



How to meet the Shiva and Shakti from within

This informal CPD article, 'How to meet the Shiva and Shakti from within', was provided by InnerCamp, who work within the holistic health sector offering expert-led solutions to help you rediscover your inner force and stand strong in your foundation on both personal and professional levels.

Shakti

Shakti means power, energy, or force. It's always described as a goddess (Devi), the divine feminine, but at the deepest level, Shakti transcends gender. Shakti is innating the creativity at the heart of all living things, is a dance of the cosmos and the source of physical energy and something beyond everything else. Often, Shakti is equated to prana and even to the subtle energy that gives rise to prana. It's associated with dynamics; that's why the dance embodies it.

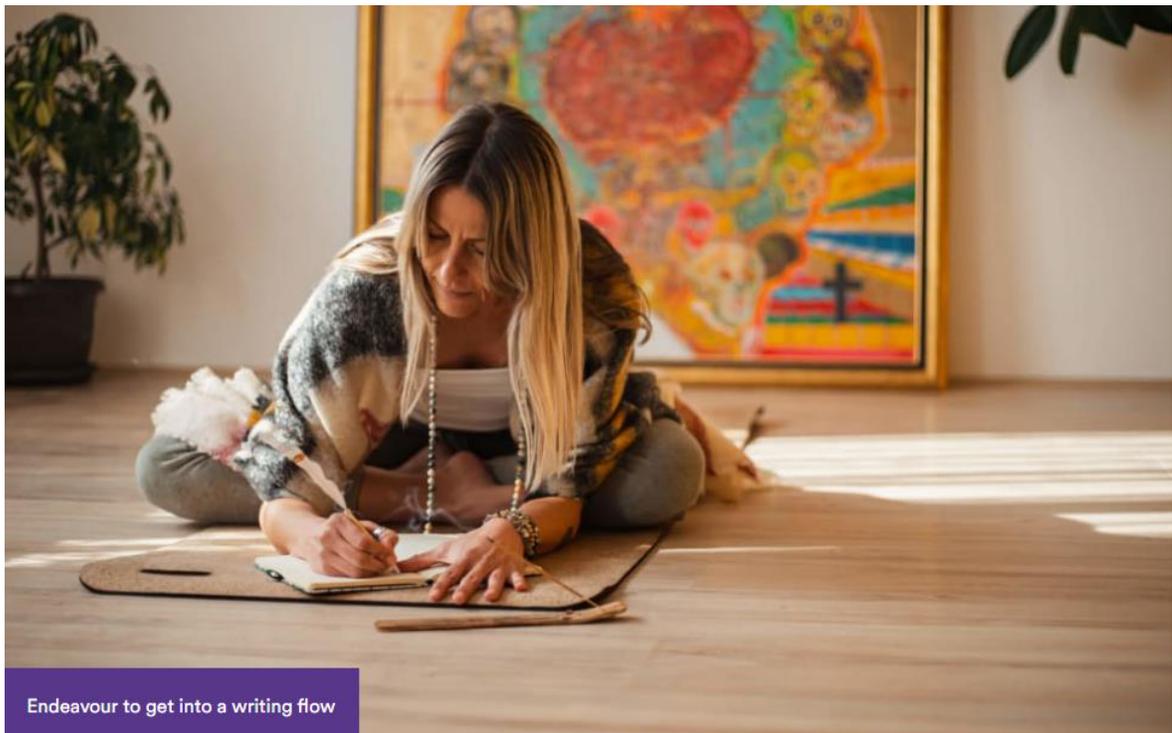
Although Shakti is the energy within everything, it often remains hidden until it's awakened. But how can you find this feminine energy, power, and creativity from within? Like everything in life, an effort is necessary for everything we want to grow or expand. Besides that, we need awareness, contemplation, meditation, self-inquiry, and a supportive cultural environment when devoting our time and energy to the "inner work."

Some of the practices that serve as a tool to entering your strength from within, your Shakti, are:

1. Talking to Shakti

Words are aspects of Shakti, whether we use some mantra or directly talk to our feminine energy. When speaking directly to Shakti, you may be surprised by how responsive and sensitive the energy is. This energy is highly intelligent and responds to suggestions and requests. This dialogue between you and your Shakti energy is especially valuable when you're feeling some physical pain or heavy sensations in your body or suggesting to stay present during meditation or a particular asana.

