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Ardhanarishvara - the Dual Nature of the Cosmos

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The concept of Prakriti and Purusha is one of the most important aspects of Hindu philosophy. This has been a matter of discussion from time immemorial, what with different schools of philosophical thought, interpreting it in different ways. We now throw light on this Prakriti-Purusha phenomenon, describing its origins and existence right from Indian mythology, to how it is still very much valid in the present day world.

Prakriti and Purusha - How they came to be

The entire concept of Prakriti and Purusha in Hindu philosophy came into existence during the time of Kapila Muni. There are no precise records of Kapila Muni's life and times. But Lord Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita, states, "I came as Kapila Muni before." According to records, Sri Krishna took His avatar (incarnation) in the year 3000 BC. Obviously, then, Kapila Muni must have lived at a time much before that. Kapila Muni is even now considered an enlightened sage and a philosopher of very high status.

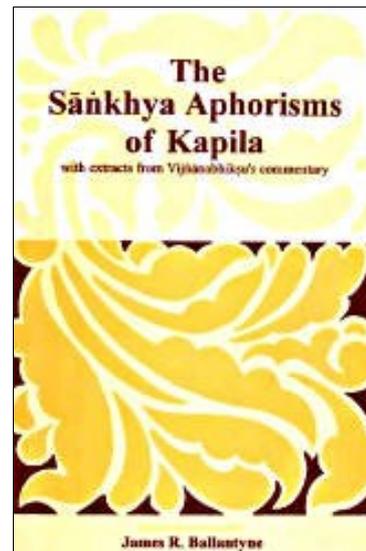
Kapila Muni created the Sankhya Sutras, which later became part of his Shad-darshanas or six branches of philosophy. This Sankhya philosophy discusses the concept of Prakriti-Purusha in great detail.

The Sankhya philosophy

The word "Sankhya" literally means "number". This vast system expounds the twenty-five principles based on which the Universe maintains itself. The very anchor of the Sankhya philosophy is the aspect of dualism in this Universe. This dualism is not to be confused with the most common Christian perception of good versus evil. Neither is it the Dvaita philosophy in Hinduism, where God and the devotee are perceived as two different individuals, separate from each other.

The Sankhya philosophy talks about the clear distinction between the Prakriti and the Purusha, the two aspects that cause the universe to behave in a certain way. According to this school of thought, the Prakriti is the material cause of this universe, whereas, the Purusha is the efficient cause of the universe.

The Sankhya philosophy states that both Prakriti and Purusha are Sat (good and real) and both are Anaadi (without a beginning) and Ananta (without an end - that is, infinite). The



**THE SANKHYA APHORISMS
OF KAPILA**
(Courtesy: [Exotic India](http://ExoticIndia.com))

Purusha is detached from the material world, hence is Asanga. Prakriti, as the name implies, is the creator, the doer. Hence, the core implication of the Sankhya philosophy is that this universe does not need any intelligent Creator to run it efficiently.

Prakriti

The term "Prakriti" means the "one that is primary". Prakriti comes before everything else. This word is a combination of the words "Pra", which means before and "Krit", which implies, to make. The Prakriti is the One pradhana - the main root, which anchors the entire universe. It is the root of all that is ever created or ever occurs in the universe. Prakriti never emerged from a cause, but it is the cause of all events taking place in this universe. Hence, while Prakriti is itself detached from and independent of everything, all is dependent on it for support.

Prakriti does not apply its creative forces for itself. All that it creates are for the joy of the soul or spirit. Furthermore, Prakriti cannot create anything by itself. Its true power can only be activated in union with Purusha.

Purusha

Unlike Prakriti, the Purusha is only a Drashta or Sakshi (witness) of events in this universe. It merely plays the role of a spectator and does not create anything. This aspect could be compared to a prism, which emits myriad colors only when light is passed through it. Again, unlike Prakriti, Purusha is not material in nature. It does not depend on anything, nor does anything depend on it. Purusha, hence, is far beyond Prakriti and is totally separate from it.

The Purusha is shashvat (ever present, undying) and nirguna or without qualities. It is omnipresent and goes beyond the boundaries of maya (illusion), buddhi (intellect) and the indriyas (senses). It is far beyond time and space and is permanent and immutable. This aspect is also unaffected by the effects of the three Gunas or attributes, namely, Sat (good, pure), Rajas (activity) and Tamas (inactivity, darkness). The Purusha remains unaffected by any and all situations presented by the universe and hence is the Chidrupa or Pure Consciousness.



