

S i l e n c e i s t h e w a y

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Earth flavor

When the monsoon winds
drive heavy with earthy smells

The mortal coil - an earthen Pot
Trembles to the flavor of Life and Death

These bones and sinews, this heart and liver
The genital jewel and the cerebral flower

All just earth – touched by the Divine Source
Enshrined in the innards of this earthy edifice

To know this earthy mould will not suffice
As it flourishes but for a trice

Rise beyond Life and Death
Upon my grace enthroned

Grace & Blessings

Sadhguru



Editorial

Dear Readers,

As the first rays of sunlight crept across the horizon, Sadhguru concluded Mahashivarathri 2009 with the promise “Staying here awake and intense will not go waste... *He [Shiva] is with you.*” It had been a night of exuberance, a night to celebrate Shiva, the Adi Yogi, and at the same time the all-pervading nothingness that is the source of creation. Too unfathomable to grasp, both, the person and the phenomenon unite seemingly irreconcilable extremes, and so did this night. Music, dance and silence, darkness and light, intoxication and awareness, lightness and profundity, austerity and exuberance together made Mahashivarathri at Isha what it is – a unique possibility to use the natural upsurge of energies on this night for one’s ultimate goal. What it takes to get there, Sadhguru explains in *A Free Ride to Liberation*. Whether someone came to seek the Divine or entertainment, whether one just followed the tradition or an inner longing, the beauty of Shiva’s Grace is that it is being showered upon all of them indiscriminately.

On the way to liberation or mukti, purification is an important preparatory step. Sadhguru has devised the *Pancha Bhuta Aradhana* to purify the five elements in the human system. This powerful process will from now on be offered every month at the Dhyanalinga Yogic Temple. We can look forward to more dimensions of the Dhyanalinga being made available by Sadhguru once he withdraws from the “road show” as he himself half-jokingly refers to his extensive tours around the globe to touch as many lives as possible.

Sadhguru’s engagements in the past month included a global leadership event in Chennai as well as speaking invitations at and around the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland before he returned to the Ashram to commemorate Viji’s Mahasamadhi anniversary. Read about all this and more in this month’s *Happenings*.

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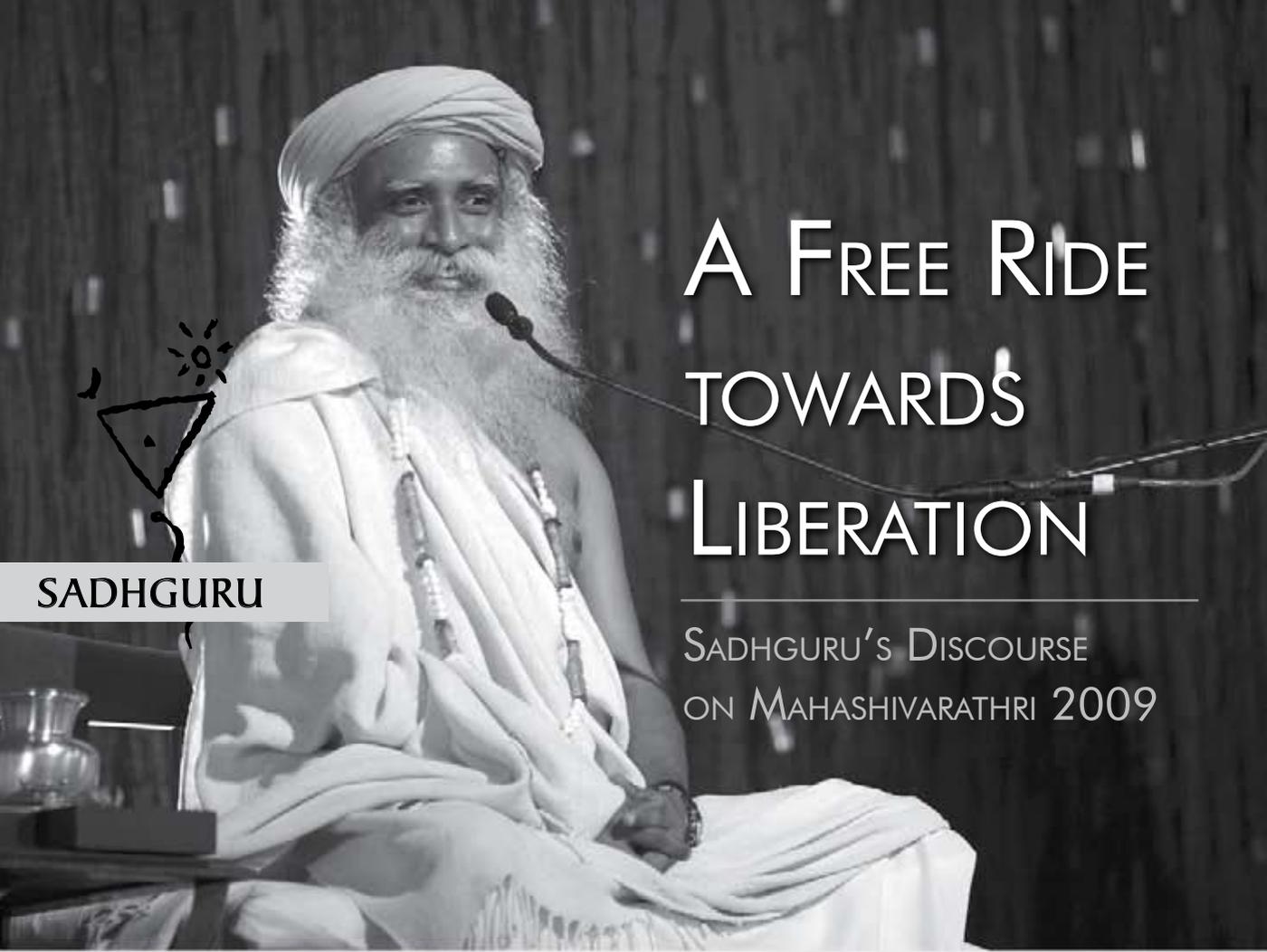
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A FREE RIDE TOWARDS LIBERATION

