And it is outside of all this”.

- *Isha Upanishad: 5*

Ashvaghosha says:

“Suchness is neither that which is existence, nor that which is non-existence, nor that which is at once existence and non-existence” [44].

From the preceding scientific survey of matter-energy equivalence, it is clear that it is energy that is at the basis of the universal manifestation. It is also now becoming more and more evident in the sub-atomic world that these so called particles or dances of energy have a will of their own, that is, they show some sort of consciousness. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, matter in the last analysis is: “A form of massed consciousness”.

It seems science is on the threshold of a momentous disclosure that the field of energy, from which energy particles appear and disappear, is in reality a continuum of consciousness. The field is activated by the consciousness which is the bedrock, the mother of creation. This is an active aspect of 'Para Samvit': The Supreme Consciousness. The Brahmānd (egg of creation)—our universe—represented in a miniature form by the symbol 'Lingam' is nothing but the play of consciousness.

The Lord of all this is Shiva: Supreme Consciousness, the Pure Light of Intelligence "Chinmātra". Linga is also a window from which we may look in wonder into the Beauty and Truth of the universe, and the Truth and Beauty in our souls. Blake saw this when he wrote:

"To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand.
And Eternity in an hour".



The Field

Modern Physics says that atoms and sub-atomic particles are in reality packets of energy. The sub-atomic particles are very active. They constantly disappear and then reappear and in this way give rise to new particles and atoms. Atoms form molecules which build this world and which we recognise as matter in its various forms

The attention of scientists is drawn to some basic entity or a substratum into which the subatomic particles disappear and reappear. This substratum is known as Field. This Field is a field of force or energy. Scientists say that the Field is a continuum in the Cosmos.

Throughout nature we, however, come across only four known separate forces. These are:

1. Electromagnetic
2. Gravitational
3. Weak Nuclear and
4. Strong Nuclear

Einstein visualized a fifth- a singular, all embracing field of energy that could accommodate all the

known forces in a 'unified field theory'. Scientists in various countries are trying to discover this force.

Mark Balfour, the Director of Meta Vision Research Ltd., reports from Australia that two Sydney Scientist researchers, Dr. Bevan Reid and Dr. Sergei Barsamian may now have discovered it. In his handout, 'The 5th Force, Romance or Reality?', Mark Balfour says:

"From the time immemorial Hindu seers have taught of a subtle all-pervading universal energy—a synthesis of all the forces in nature. Its Sanskrit name is Shakti—the 'Energy of the Gods'—personified as female and consort of Shiva, who cosmically represents universal consciousness. The Yogis refer to it in the physical body as Kundalini Shakti or the Serpent power. We ingest it via the breathing process of Prāna, the 'Breath of life'.

"Shakti is seen then as the active 'expression' of consciousness. As the Universal mother, she acts as the one living force of creation—giving birth and form to the visible phenomenal world—becoming the essential of life itself—the 'life Force'.

Electromagnetism is one of her aspects. Scientists refer to her as Psychic Energy. All existing phenomena are infused with this life force and express consciousness in different ways and varying degrees.

“In modern times, outstanding individuals in various fields of scientific research have advocated the reality of such a force (Reich-Tesla-Pavlitia) and today's thrust of Quantum physics is aimed in the direction of discovering it.

The Theory of Drs. Reid and Barsamian

“ Both the scientists are long time researchers in the characteristics of energy fields. During August last year, media outlets in Australia proclaimed the discovery by Reid and Barsamian of a “Low Level” energy field which they believe pervades the entire universe, and is responsible for growth itself. The two Doctors believe the field can transmit patterns from one natural source to another, changing its own structure in the process.

“Could this be the universal field Einstein sought-the Shakti of the Hindus? The concept has far reaching and profound

implications especially in respect of Psi phenomena.

“Living matter (as well as non-living matter) is seen to be the expression of a Universal Field or Force. Hoyle, Jeans, Raynor Johnson and other scientists have stated their belief also that the creation and maintenance of the universe rests upon a 'Universal Consciousness' – a Creative Intelligence”.

