



Nature of Paramashiva/Paramashakti

Paramashiva is supremely independent (*Parama Svatantra*). S/He is both transcendent (*vishvottirna*) and immanent (*vishvamaya*) and it is his/her nature (*avabhāva*) to manifest. Although S/He is one, and beyond gender, S/He has two aspects:

Prakāsha: Light of consciousness—light by which everything is known.

Vimarsha: Power of self-awareness, reflection and capacity to experience. *Vimarsha* is also the source of will, knowledge, and action—the power of manifestation.

Five Main Powers (Shaktis) of Paramashiva

Paramashiva has infinite *shaktis* but five predominate. The first two *shaktis*, *Chit* and *Ananda*, are eternal and unchanging. The remaining three are distinct *shaktis*. *These powers are in play all the way up and down the chain of Manifestation—they are in nature and in the human mind as well as in the Absolute.*

Chit Shakti: Power of self-revelation—self-illumination—experience of eternity (*Prakāsha*)

Ananda Shakti: Power of absolute bliss and freedom—power to know itself—experience of all-pervasiveness and satisfaction (*Vimarsha*)

Ichha Shakti: Power of will—power of supreme capability to create—experience of perfect desire and completeness

Jnana Shakti: Power of knowledge—experience of omniscience

Kriya Shakti: Power of action—ability to assume any form

Process of Manifestation

The universe of names and forms is the creative unfolding of *Paramashiva*. From the first movement (*Spanda*) of the Supreme to the grossest matter there are 36 *tattvas* (levels of consciousness).

Paramashiva transcends all 36 *tattvas* and exists as pure consciousness, unaffected by time, space, and causation. At the same time, *Paramashiva* is the support and substratum of all the *tattvas*.

Pure Creation (Tattvas 1–5)

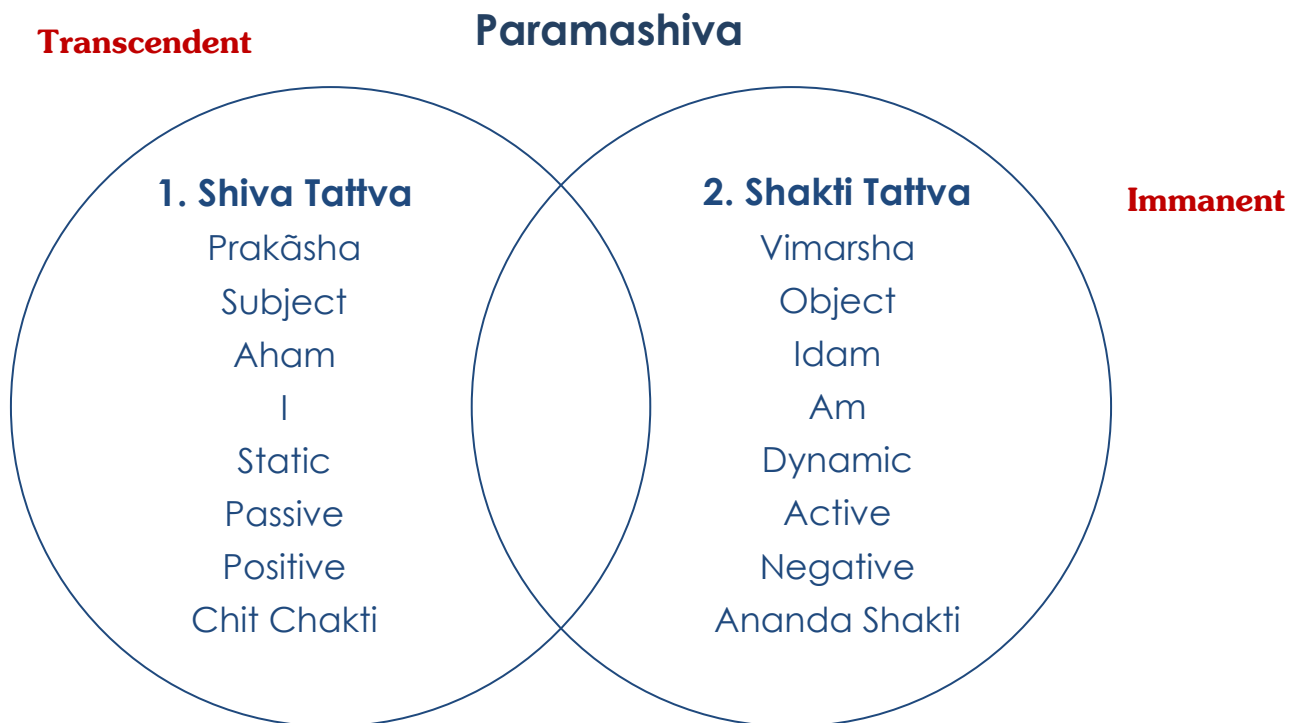
The process of manifestation is a process of the potential universe becoming apparent so it can be perceived. In Shiva/Shakti *tattvas*, the experience is of supreme consciousness recognizing and delighting in itself. Subject (I) and Object (This) exist in a state of equilibrium. When equilibrium is disturbed *aham* (“I”, Subject) and *idam* (“this”, Object) appear—creation begins. *Aham* (Shiva) and *Idam* (Shakti) are the first two *tattvas*.