However, dialogue with Shakti can take many forms. When asking Shakti for an answer, try to bring the question into your heart and ask Shakti to bring you the answer. Then take a piece of paper and write down everything that comes to your mind. Try to get into the writing flow and split all your thoughts on paper without self-censoring. Then be attentive to how answers come to you while continuing your daily life. If some synchronicities feel like an answer to your question, pay attention to the feelings attached to it and ask inwardly: "Is that an answer I'm looking for?".



Pay attention to the emotions that are attached to the answer. Usually, if there's a straightforward answer, accompanied by feelings of relaxation and calmness, that's Shakti. On the other hand, if you feel confused or how you slipped into the chatter of the mind, it's probably your ego, not Shakti.

2. Connect with Durga, Your Warrior Goddess

Durga is one of the most known goddesses that bring strength, courage, power, protection, and the answers you seek. Also, Durga connects you to your inner power and brings feminine Shakti energy into your life. Some ways to connect to your inner Durga are:

- Setting boundaries in your life - learn to honor your time and energy and know when to say no.
- Expressing yourself - after you know your needs and desires, learn how to express them and communicate clearly.
- Believe in yourself - find your greatest strength from within, undoubtedly, believing in yourself, your greatness, and your abilities.

3. Feel The Shakti Between Your Hands

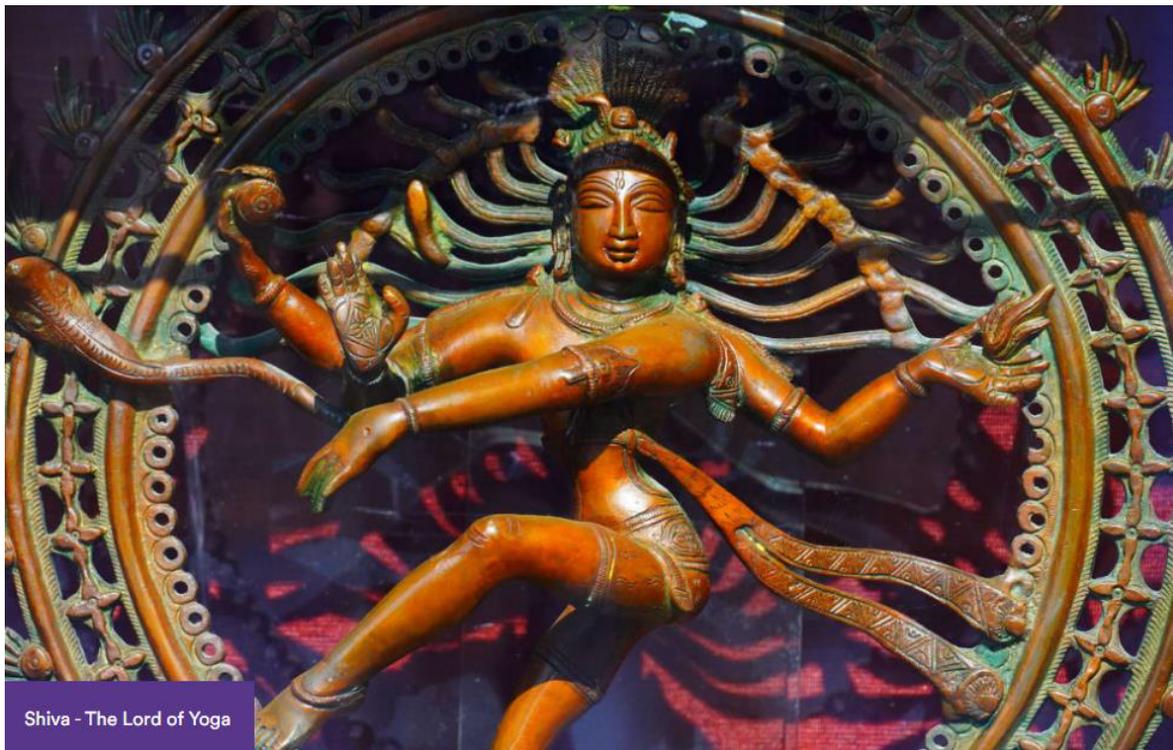
When a beginner starts to learn and practice tantra, describing the abstractness of the energies can be challenging. One of the practices that can show you the meaning and power of Shakti energy is to feel it in between your hands. Hold your hands 2-3 inches/5-8 cm apart and feel the energy between them. Once you feel the energy, try to move hands another few inches/cm apart, keeping the powerful energy connecting them. If you lose a sense of energy, move them a bit closer until you feel Shakti energy again. It's easier to do it with closed eyes and deep belly breathing.