SADHGURU

SADHGURU'S DISCOURSE
ON MAHASHIVARATHRI 2009

I am not a devotee of Shiva... If you want to be a devotee, a lover or a fan, you make certain choices. I had no choice. So I am neither Shiva's fan nor a lover, nor a devotee. Probably the only appropriate description would be that I was enslaved by him. [Laughs] ...No choice was offered. This bondage, this enslavement, which has been the source of my liberation, is and forever will be the sweetest aspect of my life. Odd words from me... [Laughs] It's a confession. [Laughs]

When we say "Shiva" in the yogic culture, we do not refer to him as a god. He is seen as the *adi yogi* or the first yogi, one who transmitted yoga in every possible form. This yogi, this mystic above all mystics, his work, his outpouring of knowing, his immense grasp of every dimension of life and above all his compassion have bred a whole tradition. If you are willing to look at it, any dimension of spiritual knowledge in any part of the world in some way can

be traced back to that spine of knowing that Shiva created.

This great being, if you look at the depth and dimension of the work that he did, is simply immeasurable. This is one being for whom substantial words of acknowledgement have not been invented yet. The depth and dimension of what he has done, how it rolls on and continues to influence and grip our lives is indescribable. It is too fantastic to be described or praised.

When we say "Shiva," we are seamlessly moving from one aspect to another. One is, we are referring to the man, the *adi yogi*. Essentially, the word Shiva means *that which is not*. *That which is* is creation; *that which is not* is the basis of creation. For thousands of years, always in the yogic tradition, we have described the cosmos as an ever expanding process. After many years of struggle, slowly modern science

has arrived at a point where they say it is an endless creation. Only *that which is not* can be endless. *That which is* is bound to have a beginning and an end. So when we say “Shiva,” we are also referring to that dimension which is absolute nothingness, stillness. Today is a dark night; if you look up in the sky, generally most people will only see the stars, but the most dominant aspect out there is vast emptiness. It is in the lap of this emptiness, it is in the lap of this nothingness which we refer to as Shiva that the whole creation happens and dissolves. For logical minds, it is a struggle to decipher when we are talking about the man, and when we are talking about the absolute nothingness. For those who come from an inner experience, there is no distinction between the two, an individual person and vast nothingness. How can there be no distinction? – That is how it is. And that is why people are struggling to know it. If the individual person and the limitless expanse of the universe were different, you would have deciphered it by now; you have enough intellect to do that. But because they are not different, you cannot differentiate. Because you cannot differentiate, you are struggling to know through the simple process of mind.

So the only real option that one has if one really wishes to know, is to open up a different dimension of perception, to open up a different dimension of vision, to raise one’s system to the highest possible voltage so that everything is *on*. Today [*Mahashivarathri*¹] is a tremendous opportunity, because nature itself is assisting you towards this possibility. Everything that we do, either here or anywhere in the world – whether a spiritual process is done by us at Isha or by anybody – knowingly or unknowingly, in some places consciously, in many places unconsciously, all that they are trying to do is somehow increase the voltage. Unless this piece of life reverberates with a higher dimension of intensity, there is no question of higher dimensions of perception. If you raise this system to its peak intensity, then you have a completely new dimension of perception. It is because of this that when you have this level of perception, we say you have not two eyes, but three. It is because of this, Shiva has been referred to as *Trinetra*, *Triyambaka*, *Mukkanna*

and many other names like this, just to describe that his perception is not limited to the two eyes. These two eyes can only see the physical dimension of life. When we say physical, your physical form or the one of the people around you is an accumulation; it is just the food that you have eaten, it is just a piece of this planet that you have gathered, which you will anyway have to put back one day.

So, if you go just by these two eyes, all you will see is what people have accumulated. But you will never really meet them, you will never really see them, you will never really know them. You may know something about the nature of their body, the nature of their mind and emotion – which is all acquired, which can be shed anytime, if you are willing, right now. You could be here for a thousand years, not knowing anything about yourself or any other life form that is around you, because as long as your experience of life, as long your perception, as long as your vision is limited to these two eyes, the physical is all you can see. The physical is like the peel of a fruit. It is only a covering.

When I was a little boy, I just sat in the house; people were moving up and down, I didn’t see anybody, I just saw blobs of energy moving around. I was supposed to be studying, but I could stare at nothing forever. [*Laughs*] Any number of times, my father came and talked to me, he was saying so many things but I neither saw nor heard him. I just stared at something else in him. I never saw the person, the body that he is, the form that he is, his words – I simply stared.

And I went to school and stared. I just stared at everything without saying anything; I had no comments to make about anything, I simply stared at everything because what I saw there was so phenomenal, it was not worth listening to them. Whatever history or mathematics or science they were teaching did not mean anything to me, I was just staring at them – I think many times to a point of their discomfort.

Today is a possibility that we can rev up your energy a little bit, but if you scream and roll, the security will

¹ The night before the new moon in the Hindu month of *Maagha* (February/March) a night-long Satsang with Sadhguru to celebrate the Grace of Shiva

take you away. So you must keep your spine erect and see that energy goes up, not that you go all over the place. If we can only raise the voltage of this life [referring to oneself], if this piece of life [referring to oneself] can reverberate with a little more intensity than the way it is right now, you will definitely have a little better perception of life. How we do it is not the point – *yogaratova*, *bhogaratova*²; but somehow it must happen. That is why we leave it free for everybody to make their own interpretations of Mahashivarathri. For one, it is the day when Shiva attained to his ultimate stillness. For another, it is a day of absolute inclusiveness, for another it is a wedding, for another it is conquest, for another it is the day of the weird. [Laughs]

If you rev up this system to its peak potential, to a higher state of intensity and energy, you will see, every moment of your life you are *on*, with everything. When your energies are feeble, you are always tired of life. People are talking about coming awake in the morning after a good night's sleep – there is really no such thing. Sleeping and sleep walking – that's all I see. When the body is sufficiently rested and you cannot remain in bed anymore, you get up. – That's not coming awake. Coming awake is of a different nature. When you come awake, the limitations of the physical don't bind you anymore. When you truly come awake, the body is just an appendage that you carry; it is not the real thing anymore. Your mind is just a cloud that follows you; it is not the real thing anymore. If you are experiencing your physical body, your thought and emotion as the real thing, then you do not know the real thing. Whatever accumulates this body and mind, if that comes into your perception, if you can simply be here without any will of your own, there is an obscure dimension of energy within you which will naturally take you there.