Shiva/ Shakti (Tattvas 1 and 2)

Chit Shakti and **Ananda Shakti** predominate—they are uncreated, eternal *tattvas*. Shiva and Shakti are blissful in their mutual self-recognition, delighting in their unity. They are one here—there is no separation, even though they are numbered as 1 and 2.

“Shiva himself, full of joy enhanced by the honey of the three corners of his heart (knowledge, will, and action), raising up His face to gaze at his own splendor, is called Shakti.” —Maheshwarananda

Diagram 1: Pure Creation Tattvas 1–2



Pure Creation (Tattvas 3–5)

Shakti has three principal forms: *Ichha Shakti* (power of will); *Jnana Shakti* (power of knowledge); and *Kriya Shakti* (power of action). Each of these forms accounts for one of the three fundamental psychological processes that precede all action. In other words, any time you or I have an idea, or conceive and carry out a project, these three *shaktis* are present.

During any process of creation, these three *shaktis* appear in succession—as each *Shakti* comes into prominence, a new *tattva* emerges. The rest of these *tattvas* are non-eternal and destructible—they dissolve at the time of *pralaya* (universal absorption).

Subject/Object awareness emerges in these *tattvas*, but relational awareness remains within unity consciousness—no “inner” and “outer” reality appears. This is why this part of the map is called “pure creation”.

Sadashiva (Tattva 3): *Ichha Shakti* predominates (the will to create the objective side of subjective experience)—first state of forward motion in consciousness—first glimmer of manifestation—consciousness becomes perceptible to itself as a hazy awareness—experience of “I am This”. *Sadashiva* is also a name for a formless personal “face” of God, worshipped in the devotional Shaiva tradition.

