

Magazine Review: GODDESS SHAKTI ...

Darshan (41-42, September 1990)

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Reviewed by Jennifer Rose

Darshan Magazine (Issue 41-42, September 1990) is a magazine of Siddha Yoga teachings. This double issue is dedicated to "Kundalini" (the Goddess Shakti), featuring beautiful artwork and elegant photography (images of Goddess/Guro).

Articles and content included like "The Devi: Mother of the Universe", and "The Union of Shiva and Shakti". Gurumayi Chidvilasananda is a Siddha Yoga spiritual Master who teaches the eternal truth that divinity is within ourselves, that God dwells in every heart. In a selection of talks given by Gurumayi, "Creating a Body of Light", she proclaims:

"Everyone's heart is connected to the supreme heart, the great Shakti, the infinite energy of God in which the hearts of all beings are interwoven. This Shakti is Supreme. The Goddess is the highest. This is why the great ones always spend

their time thinking, contemplating, worshipping, and meditating on Her. It is Shakti who moves everyone in different directions. It is Shakti who gives life to everyone." (p.160)

Since early childhood, Gurumayi has been a disciple of the Siddha Guru, Baba Muktananda, who entrusted the power of the ancient Siddha Yoga lineage to her when he departed in 1982. Together they have inspired the growth of many ashrams and meditation centers where Siddha Yoga is practiced with more than 600 locations around the world, including the Western headquarters in South Fallsburg, New York, and other ashrams established in London, Melbourne, Sydney, New Delhi, Mexico City, Boston, and Oakland, California. The original mother ashram, and Eastern headquarters of Siddha Yoga, is Gurudev Siddha Peeth, near the village of Ganeshpuri, Maharashtra, two hours from Bombay, where Gurumayi is currently in residence.

Reconnect to this ancient spiritual tradition, one of the oldest, continuously existing Goddess religions from the beginning of time, that has existed unbroken

on Mother Earth! Become immersed in the highest Reality by meditation on the Goddess Kundalini Shakti. She is awakened through Shaktipat initiation, which is freely given by Gurumayi by imparting the mantra — Om Namah Shivaya! — to all seekers. She kindles the spiritual energy (Shakti) in others by transmitting to them a spark of her own divine power.

Goddess Kundalini Shakti has been ~~is~~ invoked in various world cultures and traditions, and there are accounts of ordinary men and women like ourselves who have experienced the remarkable effects of the awakening of Kundalini, as we read in the "Editorial" by Swami Kripananda. Baba Muktananda illustrates how:

"Kundalini generates a feeling of deep friendship among people, enables them to see the divine in one another, and thus turns the world into paradise." (p.5)

In "The Awakening", we learn that cultures, or spiritual traditions, speak of Kundalini in different forms —

"The Japanese call it "Ki", the Chinese a "Chi", and in Christianity, it is the Holy

Spirit. In Mexico... the serpent-god Quetzalcoatl; the Kung people of the Kalahari desert call this same power nyum.⁹ (emphasis added). We also find the same knowledge in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. (pp. 9-10).

The Hopi Indians of North America teach us that along the spinal column of humans runs an axis, on which are a number of subtle vibratory centers. The Book of Hopi, an account by Frank Waters of the lives and beliefs of this extraordinary people describes these centers (chakras):

⁹ The First of these in man lay at the top of the head. Here, when he was born, was the soft spot... the 'open door' through which he received his life and communicated with his Creator... (p. 10)

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In "The Devi: Mother of the Universe", Charity Jones further explains these phenomena:
"Most cultures have honored the Devi as the Universal Mother, the Great Mother. In some patriarchal cultures She is recognized only as Mother Nature, but always there is some acknowledgement

of Her creative power, and of our need for Her." (pp. 71-72).

i often struggle with reconciling my abolitionist/activist beliefs as a revolutionary prisoner, with my Native spirituality and attraction to the Siddha Yoga teachings (or Shaktism — devotional love of the Goddess). However, i'm reassured by the following explanation of compatibility of my beliefs:

"And then there are times when things are not as they should be, when there is greed, injustice, ruthlessness. Those people who protest or seek to remove evil — these are the Goddess Kali in action... Kali is the consort of Shiva, the aspect of the Lord who punishes and destroys old forms so that new growth may come." (p. 72).