If you look at this universe or this cosmos, the very earth that you walk upon, the plant life, animal life, yourself, people around you, the air that you breathe, the atmosphere, beyond that – the moon, the many planets, the sun, all the billions of stars and beyond that the vast emptiness...among all that is in your perception right now, which aspect do

you think is closest to something that we can refer to as boundlessness, something which cannot be bound, which is free or liberated? If you go from the smallest to the largest thing, you can very clearly see – only the vast nothingness is beyond boundaries. The obscure dimension of the cosmos is the most free; it is the obscure which is already in a state of liberation. This is not only true with the larger cosmos; this is also true with this limited piece of life [referring to oneself]. There is an obscure dimension of energy within you. If you take away your will, your choices, your conscious ways of choice, if you can simply be here, this obscure dimension of energy naturally moves towards your ultimate liberation. The whole dimension of Shiva, the devotees, the whole tradition, the many different *sadhanas*, million ways of doing this, all are essentially aiming for that – to have a free ride towards liberation, because there is an obscure dimension of energy which has no will of its own but it is naturally moving towards liberation if you do not in any way disturb it. If you do not have any conscious will of your own, it naturally takes you there.

This tradition has bred various types of devotees, and devotion has found many forms of expression; very subtle and gentle expressions, very staunch expressions, extreme expressions and of course the weird is not left out. Devotion essentially means you are making an effort not to have a conscious will of your own. You are making an effort to allow that obscure dimension of energy within you to find its ultimate possibility.

We want to go into a very simple form of meditation. If you want to know the meaning of this meditation, I can tell you, but that will not get you anywhere. If you want to know the science behind it, I can tell you, but still it will not get you anywhere. Knowing more and more about it will not get you anywhere; but if you give yourself to it, it can get you somewhere. It is not your intellect which can make this happen, it is not your education which can make this happen, it is not your belief system which can make this happen. If you become available to it, it takes you there. And that is how every aspect of life is. If you know the composition of this air, if you

² Referring to a Sanskrit Sloka by the Adi Shankara: Either through *yoga*, or through *bhoga*, i.e. either through discipline or through pleasure (one may attain to one's ultimate nature)

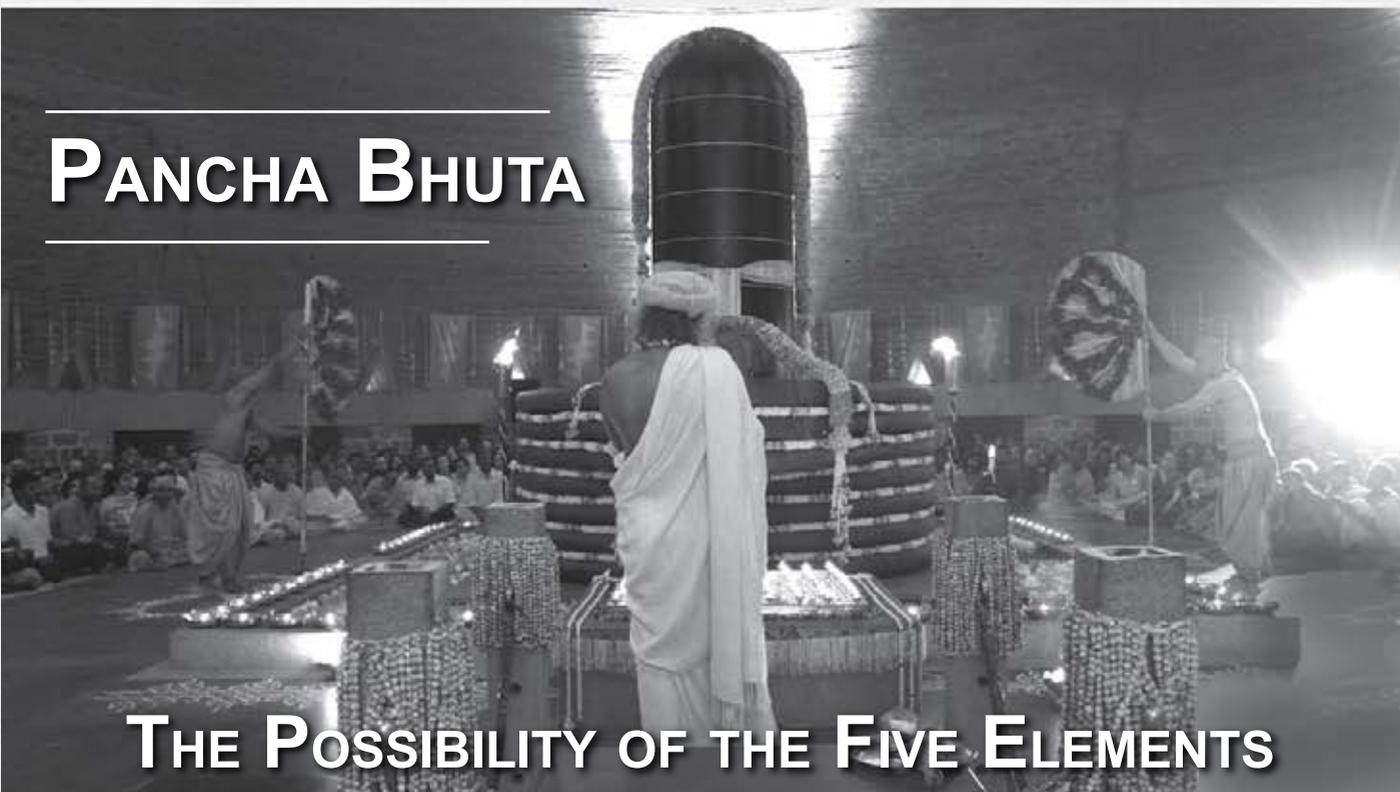
know everything about it, still it doesn't help. Only if you inhale, it sustains life.

