

[Angelic Beings Are a Living Reality](#)

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In Bali, as elsewhere in the Hindu world, the Deities are a potent presence, impacting every part of life

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Devotion to God and the Gods of Hinduism is alive in Bali, as our fascinating feature this month proves. We realized this during a visit in this beautiful island country while attending an International Hindu Conference. The music, the art, the drama and dance all reflect some aspect of spirituality. It is in Bali that an entire realm of knowledge and practice begins at an early age for children. It ranges from the childlike wonder of the unknown and the mysterious to the deep reverence which comes with understanding of esoteric interworkings of the three worlds. The Hindu view of existence is composed of three worlds. The First World is the physical universe; the Second World is the subtle astral or mental plane of existence in which the devas, angels and spirits live; and the Third World is the spiritual universe of the Mahadevas, "great shining beings," the Gods. In the pantheon of Gods there are said to be three hundred and thirty-three million. The religious life is to invoke the harmonious working together of these three worlds.

The most prevalent expression of worship comes as devotion to God and the Gods. Hindus believe in one Supreme Being. The plurality of Gods are perceived as divine creations of that one Being. So, Hinduism has one supreme God, but it also has an extensive hierarchy of many, many Gods. Still there are many who view the Gods as mere symbols, representations of forces or mind strata, or as various personifications generated as a projection of man's mind onto an impersonal pure Beingness. In reality, the Gods are individual soul beings, and down through the ages ordinary men and women, great saints and sages, prophets and mystics in all cultures have inwardly seen, heard and been profoundly influenced by these superconscious inner plane beings. Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed Deity, is such a being. He can think, just as we can think. He can see and understand and make decisions so vast in their implications and complexity that we could never comprehend them with our human faculties and understanding.

These intelligent beings have evolved through eons of time and are able to help mankind without themselves having to live in a physical body. These great Mahadevas, with their multitudes of angelic devas, live and work constantly and tirelessly for the devotees of Sanatana Dharma, protecting and guiding them, opening new doors and closing unused ones.

It is said in the Rig Veda, "He who is beyond all exists as the relative universe. That part of Him appears as sentient and insentient beings. From a part of Him was born the body of the universe, and out of this body were born the Gods, the Earth and men."

As the Gods are individual soul beings, so too is humankind. The soul body is a body of light which evolves and matures into the likeness of Purusha Brahman, just as the seed of a tree one day becomes a tree. Within this body of light and consciousness exist, without beginning or end, the two perfections of Parabrahman and Satchidananda.

Satchidananda is the superconscious mind of the soul body--the mind of Brahman. Parabrahman is the inmost core of the soul. Many of the village Deities in Bali and other countries who protect children and crops are actually souls living close to Earth in the astral plane, still functioning through the astral female or male body that is a duplicate of their last physical body.

It is in the temple that the three worlds meet and devotees invoke the Gods. The temple is built as a palace in which the Gods live. It is the home of the Gods, a sacred place unlike every other place on the Earth. Hindus associate themselves with these Gods in a very sensitive way when they approach the temple. Though the devotees rarely have psychic vision of the Deity, they are aware of the God's divine presence. As they approach the sanctum sanctorum, they are fully aware that an intelligent being, greater and more evolved than themselves, is there. Their Gods are intently aware of them, safeguarding them, fully knowing their inmost thoughts, fully capable of coping with any situation the devotees may mentally lay at their Holy Feet. It is important that the Deity be approached in this way--conscious and confident that the needs are known in the inner spiritual worlds.

The physical representation of the God, be it a stone or metal image, a yantra or other sacred form, simply marks the place

that the God will manifest in or hover over in His etheric body. It can be conceived as an antenna to receive the divine rays of the God or as the material body in or through which He manifests in this First World. When we perform daily puja, we are attracting the attention of the devas and Mahadevas in the inner worlds. That is the purpose of a puja; it is a form of communication. To enhance this communication, groups build temples and individuals establish altars in homes. Both become charged or magnetized through our devotional thoughts and feelings which radiate out and affect the surrounding environment. Soon the presence of these divine beings--and this radiation from them is known as shakti--can be felt. Shakti is a vibration of spiritual prana coming from the God and devas through the temple and home shrine. It is first experienced in the simple physical glimpse of the form of the Deity in the sanctum. Later that physical sight gives way to a clairvoyant vision or to a refined cognition received through the sensitive ganglia within the nerve system: the chakras. Through these receptors, a subtle message is received, often not consciously. Perhaps not immediately, but the message that the shakti carries from the Mahadeva manifests in the life of the devotees. This is the way the Gods converse. It is a communication more real than the communication of language that is experienced each day.

Visiting a Hindu temple, receiving the shakti from the majestic Gods, can altogether change the life of any individual. It alters the flow of the pranas, or life currents, within the body. It draws awareness into the deeper chakras. But the change is slow. The devotee lives with the experience for months and months after visiting the temple. The devotee comes to know and love the Deity. The God extends sublime psychic assistance, but never tests or punishes a devotee. Shakti

coming from the great temples of the Gods can change the patterns of karma dating back many past lives, clearing and clarifying conditions that were created hundreds of years ago and are but seeds now, waiting to manifest in the future. Through the grace of these loving Gods and Goddesses, those seeds are removed, if the manifestation in the future would not enhance the evolution of the soul.

If a temple or shrine is not available for worship, then it is possible to establish a communication with the Deity through visualization. Take for example, Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed governor of nature, dharma, science and knowledge. Worship of Lord Ganesha is immediate; to think of His form is to contact Him. Close your eyes for a second, visualize His murthi or form, and a direct communication has begun. This is like punching in a code on a computer terminal which gives immediate access to a central supercomputer. All information and answers to every question are now available. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, we can use the computer terminal of our brain and code in the divine image of Lord Ganesha. We have complete access to His grand computer mind which has been programmed over eons of time and naturally encompasses the intricacies of the universe in all its ramifications and simplicities.

Hindus look to God and the Gods for very practical assistance--from affairs of employment, family and heart to knowledge both secular and superconscious. Devotees devoutly believe that the Gods, from their dwelling in the Third World, are capable of consciously working with the forces of evolution in the universe and they could then certainly manage a few simpler problems. Devotees devoutly believe

that the Gods are given to care for humankind on the planet and see them through their tenure on Earth, and that their decisions are vast in their implications. Their overview spans time itself, and yet their detailed focus upon the complicated fabric of human affairs is just as awesome.

The ancient Rig Veda (10.151.4-5) intones, "The Gods, led by the spirit, honor faith in their worship. Faith is composed of the heart's intention. Light comes through faith. Through faith men come to prayer, faith in the morning, faith at noon and at the setting of the sun. O faith, give us faith!"