4. Shakti Visualization

The other practice, especially suitable for busy people, is changing the narrative, the perspective you're living, and seeing the world through the "Lakshmi eyes" instead. Lakshmi is a goddess of beauty, representing one aspect of feminine energy.

Practically speaking, that means that when you're stuck in traffic, on polluted roads, and cars are honking around you, you look for the blue clouds in the sky, watch a breeze around the grass and see a smiling face in the car next to you. These small daily shifts will create a different state of mind when practiced regularly. Indeed, finding beauty, connection, and love can be challenging. But it's easier to go through a hard time if we've already created at least some of these new neuropathways toward more positive thinking and therefore cultivated some feminine energy from within.

Mind that shakti is life, so you can find it anywhere and practice connecting to it through various practices, daily tasks, or just by changing the perspective that you're holding on to. Other ways to invoke feminine energy include shaking, dancing, strong and intense pranayama, being wild and free in nature, practicing a shaktified diet etc.



SHIVA

The other name for Shiva is absolute reality and is known as the Lord of Yoga. The power of Shiva's consciousness can bring great inner strength and spaciousness. It's our being in its stillness. The Divine Masculine is an active force ruled by the elements of the sun (fire) and sky (air), and it's responsible for order, structure, passion, willpower, direction, purpose, awareness, and courage. To invoke Shiva's energy within, think of trying these practices:

1. Deconstruct Your Conditioning

We've all been conditioned to follow the socially acceptable rules on "what is meant to be a man." Some common forms of such conditioning include:

- Men mustn't express their emotions and shouldn't cry.
- Men must have a successful career.
- Men must "dominate" women physically, sexually, and career-wise.
- Men are saviours of women and children.

Once you discover your conditioning beliefs, you can start working on consciously redefining what masculinity means for you. This redefining process will allow you to develop a healthy relationship with your inner Shiva energy.

2. Free Your Mind and Take Self Responsibility

To become fully conscious and stable, you need to declutter your mind to become as pure as fire. Remember that thinking does not control you or your actions, but you should be able to regulate your thoughts. You are the controller of your mind and all the other senses. Consequently, that's how you control your happiness and avoid the position of the "victim" who wants to be rescued.

3. Be Assertive and Stick Up for Yourself

Being assertive is not about being angry or confrontational but respecting yourself and your needs. One of the easiest ways to start is to define your needs first. What needs need to be met? How do I feel when my boundaries are being overstepped? Assertiveness requires courage, and it's important to go step by step. One of the essential steps you must take is to learn to say "no." While doing that, remember that your needs and opinions are just as important and valid as anyone else's.

4. Improve Your Posture

Our body language communicates a lot about us to others and immensely impacts how we feel (and vice versa). First, try to strengthen your back and shoulders and let your chest be exposed, so you're in an "I" shape. This will send biological signals that you're confident, calm, and secure in yourself and get you in touch with your Divine Masculine side.

5. Start Being Active

To feel your fire from within, cultivate a habit of being the initiator, instigator, or giver in relationships. For instance, take the initiative to make plans and work towards what you dream. The whole point is not to ignite and use your inner fire.

Conclusion

It's crucial to know that Shiva and Shakti are masculine and feminine energy inside of us that is not based on our gender. All of us have divine masculine aspects and divine feminine aspects. It's said that our feminine resides on our left side, while masculine resides on our right. While Shakti is pure becoming in all her flow, creativity, and openness to new possibilities, Shiva is pure being in its stillness. We both hold this energy within us, and when united, there's complete balance, joy, and presence within our very being.

With different practices, you start to feel both energies can manifest in various ways - somatically (as a heat, a physical movement like swaying) or psychologically (as an insight).

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