You don't know how life happens, but still, aren't we all living? Meditation is just like life; the same parameters, same conditions that life demands. If life has to happen, you have to allow it, otherwise it won't happen. If you try to use your education, your knowledge and your intellect, you will become only repetitive; you will try to do something that you already know. This is the biggest crippling factor, that always you want to know before you do. Life will never work like that. It is just a mental delusion that people believe that first they will know and then they will do. There is no such thing. If you really live strong, you will know. If you go by the nature of your mind, you must understand it is

very repetitive, because the mind is always seeking that which is familiar. When you seek familiarity, you are seeking repetitiveness. When you seek repetitiveness, unknowingly you are getting into a cycle. This is the *karma*. The karmic process is just this that you are getting into a repetitive cycle of your own mind and intellect.

Leave your ideas aside – your ideas of who you are, your education, your culture, your civilization. I want you just as raw life, because only life can know this. Your university education cannot know this, your doctorates cannot know this, your ideologies cannot know this, your belief systems cannot know this; only raw life can know this. I hope you allow this to happen to yourself.

PANCHA BHUTA



THE POSSIBILITY OF THE FIVE ELEMENTS

Whether you want to know pleasure or you want to know bliss, for both your system has to become willing. If you want to know pleasure, your mind should come to a certain state of willingness and your physical body should be in a certain level of sensitivity. If you want to know the bliss of being one with something larger than yourself,

once again your body has to cooperate. When I say body, I refer to the whole system. Whether it is the physical human body or the larger body of creation itself, whether it is this individual body or the larger cosmic body, essentially, they are made of five elements – earth, water, fire, air and space. In this, four elements are the active participants and

the space is the catalytic force. It is in the lap of this boundless space that these four elements play the game. So, the *pancha bhutas* are the five elements of nature. What you call “myself” is just a mischief of these five elements. If you want to know this, if you want to realize the full potential of this mechanism that you call a human being, or if you want to transcend this one and become one with the larger, cosmic mechanism, whether your desire is for the individual or for the universal – for both, unless you have a certain amount of mastery over these five elements (knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously), you can neither know pleasure of the individual self nor the blissfulness of the cosmic being.

In Isha Yoga, every *sadhana* has something to do with organizing these five elements in such a way that you can reap the best out of the individual being and the cosmic nature because both are just a play of these five elements. Whether this individual body, this physical body, becomes a stepping stone for your ultimate possibility or it becomes a hurdle towards that essentially depends on how you are able to deal with these five elements. What you are right now is just a little bit of earth, water, air and temperature – that is all you are. All the ingredients are out there in the garden; it just takes a little divine touch to make these four things into a throbbing human being. But the ingredients for who you are right now are available in the garden. Both your body and your brains are just earth.

The fundamental *sadhana* in yoga to gain mastery over these five elements or to purify the elements in the system in such a way that they cooperate is referred to as *bhuta shuddi*. If these five elements don't cooperate, you can struggle as much as you want, nothing happens. Only with their cooperation, from the basic aspects to the highest aspect, your life becomes a possibility. This human system is like a doorway. A door has two aspects to it – if you are always facing closed doors, for you doors mean that which stops you. If doors are opening up for you, then for you a door means a possibility of entering into something. But it is the same door; which side of the door you are on decides everything about your life, even in terms of time and space. They say, how long a minute is essentially depends on which side of

the bathroom door you are on. People who are inside say, “Just a minute, I'm coming.” For the person who is outside, that one minute is an eternity. So, whether you experience this body as a great possibility or a great barrier simply depends on to what extent these five elements are cooperating with you. Everything that we are doing is in some way aimed towards this but except a small group of people that we have selected and worked with, generally we have not offered specific *sadhanas* towards purifying the elements. This Mahashivarathri, we will be opening up this possibility.

This Mahashivarathri evening, we are doing what is called *Pancha Bhuta Aradhana* in the Dhyanalinga Temple. This is mainly to access that dimension of Grace in the Dhyanalinga. One of the names for Shiva is Bhuteshwara, the Lord of the Elements; that is one aspect of him. We will be opening up that dimension of Grace in the Dhyanalinga every Shivarathri. Every 14th day of the lunar month, this process will be on and we are to create a certain sense of commitment and focus so that it does not become of tourist value. We are allowing only those who register for the process. Every month on that day, people can register for the process and be there. Probably in another three to six months' time, when we feel people are into the process in some way, we will also start specific *sadhanas* for each one of the elements. “Oh, I have enough practices; it's already taking 45 minutes.” This is only for the spiritual nuts, okay? All these practices initially will take time, but after some time, they can become a part of your life. Particularly when I'm at the World Economic Forum, because I'm out the whole day and late into the night and again I'm back early morning, people are asking, “How many hours of yoga do you do?” I tell them, 20 seconds; 20 seconds of yoga I do every day; I never miss that. There was a time I was doing hours of yoga, now I have brought it down to 20 tseconds but I've not reduced my *sadhana* in any way – I just squash the time.

So, initially, these things do take time, but after some time, they can just be made into a part of your life where it doesn't take time as such, it just takes a certain focus. First of all, to sit here and know the water in your body, how it is; the air within you, how it is; the earth within you, how it is; the fire within

you, how it is – if you are aware of this, suddenly you live your life with so much ease, people start thinking you are superhuman. But this is not about being superhuman. I am constantly repeating this everywhere – this is not about being superhuman, this is about realizing that being human is super; it truly is super. Being human is super if only you learn to use your humanity and this human mechanism as a possibility, not as a barrier. So, *Bhuta Aradhana* will be starting in the Dhyanalinga. You know, I'm on the road show around the world. When I retire from the road show, we will open up many aspects of the Dhyanalinga, so that every day, different dimensions of the Dhyanalinga can be available to people because there are so many aspects to it; they are innumerable. But at least a few vital ones can be opened up so that people can do specific *sadhana* and enjoy that.

