

Discourses/Articles
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SHAKTI AND YOGA

Visitor: What is Shakti? How does it work?

Swamiji: What is Shakti? Which Shakti? First of all you tell me what you mean by Shakti?

Visitor: Well, Shakti like creature power; Shakti like the Divine Mother.

Swamiji: It works everywhere and in everything, and everything is its manifestation. It is cosmic energy. And everything is constituted of that. Do you know what the latest modern scientific discoveries say? They say that every material object - looking apparently material - is nothing but a formation of cosmic energy. Everything including, your own body, is made up of that one energy, Shakti - which means energy, power, force, etc. It is the stuff of everything, right from earth to heaven. There is nothing else except that. And the more you are able to participate in its working, the more strength you derive. Shakti is not merely physical; it is also psychological, and even spiritual. But you must know how to participate in its working. That means you have to transcend your ego and also, to some extent, your personality and your individuality. Because the cosmic substance is all-pervading, it is not affiliated to some particular individual. So to participate in the universal substance means to get over the limitations of personality - that is, to transcend it. What else do you want to know? What is your question?

Visitor: Is the Shakti connected with the feminine quality?

Swamiji: No, no! It is not connected with any quality, because it has no such distinction as masculine or feminine. It is a universal, impersonal force. It may split itself into various shapes, into not only into feminine and masculine but also into matter - the animate and the inanimate, etc. This is an issue of animate and inanimate. Even that is the creation of the ways of human perception. It has no such distinctions in itself, but it looks as if there is distinction when you look at it from your point of view. It is not male or female; it is impersonal. It is androgynous. Do you know what androgynous means?

Visitor: Yes!

Swamiji: It is that.

Visitor: It works also in the individuality.

Swamiji: It works also in the individuality; it works everywhere. In every atom of the world, it is working. It alone exists through all that appears as substances. But it looks to your empirical perception as if it is divided, whereas it is cosmically integrated.

Visitor: There are such things as positive and negative forces. Can the male and female be regarded as such?

Swamiji: This would be a very gross and crude form of expressing the two forces, positive and negative. These two forces of electricity, for instance, are not called feminine and masculine. That is a very peculiar human way of looking at things. They are two electric couplings - neutral forces. One becomes complete by combination with the other. They appear to be different on account of the manifestation of the space-time causal relationship. There are further distinctions, such as male-female, positive-negative, etc. But in what people nowadays call the fourth dimension, there is no such distinction of positivity and negativity. The split of positive and negative, male and female, arises after space and time have been divided. So what you say in this context is correct. But everything is contained in the fourth dimension, and the uniformity of the continuum in its essentiality has no division within itself. There's a difference between the head and the legs, for instance. You have a head and you have legs. Though you can't say either that one is the same as the other, you don't feel the difference. You feel it is one whole, one living mass or personality extending from head to foot. You don't see the distinction from one part to another part of the body. Likewise, the energy does not see the difference that the mind sees. It is one mass, in which everything is comprehended: Pure Awareness.

Visitor: Then why are we not aware of this?

Swamiji: We are not aware of this because we are cut off from the source. This is what is called the fall of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

Visitor: What is the meaning of yoga, please?

Swamiji: The meaning is the realization of the mistaken notion of the isolation of the individual from the cosmic, your feeling that you are cut off from the world. You feel that you are outside things, isn't it? There are so many things like the sun, the moon, the stars, etc., and you feel they aren't connected with you. But it is not true; you are connected with them. The solar rays and the cosmic rays constitute the substance of your body itself. But you feel that you aren't connected. This is your mistake. Your mind is not so made as to appreciate the connection of your existence with other things. This is the inability of the mind to think correctly. That is your problem. And the practice of yoga is nothing but a gradual process of self-identification with the different levels of reality, until gradually you identify yourself with that to which you originally belonged. It is a great art, a tremendous, life-long process - life-long, not a question of a few days and months. And you exist only for this purpose, and have no other duty in life. Every other duty is only for this purpose. What can you do in this world is a step in the achievement of this purpose.

Visitor: So yoga is connecting the individual reality with the Cosmic Reality?

Swamiji: Yes, yes; right, right!

Visitor: Have you to use the mind too

Swamiji: In the beginning, you've to use nothing else; you have no other faculty. In the beginning, the only faculty you have is the mind and the intellect. But later on, there is no need for you to use the mind and intellect; the soul itself will act. Your soul is your total personality. It is not working always. Generally only a partial part of your total personality works.

Visitor: It is the individuality that works.

Swamiji: Yes. Personality is the outward expression of your individuality. Your individuality is superior. The feeling that you exist as a person or individuality does not work for all times. Either the intellect works, or the emotions work, etc., but the soul does not work. The whole intellect works, the emotions work, the will works, but the soul very rarely acts.

Visitor: Is it because the intellect and the mind are very much conditioned?

Swamiji: They are very much conditioned, and they are not going to be of help at all times. But when you have nothing else, you have naturally to take their help for the time being. When you have no apparatus to rely upon, you have only the mind and the intellect, you have to take their help.

Visitor: What about feeling? Is it conditionless?

Swamiji: It is equally conditioned, as much as the intellect and the mind. It is no less conditioned. Your whole vision of things is conditioned in a particular manner by space and time. As I mentioned to you, you cannot get over this conditioning. But the intellect will help you finally in knowing its own limitations. That is, when you know your own limitations, you have automatically outgrown your limitations. When you know, you can go up higher and further to this level, and you have to some extent known what is above you. When you know the limit of a thing, you also have an idea of what is outside that limit. So when your intellect has reached its farther limits of logic and understanding, you would get a flash from the higher level. And then the soul acts and the intellect stops.

Visitor: What happens to your own personality afterwards?

Swamiji: It all just goes afterwards. It will not exist then. You will become something different. You will become a larger personality and not an individual personality. You become inclusive of all other factors in you. That is what is called a superman. You must have heard of superbeings. A superman is nothing but a higher being in whose personality the existence of the other personality is subsumed. He is a larger individuality with greater dimensions, tending towards a still higher realisation, stage by stage.

Visitor: What is the difference between Jnana Shakti and Kundalini Shakti?

Swamiji: Kundalini Shakti is everything. Jnana Shakti is knowledge. Jnana is a Sanskrit word; the power of knowledge is Jnana Shakti. Kundalini Shakti includes the power of understanding, of feeling, the power of action. It is every kind of Shakti, action, volition, feeling- all these are comprehended within it.

Visitor: Is it included in the practice of yoga? Can we use this term?

Swamiji: Yes ! Kundalini Shakti is included in yoga. All types of energy are included therein, and it is inclusive of everything.