

HIMALAYAN LUST



*by Yogi, Mystic, and Visionary
Sadhguru*

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Every year, a group of Isha meditators sets out on a tour of the Himalayas. It is a journey that has been made for centuries by travellers from across the globe. These travellers have found themselves seized by a lust both insistent and primal: a lust for adventure, for an encounter with nature at its most dramatic and awe-inspiring, for a taste of the terrifying stillness at the heart of an epic wilderness. Mountain-climbers, seekers, trekkers, devotees, sadhus, nomads, yogis – all seem to have felt the urge to experience this miracle of soaring earth and plummeting sky.

It is a phenomenon that silences them. It also changes them. On their return, the Himalayas appear to have marked them in some subtle but enduring way. Not surprisingly, the journey has been deemed sacred by diverse spiritual traditions. So in making this annual expedition, the Isha meditators are merely retracing the footsteps of innumerable generations of seekers before them. But there is a difference. For accompanying them on this trek is Sadhguru – a spiritual master considered by many to be one of the foremost living yogis on the planet. His presence offers the meditators the opportunity to view the entire Himalayan experience through his gaze, and to marvel at his formidable reserves of mystical knowledge and insight.

For those who have known him as an urbane international speaker or as a friendly mentor, the truth invariably comes as something of a shock. For it uncovers a side of him that is unsettlingly remote. A group of Isha meditators on a Himalayan excursion some years ago happened to encounter a woman mystic called Bengali Maa, an intimidating personage, locally revered in the Tapovan region as a saint. When the group mentioned to her that they were on a trip with their guru, she enquired after her antecedents. One of the meditators pulled out a photograph of Sadhguru and handed it to her. She scrutinized it. ‘But he is no longer here,’ she announced in ringing tones. ‘He finished his work and has left long ago.’

Stupefied, the meditators reported the incident to Sadhguru. He laughed. ‘From the point of view of existence, I no longer exist,’ he explained. ‘Only life at a certain level of vibrancy, and with karmic appendages, is counted by existence as life. I am off the record as far as existence is concerned. I may have deceived all of you, but here is a woman who could not be deceived.’

Yet another curious incident was the time when a team of Isha meditators trekking up toward Kedarnath met a group of around twenty yogis, led by a fierce ascetic, with flowing hair and a smouldering gaze. The leader’s air of self-possession and authority was palpable, and his followers treated him in a manner that was markedly deferential. When one of the Isha volunteers mentioned Sadhguru in the course of a conversation, the ascetic was contemptuous. ‘Why are you telling me this? I am not interested. You obviously cannot see who I am. I am Shiva.’

The statement was unequivocal with no room for argument. An intense exchange ensued, with the

meditator urging the charismatic yogi to experience Sadhguru firsthand and then draw his conclusion. But the yogi remained unimpressed.

A short while later, Sadhguru himself approached the scene. With his hiking boots and sunglasses, he had never looked less the typical mystic than he did just then. It was then that a strange thing occurred. The imperious yogi, the self-proclaimed Shiva, ran up to Sadhguru and prostrated at his feet.

What did that gesture really signify? What did the ascetic mean by claiming to be Shiva? And what exactly did he see that made him bow down so spontaneously at Sadhguru's feet? Any pat answer runs the risk of ironing out the mystery, and trivialising the significance of what really occurred. Perhaps it is sufficient to say that for the meditators who witnessed it, the experience only confirmed what they already knew – the fact that there is more, much more, to Sadhguru than meets the eye.

This is a book for those who stayed behind. It is a chance to make a pilgrimage on the page, travelling through the unpredictable but fascinating terrain of the master's words. Amalgamating discourses and conversations from several yatras, this book is a blend of the specific and the timeless. Its relaxed, informal mode allows for a spectrum of freewheeling questions, from the quirky to the profound, and for answers that are quintessentially Sadhguru: irreverent, challenging, richly veined with anecdote and legend, and invariably, uncomfortably, bang on target.

This book is not just about the Himalayas. And yet, the book would never have happened without the Himalayas. The mountains play a vital role in the text, alternately as context and catalyst, mood and metaphor. Without them, some of the questions in this book would never have been asked. Even when they sometimes seem tangential to the line of enquiry, they remain a powerful subterranean presence, eventually becoming the very bedrock of this book.

The book allows readers not only to enjoy, but also draw sustenance from Sadhguru's epigrammatic style, his trenchant wit and his gift for telling a good story. Above all, through the conversational rhythms of this text, readers can absorb and revel in the experience of actually being with the master as the adventure unfolded. There are times when they might catch a whiff of wild mountain air, the scent of danger and discovery – perhaps glimpse those landscapes of surreal beauty and spiritual power. And it is possible that they will even catch sight, however fleetingly, of dimensions beyond the geographical – of worlds unknown and undreamt of.

It is a perilous journey, but an exhilarating one. Take a deep breath and begin your ascent.

—Arundhathi Subramania

*Even the rocks reach out to the heavens.
No wonder beings seeking the divine
Made you their abode.*

*You of gushing waters and rushing air,
Towering presence of unsurpassable grace,*

*The brave hands that crafted these paths
Into your ceaseless folds –
A mighty effort, but miniscule.*

*Many have traveled this labyrinth
That seemingly leads to your very womb,*

*The womb that the courageous ones sought
To die and be born once again.*

*These Dwijas – the twice born
Of immeasurable wisdom
Left imprints that even
The final deluge cannot erase.*

*O deathless ones, your energies and wisdom
Live here through me.
I have the keys to your grace and boundlessness*

*Every beating heart claims to seek.
As I peel to reveal,
The weak-hearted ones run
To save their frailties,*

*But a few lusty ones remain.
Lust – lust for life – deeper life
Is the only way to unravel*

*The bounty of nothingness
That is me and you.*

—Sadhgu

SADHGURU ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HIMALAYAS...

'If one is striving to grow, earthquakes and landslides keep happening in one's life.'