This is a land which has seen that kind of *sadhana* and that kind of focus, that kind of understanding and that kind of mastery for a very long time. Probably many of you are aware that we have five basic temples for five elements in nature; four in Tamil Nadu, one in Andhra Pradesh. For the five elements in nature, there are five fundamental

temples. These temples were created not for worship but for *sadhana*, so people moved from one temple to the other. Now, you do *sadhana* on earth, then you go to the next temple and do *sadhana* on water, then you go to the next one. Geographically, they are all within the Deccan Plateau. People used to move like this, but now, the connection is not there anymore because the *sadhana* atmosphere has been taken away; that understanding and that mastery is generally missing, but still the temples exist. Some of them still maintain that vibrance and quality; some of them have become weak. They could be easily revived, but they are all in the hands of the state government, so nothing can be done to revive them. So, we will be opening up this possibility here. All of you may not be able to get in because a maximum of only 350 to 400 people will be able to sit there on that day, but every month, it will be available and we will also make it available outside the temple after some time. The Pancha Bhuta Aradhana will be one significant step we are taking on this Mahashivarathri, the 10th year after the consecration.

For more details and registration:

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Reshaping the Future, Globally



Sadhguru at Global Leadership 2020 in Chennai

From 16 to 23 January 2009, 50 high level executives – belonging to four multinational companies – came together in Chennai to take a leap into the future with *Global Leadership 2020*. *Global Leadership 2020* is a program organized by the prestigious Tuck School of Business Administration of Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, USA, with the goal of creating the next generation of global business leaders.

Mr. Vijay Govindarajan, Professor of International Business and the Founding Director of Tuck's Center for Global Leadership, who has been conducting the *Global Leadership Program 2020* for the past eight years, wanted the participants to experience something radically different this year, something that would allow them to gain experiential insights to effectively enhance their leadership skills. With this objective in mind, the organizers called upon Sadhguru to conduct a session for the participants.

The seminar was held at the Taj Connemara Hotel in Chennai where Sadhguru joined the participants on 16th evening for dinner. In no time, his table was surrounded by young businessmen and women who were eager to get answers to various queries sparked by reading *Midnights with the Mystic* – Sadhguru's latest book release in the USA, which had been offered to the participants as recommended literature.

The following morning, Sadhguru addressed a mainly western audience, taking the opportunity to redefine spirituality as a device for Inner Engineering. It is this self-transformation that will serve as the foundation to build great leadership, especially in the present turbulent times, Sadhguru stated. He further explained the importance for global leaders to invest sufficient time in cultivating higher levels of perception and clarity as essential qualities for anyone who manages businesses and people in a multicultural environment. The session concluded

with an interactive question and answer session. The response was overwhelming and most attendees readily took up Sadhguru's offer to participate in a 4-day Yoga program within the retreat, despite the seminar's already tight schedule.

This is what participants shared about their encounter with Sadhguru:

"Great content to focus all of us over-achievers on the broader purpose/meaning of life. Very practical/ implementable in both our professional and personal lives. Truly, one of those life-changing moments."

"Exceptional presence and a totally new point of view. Regardless of how people may or may not react to the spirituality aspect, he spoke many truths, great logic and insight, particularly around self-awareness and how to make best use of this."

"Having had the opportunity to listen to Sadhguru was a real privilege. He was absolutely outstanding. His clarity and wise words really made me reflect. I wish we had spent more time with him."

Overall, it was very promising and inspiring to see how future global leaders are willing to explore a more inclusive and responsible approach towards management, with added focus on human and environmental wellbeing.

Thinking Out of the Box

The World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos traditionally brings together top business leaders, international political leaders, selected intellectuals and journalists to address the world's most pressing issues. In view of the current economic crisis and the threat of global recession, the pressure on the leadership of the world to find solutions is high and advice from someone who has the necessary clarity precious. Not surprisingly, Sadhguru was showered with invitations to address meetings, conferences and sessions, even before this year's Annual Meeting officially started.

Sadhguru at Pre-Davos Conferences in Zurich

His trip to Switzerland started a day early with the Emerging Markets Investors Roundtable in Zurich that gathered about 150 CEOs, members of the investor's community and thought leaders on their way to Davos. As a panelist on two sessions, Sadhguru shared the floor with eminent speakers such as N.K. Singh, Rajendra Pawar, Chairman of NIIT, India and François Barrault, CEO of BT Global Services. The main topic was, of course, the current global financial meltdown and the impact that it would have on the economies of developing countries. Amidst dire predictions for the future from the other panelists, Sadhguru brought the



economic and financial issues back to their human dimension, pointing out that instead of looking at people as markets – whether emerging or developed – we need to look at them simply as people. This will bring about a more inclusive and expansive economy. He went on to explain, “The current crisis is an opportunity for re-evaluating and redefining economic growth according to more inclusive and ecological parameters which will expand human wellbeing to a wider base of people. If the economy is founded on a wider base, the whole structure is bound to have a more solid footing.”

Amidst a sea of dark business suits, Sadhguru immediately found himself at the center of the participants’ attention. When seeing Sadhguru for the first time, one of the conference’s participants spontaneously remarked, “I don’t know who he is, but he is a wonderful man...he is so beautiful.”

Later that day, Sadhguru was slated to address a symposium organized by the Swiss Indian Chamber of Commerce (SICC) on the theme of innovation. Swiss parliamentarian Doris Fiala who had been at Isha Yoga Center last April with a Swiss delegation of parliamentarians introduced Sadhguru to the members of the SICC. The evening started with an address by the newly appointed ambassador of Switzerland to India, Mr. Philippe Welti.

Sadhguru opened his topic “Thinking Outside of the Box” by pointing out that whatever thought we generate, it essentially comes from the data that we consciously and unconsciously collect from outside. “The first condition to think outside of the box is to come out of the bone box” he said (pointing to his

head). “Thought is essentially a projection into the future. Thinking outside of the box needs to be way beyond improvements of what we are doing right now. For that, cultivating the ability to see clearly is essential. “Just as we have moments of activity, we can also stop that activity. The same needs to be achieved with the mind, where one can simply decide when thoughts should be on and when they should be stopped. It is in these spaces in between thoughts that people can achieve maximum clarity of perception.” He concluded by saying that it is essential that everyone invests in developing clarity and that this is something everyone can achieve.