PURUSHA AND PRAKRITI
(Courtesy: [Exotic India](#))

As we see from the above, therefore, Prakriti and Purusha are completely and distinctively different from each other. Purusha is sentient but inactive, while Prakriti is non-sentient but active. Purusha is the alert, conscious mind, but is Akarta (does not do anything). Prakriti, on the other hand is the Karta (the doer), but at the same time, does not work at the level of consciousness.

The three Gunas affect Prakriti, but they do not sway Purusha. Purusha is always unchanging in nature and hence, it is Achala or static. Prakriti, on the contrary, constantly creates changes in this universe, hence is the dynamic one. Though so diametrically opposite to each other, neither can function efficiently without the other. Prakriti and Purusha have to go hand in hand for the smooth

functioning of this world.

Prakriti and Purusha as the female and male embodiments of the universe

Hindu philosophy sees Prakriti and Purusha as two separate aspects of the Brahman or the Creative Consciousness. While Prakriti is likened to the creative energy and joie de vivre of Mother Nature, Purusha is the consciousness that is the power of Brahman. While Prakriti gives shape to things, Purusha helps manifest them as part of the universal consciousness.

Prakriti works through two levels of being, one higher and the other, lower. The lower level includes the five elements of air, water, fire, earth and ether; mind; reasoning and alter ego. This 'feminine' energy's higher power is the life force, which puts into action the above-mentioned elements. This is the Adibhuta, the one, which exists permanently in this world.



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JOURNEY OF THE COSMOS

At the end of an epoch cycle, all the levels of this energy dissolve into the Universal Prakriti and at the beginning of yet another cycle, it is created yet again. This process goes on and on endlessly. The Purusha silently works to create and maintain all events occurring within Prakriti. According to the Sankhya theory, there is no 'real' and absolute 'destruction'-taking place. There is only evolution and the changes occurring as a consequence of that evolution. What actually happens is that the process of creation, dissolution and quiescence takes place in a constant cycle.

During dissolution, the three gunas are in perfect equilibrium. But the very moment the aspect of Purusha comes into contact with Prakriti, this balance is disturbed and there emerges a state called Vikriti.

From Prakriti arises Buddhi or Mahat or intellect, which gives rise to Ahamkara or ego. Ahamkara creates the mind, the Pancha Indriyas (five senses) and the five organs, namely, feet, hands, mouth, genitals and anus. The internal senses such as the Mind and the Ahamkara work in tandem with the five external senses. Apart from these, there are the Tanmatras which give rise to the five gross elements of earth, fire, water, air and ether. Including these and others, there is a total of twenty-five principles in the Sankhya philosophy.

Here, one should understand that Prakriti has no role to play, other than creating all for the pure enjoyment of Purusha. After showing the latter all the joys in this universe, Prakriti also aims to free Purusha, liberating it entirely of worldly matters.

Hence, Prakriti, which is material in nature, comes into contact with the self or the soul - the Purusha - and begins its cycle of evolution thus. The self, entrapped in this material world, can liberate itself only by understanding how different it truly is from the nature of Prakriti. The Purusha is liberated the minute it learns to observe all events, without getting caught up in the entire experience.

Yet another interpretation of Prakriti and Purusha



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THE COSMIC TRUTH

There are several interpretations of Prakriti and Purusha in Hindu philosophy. Yet another one is that which likens Prakriti to the mind and the physical body with all its different parts and organs. The Purusha, on the other hand, is the pure, ego-free, divine Self, residing inside the body. This is a mere observer of the events occurring in the person's life and does not react to any incident whatsoever. It is the indwelling Soul, the Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient One - the Supreme Self.

The Purusha is also of two types, destructible and indestructible. The former is the Prakriti, while the latter is the higher Self. The Supreme Purusha, however, transcends both these types of Purusha. He is the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Knowledge and the Supreme Light. He is far beyond the Purusha and hence is called the Purushottama.

The Buddhist interpretation of Prakriti and Purusha

In Buddhism, the ancient masters refer to reality in a twofold way, which is much similar to that of the Hindu philosophy.