The moment you step onto the foothills of Himalayas, a certain romance has begun between the youngest species in the planet, which is you, and the youngest mountain range in the planet – the Himalayas.

Both are still growing, still struggling, still evolving, and still wanting to touch their peaks. But touching the peaks doesn't come easy for the Himalayas. Every day in its effort to grow, it dismantles itself, thus leading to a huge number of landslides and avalanches.

All this seeming chaos is because the mountain range is making an effort to grow and reach its peak, which is not any different from human life. It's very symbolic. Lots of earthquakes and landslides and disturbances keep happening on a daily basis simply because the mountain is growing. The same is true with human life: if one is striving to grow, earthquakes and landslides keep happening in one's life.

Those who are stagnant, who don't grow, their life seems to be stable and steady, and looks better. But it's lifeless. For one who is striving to grow, an enormous amount of upheaval happens in his life. But all the upheavals are worth a little bit of growth that could happen within a human being.

Now, the first crash happened in the Himalayas some fifty million years ago, and slowly it's been rising at the rate of five millimeters per year. Though the horizontal movement of the continent is about five centimeters per year, the vertical rise is only about five millimeters per year. This is always so with life. If you put in so much of horizontal activity, just a little bit of vertical movement will happen. (*Laughs*) This is true if you are seeking material well-being, and especially spiritual well-being. If you put in an enormous amount of horizontal activity, just a little bit of vertical movement will happen. That is so for the Himalayas and it is so for you. So the Himalayas and you are very deeply connected; your struggles and the mountains' struggles are very much connected. That's why we let you struggle for these two to three weeks.

It takes enormous intelligence for a person to grow without struggle. Not that it is impossible. Most of the people – in my experience, 99.9% of the people – struggle to grow. Either it takes enormous intelligence, or it takes enormous trust. These are the only two ways one can grow without struggle. Otherwise, struggle is inevitable. Huge volumes of this mountain collapse around itself simply because it is striving to grow. If it becomes stagnant, these earthquakes and these landslides will not

happen. But it wants to grow even at the cost of its own well-being. And it can only happen that way for most people.

I have always loved the mountains. Trekking and climbing have always come naturally to me. The Himalayas, these magnificent mountains, have fascinated me since my childhood. Many pictures and books came my way to fuel my urge to trek these vast tracts. Though these mountains have inspired religious hopes and spiritual aspirations in many, I have never looked at them in that way.

One reason why I keep coming back to the Himalayas is that this is one place where there are many who recognize who I am. So I feel at home. Anywhere else I go, I have to play myself down in a way that makes people comfortable. *(Laughs)* This is one place where people can understand life without pretence; people can understand life just as life – not as culture, not as morality, not as ethics, not as religion. They know life just as life, raw life, the way it is. I am very much at home in a place like this.

These mountains are alive with spiritual vibrations. Many spiritual masters have chosen the mountains as their abodes and illuminated the place with their energies. That makes these mountains an inspiring experience for all spiritual seekers. Before you are too weak or old you must meet and merge with these mountains. This is my wish and my blessing.

...AND ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LUST.

‘Lust is a longing without solution.’

What we are referring to as a spiritual process is basically a journey from creation to Creator. The greediest people on the planet are the spiritual people. All the others are willing to settle for a piece of creation. These people want the Creator himself.

(Laughs) A few years ago, a very typically ‘spiritual’ group of people asked me, ‘What is needed, Sadhguru, to grow on the spiritual path?’ I said, ‘You need lust.’ You really need lust, lust for life and deeper life. If that’s not there, you cannot grow. They felt extremely offended, because lust and spirituality don’t go together. But without lust there will be no spirituality.

What you call ‘lust’ is a longing for which you have no solution, isn’t it? If it is just a desire, there is a way to avert it. If it is just curiosity, there is a way to satisfy it. Lust cannot be satisfied with anything else except finding the goal. Lust is a longing without solution. You must become one with it, or there is no answer for it. So without lust there is no spirituality. The problem is when you say ‘lust’, people are thinking only of the lust of the body. They are not recognizing the deeper lust that exists in the human being which is far bigger than anything else.

Lust is a compulsive longing. It's inborn. Because it's inborn, it's such a strong and powerful influence. ~~Spiritual lust is also inborn, but because of excessive teaching, people think it's coming from outside.~~ As the longings of the body, the longings of the being are constantly in play. Every human being is naturally spiritual. You are just a spiritual being dabbling with the material, though you think it's the reverse.

There are two aspects to human nature. There is a simultaneous need in every human being for containment and expansion, for self-preservation and boundlessness. Physical nature is trying to protect itself, while spiritual nature is trying to expand. Only the body needs protection. Beyond that the impulse to preserve is imprisonment. Not understanding these two dimensions, people have divided these two longings in human beings. So they seem conflicting. But in reality, they aren't. You have to maintain the integrity of the boundaries of your body, but beyond that there will always remain something within you that dislikes boundaries.

Do you empower your limitations or your longing to become free? That is the question. Do you walk with your eyes closed or open? That is the question. Are you spiritual consciously or unconsciously? That is the question.

The Domain of Shiva Kedarnath

'There are only two or three things in the world which actually overwhelm me – Kedar is one of them

For the pilgrim, this remote Himalayan town, flanked by breathtaking snow-capped mountains located in the Indian state of Uttarakhand, is a site of immeasurable sacredness and antiquity. For the mystic, it is 'the craziest cocktail of spirituality'.

In a spellbinding chapter, rich in metaphor and fable, Sadhguru speaks of the Himalayas as he sees them. He speaks of the variety of yogis who have bequeathed their energies to this distant mountain and left behind the essence of their spiritual discovery for future generations of seekers. It is this bequest – invisible but still vibrantly alive – that makes Kedarnath a living benediction to anyone on the path to self-realisation.