In the discussion that ensued between the panelists, as some of the speakers asserted that one of the best triggers for innovative thinking was crisis, Sadhguru pointed out to the contrary. “Crisis will lead to reaction and the urge of self-preservation becomes dominant. In these kinds of situations, energies are focused on ensuring survival. It is possible that one can design enhanced means of survival but this is not innovative thinking. In times of crisis, we tend to go in survival mode and close the door to anything new. Moments of crisis will spur certain desperate measures which may feel like a certain improvement.” He continued to say, “True out of the box thinking requires a certain state of relaxation where one can simply see. A certain sense of relaxation and focus is needed because in moments where intensity and relaxation come at the same time, that is when your body, your mind and emotions function at their highest peak.” The audience and organizers were delighted by what they were hearing, and what the moderator referred to as thought-provoking remarks.

The conference concluded on a lighter note when in response to a question about improving trade relations about India and Switzerland, Sadhguru jokingly suggested that if Switzerland shared their secret of making chocolate, then India would share the secrets of making chutney. As the otherwise gloomy mood among the participants brightened,

an opportunity to step out to the box and move on to a new level of clarity opened up for them. Whether each individual will pursue this possibility or not will make all the difference now – in their own lives and for all those who are impacted by their decision-making.

No Sustainable Prosperity without Inclusion

Sadhguru at the Davos World Economic Forum 2009



The 2009 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos opened on 27 January 2009 with the ambitious agenda of “*Shaping the Post-Crisis World.*” In view of the state of affairs, one may either regard talking about post crisis as premature – or proactive. The world’s foremost business and political leaders spent five days in Davos looking into the causes that led the world to the current financial and economic meltdown, as well as attempting to draw lessons for the future.

This year, Sadhguru contributed as faculty member in four different sessions. He was also invited to contribute to the shaping and integration of the agenda of the “Faith Community” of the WEF. This inhomogeneous group of global religious and spiritual leaders was asked to redefine its role and contribution at the Forum. Sadhguru suggested setting up a faith multiplex on the internet where

each religion and spiritual organization would provide official information about their faith or teachings. Virtual tours of a mosque, synagogue, church or temple including the option to attend rituals there would be a way not only to know about someone else’s faith in theory but also to almost practically experience it. Sadhguru pointed out that besides the official information put out by the religious and spiritual organizations, there should also be space for people to express criticism.

In view of the main focus of the World Economic Forum, Sadhguru’s message to the business and political leaders was that although the crisis has been very detrimental to many and that people were suffering, the current situation brings an opportunity to reform the fundamentals of our economies. During his session on *Recession and Depression*, he examined the current crisis in terms of opportunity. “The world needs to look at the fundamentals of business and economic activity which should be directed towards developing human wellbeing. We need to stop looking at the world as markets. What are markets? Markets are people. Once you see that what you call as markets are people and communities, your approach is bound to be more inclusive and sustainable. You will see that to create, you cannot simply go about finding outlets for your

products. What is needed is to develop people, educate and train them and empower them with the means to produce the very products they consume.” Sadhguru stressed the need to change the economic model by moving from mass production to bringing production to the masses.

He described in very clear terms the root of the problem and the prevalent mindset today. “The problem with the current economic model is that if the economy does well, we are doomed because of the heavy environmental price we have to pay. But if the economy is not doing well, people get depressed. The need is clearly to establish a sustainable model of development, a goal that can be attained by developing communities where education, training, production and consumption happen in a holistic and wholesome way within the community.”

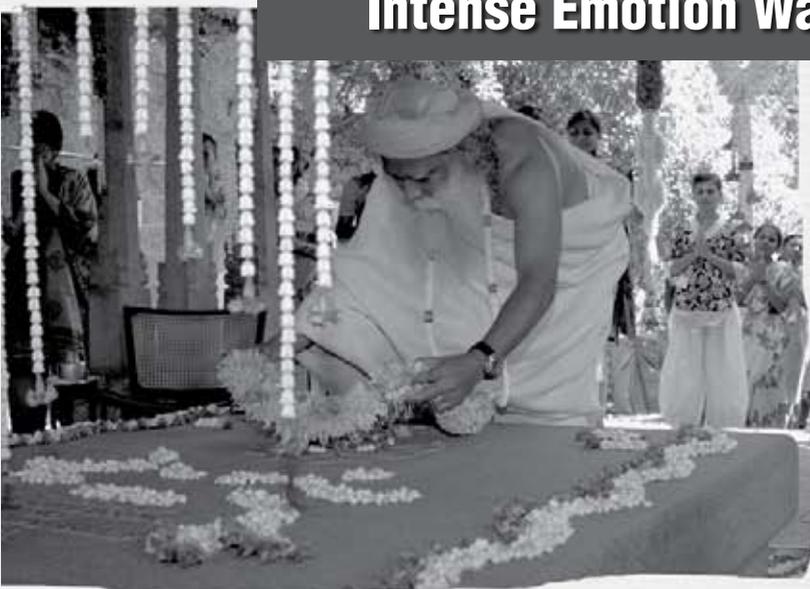
The other aspect emphasized by Sadhguru was that more than ever this crisis is the opportunity to change the way we do things and reduce the ecological footprint of our activity on earth. “At

a time where the traditional economic activity contracts, this is not the time to let go of highly qualified and trained employees. Instead of laying off people because there is no work, let’s employ people’s creativity to explore new avenues of development that had never been looked at before.”

Beside the public meetings, Sadhguru met privately with some of the most eminent leaders in environment, education and scientific research to discuss issues such as making Tamil Nadu a model for developing a completely eco-friendly state, to setting up scientific experiments to demonstrate what meditation can do for raising consciousness.

During these five days, Sadhguru infused the discussions at the World Economic Forum with one underlying theme – the urgent need to create an inclusive global culture where the criteria for every decision and action is to increase human wellbeing for all rather than the pursuit of vested individual interests and shortsighted economic goals.