The Purusha is considered to be the Inner Self or the Indwelling Spirit. This is shorn of all emotion and feeling and is pure consciousness.

The Mulaprakriti, on the other hand, is the Non-Self, something, which existed even before cosmic matter came into being.

Like the Purusha of the Hindu theology, this Purusha too is inactive and non-responsive to events in the world. It only Sees, Perceives and Witnesses. Mulaprakriti, on the contrary, is pure potential action. It is constantly dynamic and undergoes several changes at various levels of being.

The meeting of Purusha with Mulaprakriti tilted the delicate balance, resulting in a form of progressive differentiation, thereby creating the world, as we know it today. The Mulaprakriti, which gives rise to the three gunas, manifests at the levels of the mind and ego, thereby inducing creatures to behave in a certain way. One can free oneself of the clutches of this Mulaprakriti only by understanding the transient nature of this energy and realizing the true power of the imperishable, impermeable Higher Self within. Liberation is bestowed upon the Saadhak (seeker) when he or she realizes that Ultimate Truth and achieves the state of Sunyata (nothingness).

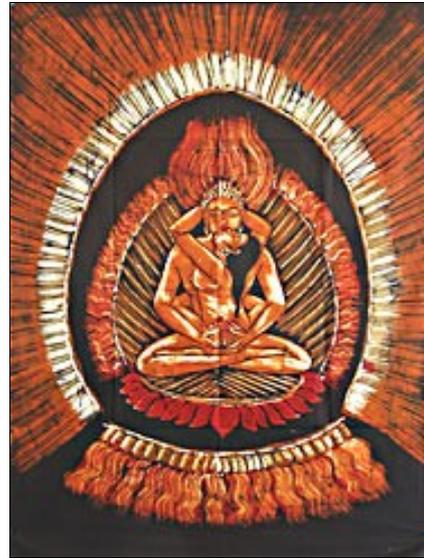
The pure consciousness of the Purusha is very different from and totally unconnected to the action-oriented Prakriti. It is transcendental in nature and has no cognitive or intuitive capabilities and functions only when backed by Prakriti. The prerequisite for any concrete action is the presence of egoity or the gunas, which induce it to act. This field belongs only to Prakriti and is totally absent in the Purusha aspect.

Purusha denotes only Sakshitva (observing events) and not any dynamic action. Prakriti is the awareness or the Chittavritti. In spite of being so different, Purusha and Prakriti need the support of each other in order to function properly. The mind understands and acknowledges the presence of the Purusha within itself, but it cannot become that Purusha. That awareness of the Purusha is verily the activity of the Prakriti within! Hence, there is no Purusha without Prakriti and this applies vice-versa as well.

The Prakriti-Purusha relationship as depicted in Indian mythology

Indian mythology is probably the most extensive in the world. The reason being, several tenets of Hindu philosophy are expounded by means of simple, interesting and educative mythological stories. These stories sometimes even explain high philosophical principles by way of symbolisms. Though a mythological story may sound simple at first glance, a deeper study reveals the true wealth of philosophical content it has to offer.

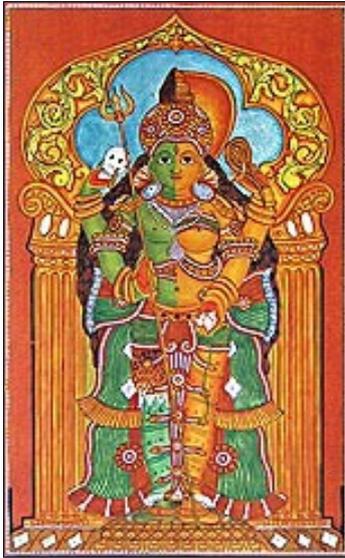
Like everything else, Indian mythology explains this very perplexing concept of Prakriti and Purusha in the simplest fashion, by way of tales and stories of yore. We now examine one of the most oft-repeated stories of Lord Ardhanarishvara and find out how this complicated Prakriti-Purusha concept is explained by way of mythology.



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**DEPICTION OF PURUSHA PRAKRITI
IN BUDDHISM**

The Ardhanarishvara - Prakriti and Purusha in complete harmony!