It is impossible to speak of Kedar without speaking of Shiva. The town is the locus of one of the most revered Shiva temples in the country, making it one of the four major sites in India's centuries-old Char Dham pilgrimage. Sadhguru deepens our understanding of this mysterious protagonist who looms large in the spiritual heritage of this land. Invoking him with a strange mix of intimacy and impersonality, he brings Shiva alive in a tantalising variety of ways – as 'emptiness', as 'that which is not', as 'the freedom of the uncreated'; as 'the first yogi and the first guru'; and as fellow conspirator, as an enigmatic fifty per cent partner'.

Sadhguru also speaks of that esoteric dimension of mantras and yantras – the deep connection between sound and form. In the process, he throws light on questions shared by pilgrims and seekers since time immemorial, questions about gods and idols, yogis and adepts, saints and gurus.

Subtle and intriguing, this chapter does not promise to solve any riddles; it only deepens the mystery.

'THIS IS THE CRAZIEST COCKTAIL OF SPIRITUALITY ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.'

The reason we make this trip to Kedar is that this is a place which has witnessed thousands and thousands of yogis, mystics – every kind that you can ever think of – for thousands of years. These are people who made no attempt to teach anything to anybody. So their way of making an offering to the world was by leaving their energies, their path, their work, everything, in a certain way in the spaces. This is the craziest cocktail of spirituality anywhere in the world. No single place has seen thousands of many different varieties of people – people of every kind. When I say every kind, you cannot imagine those kinds.

This activity has been going on in this valley for approximately anywhere between twenty-five and fifty thousand years. The legend goes that this is the place where all the sages and saints lived. That is not just a legend; it's a historical fact. Beyond this mountain is a place called Kanti Sarovar. The legend says that Shiva and Parvati lived there, and they visited Kedar once in a while. It's on the banks of this lake that Ganapati, or Ganesha, was created. It's on the banks of this lake about ten years ago in 1994 in the month of April, when I came here, that the whole experience of 'Nada Brahma' happened. Today after ten years we have had the opportunity to go there. It is very difficult to describe

the place and what it is.

In ancient times, India did not exist as one country, but still it was considered as one entity which was called Bharat Varsha. Its people were not of the same religion, race or language; they did not worship the same gods nor were they politically one. But still the land south of the Himalayas was referred to as Bharat Varsha. So somewhere, there was some sense of unity, because of the common spiritual ethos they carried in them.

Spiritual ethos means, no matter what you are doing, whether you are a king or a peasant, whatever the nature of your activity, there is only one ultimate goal for everybody – liberation. Even today even the simplest farmer in this country will talk about mukti. This is a result of the phenomenal amount of spiritual work done in this country. One person who is largely responsible for this, who is of paramount significance in shaping the human consciousness, is Shiva.

In the yogic culture, Shiva is not known as a god, but as the first guru or the Adi Guru. He is the Adyogi or the first yogi. Out of his realization, he became ecstatic and danced all over the mountains and then sat absolutely still. He was constantly into bouts of stillness and bouts of mad dancing. All the gods who saw him saw something was happening to him that they themselves did not know. Suddenly heaven felt like a bad place, because this guy is having such a good time! They felt, 'We are missing out on something.' When they finally got him to teach the method, Shiva expounded various types of yoga depending on the level of preparedness of the person who was sitting in front of him.

The first part of Shiva's teaching was to Parvati, his wife. It was taught in a certain intimacy. In great detail, and in very gentle ways, Shiva expounded the ways of yoga to Devi. The yoga sutras of Shiva are such that almost in every sutra, he refers to her as the 'resplendent one', the 'gracious one', the 'beautiful one'. So this teaching transpired between two people in utmost intimacy. Intimacy should not be understood as sexuality. It means that there is no resistance; that this person is absolutely open to what is being offered.

The second set of yogic teachings was expounded to the Sapta Rishis, or the first seven sages. When we use the word 'yoga', don't think it means twisting your body or holding your breath or anything like that. We are not talking about a particular exercise or a technique. We are talking about the very science of creation and how to take this piece of creation – that is you – to its ultimate possibility.

We are looking at gaining mastery over the fundamental processes of life; the very process of creation and dissolution. It doesn't matter at what level of evolution a person is right now; for him also, there is a way. For every being on the planet there is a certain way. That is the advantage of yoga. This teaching happened on the banks of Kanti Sarovar. This is where the world's first yoga program happened.

'[Shiva] has been my fifty per cent partner in everything that I do, but still he overwhelms me.'

For a person who is seeking some kind of spiritual uplift, Kedar is a boon, whose proportions you cannot imagine. That's how it is, if one is open to this. It's very difficult to explain to you what it means; after all, it's just a mountain, just an outcrop of rock. But it's just what the type of people who lived here have done for these thousands of years, what they have done to the space there, which makes the enormous difference.

Now that we are going up in a large group – as we have for the last few years – we need to understand this. In the programs that we do, a million times over I have been saying the same thing, you know, just be with me, just be with me. But for most people, 'what about the food', 'what about the toilet', 'what's happening here', 'what's happening there' – that's been the focus. The few moments of just being there have made some difference, and in so many ways, that's what has brought you here. I would like to say this once again; you just need to be with this. Without deviating yourself, if you do not know what it means to 'be' with something, at least keeping your senses focused is a good way to start being with something. Now, if you are looking at me does not mean you are being with me, but it's a good way to start. You are not capable of looking away from me and being with me, so a good way to start is with your senses.

This is a place that has been specially prepared for the sound, 'Shiva'. When we utter the word 'Shiva', it is the freedom of the uncreated, the liberation of one who is not created. (*Long pause*) He has been my fifty per cent partner in everything that I do, but still he overwhelms me. (*Laughs*) It is not hundred per cent correct to say this, but we can say that the source of the sound 'Shiva' emanates from this space. It's almost like that.

