

śrī vidyā

Sri Vidya

In the beginning was the One (Kaivalyam), unmanifest and unqualified. It desired to be many. That first desire (Kama) is indeed the Mother of this Universe. When the manifold universe emerged from the One, the original desire pervaded all its manifestations. Tracing the roots of the inner most desire in ourselves (the microcosm) is the surest and safest path to reach Her. The desire to know her comes by Her Grace. She reveals Herself as the Universe and its Mother at the same time, to all who so desire. The mysteries of the Universe remain mysteries no more. For the knowledge She bestows on Her devotees is that of the Supreme Self, otherwise known as SriVidya.

The presiding deity of SriVidya is Kamakshi, One with desire in Her eyes. She kindles the fire of desire in Her devotees by just a mere glance. Desire is the source, controlled expression of desire is the medium and complete satiation of desire the vision of Her lotus feet. The desire is to be One again, unqualified and absolute; the desire is to embrace all that is perceived different from ourselves allowing us to become rooted in our true nature. It is an experience of being self sustained, where desires rise continually, but get satiated continually as well - a notion expressed so well by the interlocking triangles of the Sri Yantra. It conveys the fountain of continuous and self-sustaining bliss to those who dwell upon its true meaning.

It is only natural, therefore that man seeks to compliment himself in his pursuit for completeness in woman and vice versa. Searching for happiness and pleasure in external objects alone gives us glimpses of the lost paradise but falls short of the promise of everlasting happiness. Happiness must come from within, as SriVidya reveals, and is to be obtained by a search within. Our soul mate, the Vidya proclaims, lies in the core of our being, often referred to as Kundalini in Shakta parlance. Kundalini Shakti is symbolically represented as Serpent Power, or a slender and bewitchingly beautiful woman, depending on the aspirant's perspective!

The yogic branches of SriVidya emphasize the importance of Kundalini and describe the purpose of saadhana as the tantra or technique of unleashing its potent powers. Tantrics have their

share of poets among their creed, who choose to describe all of SriVidya as essentially the reunion of the beautiful Shakti with her beloved Lord, Shiva. It should be apparent to the reader by now that Kundalini is none other than the Mother, the embodiment of all desires, mentioned at the very onset of this piece. She resides at the seat of desire, personifying desire itself. Her arousal, ascent to the crown of the head, and merging back with the Bindu completes the cycle of creation, sustenance and dissolution at the microcosmic level.

- *Satyananda*

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