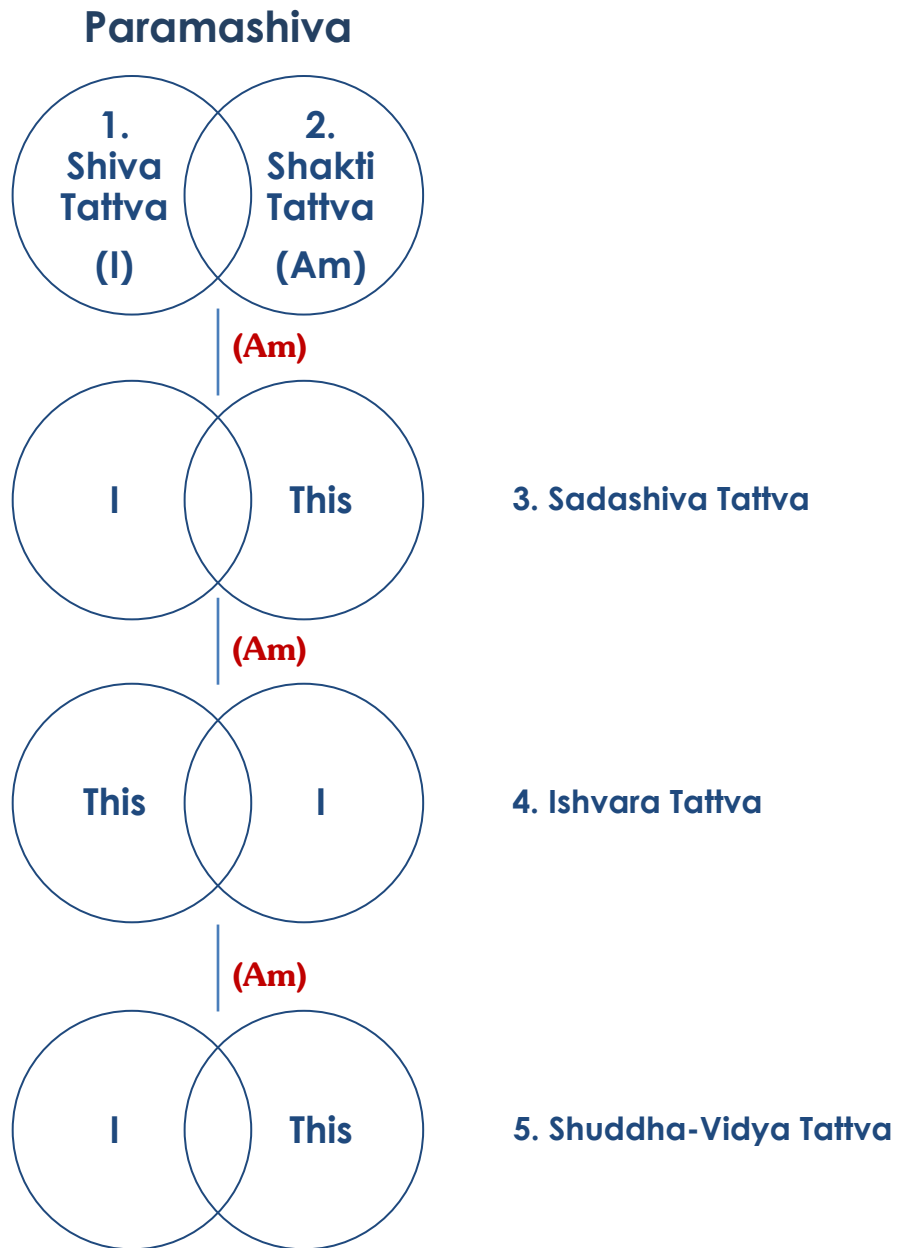
Ishwara (Tattva 4): *Jnana Shakti* predominates—objective side (*idam*) becomes more defined—this is the distinct blossoming of the proposed universe—awareness of the universe becomes clearer—experience of “This am I”. *Ishwara tattva* is also the level of “lordship”, where the great personal deities of the Indian tradition—Shiva as the divine yogi, Durga, Kali, and Vishnu reside.

Shuddha-Vidya (Tattva 5): *Kriya Shakti* predominates—subjectivity and objectivity, the Self and the universe, are equally balanced without emphasis on either—*aham* and *idam* remain unified, but clearly distinguished in thought (diversity in unity). Consciousness is ready to split in two and express itself as a world. This level is the “home” of pure wisdom (*Shuddha-Vidya*), usually expressed through mantras. The mantras like *Om Namah Shivaya*, *Om Namo Narayanana*, *aim*, *hreem*, *Kleem*, *om*, etc. are not simply words, they are actually grace-bestowing entities. In tantra, a mantra is said to be the sound form of a deity.

Diagram 2: Pure Creation Tattvas 3-5

Transcendent

Immanent



Impure Creation (*Tattvas* 6–13)

Contraction and limitation begins—the infinite becomes finite. *Maya* creates a veil over the Self—sense of difference emerges. From *maya* the five limitations or cloaks (*pancha kanchukam*) evolve.

Maya (*Tattva* 6): Veiling, limiting power of *Paramashiva*—obscures the nature of Reality—creates a sense of differentiation.