The Field which is a continuum in the Cosmos is an active aspect of 'Para Samvit' or the Supreme Consciousness: Shiva. The active realization of this aspect of Shiva, Super Consciousness, Cosmic Consciousness, etc., seems to be the prime function of Man.

It is said that such a realization is possible through the science of Yoga. Lord Krishna says:

“The Yogi is greater than the body-disciplining ascetic, greater ever than the follower of the path of Jnāna, or of the path of Karma, be thou, O disciple Arjuna, a Yogi”.

- *Bhagvad Gita: VI-46*



Creation is Movement: Life, the Play of Shakti

The Shiva Linga is the symbol of Shiva in the act of creation. In his dynamic aspect as Shakti; Shiva is ever creating variegated forms, shapes, colours, etc. This is a never ending process. What we name as construction and destruction is, in fact, creation and then re-creation. Creation is, infact, a never ending Movement. Movement is life and the same is consciousness.

Shakti beyond creation is Shiva and Shiva in the universe is Shakti: Shiva and Shakti are the two faces of the same ultimate reality. Creation is really the dance of All Conscious Energy. The ellipsoid of the universe, along with the living creatures with their joys and sorrows, is in reality Divine Shakti in Movement. It is the play—'Leela' of the Divine Shakti—the Cosmic Beloved, the Universal Mother, Kāli.



Man: Life Consciousness

In the gross material form the movement – life – is, so to say, hidden. It is there, but not ordinarily visible. The movement begins to express itself in vegetable, animal and then in human form. Man is the flower of creation. The movement shines forth rather clearly in the form of consciousness-cum-awareness in the human entity.

The separate divided individual awarenesses in human beings belong to and in reality are the same in quality as the Divine Shiva Shakti Consciousness-Awareness-continuum. In man, the consciousness awareness continuum is in play in a limited physical tabernacle and is functioning through a circumscribed physico-mental apparatus: the physical body and hence, ordinarily, this does not show its grandeur and infinite magnitude. The source is the same, and the same Life Element-Consciousness-Awareness is at play in man.

Man, over and above, being a physical entity much more akin to the animal world, is basically a play

field of consciousness-cum-awareness. Man is in essence only consciousness-awareness. The sacred function of man is to cross the barrier and to merge himself in the pure infinite stream of consciousness. This is the only function of man. This, of course, is a long process but it is a natural process. The consciousness awareness is in the process of completing the full circle back to the source from which it originated. It has run its course through creation and in Man is in a position to merge itself in the source. It is, as pointed above, a long process and it may take time.



Time is Relative

Time, that is Kāl, is a relative concept. There is no single time which flows equally for all. There is no absolute time. One and only one absolute flow of time throughout our physical universe does not exist because time is a psychological gap of an individual between what is and what should be. 'Now', 'sooner', and 'later' are relative terms. They all depend upon the state of motion of the individual. Man has the capacity to get merged with the source, Here and Now, or otherwise may take many light years to get united.



True Destiny of Man

Existence because of its limitations of consciousness-awareness is misery. Man always longs to possess unlimited power and grandeur. This is the innate wish of man. This wish is theoretically possible of being realized, what is needed is that the awareness-consciousness continuum in a man awakens in the Shiva Shakti-Samvit-Consciousness. In actual practice it is a little tough and a time consuming process. But, at the same time it is within the scope of man to accomplish this, as it is a natural and an evolution ordained process. It is a sort of transformation, a sort of switch over, a sort of gliding into a lagoon from a rivulet.

The Shivalinga is an idea, a truth made concrete. It is the idea of immanence of Shiva, the idea of the divine origin of man and the grand idea of man being in a position to attain to the Shiva State. Let us in all humility and sincerity worship the idea and thereby make an all-out effort to realize the idea.

Some people in the first instance worship the symbol. The symbol is of course a material object. Matter is a veiled manifestation of chit Shakti of Shiva and matter is in essence only dancing waves, dance of Shiva & Shakti. An atom of any matter is not dead, insensate or inert. In it or involved in it is the Effulgent Person. In the process of subtle vision one might hear and see the actual dance of the conscious energy waves in an atom. People worship Shiva in the form of Lingam with leaf, flower, fruit, water, etc. They prostrate themselves in front of the Shiva Linga. Srikrishna says:

“He who offereth to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept from the striving self, offered as it is with devotion”.