So it's a tremendous possibility. One way of assisting yourself to be with this is that with every step that you take, you utter 'Shiva'. If you want to have a picnic, it's a beautiful place, a fantastic place. I am not against it. If you wish to do it that way, it's up to you. There are no compulsions about this, but if you wish to know something else here, you must minimize yourself. You must simply make yourself very small and every step that you take, we will go with a certain mantra.

So when we say 'Shiva', it's not about creating one more idol, one more god that we can beg to, ask for more prosperity, and for better things in life. It is not about that. The word 'Shiva' means 'that which is not.' Not that which *is*, but that which is *not*. If you want to put it in logical terms, we have been saying everything begins from nothing and ends with nothing. Everything that's here has evolved itself out of nothingness; now it is here; and again it goes back to nothingness. This is a fact of life. That nothingness is Shiva. What we call 'shoonya' is Shiva. That emptiness is Shiva. You can call it by any name or form, or if you have that much awareness, you can look at it as a formless energy. But that which contains everything, that which is not, is Shiva.

We have given many names to this energy, many forms also. One important aspect of Shiva is 'Shambho'. Normally, Shambho, or that aspect of this root energy, is worshipped only by people who are on the spiritual path, because the word 'Shambho' means 'the auspicious one.' The most auspicious thing that can happen to you is to realize yourself, is to reach the highest within yourself. We think, unfortunately, that getting married is auspicious; getting a promotion is auspicious.

building a new house is auspicious... The most auspicious thing that can happen to you in your life is that you reach the peak within yourself. At Isha, the energy of Shambho has been very dominant. In that form we are able to call him down to us here, very easily. In that form he seems to respond to us much better than any other form.

There is a very unfortunate tradition right now which says you should not keep Shiva in your house. It is right; you should never keep Shiva in your house; you have to keep him in your heart. Keeping him in your house is of no use. If you have the courage, you carry him in your heart. Locking him up in the pooja room won't work, because you can't lock him up.

One reason why this has been said is that this energy is towards your dissolution; this energy is for you to reach your highest peak. This energy is not for begging; this energy is not for getting a little more advantage out of life. This energy is only for those people who are seeking to reach the very peak of their consciousness. If you are only concerned about getting a little more advantage out of life, maybe we can create many other smaller deities, smaller aspects of life, but not Mahadeva, not Shambho. If you go to the highest, ultimate power in existence, you must also be going with the petition for the highest possibility. You cannot be going with small things to the big man. So that's why they told you, don't keep him in your house. If you are limiting yourself to small things in life, don't keep Shiva in your house. But if you are seeking the highest, you should.

Shiva has always been referred to as 'Triambaka' because he has a third eye. The third eye is the eye of vision. These two eyes are just the sensory organs; they feed the mind with all kinds of nonsense because what you see is not the truth. You see this person and you think something about him; you see that person and you think something else about him. But you are not able to see the Shiva in him. These two eyes don't really see the truth. So another eye, an eye of deeper penetration, has to be opened up.

In this country, in this tradition, knowing does not mean reading books; knowing does not mean listening to somebody's talks; knowing does not mean gathering information from here and there. Knowing means opening up a new vision or insight into life. So true knowing means your third eye has to open up. If this eye of vision is not opened, if we are limited to just the sensory eye, then there is no possibility of Shiva.

Any amount of thinking, any amount of philosophizing will not bring clarity into your mind. Only when your inner vision opens up, there's perfect clarity. No situation or nobody in the world can distort this clarity within you. But the logical clarity that you create, anybody can distort it. Difficult situations can completely put it into turmoil.

So for what we call Shiva, for that nothingness or for that energy, we have given a form. The form that has been created in such a way, in the tradition, that you should not be able to digest him. He is not a good man. He has got a snake around his neck which you don't like. He's got a garland of skulls which is unimaginable, most uncivilized. At the same time he has such powerful 'tejas' that you can't stand

away from him. There is a helpless attraction and a powerful repulsion. That's how the image has been created because the whole idea is to make you understand that this is not something that you logically perceive. Whatever you call God, or divinity, or Shiva, or whatever you want to call it, is not to be perceived logically. It is to be experienced, but never to be understood logically.

You can't arrive at a conclusion that he is a good man. I don't know if you are aware of these things but in the Shiva Purana, there are such wild stories about Shiva that you can't believe that this could be a god. So, conveniently, a so-called civilization has eliminated all those indigestible stories about Shiva. But that's where the essence of Shiva is.

There are various stories like this. Let me tell you just one to give you some indigestion. You know there is a story about how the world was created. They say, first of all, there was a Mother who gave birth to three sons – Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The Mother is beginning to age and she is concerned that if she doesn't bear more children, the world will end here with these three children. So she wants to be impregnated. But there is no other man in the world except for her three sons. If she has to choose a man, she has to choose one of her sons.

This is something unthinkable. But she approaches Brahma and says, 'The only way to perpetuate the world is for you and me to be like man and woman.' He says, 'It's impossible; you are my mother; I can never touch you.' Then she comes to Vishnu and asks the same question. She says, 'The only way to perpetuate life is for you to be with me like this.' Vishnu is always known to be very diplomatic; he just smiles and he goes away. Then she comes to Shiva. She asks him the same thing. He indulges her without any hesitation. And that's how the world was perpetuated.

So these kinds of stories are there about Shiva, just to make you see that you cannot perceive him through your mind. He is impossible. He is everything that you don't want; at the same time he is the very root of life. That's how the Shiva Purana has been built. The whole idea is to destroy your logical mind so that you open up to a different dimension of life altogether. So if you have to open up Shiva or that energy which we call Shiva, this one (*referring to the mind*) is not useful. You have to keep it aside. Only then you can feel it; only then you can experience it.

For me, he is alive; for me he is always with me. I never worship Shiva or anybody. But for me he is alive. Every moment of my life, he is there with me. Everything that I do happens out of this. It is not a question of belief; it is not a question of 'do you like this idol very much', or 'what is your ishvara devta'. It is just that his energy is always with me. It is within me; it is outside of me. This is a living experience.