Kanchukas (*Tattvas* 7-11)

Arise from *maya*. Each *kanchuka* represents a limitation of one of the universal conditions of *Paramashiva*.

Kalā (*Tattva* 7): Limits power of omnipotence (universal action)—gives rise to experience of limited agency as the individual soul.

Vidyā (*Tattva* 8): Limits power of omniscience (universal knowledge)—gives rise to experience of limited knowledge.

Rāga (*Tattva* 9): Limits power of completeness (universal desire)—gives rise to desire for particulars.

Kāla (*Tattva* 10): Limits power of eternality—gives rise to limitations of time—creates sense of past, present, and future.

Niyati (*Tattva* 11): Limits power of all-pervasiveness and freedom—gives rise to limitations of cause, space, and form.

Purusha (*Tattva* 12): *Paramashiva*, through the limitations of *maya* and the five *kanchukas*, becomes *purusha*, (individual self)—the subjective experience of all sentient creatures—subject and object permanently separated.

Prakriti (*Tattva* 13): Objective side of individual experience—root cause of all remaining *tattvas*—comprised of three *gunas*: *sattva* (luminosity and purity), *rajas* (activity and passion), *tamas* (dullness, rest, and sleep). The rest of the manifest universe is formed from different combinations of the *gunas*.

Impure Creation (*Tattvas* 14–36)

Inner Psychic Instrument (*Tattvas* 14-16)

Processes of mental operation appear in three stages: *buddhi* (intellect); *ahamkāra* (ego); *manas* (mind). From *buddhi*, *ahamkāra* is produced—from *ahamkāra*, *manas*, and all other *tattvas* emerge.

Buddhi (*Tattva* 14): Judging faculty—assimilates concrete experiences for categorization, abstraction, and comparison. It is primarily sattvic in nature, which is why intellectual activity can feel so free and pure.

Ahamkāra (*Tattva* 15): Power of self-appropriation—sum total of memory of all personal experiences which have been identified and assimilated—particularized sense of individual “I” as in “I am Sally,” a particular individual.

Manas (*Tattva* 16): Desires, seeks for, isolates particular groups of sensations from the mass—builds up images and concepts in collaboration with the senses.

Important: All these instruments are interior to the brain and nervous system. In other words, they are prior to the brain, but act through the brain. The brain comes into play in the last five *tattvas*, which encompass the physical body and the physical world.

Jnāna Indriyas (*Tattvas* 17–21)

Five senses of perception—the powers of perception of the *pursha* (not the physical organs).

Shrotra (*Tattva* 17): power of hearing

Tvak (*Tattva* 18): power of feeling by touch

Chakshu (*Tattva* 19): power of seeing

Jihvā (*Tattva* 20): power of tasting

Ghrāna (*Tattva* 21): power of smelling

Karma Indriyas (*Tattvas* 22-26)

Five organs of action—the powers of action of the *purusha* (not the physical organs).

Vāk (*Tattva* 22): power of speaking

Pāni (*Tattva* 23): power of grasping

Pāda (*Tattva* 24): power of locomotion

Pāyu (*Tattva* 25): power of excretion

Upastha (*Tattva* 26): power of procreation

Tanmātras Indriyas (Tattvas 27-31)

Subtle elements—products of *ahamkāra*—rudiments of the gross elements. Taken together the *tanmātras* form the supra-physical universe. They are prior to the physical universe; we experience them in imagination, dream, and meditation.

Shabda (Tattva 27): element of subtle sound

Svasrha (Tattva 28): element of subtle touch

Rupa (Tattva 29): element of subtle color and form

Rasa (Tattva 30): element of subtle taste

Gandha (Tattva 31): element of subtle smell

Mahā Bhūtas Indriyas (Tattvas 32-36)

Gross elements—products *tanmātras*—components of the physical universe as experienced by the senses.

Ākāsha (Tattva 32): ether

Vāna (Tattva 33): air

Aani (Tattva 34): fire

Āp (Tattva 35): water

Prithivi (Tattva 36): earth

ALL 36 *tattvas* are filled with *Shiva/Shakti*-ness. Even the physical world is imbued with the presence of *Shiva*. The first two *tattvas* permeate all.