- *Bhagwad Gita: IX-26*

Sathya Sai Baba says, “The Lingam that emerges from the Universal Absolute, Brahman, is the cosmos-first conceived as a wish, later formed as an idea and finally adopted as a will. The Cosmos is the will of Shiva Concretized. You too are, therefore, willed by Shiva and formed by Shiva from Himself” [45].

The people in this way really worship the All Pervading Immanent Shiva. It is, however, necessary to realize the idea and get united with the Para Samvit—the Supreme Shiva Consciousness. It is extremely necessary and so to say imperative for the well-being of human beings to shape their living in accordance with the Shiva Idea—principle—which is so well involved in the Shiva Linga.



Life possible through Self-Surrender

Creation is made possible through the continual self-surrender of Parama Shiva to the Universe. Shiva the Infinite appears as finite in matter in the universe and the universe becomes possible. Shiva is engaged in this Supreme 'Yagnya' sacrifice. This is the Primary sacrifice. This sets the pace for what follows. The creation born out of an act of sacrifice is sustained by sacrifice. This is the primary sacrifice. The law of sacrifice is the Law of Life. So, the spiritual universe of man is also ever claiming self-renunciation from the individual unit, the Man. Shrimad Bhagavad Gita says:

“The righteous, who eat the remains of the sacrifice, are freed from all sins; but the impious, who dress (cook) food (only) for their own sake, they verily eat sin”.

- *Bhagwad Gita: III-13*

The righteous man recognizes that his life is a part of the divine action in Nature and not a thing separate, to be held and pursued for its own sake.

He regards his enjoyment and the satisfaction of his desires as the fruit of sacrifice and the gift of the Lord of Life.



How a Man is to Live

All along Man has, however, to live his life. He has to satisfy his basic needs and to enjoy. Happiness is the birth right of man. How to live in this world and how to secure real happiness is also involved in the grand Idea of Shivalinga? How to live and enjoy is made more clear in Isha Upanishad. A verse from Isha Upanishad says:

“Ishāvāsyam-idamsarvam
Yat-kinchajagadhyāmjagat,
Tenatyaktenabhunjithā
Māgridhahkasyasviddhanam”.

The Lord permeates the whole animate and inanimate existence. Enjoy this by renouncing; do not covet others' riches.

The great Shiva, who permeates all that moves and lives, is the God of the Universe, whose mind we share, in all our true knowledge, love, and service, and whom to reveal in ourselves through the renunciation of the self is the highest end of life.

Man has to enjoy through sacrifice—*“Tēnatyaktēnabhunjithā”* and man has not to covet—*“māgridha”*—what belongs to others. Greed diverts our mind from the truth that we represent, the 'ParamaPurushah', the Supreme Person. But very soon greed overtakes a man. Our greed diverts our consciousness to materials away from that supreme value of truth which is the quality of the Universal Being. “A gulf, a void, is thus formed in our inner being and we try to fill this with a continuous stream of wealth. Wealth has the power to fill but not the power to Unite and recreate”.

It looks like moral values are falling and the high Dhārmic (religious) principles are being trampled upon. The general rule of living seems to be: ‘grow rich at once through means, fair or foul’.

In the present times, the age old cultural and ethical values are not handed over to the younger generation, either in the home or in the educational institutions. In the present days, home is not in a position to impart to children enough religious practice and teaching. In fact, it is the duty of the state to introduce ethical teaching in the Schools and Colleges. But mere dry moral teaching is not going to bear fruit. Morality is caught and not taught. So, in the present situation of dwindling moral values, it is very necessary to impart

religious (ethical) education. The ethical teaching if based and imparted through invaluable religious principles and religious lore will leave a lasting impression on young minds. Moral teaching with religious basis has the capacity to develop a virtuous man. The age old motto of 'simple living and high thinking' is required to be re-established. It is only then that man will be able to discharge his duty towards himself and towards his society.