If it has to become like this – that God is not something that you worship, but is something that you call yourself, that which is you – then one significant step you need to take is to destroy the logic which separates everything. That is the basic trick with the logical mind; it sets everything apart. Everything has to merge into one, if everything has to become nothing, or if everything has to become Shiva, this mind has to be dissolved.

‘This is a place which has housed so many people who just won’t fit into your moral structures.’

As I said earlier, Kedar is a very heady mixture of energies. See, when you think of somebody on the spiritual path, probably you would think of them within a certain kind of framework, in terms of a certain kind of behavior, maybe a certain kind of dress, a certain kind of speech. But this is not a land of that kind of spiritual person. The kind that fits into your ways of understanding *has* been here. But there have been many more here who are utterly wild, whom you can never recognize as spiritual. But these are people who have touched the very peaks of existence.

When we say ‘a yogi’, we do not mean someone of a certain behavior; we do not mean someone with a certain type of morality or ethics. It is just that he is perfectly in tune with life, so tuned in with life that he can dismantle life and put it back together again. The fundamental life that is you, if you can dismantle that completely and put it back, only then you are a yogi. So this doesn’t come with ethics; this doesn’t come with morality; this doesn’t come with good behavior. (*Laughs*) Those things will earn you merit in society, but those things will not get you anywhere when it comes to existence.

So there have been many such incredible human beings. Some of them, as far as the world was concerned, were utter drunkards, but they were yogis. They were drug addicts, but they were yogis. They were highly abusive people, but they were yogis. All these things in their lives happened not out of some inner compulsion within themselves; these things happened because they did these things consciously and very consciously. This is a land which doesn’t fit into your morality. This is a place which has housed so many people who just won’t fit into your moral structures. There are many (*Laughs*) here who abuse every other path in the world, who abuse every other guru in the world – not out of some inner compulsion. They are doing this because unless you think the path you are walking is the best, you cannot involve yourself a hundred per cent. If you think, ‘Yes, I am walking this path, but maybe there is a better path’, then you are not going to walk this path a hundred per cent. Unless you see your guru as the best guru, you can’t involve yourself; you can’t give yourself to the process. So it is from that understanding that these people are coming. It is not in ignorance that they are making this kind of life for themselves.

So today they have taught you morals and values that [preach that] you must appreciate all the paths in the world. All that is socially very good; spiritually, not good. Suppose you want water and you start digging a well here. In this whole valley, unless you think this is the best place, you won’t go all the way and hit the water. You’ll dig ten feet, and if somebody comes and tells you that other place seems to be better, and that you can actually get water at five feet, you will go and dig another hole there. If somebody comes and says, ‘That would be a better place’, you will go and dig another hole there. And in the end, all that you have is holes. Your life will be full of holes, but you will not find anything. Just to avoid this, they created a certain kind of life, which logically doesn’t make sense to lots of people. But the very fact that these people attained and lived gloriously, shows it worked.

‘Yoga has innumerable devices, innumerable methods of working towards a still mind.’

This yogic tradition has seen thousands of realized masters. No other tradition in the world, no other spiritual culture in the world has seen this kind of galaxy of realized beings. Many methods, many ways, many systems have been evolved. Each master delivered his teaching in his own way; each master employed his own methods and devices as were suitable for people around him.

Fundamentally, the very process of yoga is to realize who you really are. Many methods have been evolved; many devices have been created; many support systems have been devised to make things happen. Each master has made it happen to people in many strange ways. Because every master expresses himself in his own way, each one of them faces different types of resistance in society. The social norm is such. Society knows one guru, a hundred years ago, was doing something in a certain way. So now another one comes today and starts doing things in a totally different way. Now, either society has to denounce that man or this man. They cannot see that there are a number of ways to make the same thing happen.

This reminds me of a great sage in our tradition whose name was Ribhu. He was known as Ribhu Maharishi. Ribhu had a disciple, a wayward disciple, whose name was Nidhaaga. Ribhu Maharishi had a very special love for this particular disciple, but this disciple was a little wayward, not as focused as the others. So naturally, among the disciples there was a little problem: 'Nidhaaga is so unfocused, but why is the guru so loving to him, and not to us?' There was a problem going on. These things always happen because a guru is somebody who is not looking at you for what you are today; he is looking at you for what you are capable of tomorrow. What is the possibility that you carry within you? What you have done till now is of no importance to him. What you are today is of some importance to him, but what you can be tomorrow is of utmost importance to him.

Nidhaaga left Ribhu Maharishi and went away. Ribhu Maharishi made trips to see his disciples wherever he was. But Nidhaaga was not too receptive. So Ribhu always went in disguise just to see his disciple and to bless him, to guide him.

One day, Ribhu Maharishi dressed himself as a village rustic and went where Nidhaaga was. A king's procession was passing by on the street. Nidhaaga was intently watching the procession. So Ribhu Maharishi, disguised as a rustic, went and stood beside Nidhaaga and asked, 'What are you looking at?'

Nidhaaga looked at him in disdain, thinking to himself, 'Everybody is looking at the procession; the fool doesn't even know what we are looking at.'

He said, 'I'm looking at the king's procession.'

Ribhu Maharishi asked, 'Where is the king?'

'Can't you see? He's sitting on the elephant.'

‘Oh, but which one is the king?’

Now Nidhaaga got really angry and he said, ‘Can’t you see, you fool? The man who is sitting above the king; the animal below is the elephant.’

‘Oh, what is this above and below? I don’t understand.’

Now Nidhaaga became really furious. He said, ‘You fool, you do not know what is above and below. It looks like what you see and what you hear doesn’t seem to get into you. You need some action.’

He bent Ribhu Maharishi forcefully down and stood on his shoulders. ‘Now do you see? Now I am above, you are below; I am the king, you are the animal. Did you get it?’

‘Not really! Now I can understand what is man, and what is elephant. Now I can understand what is above what is below. But what is this ‘you’ and ‘me’ you are talking about?’