Additionally, i often contemplate and struggle concerning the spiritual significance and purpose of transgender and intersex peoples, which are also reflected in the scriptures/stories (and images)

as ⁴ "the Union of Shiva and Shakti", which is depicted/manifested in the form or image of androgynous/transsexual deity named Ardhanarishvara, literally translated "the god who is half woman". (See photo with caption that reads: "Ardhanarishvara: Shiva and Parvati as one. Bronze statue, India, c. 11th - 12th Centuries. P. 72).

As a "white-identified", part-Native Cherokee Two Spirit/transwoman, who was raised by Christian parents and forced to attend church (including Sunday school indoctrination, and learning the major Bible stories/teachings about Creation, Moses and the Plagues of Egypt, David and Goliath, Jesus in the Gospels), I could never reconcile such foreign anti-human, and anti-woman/anti-Nature ideas with my own concepts of "right and wrong"! So, As a rebellious kid, I eventually broke free from limitations of intelligent, critical, free thought inquiry. As a seeker of Truth, with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, I've become a self-taught, book-smart revolutionary & prison activist, journalist, and poet/writer.

i've studied the pre-Christian, ancestral religions of Celto-Germanic tribes of Old Europe, as well as the Greek and Roman mythology and pantheons, and the ancient Egyptian beliefs/rituals. The Goddess worship of the Amazons, and the Gallic Priestesses of Demeter (or the Great Goddess Cybele) — many of these latter whom were transgender!

i enrolled in the Siddha Yoga Prison Project Correspondence Course as a student in 1998, while confined in long-term solitary confinement torture at Pelican Bay - SHU. In Search of the Self and the Home Study Course, which are more than a decade of long-term study intended to be completed after 11 or 12 years, took me 22 years to complete. i received my beautiful Certificate upon graduation in 2020,

i wrote directly to Gurumayi (and one of her disciples, Swami Kripananda (author of The Guru's Sandals), about 20 years ago. i thank Gurumayi for granting me Shaktipat diksha (initiation), which i was so honored to receive by direct reply letter from Ganeshpuri, India. She directly authorized Swami Kripananda to impart the mantra to me — Om Namah Shivayah!

For further information about the Siddha
Yoga path and teachings, write or call:

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South Fallsburg, NY 12779

Phone: (914) 434-2000

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An important vehicle for making the Siddha
Yoga teachings available to students and
seekers around the world, including those
who cannot attend satsangs in local Centers,
is the Siddha Yoga Path Website. The
internet address or URL is:

www.siddhayoga.org

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Incarcerated people can enroll in the Free
Siddha Yoga Correspondence Courses,

In Search of the Self, and Home Study
Course, and become Siddha Yoga Students
by writing to the Prison Project at:

SYDA Foundation

Prison Project

P.O. Box 991410

Emeryville, CA 94662

For those who may soon be released from
prison, there's also a Released Student
Program, which students may call, email,
or write. The contact information is:

SYDA Foundation Prison Project
Released Student Program

P.O. Box 99140

Emeryville, CA 94662

Phone: (510) 898-2700, ext. 4104

Email: ReleasedStudent@sydaoakland.org

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There is also a monthly sadhana circle for formerly incarcerated students at the Siddha Yoga Ashram and Center in Manhattan, New York. Call either of the following or check the website:

Alan Gompers at: (718) 708-4799

Marie Stanace at: (917) 445-2694

Website: www.siddhayoganyc.org

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Do you have an opinion? Want to ask a question? I also welcome you, the Reader, to post your comments and criticism, or other feedback, on this blog, or write to me directly if you prefer at:

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