Intense Emotion Was Her Way



She had chosen the full moon day of the Tamil month of Thai to cast off her mortal frame and attain Mahasamadhi, the ultimate dissolution of the self. On 23 January 1997, Vijji, as Sadhguru’s wife was fondly referred to, left all those who knew her (and those who did not) dumbfound and awed at how easily she attained that which is the supreme goal of any spiritual path. 9 February 2009 marked the 12th

Celebration of Vijji’s Mahasamadhi Anniversary

anniversary of this particular pournami day. Her Samadhi was intricately decked out in flowers all over as residents and guests of Isha Yoga Center gathered for bhajans in tribute to Vijji. In spite of a hectic schedule which had led him to Switzerland and the UK in the previous two weeks, Sadhguru had rushed back to the Ashram just to be there for this event. After laying garlands at Vijji’s Samadhi, he started the chant “Shambho,” the mantra that had become an essential part of Vijji’s life breath. As the last “Shambho” faded, Sadhguru, and along with him everybody else, moved on to the Dhyanalanga for an extraordinary Nadha Aradhana that suited her in its intensity and emotional depth. Sadhguru also joined the subsequent feast for residents and workers at the Biksha Hall, offered

in the true spirit of indiscriminate love and care for all. After finishing his meal, he was seen silently standing and watching everyone eat. His presence throughout the festivities had been overwhelming and uplifting for all those present. The joy was even greater when in addition, a Sathsang with Sadhguru was announced for the evening. On this occasion, he shared his memories of her. The following are excerpts of his talk.

“In the yogic traditions, this day¹ is held very sacred because many beings either chose or got induced into consciously shedding their physical bodies on this day. So many have done this in this tradition on this particular day. Even here at Isha, 12 years ago, we witnessed a great event...which should have been a great event in the society, but it got us into a lot of trouble. That’s been the way of the world – whenever really phenomenal events happen, it gets people into trouble. So we were not spared too. Anyway these 12 years have been so significant in many ways. For Vijji, who had neither any *sadhana* behind her nor did she have any great knowledge, with the simplicity of her emotion and the intensity of her focus towards what she wanted, this happened too effortlessly to a point that though we knew it was coming, still it was a surprise. Even accomplished yogis would go through a little bit of struggle and strategy to do such things; it happened too effortlessly for her.

Three things that she would have been very happy and proud to see are... the glorious way in which the Dhyanalina consecration happened in spite of her absence at that time, and of course everything else that is happening with Isha in the last 12 years. And the last – but for her it wouldn’t have been the least – is that her daughter is more than 18 years of age, she has become a young woman. Before Radhe was born, we happened to visit Kalakshetra² in Chennai and



she desired if we have a daughter, she must go to this school – and today she happens to be in *that* school. That would have been a great event for her.

Today, as an organization, Isha has spread to many corners of the world; but that is not the important thing. The important thing is, compared to any spiritual movement on the planet, you will see more energy bursting out of Isha meditators than anywhere else. If 1000 people sit, at least 600, 700 people are bursting with energy; nowhere else you will see that. That is the biggest achievement. We have a million volunteers; we have gone around the world – that is not the big deal. The biggest achievement is, we are building people with a phenomenal amount of energy. If you bring a little wisdom into your head along with this energy [*participants laugh*], it would do great things. [*Laughs*] Really it would, but... I can infuse energy into you, not wisdom. Wisdom is something one has to earn with daily experience of life. If you don’t learn from every single experience of your life, you will be just like a tree in the early spring; full of green leaves, no flower. No flower or fruit will happen; a lot of green leaves, bursting with life. That is happening – a lot of energy bursting with life; wisdom has to come. [*Laughs*] That cannot be given to you, that cannot be poured into you, that cannot be stuffed into you – that’s something everybody has to earn with daily experience of life. If you make every moment of your life into a learning process, wisdom



¹ Referring to *Thaipusam*, the full moon day on which Vijji attained Mahasamadhi

² Cultural Academy in Chennai dedicated to the preservation of ancient Indian dance and other art forms

will happen. Otherwise you will be like an early spring tree. [Laughs] Lot of leaves – it takes carbon footprints from the planet. You don't know this? It's eco-friendly, but still, a tree should flower..."

Beyond the grateful remembrance of someone who, in the eyes of many, had gone too soon, Viji's Mahasamadhi Anniversary offered inspiration to look ahead and reexamine one's integrity and intensity on the spiritual path.

A NIGHT WITH THE DIVINE

Mahashivarathri 2009 at Isha Yoga Center

Through the years, Mahashivarathri has been established as a grand celebration at Isha Yoga Center. From 250 people under a thatch roof in 1995, to close to 1 million people last year, the Presence and Grace of Sadhguru and Dhyanalinga have made Mahashivarathri at Isha the most powerful and exhilarating experience of its kind.

The night-long Sathsang was held at a new venue this year, about 3 km away from the Dhyanalinga – a beautiful green plateau stretching well over 200 acres, surrounded by the glorious mountainous biosphere that is nowadays inseparably connected with the name Isha Yoga Center. The main reason behind this shift of venue was that around 1 million people were expected to take part in the festivities this year – and these expectations were met if not generously exceeded!

By the morning of 23 February, the plain terrain was transformed into a showcase of amusement park

attractions, food and craft stalls that were set up for the occasion. The main *pandal* was large enough to fit over 50,000 seats. At the center of it spread a fairly wide, 7-foot-deep trench that led all the way to the stage area. It later served as a path for the devotees to go for the *Pada Arpanam*¹ and be in proximity to Sadhguru for a moment.

By 6 o'clock in the evening, the venue was already filled with over half a million people, whilst another 10,000 were gathered around the Dhyanalinga Yogic Temple. Around 600 of them had the great privilege of being part of the first *Pancha Bhuta Aradhana*. Embedded in an invigorating progression of sounds and movement, this powerful process performed by Sadhguru over the Dhyanalinga evoked the pure essence and energy of each of the five elements, and culminated into a shower of grace palpably experienced by all those present.