Suddenly the basic questions of ‘Who am I? Who are you?’ struck Nidhaaga. He fell at Ribhu’s feet and he realized that it could not be anybody other than his master, and he attained self-realisation in that moment.

So each master employed his own ways, his own methods to do things. Some were subtle; some created dramatic situations. In Isha (*Laughs*), I don’t want to reveal the method, because once you reveal the method, you have to create a whole new method. (*Laughs*) Any method works only when you just walk into it and it happens to you. If it is all told to you, it doesn’t work. So here we have our own methods, very subtle. For some we have subtle methods; for some we have dramatic methods; for some we have knocking-on-the-head type of methods. There are various kinds of methods.

Searching for truth is itself a big illusion because whatever we term the truth is always around everywhere. We don’t have to search for it; we don’t have to seek it; it always is. Now the only problem is your inability to experience life beyond what you call mind; or right now your capability to experience life only through the limited dimension that we call mind. That is the only problem.

Patanjali Maharishi defined yoga as chitta-vritta-nirodha. It means that if you still the modifications or the activity of the mind, you are there: everything has become one in your consciousness. So yoga has innumerable devices, innumerable methods of working towards a still mind. We may be pursuing many things in our lives; we may be going through the processes that we call achievements in our lives. But to go beyond the modifications of the mind is the most fundamental, at the same time the highest achievement, because this releases a human being from what he is seeking, from what is within and what is outside, from everything. He becomes an ultimate possibility if he just stills his mind.

Whatever we may be seeking in our lives, whatever we may be doing in our lives right now, whatever most people are after right now in their lives, is fundamentally to achieve happiness and peace. Most people spend a whole lifetime and never get to be truly happy or peaceful. Now not being happy or not being peaceful are also certain states of the mind, a certain expression of your energy. If you're happy, your energy is expressing itself in a certain way; if you are unhappy, the same energy is expressing itself another way; if you're angry, it is finding a different type of expression; if you are in frustration, another type of expression; in fear, anxiety, another type of expression. It is the same energy finding different types of expression. Definitely, every human being, no matter which path he is pursuing, fundamentally, he is doing whatever he wants to do right now because somewhere he believes that will bring him happiness and peace.

Whatever happiness and peace that one knows in one's life is generally so fragile that it is always subservient to the external situation. So most of your lives go in trying to manage a perfect external situation which is just impossible to do. No human being is ever capable of creating a perfect external situation because the outside situation will never be a hundred per cent in your control, no matter how powerful a human being you are. So yoga focuses on the inner situation. If you can create a perfect inward situation, no matter what the external situation, you can be in perfect bliss and peace.

This reminds me of a certain situation that happened in the South Indian yogic tradition. Once there was a devotee whose name was Tatvaraya. Tatvaraya encountered a very beautiful master in his life, his name was Swaroopananda. This master never spoke. As a human being, he spoke here and there, but as a guru he never spoke. This was a silent master. Tatvaraya found tremendous bliss and joy in being with his guru, and he composed a bharani. The bharani is a certain composition in Tamil, which is generally composed only for great heroes.

So society reacted and protested that a bharani cannot be composed for a man who has never even opened his mouth, who has not done anything except sit quietly. This can be composed only for great heroes. A hero was generally in the past described as a man who has slain one thousand elephants. You know Veerappan? (*Laughs*) So that's a real hero who can slay one thousand elephants! And this man has never even opened his mouth; he just sat quietly; surely he doesn't deserve a bharani? Then Tatvaraya said, 'No, my master deserves more than this, but this is all I can give.'

So there was a big argument and debate in town about this. Then Tatvaraya decided the only way to settle this issue is to take these people to his master. And he took this group of people into the forest. His guru was sitting quietly under a tree. All of them went and sat there, and Tatvaraya explained the problem: 'People are protesting because I composed a bharani in your honor; it is supposed to be composed only for great heroes.'

The master heard all this and just sat quietly. All of them sat quietly. Hours passed; they sat quietly. A few days passed; they sat quietly. After about eight days of all of them just sitting quietly, Swaroopananda moved his mind. At that point, everybody's thought process became active. Then they realized a true hero is somebody who has tamed these rutting elephants that you call mind and ego. And both these elephants were still for these eight days for everybody by just sitting with the master.

And they said, 'Yes, this is the man who truly deserves a bharani.'

'A yogi is somebody who is able to dismantle his own creation and put it back together again.'

Seeker: Sadhguru, you've said that Shambho is a 'form' of Shiva. What exactly does that mean? I'm not sure I understand. I thought you said Shiva was a mantra. And if Shiva is a mantra, how does a mantra have a form? Is Shambho a form of Shiva, a mantra or a state of being?

Sadhguru: See, this culture was created as a science to enable you to seek your ultimate liberation. Every aspect of your life – whether you sing, dance, eat, or study – was only aimed at your mukti. Your religion, education, family, and your business, all these things are secondary; the only thing that matters to you is your mukti. That's how it's supposed to be, isn't it? So when mukti is the only thing that you're seeking, everything is oriented towards that.

Dance was not entertainment. If you get deeply involved in it, you will become meditative. That's how it was structured. Music was not entertainment either: if you get deeply involved in it, you become meditative. Everything was oriented only towards your emancipation, taking you towards ultimate liberation.

This culture has looked at it this way for a long period of time. Over ten thousand years or even more, it did not know any disturbance. A well-settled society, constantly looking at liberation – you know how many million ways they could have developed people? All because the whole society's intelligence is focused in one direction? Every possible way of exploring your inner nature was brought forth. Nowhere else in the world – you can investigate it as much as you want – have people understood the interiority of a human being as this culture has. With enormous depth, it has been looked at – not the surface, but the very core of the human being. It is just that because they're subjective sciences, they were expressed in certain ways, coded in certain ways, so that logically you cannot misinterpret them. Such care was taken to see that misinterpretations don't happen. In spite of that, over a period of time, misinterpretation invariably happens, and the science needs to be rejuvenated.