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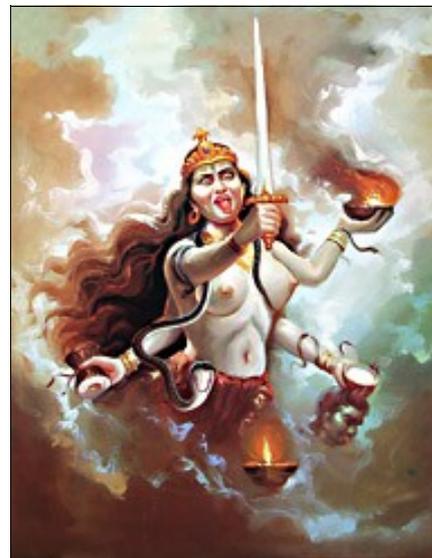
ARDHANARISHVARA

again clothed in another body. Hence, there is no perishing of any creature - it is all only a part of a much larger process of the cycle of life itself.

The concept of Ardhanarishvara best explains the aspects of Prakriti and Purusha. Ardhanarishvara, the Androgynous One, is an aspect of Lord Shiva, whose form is half man and half woman. This image represents a transgendered entity, which depicts how the female principle of Goddess Shakti is inseparable from the male principle of Lord Shiva. Both the Shaktas (devotees of Shakti) and the Shaivas (devotees of Shiva) of the Tantra school of thought believe in the Divine Unity of Shakti with Shiva as the Ultimate Truth. The hermaphrodite form of the Ardhanarishvara, above all else, represents this concept of Oneness or wholeness, which goes far beyond all perceptions of duality and from whose womb all existence emerged.

The Ardha-Nari, which literally means, "half-woman", is considered in Indian mythology, to be the Soul of the World. All creation starts from Him. Life is created from Him and death is considered as a return back to His Kingdom, only to emerge yet

The Shaktas consider the Devi (Goddess) as the very source of all creation. Hence, they consider Goddess Ardhanarishvari to be the Supreme Creator, who split Her own body into half man and half woman. According to them, the Supreme One should be female, as it is the female species that gives birth to all existence. They also believe that this Supreme Goddess is at the center all of all creative processes in this world. The Shaktas depict the Goddess producing Shiva from Her own form, thereby balancing her own feminine qualities with his masculine ones. Devotees of Sri Vidya who worship the Sri Chakra, also believe in this Shakta theory.



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KALI-A FORM OF THE SUPREME GODDESS

The inner meaning of the form of the Ardhanarishvara

Of course, philosophers agree that it is of not much consequence debating if God is masculine or feminine. God is actually an energy that activates all existence and all else associated with that icon are mere symbolisms and nothing more.



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ARDHANARISHVARA

"It was as though two objects were simultaneously perceived in close proximity. In one half it was as white as camphor and in the other half it is as red as red lead. The body of a single unit was highly wonderful. In one-half there was flowing tresses. In the middle of the necklace there was a flower. The body of the crescent moon-crested Lord had silk in one-half that was beautiful with a single anklet, ear-ring and bracelet. The body of the companion of Kubera shone with a single breast".

The first three verses of the Ardhanarineshwara Stotra describe the deity thus:

*"Chaampeyagaurardhashareerakaayai
Karpooragaurardhashareerakaaya|
Dhammillakaayai Cha Jataadharaaya
Namah Shivayai Cha Namah Shivaaya||"*

"Her body is fair like the champa flower;
His body is like camphor.
She has elaborately braided hair decked with pearls;
And he has matted hair.
I bow to Shivah and I bow to Shiva."

*"Kastoorikaakumkumacharchitaayai
Chitaaraja: Punjavicharchitaaya|
Kritasmarayai Vikrutasmaraya
Namah Shivayai Cha Namah Shivaaya||"*

"Her body is sprinkled with musk-vermillion powder;
His body is smeared with funeral pyre ash.
She has the power of sexual desire;
And He is adverse to it.
I bow to Shivah and I bow to Shiva."

The Ardhanarishvara is usually depicted with the left part of His body being female and the right half being male. The female half is shown attired in brilliant blood red and holds a lotus in Her hand. Her skin is lighter and she appears calm and serene. Her whole being is sensuous and she smiles down benignly on her devotees. The male half, on the other hand, is shown draped around the waist in tiger skin. His skin is light blue in color and he exudes a certain power and feline grace that is truly awe-inspiring. Some of the best paintings of this God can be seen at Ellora and the Elephanta caves.