It is, perhaps, not possible to introduce religious teaching in our schools. Basically all the great religions teach the same eternal principles. They, however, differ in their day to day external observances and ceremonies.



Education for Human Values (EHV)

Education for Values was introduced by Sri Sathya Sai Bāl Vikās Education Trust in Andhra Pradesh some years back. It has, now, developed into a great educational movement even outside India.

HUMAN VALUES

There are five universal, highly cherished human values with human beings. These are: Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love, and Non Violence. It is these which promote the basic human interests of healthy and joyful life. These help in the moral development as also in the spiritual fulfillment of man. These values develop and flourish in a suitable social environment.

Values are, however, abstract principles. Learning and teaching of values would have no practical use until they are ingrained as habits through purposeful activities. Values, in fact, require to be internalized to become basic concepts. Value oriented concepts have the capacity to give rise to wholesome attitudes and these then give direction

to human behavior. In this way, a man with a sound character living and working in a social environment will get formed.

Keeping these objectives in view, EHV has developed a definite teaching technique. It utilises the various life activities of children through a purposeful and interesting social living.

In spite of tremendous scientific and technological achievements man is not happy today. There seems to be a dichotomy between the inner and outer life of a man. This disharmony results in the loss of sound moral character. In addition to this over emphasis on mere formal education in absence of direct religious and ethical teaching has not resulted in producing men with inner peace of mind and outer moral living.

EHV is perhaps the only alternative just now available for building men with sound body and sound mind.



Man's Supreme Duty

If only man would live and enjoy not by grabbing, snatching, and coveting what belongs to another man, what a beautiful spiritually ordained true living could we achieve and establish. It would then be a world in which all the basic needs of man would be satisfied. All the goods in the world would get distributed fairly. A real brotherhood of man would then be achieved. Shivalinga is a concrete symbol, an idea and a message for achieving an Egalitarian society. This, indeed, will then constitute the true worship of Lord Shiva.

Benedicto de Spinoza, a German philosopher of eminence, has given expression to the same vision. He says that all reality is one substance, God, of which thought and extension—or mind and physical reality—are two aspects or attributes. In reality the spiritual origin of life forms the solid basis of egalitarianism. Matter and material transformations are nothing but the play of waves of conscious energy. In the world, we ordinarily come across only discrete events or part-wise

energy wave phenomena but the parts are interconnected and these communicate with each other and form one single Act of the Divine Shakti. So, life is divine and all men are basically equal. All men deserve to be given equal opportunity to evolve and develop to their full stature so that the ideal of 'from each according to his capacity and to each according to his need is achieved'.

So, let us then resolve to relieve the suffering, to wipe the tears of orphans and the destitute and not to snatch bread from the mouths of others. If we only stand and resolve to recast and purify the society so that all: men, women, young, old, rich and poor can live and breathe freely, we would then have understood the message, the real meaning of Shivalinga. Will this not then constitute a grand worship?



AppendixA

TANTRAS

Tantrās are a vast body of Indian literature. It also comprises Kashmir Shaivism. Kashmir Shaivism is a realistic philosophy with its Central principle of Ideal Monism with two aspects: one transcendental and the other immanent.

Dr. B. N. Pandit says, "Absolutely profound and extremely minute philosophic thoughts, far higher in degree than those contained in Upanishads, are found in Tantrās, and the Spiritual attainments of great philosophers like Shankrāchārya are mostly due to devoted practice in the Tāntric Yoga hinted at by them in works like the Saundaryalahri" [46].

Tantrās have suffered wide spread criticism both from Western and Eastern scholars as, "The Tantrās, due mainly to their esoteric character, made it impossible for scholars to obtain adequate information of their true content. The ban on their investigation was finally removed by the fruitful labours of the late Sir John Woodroffe, the first to define the outraged Tantrās, and now the field of Tāntrik literature can be intelligently investigated" [47].

Certain Yogic practices of lower order in Tantrās, do give some transitory powers to worldly minded Sādhaks. A few, so called, followers of Tantrās can as well be black magicians under a religious garb. But this does not justify anyone to deform, to criticise, the sublime philosophy of Tantras or its effective Yogic practices.