So as a part of this, this culture also created various energy forms which could be conducive to your growth. This creation of energy forms – powerful energy forms through which one can seek one's own growth and well-being – is again another dimension of what we call consecration.

The Dhyanalinga*, for example, is an energy form. It took eighteen or nineteen years of preparation and about three-and-a-half years of intense consecration. People who witnessed what happened during these three-and-a-half years have never been the same again. Hundreds of people were witness to this. What they saw is so miraculous that if they talk to anybody about it, it will be pure mumbo-jumbo. Nobody will believe that such things can happen. Absolutely incredible things were happening around that whole space during the consecration. This is what we mean by creating an energy form.

You see the stone linga; that is not significant. The stone linga was used only as a scaffolding to create an energy form. Once the energy form was created, actually we could have removed the stone linga. Nothing would change. But people want to see things with their eyes, otherwise they cannot relate to it. And also we spent a lot of money, so we won't remove the stone linga! But actually, as far as your experience and the energy is concerned, even if we remove the stone linga, it will still be the same. Nothing will change there.

Generally, the word 'linga' is referred to as the 'form'. Why we are calling it the 'form' is because today modern cosmologists are telling you the core of every galaxy is a perfect ellipsoid. Are you aware of this? The core of every galaxy is always an ellipsoid. A perfect ellipsoid is what is referred to as a linga. You know what an ellipsoid is? An ellipsoid is a three dimensional ellipse. So the first form – from the unmanifest to manifest – that creation takes, is always the form of an ellipsoid. This is something cosmologists are saying today. And from our experience we know that if you raise your energies to a certain pitch, the final form that your energy takes before dissolution is also that of an ellipsoid. So the first form is the linga; the final form is also the linga. This is why the linga is seen as a doorway to the beyond, from both ends. Because the A and Z of creation happen to be the linga, it is seen as a doorway to the beyond.

So the word, 'Shambho', is associated with this. Is it a mantra? Yes. What does a mantra mean? Now modern science is telling you that the whole existence is just a vibration. That means the whole existence is just sound. In this complex arrangement of sounds which you call creation, there are a few key sounds. These key sounds can open up dimensions for you. So that is what is being referred to as a mantra. Every sound is a mantra. But we are referring to certain sounds as mantras, because they are key sounds. If a key is given to you, you could start loving the key, hugging or kissing the key, but it doesn't do anything. If a key is given to you, you just have to understand where you should insert it and how you should turn it. It can open up a whole world for you. So a mantra is a device that you learn to use in a particular way. If you know how to use the particular mantra with the right sense of awareness, it can open up a completely new dimension of life for you. If you were just emotionally attached to the mantra – you know, emotions can be juicy and nice – it won't lead you anywhere. So what you call as a mantra is basically a device.

Is it a form? Yes, because every sound has a form attached to it. The word, 'Shambho', has its own form. Is it a person? Yes. Is it a living thing? Yes, very much, because everything in the existence is alive. From a single atom, a rock, a tree, a plant, to an animal, everything is alive actually, isn't it? Whether you are able to perceive this or not, that's the only question. Right now, you're breathing; the air is alive, that is why it can give you life, isn't it? Maybe it is not alive like you, but it is alive in its own way. Because of this, here in this culture, we started looking at life in a different way.

This is a culture which worshipped trees, which worshipped the earth that you walk on, the water that you drink, the food that you eat. Generally, everywhere in the world, if food appears in front of people they will thank the god that they have not seen for it. Here, we have no such etiquette problems. Here we just bow down to the food itself. We don't know what gods created this. Do you know? You really don't know what gods created this. All you know is, if you do not eat this, you'll fall dead. All you know is that this food on your plate is actually going to become you within the next few hours, isn't it?

it? This is sustaining your life. So you become reverential to the food that you eat.

If you eat your food reverentially, whatever you eat will work miraculously within you. The water that you drink, you become reverential to it, because over seventy per cent of this body is water. When you value your body, should you not value the ingredients which make this body? You cherish and love your husband, wife, child, mother, father, isn't it? If you love them, then the ingredients that make up these people – should you not be reverential to them? If water plays havoc in your mother's body, she's finished. Yes or no? If air plays havoc in your husband or wife's body, they're finished. If earth, fire, or any aspect of the five elements just go a little out of hand, your husband, wife, child, mother, father are finished. Isn't it so? So, every moment, it is these five elements which are sustaining you, nourishing you, and making things happen. You just become reverential to that. Every aspect of existence actually has something to do with your life, isn't it? If some imbalance happens in some galaxy, you could just evaporate the next moment.

So this tradition created certain powerful forms, well-established forms, that you can call for. In certain systems of yoga, people master these forms. You have heard these kinds of things. Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to feed Kali with his own hands and she used to eat food. This is a hundred per cent reality, I'm telling you. For any logical, thinking mind, it looks like absolute nonsense, isn't it? It looks like he must be hallucinating. He's not hallucinating. It is just that his consciousness is so crystallized, whatever form he thinks of and reveres, he just creates it right there. So if you want Kali, Kali is right there. Anything that you want can be created right there, simply because all these forms were established long ago for sadhana.

Different yogis, different systems created various forms. There are very beautiful forms and very hideous forms. Shambho is one of the more auspicious ones. He is a very gentle form of Shiva, which is rare. Shiva is usually wild and crazy. But this is a very gentle form of Shiva, a beautiful form. These forms were established by people so that others could make use of it. They are made into eternal forms. If you are willing, you could bring them down in your experience. Is this a reality? Is there something that is there in the creation? No, these things were created by people who had absolute mastery over their own systems, their own energies and their own creation.