Ancient texts such as the Skanda Purana and the Ardhanarineshwara Stotra describe this amazing form in great detail. The Skanda Purana says:

"It was as though two objects were simultaneously perceived in close proximity. In one half it was as white as camphor



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SHIVA AND PARVATI

*"Chalatkwanatkankananoopuraayai
Paadaabjaraajatphaninoopuraaya
Hemaangadaayai Bhujagaangadaaya
Namah Shivayai Cha Namah Shivaaya||"*

"From Her you hear the movement of tinkling anklets and bracelets.
His lotus feet have glistening anklets of snakes.
She is adorned with golden armlets.
And He has armlets of snakes.
I bow to Shivah and I bow to Shiva."

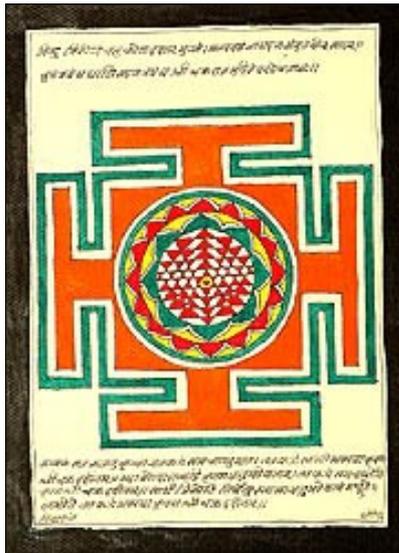
It is to be understood here that the concept of Ardhanarishvara is not merely a combination of the male and female genders. It actually exists in order to educate the Sadhak about non-duality and teaches him to break free from the vicious cycles of base human emotions, biases and other common follies and foibles.

The Rig Veda propounds a beautiful explanation for this concept of Ardhanarishvara. It says that in Aadikaala (at the very beginning), there was only One non-manifest power. This power lived without breath, without emotion and without thought. In other words, there was naught beyond the One. Darkness and inconscience reigned.

Then the Universal Power generated its own energy, giving rise to the Supreme One, who then gave rise to the entire with a mere thought, emanating from its Mind. This One Being felt the desire to become many. This is where the phrase, "Ekoham Bahusyami", comes to be. This means, "That which I only am, shall manifest as many." This was the desire of the Power to emanate forth in the form of Shakti, creating a multitude, and also to emanate as Shiva, to witness that multitude in action!

The Yogini Hridaya states, "When the Supreme Shakti of Her own will takes the form of the universe and looks at Her own throb, then the Chakra (Sri Chakra) comes into being." This creates the two completely opposite, yet complementary, forces of Shakti and Shiva as Prakriti and Purusha respectively. Here, Shiva is the Transcendent One, the Satchitananda, who merely observes and is unmoved by events occurring in creation. Shakti, on the other hand, does not depend on him to perform her functions, but she needs his power to sustain and maintain her creation. So though Shakti is not co-existent with the Purusha, that is, Shiva, she requires his presence to keep the cosmos functioning smoothly.

In the case of Shiva, though he wields unlimited power, he cannot create the universe without the Eternal Life Force of Shakti to back him. Therefore, the concept of Ardhanarishvara clearly brings out the fact that Prakriti (Shakti) and Purusha (Shiva) are nothing without each other and one cannot exist and function in the absence of the other. It also shows that the male is as much female as the female is male! This means that masculinity and femininity are merely attributes working to create the entire bigger picture of the world.



SRI CHAKRA
(Courtesy: [Exotic India](#))

In fact, the Sri Chakra itself symbolically represents this concept. The Bindu right in the center of the Sri Chakra depicts the complete harmony between the consciousness of Shiva and energy of Shakti. It represents a state of oneness and non-duality, where surface differences and biases vanish completely. Hence, in Tantra, worshipping the Sri Chakra in itself is a prayer to the Ultimate Truth. The Bindu is likened to Kameshwara (Purusha) and the Trikona (triangle), to the Kameshwari (Shakti), the Mother of all creation. The union of these two aspects create the Divine Sri Chakra.