The body of Knowledge together with various Sādhanās known as Tantrās need not be downgraded or criticised for its not-right use by a few persons of debased nature.

Tantrās and its techniques are in need of unbiased research. The Tantra is sure to outshine and even give meaning to the many sided modern sub-atomic discoveries.

The one outstanding feature of Tantrās is that it advocates a path of sublimation of one's emotions and instincts rather than suppressing them.

“Starvation of senses has been disfavoured
 An imposed starvation has been said to
 create adverse reactions” [48].



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(Krishnaprem was a Krishna Bakhta of a very high order: born Ronald Nixon (1898-1965) at Cheltenham, England, studied English Literature at Cambridge, taught English at Lucknow University, took Sanyasa (Vairagya) in 1927-28, founded a Vaishnava Gaudiya Ashram at Mirtola, Almora, India.)

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About the Author



The author (1908-1999), Shri S. L. Vaishnavi was, by education and training, a man of science, of scientific temper, discipline and approach, analytic and objective. But, Shri Vaishnavi was of a spiritual bent of mind, too; not given to ritual, particularly religious ritual, he was more inclined and engrossed in mysticism and spiritual philosophy. His life-long spiritual thirst and quest led him into the company of Mystics, Yogis and Masters both in as well as outside Kashmir.

Professionally, Prof. Vaishnavi was a teacher and a trainer: his interests spanned Science and Teaching of Science, Psychology, Extension Teaching Methodologies, etc. He was an innovator: he designed and evolved several teaching techniques, aids and experiments; authored, over the years, several easy-to-read and to follow booklets on concepts and aspects of Physical Sciences to make these easy for students and others to understand; and co-authored Physics and Chemistry text-books for secondary / higher-secondary levels which were prescribed standard books for long.

A Physics Medalist (B.Sc. Hons.) from the then Punjab University, Lahore, he started his career as a teacher in Gujranwalla (now in Pakistan). After joining the J&K Deptt. of Education, he did B.T. (B.Ed.) from Banaras Hindu University and after some years was appointed as a Principal of a Higher Secondary School and Zonal Inspector of Schools.

After M.Ed.(1953) from the Central Institute of Education, Delhi University, he was appointed to the Gov't. Teachers Training College (renamed: College of Education). After a few years, he received a Colombo Plan Fellowship at University of Birmingham where he studied and researched for two years. On return, he was designated as Science Fellow by Govt of India and as Coordinator, Deptt. of Extension Programmes for Secondary Schools, New Delhi (NCERT).

His dedication towards education as a means of building Man, Society and Nation, and his secular temperament, both were amply borne out by his long association with the Vishwa Bharati Women's College, Srinagar which, as its Principal, he built up from grass roots to the degree level in both Arts and Sciences, and the College of Education, M.E.T. Sore.

Early in life, he was exposed to and associated with several well renowned sages and mystics in Kashmir, his place of birth. Later on he was exposed to The Theosophical Society, teachings and philosophy of Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Ramana Maharishi whilst at the same time pursuing his deep interest in Kashmiri

Shaivism and Mysticism in all its forms, including Sufi-mysticism as prevalent then in Kashmir. He was both a student of science and a spiritual and mystic seeker. In consonance with this, he constantly endeavoured to relate the two, to find roots of one in the other, to find conjoints in concepts and co-relates in observation, theory and experience.

Shri Vaishnavi was a serious and consistent practitioner of mystical meditational processes and practices all his life and is believed to have achieved a high state of realisation but he was never one to advertise or expose this to public view. In that respect, he and his close lifelong friend, philosopher and guide, fellow meditator / seeker, Prabhuji (Shri Amar Nath Wali), retained their veils of ordinary and mundane activities including undergoing life's travails and tribulations. Except, Prabhuji, indulged in mystical poetry, and Shri Vaishnavi authored several books, pamphlets, tracts on mysticism, Kashmiri Shaivism, and other related topics, and attempted to intertwine these and our Vedantic heritage, Upanishads, with modern Science, particularly the latest developments in Astro- and Particle Physics.

The present book is one such endeavour of Shri S. L. Vaishnavi.