When we say somebody is a yogi, it does not mean he stands on his head, or holds his breath. A yogi is somebody who is able to dismantle his own creation and put it together again. These are the fundamentals of yoga. The basis of yoga is in what is called bhoota shuddhi. You know the panchabhootas? The five elements in nature? It means having absolute mastery over the five elements which make you. So once you have this mastery, you can dismantle yourself, and put yourself back together again. So that is what yoga means. Knowing the science of yoga means that you know every nut and bolt of your creation. You have gone into the depths of who you are, on all levels: the physical body, the mental, the energy levels, much deeper levels. You have seen everything, the way it is within yourself. It is from that context that you exist because what you call 'myself' is a mini cosmos by itself. If you know this one, you know everything. Everything that is worth knowing in existence you know the moment you know yourself.

‘Shiva is constantly waiting for one moment of vulnerability in you when he can crack you.’

Seeker: So does chanting ‘Shiva Shambho’ help us on our trek up these mountains? And would it be appropriate to continue chanting ‘Shambho’ afterwards as well?

Sadhguru: When you say ‘Shambho’, when you say ‘Shiva’, you are not asking for help. Now if you are saying ‘Shambho’ every time your knees are hurting, that’s not it. (*Laughs*) Shiva bhaktas always called upon Shiva and said, ‘Shiva, please destroy me.’

Have you seen that panel about Akka Mahadevi in the Dhyanalinga temple? Akka called upon Shiva and this was her prayer: ‘Shiva, when I am very hungry, if I get a morsel of food, before I put it in my mouth, let it slip and fall into the mud. And before I bend down and pick it up, let a dog come and take it away. And if I am climbing a mountain, let my feet slip and let me fall down and let my head break.’ This is how the prayer goes. (*Laughs*) Is that how you were calling Shambho? (*Laughter*)

This is a trick. You will see tomorrow early morning when you go to the Ganga to wash all your sins, particularly if you go there where it’s very crowded. You will notice that it’s not so cold right now, yet the water is quite chilled in the mornings. They’re all saying, ‘SSShivaaa-shivvaaa!’ When they are having a warm water bath, are they saying ‘Shiva, Shiva’? No. (*Laughs*) They are whistling or singing some film tune. In chilled water, it’s ‘Shiva, Shiva, Shiva’. (*Laughs*) This is not about Shiva; this is about your survival. You’re just calling the wrong guy. If you are seeking survival, you are just calling the wrong person. Shiva is constantly waiting for one moment of vulnerability in you when he can crack you, okay? He is not seeing how to help you to survive. He is just waiting for a moment of vulnerability when he can squash you. So I asked you to say ‘Shambho’ with that intention, not with the intention of helping you up the mountain.

As I mentioned earlier, out of a very deep state of understanding of sound, we have taken out a few sounds which are like the keys to existence. If you utter them with the right sense of intensity at the right moment in your life, they can just shatter all your limitations and take you elsewhere. So ‘Shiva’ and ‘Shambho’ are two such keys. You are supposed to use these to break you open, to crack you up. From the solid person that you are, they are meant to open you up to a new dimension. Not ‘Shiva, Shiva, Shiva’ to help you to go up the mountain; that is not the way it was given to you. Just make your life-breath, to make the sound constantly on within you. If one moment of vulnerability comes, the sound will just crack you open. New things will happen; absolutely new things will happen.

So don’t use ‘Shiva Shambho’ for your survival. You say ‘Shambho’ because you want to dissolve with this sound. Not because you want to become something with this sound, not because you want to buy a condo in Florida, not because (*Laughs*) you want to buy a new house, or you want to buy a new vehicle, or you want to get your daughter married. That’s not the reason why you say ‘Shiva’. When you say ‘Shiva’, you are seeking dissolution, because Shiva means ‘that which is not’. The blissfulness of the uncreated, the ecstasy of being uncreated, that’s what Shiva means. When who you are, is broken, only then you will be ecstatic. If you have known a moment of ecstasy in your life,

those moments happened only when who you are was broken for some reason. Isn't that so? When you are yourself, you will never know a taste of ecstasy or blissfulness within you.

Can I continue to say 'Shambho'? If this is your intention, you must always say it. If this is not your intention, if you are just thinking of how to acquire the next property, call on someone else. Don't call on Shambho and Shiva. It will not be appropriate. Not that they cannot provide it, but it'll be like using a spacecraft to go to the next village. You can walk to the next village. If your intention is to go to Mars or beyond, a spacecraft is okay. But don't ride a spacecraft to the next village.

There is a wonderful story in the yogic lore about the kriya yogis, yogis who have mastery over their life energies. Usually if they have attained to their heights, it's fine. But otherwise as they get more and more mastery over the situation around them and they can do things that other people cannot, they tend to have a total disdain for everything else around them. (*Laughs*) So they look down upon all these mantra-uttering people.

One day a kriya yogi, who had great accomplishments behind him, went to Shiva and asked, 'What is all this? Your bhaktas are making all this noise in the world; all the time they are shouting, 'Shiva Shambho'. What is this going to do? What is the use of yelling these mantras like this?'

Then Shiva said, 'Let us experiment. Here is a worm crawling. Go close to him and say, 'Shiva Shambho'. Let's see what happens.'

The yogi went to the worm and said, 'Shiva Shambho'. The worm fell dead.

The yogi was aghast: 'I just uttered this mantra, your name, and the worm is dead! What is this?'

Shiva, completely oblivious of the worm, pointed at a butterfly and said, 'See how wonderful the butterfly is.' The yogi also got involved with the butterfly. Shiva said, 'Attempt the mantra with the butterfly.'

The yogi looked in the direction of the butterfly and said, 'Shiva Shambho'. The butterfly fell dead.

The yogi was totally in turmoil, and said, 'What is this? If I just utter your name, one creature after the other is falling dead. I don't want to say it anymore.'

Shiva completely ignored this and looked at a wonderful deer that was romping around. He said, 'Look at the deer, so wonderful.' The yogi also got involved. Shiva said, 'Why don't you utter the mantra to the deer and see?'

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