The Samayin school of thought

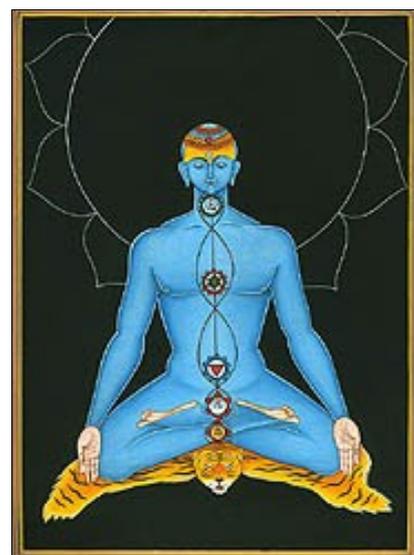
According to the Samayin School, Shiva and Shakti are actually one. They become Kameshwara and Kameshwari respectively, so as to continue with the process of srishti (creation), sthithi (preservation) and samhaara (destruction). It is interesting to note that this school regards Shiva as Dakshina Murthi. Here, Dakshina is a female aspect, which has the power to unfold and manifest via its many creations. When this form comes into contact with the male Murthi, it becomes an Ardha Nari (half woman) by itself!

Hence one could say that the Brahman (creative consciousness) is static Shakti and the Shakti is the dynamic side of Brahman.

The Ajneya Chakra

There are seven charkas or spiritual centers in our subtle body, through which the Kundalini or the Divine Serpent rises, finally resulting in the blossoming of the highest chakra, the Sahasrara, situated in the head region. One of the charkas, the Ajneya Chakra is situated right in the middle of the eyebrows. This point is considered very vital, as it is a meeting point of the naadis (psychic channels), Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. The Ajneya Chakra is the chakra of the mind and hence, controls the powers of understanding, reasoning and intuition.

This chakra is the meeting point of all vital spiritual faculties in the body and is presided over by the deity, Ardhanarishvara, also referred to as Shukla-Mahakaala.



SEVEN CHAKRAS IN THE HUMAN BODY
(Courtesy: [Exotic India](#))

The concept of Prakriti and Purusha in other religions

Not surprisingly, many other religions of the world also talk about the very same concept of Prakriti and Purusha.

In the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, the Jesus of Nazareth states, "When you make the two one, and when you make the inner as the outer and the outer as the inner and the above as the below and when you make the male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male and the female not be female.... They you shall enter the Kingdom."

Zohar, a very important aspect of Kabbalah or Jewish mysticism, also regards God as a complex concept, as a combination of a dynamic female and static male energy. Here, the former has the energy to create and overflow and the latter, to receive and sustain.

Some world cultures regard Adam to be reappearing as Noah. Here, the Ark is considered as a 'micro' version of Mother Earth. The two, coming together as a combined male-female energy, gave rise to and nurtured the entire creation.

The Chinese and Greek cultures also have similar hermaphrodite representations of God. The Orphic, the Platonic and the Pythagorean theologies are good examples of the same.

In Greek mythology, Hermaphroditus fell in love with the nymph, Salmacis. They requested the king of Gods, Zeus, to unite them forever. In all his compassion, Zeus fused them both into one single body, thus resulting in the very same concept of combined man-woman energy.

Some schools of Tarot reading believe that the card with the figure of the Hermit is actually a symbolism of androgyny. This figure is veiled, so its true nature is concealed. The Hermit is considered to be a blend of the male-female qualities of Truth and Harmony respectively, thus in itself, being a representation of the Purusha-Prakriti phenomenon.

Yin and Yang



YIN YANG
(Courtesy: [Exotic India](#))

Chinese Taoism talks about the now popular Yin and Yang philosophy. Just like the Indian Ardhanarishvara and the Greek Hermes, Yin and Yang are apparently two completely opposing forces that come together to produce harmony in this world.

The Yin Yang symbol is truly remarkable and shows clearly the relationship between Prakriti and Purusha as Hinduism knows it. This symbol is represented by two equal halves of a circle. The dark side of the circle is the Yin and it represents night. The bright or white part, the Yang, is the day. Just as day and night flow from each other in a continuous stream, the Yin and the Yang melt effortlessly into each other and are inseparably entwined. There is also a small Yin circle in Yang and vice-versa. This symbolizes that each of them is never completely on their own.

The female energy here is Yin and the male energy is Yang. Further, the Yin is always much softer than the Yang, which is hard and rough. The Yin goes backwards, while the Yang progresses forwards. When each one's energy is channeled properly, it can result in great

good, peace, progress and harmony. Hence, the Yin Yang symbol actually represents the full circle of life, with all its aspects.

