



Svaroopā® Vidya Ashram

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Multi-Dimensionality #3

## Duality is Reality

By Gurudevi Nirmalananda

Your mind lives in multiple realities simultaneously. In the midst of life, you are often reviewing the past or comparing the present with how you wanted it to be. You might even write a script in your head, but feel bamboozled when the others don't follow it. Your inner experience and outer experience can be wildly incompatible. This is not duality. This is delusion.

Some yogic philosophies say that your whole life is delusion. Worse, they say the whole world is maayaa, meaning it's all illusion, like you think you're seeing water but it is a desert mirage. Your mind spins out webs that entangle you, causing endless suffering.

Yes, your mind can cause great suffering. But I recognize your suffering as real. So is your bliss, once you turn your efforts in that direction. Our yogic tradition honors everything as real, even all the stuff in your mind. Here is how it works:

Everything that exists does exist.

Everything that doesn't exist also exists.

Kashmiri Shaivism honors the world as being the formless in form. Every object and every being is a physical form of the Ultimate Reality, Shiva. His Divine power of creativity is so amazing that everything he brings to mind actually becomes real. This universe existed first in Shiva's mind. Then he brought it into reality by becoming all that he conceived of.

Nothing that is not Shiva exists anywhere.

Nashivam vidyate kvachit.<sup>1</sup> — Svachchanda Tantra

The One Divine Reality is omnipresent, meaning all-pervading. Shiva is everywhere, pervading all, being all. Where can you look that Shiva is not there? What can you think of that is not Shiva?

Shiva is the is-ness of everything. He never ceases to exist. He never vanishes. He is eternal whether or not perceived to be so. He is everything and beyond everything. Shiva has become you, along with being everything else.

Shiva kept his power of creativity when becoming human, which means that everything you think of becomes real. Fortunately, your creative power is currently limited — by your state of un-enlightenment. Otherwise all your fears and worries would manifest immediately.

Yet these fictional events in your mind are real. The only place they exist is in your mind, but they really do exist there. They have real effects. If your imagined scenario never happens, your body still undergoes the effects of you running it through your mind. Medical research has proven that it stresses your body, especially affecting your nervous, cardiovascular, digestive, immune and respiratory systems.

The enlightened mind avoids such self-created problems. Such a yogi finds present-day reality to be engaging enough. They do not have to create such alternate realities in their mind. Their creativity pours into more useful things. They usually focus on benefiting others.

The good news is that being enlightened is easier than getting enlightened. It works the same way as playing piano. Once you know how to play, it's easy, even fun. But learning takes years of diligent effort, along with a demanding and compassionate teacher. You need such a teacher to get enlightened as well.

With Shaktipat, you get an additional boost. The infusion of Divine Energy empowers you to a new capacity for inner exploration. It also instils enthusiasm for the practices as well as supporting your dedication to the goal.

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<sup>1</sup> Na"sivam vidyate kvacit.

I got all this from my Baba. I was so fortunate to study with him in person. By living with him for years, I absorbed so much by osmosis, a Divine and wordless process. Like a cat lying in the sun, I melted into his presence, with the sound of his voice like a lullaby that echoes still in my brain.

He saw God in me. I could tell that he saw something in me that no one else saw, not even me. I saw God in him. That was easy to do, for he radiated Divine Consciousness. Best of all, he gave me the ability to see God in me, though I had to do my part to grow into it. As I grew into it, I became able to see God in all, including you. Delusion is gone.

Better yet, now duality is non-dual. All that appears to be merely mundane is actually Shiva, masquerading as being merely mundane. There is nothing to reject, nothing to fear or hide from. There is no one thing that is better than another, nothing to seek or to depend on for happiness. It's all Shiva!

The universe is the blissful dance of Shiva unfolding within Shiva.

Iti vaa yasya samvittih kriidaatvena-akhilam jagat.<sup>2</sup> — Spanda Karikas 2.5#

Shiva becomes the many, hiding himself in each and all, yet being fully present within each and all. When you know your own Self as Shiva, you see this world for what it is – a paradise, but full of people who are not yet able to see it clearly. You care about them and want to help.

When you are not yet enlightened, you don't know your own Shivaness. You see duality everywhere. You feel that Shiva is separate from you. There's God, and there's the world, and "never the twain shall meet." Religion is dedicated to bridging the gap, generally doing a good job at it. The point of every religious service is to give you an experience of God.

I've explored all the major religions, like the great yogi Ramakrishna. In different languages, they use similar words and ceremonies, all of which work beautifully. Yes, I find God in every church, every temple, every synagogue, every mosque.

I also find God in nature. Many Westerners have left their religion behind to seek God in nature. Yes, God is there. For God is everywhere, including inside. Why on earth are you still looking outside?

It's only because of duality. You think God is separate from you. But God is being you, oh Shiva. It's like ice is made of water. There is only One Divine Reality, who is the source and substance of all that exists.

Duality affects your inner sense of self, making you feel separate and different from God. In that isolation and aloneness, you also feel separate and different from everyone else. You look outward for connection, hoping for a deeper bond that will fill the hole in your heart. All the un-enlightened beings around you are looking for the same thing.

When you connect with another, you get a temporary fix. It works, but briefly. It's like you're crossing a river on wet stepping stones. The connections are brief and slippery. Sometimes you make it across. Sometimes you slip and fall. Truly, only God can fill the hole in your heart.

And where do you find God? Inside. When you find God inside, you find your own Self, oh Shiva. For there is nothing else, nowhere. But you need to cultivate Divine eyes, so you can see what is already here. For that, do more yoga.

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

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<sup>2</sup> Iti vaa yasya sa.mvitti.h krii.daatvena-akhila.m jagat.