By 7 pm, an ocean of people was silently gazing at the

¹ An opportunity for devotees to offer their pranam at a stone imprint of Sadhguru's feet displayed next to the stage

dais, eagerly awaiting the arrival of Sadhguru. The first lights revealed a group of Bramhacharis sitting perfectly still, intensely focused and looking intently towards the crowd, surrounded by several musicians of Sounds of Isha. The thumping drums began to play with rising intensity when suddenly, three Swamis appeared on stage to perform an enthralling fire dance. Suddenly, everything dropped into the sound of an enigmatic pad, followed by the flute which slowly led into an exuberant and powerful rendering of *Nirvana Shatakam*².

By 7:20, Sadhguru graced the audience with his Presence and thus began the night-long Sathsang which was not only celebrated at the Velliangiri Foothills near Coimbatore, but in over 70 Isha centers around India, and telecast live over satellite and internet for millions more worldwide for all to experience the “Great Night of Shiva.” Sadhguru described this night as a wonderful possibility where one can raise one’s system one notch and go a long way in life.

The Gundecha Brothers, India’s leading *dhrupad*³ singers, seemed to translate the peacefulness, meditateness and powerful energy that was present on that night, their voices carrying the crowd into a realm of deep devotion and abandon. This set the perfect tone for the first meditation of the evening, which Sadhguru introduced by saying: “There is an obscure dimension of energy within you. If you take away your will, your choices, your conscious ways of choice, if you can simply be here, this obscure dimension of energy naturally moves towards your ultimate liberation. The whole dimension of Shiva, the devotees, the whole tradition, the many different *sadhanas*, million ways of doing this, all are essentially aiming for that—to have a free ride towards liberation, because there is an obscure dimension of energy which has no will of its own but is naturally



moving towards liberation if you do not in any way disturb it. If you do not have any conscious will of your own, it naturally takes you there.” Sadhguru then lead the gathering towards a different dimension with every single utterance of “Shambho.”

Moments after the process was completed, Sounds of Isha came on stage for a tight intermission that sent the crowd into a frenzy with Phalgat Sharma – meditator from UK – tap dancing his soles into ecstasy. Sadhguru then came back on the dais for the much anticipated *Mahamantra* meditation at the midnight *sandhya*⁴. The lights were switched off, allowing the darkness of the night to prevail, and the flames of the fire *urulis*⁵ rose as if to invite all to melt into the glory of the mantra. Sadhguru requested all to keep their eyes open and gaze into infinity. The chanting resonated louder and more and more intensely, and as soon as it stopped, only a moment of silence separated everyone from the roaring drums of Sounds of Isha, who came back on stage along with the Bramhacharis for an even more powerful rendition of the *Nirvana Shatakam*.

The celebrations carried on with the lively music of Indian Ocean, who already performed at Isha Fest 2005 and at a special fund raising event for Mahima in the United States. The meticulousness about each and every technical aspect of the stage that they expressed during their rehearsal was perfectly justified by the impeccable performance they offered. The band Naadbrahma carried along the same vibe, entrancing the crowd



with their rhythmic resilience and soulful tunes.

Sounds of Isha came back for a finale, featuring two special guests, Shri Deepan Chakravarthy and Smt. Srilekha Parthasarathy who each sang two exclusive songs specially written and composed for the occasion, before leaving the mike to crowd favorites by Sounds of Isha such as *Bam Bhole* and *Celebration* – which were intensified even further as Sadhguru started dancing amidst the people and even jumped in to join the people who were calling out his name from the Padam Pooja clearing!



wonderful way. He also recognized the audience “who kept this night a true high-voltage night.” Sadhguru concluded with the story of why the Velliangiri Foothills are known as the “Kailash of the



Before anyone knew it, 12 hours had already passed. Sadhguru acknowledged all the musicians, government departments, residents, Brahmacharis and everyone else who worked tirelessly to make this event happen in a

South” and how Shiva, a little pained by his inability to fulfill a certain devotee’s wish, had gone up these mountains and spent some time there. But to the crowd’s disappointment, Sadhguru chose to keep the story for another “episode” of Mahashivarathri, ending with the powerful statement: “Staying here awake and intense will not go waste... He [Shiva] is with you.”



² Sloka written by the Adi Shankaracharya, summarizing the concept of Advaita Vedanta, or non-duality

³ Oldest surviving style of music in the Hindustani musical tradition

⁴ Transition periods of the day (sunrise, noon, sunset, midnight)

⁵ Traditional South Indian vessel, usually made of bronze

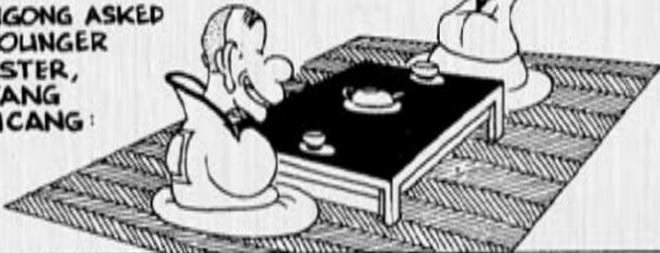
**GRASPING
EMPTINESS**



**CAN YOU
GRAB A HOLD OF
EMPTINESS ?**

SURE.

**SHIGONG ASKED
A YOUNGER
MASTER,
XITANG
ZHICANG :**



**WELL, LET'S
SEE YOU DO
IT.**

OKAY.



**IS THAT IT ?
YOU DIDN'T GET
ANYTHING !**

**THEN HOW
WOULD YOU
DO IT ?**



**LIKE
THIS !**

**OW!
THAT
HURTS !
THAT
HURTS !**

**SINCE
MATTER IS EMPTY,
AND EMPTINESS IS
MATTER, GRABBING A
PIECE OF EMPTINESS
ISN'T AS CLOSE TO
REALITY AS JUST
REACHING OUT AND
GRABBING THE OTHER
PERSON'S
NOSE IS.**



*This eternal mischief
That these elements five did make
What a simple trap you set
To see no man can ever know rest*

Sadhguru

