Anatomy of Consciousness
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Anatomy of Consciousness

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When devotees of Swami Muktananda suggested that HINDUISM TODAY publish an article in this issue commemorating the October 2nd, 1982, Mahasamadhi of this great soul, we like the idea. Party because we liked the Baba so much. Your publisher and editor first met Swami Muktananda when we pilgrimaged through India with 75 seekers in 1972. Who could not be delighted to be with this remarkable master at his country ashram outside Bombay? With such love he let us feed his little elephant, and with his own skilled hands prepared part of the day's lunch. He spoke to us through his translator, Prof. Jain, but it was impossible to miss his effortless depth or to ignore the singularly serious sadhana that those gathered around him were immersed in.

As we left Ganeshpuri, our two buses bounced brutally along the dusty road, both drivers leaning without reprieve upon howling horns (as required by Indian vehicular law). One of the intrepid pilgrims turned to Subramuniyaswami to ask the question on more modest minds, "Gurudeva, do you think Baba is fully enlightened?" It's not a query he would usually answer, but in this will never forget, about a Satguru we will forever remember.

In planning our editorial this month, we thought to focus on something dear to the modern siddha Baba Muktananda. But so much was central to his way: the non-dual Self within all, the primacy of disciplines rightly performed, the joy of innerness, the centrality of the Guru, and the necessity of meditation. We chose another: the certainly of the ascent of Kundalini into Siva consciousness.

One of the generous gifts which Sanatana Dharma gives to mankind is its acceptance of us wherever we may find ourselves on the path. Are you an inquiring

agnostic, trusting more in incisive skepticism than in unprovable spiritual claims, testing each step to be sure you're on solid ground? No problem. Are you a devotee of doubtful discipline? A seeker struggling to keep the goal in sight? An uncelebrated but saintly soul? No problem. Hinduism has a place for everyone. Because there is no dogma, there are no heretics in Hinduism. No one lives outside the fold, not even the most malicious, malevolent and malignant of men.

Anyone who has inquired into world faiths knows this is unorthodox approach. It is more common to find that where we don't believe, we don't belong. Hinduism has not adopted this view. It does not exclude outsiders, not because it is compassionate beyond belie. It does so because it does not see outsiders. It sees all men as whole, as evolving. Part of this comes from the somewhat esoteric understanding of consciousness, its evolution and its expression in human experience, especially the ascent of the Kundalini or serpent power through the charkas.

Everyone knows charkas, those spinning wheels of energy which lie roughly along the spine, each radiating its unique color, sound and vibratory state of consciousness. If the spinal channel is likened to an elevator, the charkas are the various floors in the body-building. In many building it is usual that the basement is dark and enclosed, the first floor busy with activity and the penthouse refined, offering a wide view of the city below. Similarly in man. The darker states of mind are reality when we live on the lower floors; the mental-emotion realms engage us while we inhabit the main building; and the divine, superconscious regions are the experience for those who have reached the supernal upper stories. God, the landlord, any prefer the penthouse, but he manages the whole building.

One assumption of the chakra system is that the man is complete, containing within himself the whole. As Baba wrote: "You are the entire universe. You are in all, and all, is in you. Sun, moon and stars revolve within you." Everything is within man: fear and superstition when consciousness falls toward the feet, inspiration and illumination when it rise above the head. And religion is not just the final climb to the summit, it is the entire journey from bottom to top. Here, then, is the world's most simple and simplistic chart on the charkas through which Kundalini rises. But remember, it is all functioning already within each one, only awaiting our recognition, our realization.

Awakened Soul: 7th Chakra

A few souls reach the Sahasrara Chakra at the crown of the head, and fewer still live there regularly. From this mountaintop the liberated ones in illuminated communion with the inmost Self, the formless, timeless, spaceless Absolute.

Yogic Seer: 6th Chakra

The Ajna Chakra or Third Eye is the seat of divine sight. Yogis sustain and deep mediators achieve the level of consciousness from which they see God everywhere, ganging access to the many levels of superconsciousness, seeing into subtle worlds of light.

Compassionate Sage: 5th Chakra

The Vishuddha Chakra at the throat is the center of love and expressiveness. Those who live at this are great exemplars, selfless souls who speak with profound intuition. Mystical poets and virtuosos in the arts function in this consciousness.

Knowing Teacher: 4th Chakra

The Anahata Chakra near the heart is the center of cognition and direct knowing. Those who have reached this realm, with their special insight into many fields of human knowledge, are mankind's guides and counselors, mentors and problem solvers.

Strong-Willed Achiever: 3rd Chakra

The Manipura Chakra at the solar plexus is the hub of willpower. Accomplished men and women - whether athletes, managers, artisans or aides - problem at high levels mentally and physically when living in this center of energy, discipline and endurance.

Thoughtful Intellectual: 2nd Chakra

The Svadhishthana Chakra at the level is the home of reason and mental ability. Educated people have awakened this center of logic and analysis, and the world's great intellects have mastered it. It is the pundit's dwelling, the practical person's refuge.

Well-Informed Specialist: 1st Chakra

The Muladhara Chakra at the base of the spine is the abode of memory, which is the foundation of all human knowledge. It is also the center of our instincts: survival, sexuality and others. These instincts must be harnessed to keep above the lower chakras.

Young Soul

As there are seven chakras above, so there are seven below the Muladhara, from the tights to the feet. People living in states of fear, jealousy, hatred, envy, lust, greed, guilt and melancholy are functioning in this lower realm, called the Naraka.

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