Medical proof of the Prakriti-Purusha principle residing within all of us

The most interesting fact about the study of the Prakriti-Purusha symbolism of dualities existing with each other in order to create perfect harmony; is the actual medical indication of the same in all our bodies. All men and women have cross elements of the opposite sex in them. The hormone, Testosterone, which is a predominantly male hormone, is also found in moderate quantities in women. Conversely, the female hormone, Estrogen, is also present in a small quantity in men. This in itself is the evidence that a little of both sexes are present in all of us. This is absolutely necessary, as it maintains each one's personality traits and balances and harmonizes the environment as a whole.

Ardhanarishvara as the absolute symbol of Prakriti and Purusha

The iconographical embodiment of Ardhanarishvara is indeed the absolute symbol that best describes the concept of the co-existence of the dual forces of Prakriti and Purusha. The beautifully created anthropomorphic imagery of Shakti and Shiva blending as One Being fully explains the paradox of complete oneness existing in this duality. The Devi, who is depicted on the left side of the Ardhanarishvara provides the Lord on the right side with the power and energy to sustain the world she creates with her own infinite powers. Together, they go about the functions of creation, protection, sustenance and destruction of the material world.



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ARDHANARISHVARA



HIRANYAGARBHA
(Courtesy: [Exotic India](#))

Hindu philosophy believes in the Hiranyagarbha concept (the Big Bang theory) and that the entire universe was created from a giant golden egg that split into two halves, one creating the sky and the other, the Earth. Many Hindu religious texts talk of one divine entity, single-handedly wielding the powers of the Divine Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara (Shiva). This Supreme Creator then becomes both the Divine Mother and the Father, blending into one another, to form an extremely powerful, harmonious, whole!

Yet another beautiful aspect of the Ardhanarishvara icon is that both the male and the female are treated as equals, each one wielding equal and limitless powers, each one working for the benefit of the universe.

The distinction made between Shakti and the Purusha (Shiva) is only subtle. In actuality, they are non-dual and constitute the One Supreme Reality. Shiva wields the Power that is actually the Devi Herself! The Purusha as symbolized by Shiva is the Sat-Chit-Ananda, while the Mother Tripurasundari, Lord Shiva's Divine Consort, is the Supreme Power, the Prana Shakti and the life force so essential to create the universe in its entirety.

Though they appear different, Shiva and Shakti are but one and the same, each representing and complementing the other, thus becoming the substratum of Ardhanarishvara.

The relevance of Prakriti-Purusha in today's context

The concept of the Shakti-Purusha oneness makes for a fascinating study of Indian philosophy itself. But what makes it stand out so much is that it is also very relevant to our times. This philosophy can be applied practically in our lives, so as to bring all of us peace and harmony. What is the macro is also the micro. Hence, though difficult to practice and bring forth as a reality, this attitude to life helps us harness our own infinite power and emerge as better and stronger individuals, who help make a better tomorrow.

Saint Sai Baba explains the Shakti-Purusha principle in a very apt manner. He says, "The principle of Shiva-Shakti is all-pervasive. This world has a very significant name, Bhavani-Shankara. Bhavani means 'Shraddha (steadfast devotion) and Shankara means Vishwas (faith). It is to say that the world has been based on the twin principles of Shraddha and Vishwas. Bhavani and Shankara are inseparable, interdependent and all pervasive. So, whole world is the form of Ardha-nareeshwara." He further goes on to state, "Through 'Shraddha' (earnestness) Ichchaa-shakti (will power), Kriya-shakti (power of action) and Janana-shakti (the power of wisdom) are manifested. The essence of these three potencies is Eeshwaratva (Divinity). They constitute the power of faith (Vishvaas)."

Thus, earnestness and faith go hand-in-hand, working equally, much like Shakti and the Purusha, in order to produce harmony and peace in one's environment.

This article was written by **Saipriya Viswanathan**. Saipriya is a teacher/performer of Bharata Natyam, Carnatic vocal music and Carnatic Veena. She is a recipient of several awards for both dance and music, including the Sur Mani and Singar Mani titles. She is a recipient Govt. of India Merit Scholarship for dance and is a diploma holder in Carnatic vocal music.

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