

THE SOUL'S JOURNEY

Guidance From The Divine Within

By Lawrence Edwards, PhD



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Audiobook Bonus Supplement:
Acknowledgements, Foreword, Figure 1,
Chapter Notes, and References





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O My Beloved: Whisperings From The Divine Heard By Kalidas

Kali’s Bazaar penned by Kalidas

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**The Soul's Journey:
Guidance from the Divine Within**

By Lawrence Edwards, PhD

Foreword

Foreword

by Stephen Larsen, Ph.D.*

One of Joseph Campbell's profoundest discoveries of the Wisdom of the East¹ was the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, the nineteenth century Bengali Saint. Ramakrishna had a spiritual opening in which he felt his human life to unfold in the embrace of the Cosmic Goddess, *Kali*, whose effect was to instill divine rapture and love for all beings. Ramakrishna's insights are full of poetry and metaphysical wisdom of an extraordinary depth.²

Like Ramakrishna, whom he refers to, Edwards reveals himself in this book to be a *bhakta*, a devotee of the Goddess, she whose Radiance permeates the visible world. He is engaged in a kind of love affair with a Divine Being, with ever-renewing levels of rapture to be attained. In this way, there is no end to the revelations.

Little Lawrence's spiritual life, he tells us, began to unfold at about age three and a half, as a beautiful, luminous woman visited him during a thunderstorm; her gentle light was interwoven with the lightning; tenderness and fierce power present simultaneously. The cry that came spontaneously from his lips is known in languages the world over: "*Mommy! Ma!*" The little boy thought he was calling his mother, but named she who stands behind the maternal human person as well; the Mother of us all. More visions came in a gradually unfolding revelation, and then mythical or allegorical stories began to come to him; offering a kind of guiding or explanatory orientation to the states of ecstasy. These make the book accessible to the general reader, and offer an easy initiation into intoxicating and complex spiritual ideas.

* *Editor's Note:* Stephen Larsen, Ph.D. is the author of *The Shaman's Doorway*, *The Mythic Imagination* and numerous other works. He was a close student and friend of Joseph Campbell, editing volumes of Campbell's works and co-authoring, with his wife, Robin, *A Fire in the Mind*, Campbell's authorized biography. The Larsen's also wrote *The Fashioning of Angels: Partnership as Spiritual Practice*, published by the Swedenborg Foundation.

Lawrence Edwards is a modern shaman, but with a Ph.D. in psychology, which he gained to be able to operate on a competent professional, as well as spiritually intuitive level. Combining both qualifies him as a “technician of the sacred,” as Mircea Eliade referred to the primordial shaman.³ The instruction in the spiritual life comes not from a tradition, or an historically elaborated system, but from the universe itself (*herself*).

The world today has many spiritual seekers in it, but they may be interested to learn from one with a personal revelation that is so life-supporting and deeply enriching. Perhaps we need a new faith, and if we are to take this work seriously; it is not to be a *credo*, but an invitation to believe in the living spirituality of the universe. The personalization as a Goddess presented by Dr. Edwards is an invitation to enter the feeling side of divinity through Divine Love—a gateway that, though very ancient, is having a renewed appeal for many of us as a portal to the Transpersonal.

In this newly emerging spiritual approach, as Edwards models it for us, humble openness is to be combined with love and gratitude. One can be spiritually alive and questing with the wholeness of one’s being—but on a personal path, not a collective one. Edwards’ insights at times approximate the luminous insights of Ramakrishna, or his modern interpreter, Lex Hixon.

Edwards writes of: “...the Divine Mother who gives birth to everything, who contains within her all that is or ever will be. In this form she symbolizes the totality of our unconscious which contains within it the Light of the Self. Until we are aware of the Self its Light is buried in our unconscious.” Here he is evoking the metaphysical wisdom of the *Mandukya Upanishad*, which says that there is an especial quality of consciousness, in which it may learn to penetrate all of its own potential states: Waking, Dream, Deep Sleep, and *Turiya*. It is just beyond deep sleep that our knowledge of Cosmic Consciousness exists. It’s here all the time, only we are unconscious of it. The yogi’s task is to penetrate that state in order to experience unity (*nirvikalpa samadhi*). Edwards displays a quite sophisticated understanding of the Sanskrit literature, with which he made himself familiar in order to help him understand his continuously unfolding visions. He interweaves three elements: Indian Yogic wisdom, knowledge of both psychology and psychotherapy, and personal experience.

There is useful and felicitously phrased practical instruction in this book for how to align oneself in this approach:

One way that Consciousness is enabling me to contain even the small currents of Shakti that come into me, is by maintaining the seeming dissociation between the Goddess and myself. This leaves my identity as Lawrence Edwards relatively intact and functional. It allows Lawrence to strengthen that identity by doing what he can to be a better servant and student of the Divine. At the same time, I experience Shakti gradually shifting my sense of self away from just the mind and body of Lawrence Edwards

and into the Divine. This doesn't negate my limited identity as this particular man, but adds to it such an extraordinary vastness of Being that the previous sense of self seems like a droplet of water blown off the crest of a wave, and having enjoyed coursing through the air, it now looks with great joy at the infinite expanse of ocean into which it is about to fall.

The biographical aspects of this work are integrated into a journey of discovery—the hero's journey of Campbell, which Edwards uses as a guidance system. At times he is like a sorcerer's apprentice, getting in over his head in spiritual realities that trip him up. This is the special value of this book, which is surely one of the finest examples of an emerging genre: First hand accounts of contemporary mystics who are plumbing the same depths as historically significant saints and mystics in the identifiable literature of the *Perennial Philosophy*. It is a privilege to have self-befuddlement and personal mistakes so openly disclosed as herein; and it is to be hoped for that our response to such disclosures is to learn from them—just as we do from our own errors. In this way, the lineaments of the once and future spiritual path are discernible. It is a version of Campbell's Hero Journey, a Western version of the spiritual enlightenment Quest of the East, but stretched out over time: a more gradual revelation.

Mircea Eliade referred to *illo tempore*, a sacred revelation from the long ago, which in enactment, puts one in contact with the ancient power: *As it was once, is now and ever shall be, world without end... Amen.*⁴ We moderns will madly venerate any sacred revelation from the past—Koran, Bible, *Bhagavad Gita*—which somehow becomes more sacred the more ancient it is regarded to be. But what Martin Buber regarded as a “spiritual exile” from the Holy Land, that afflicts the modern world, and T. S. Eliot called “the wasteland,” can be moistened, and sweetened with the nectar of living experience. Thus this account, with its honest self-revelation, agonies as well as ecstasies, tell us the same thing said by the Gnostic Jesus: *The Kingdom of God is spread upon the Earth and Men do not see it!* (one of Campbell's favorite quotes) Lawrence Edwards joins Yogananda and Krishnamurti in contemporary spiritual autobiography. Any contemporary mystic, especially one as young as Edwards, has a chance to show us the actualization that is ongoing in life—“here now, there now, always” as Eliot put it.

The Kundalini material is especially interesting, and Edwards treats this living energy with great respect—while celebrating its own revelatory power—its ability to “clean” the chakras as it arises and infuses the psychospiritual energy system of the body. When this happens, he shows, we are challenged with greater life—greater sensitivity and responsibility. He affirms that we do not have to stay within a traditional spiritual path if we prefer a more spontaneous and open journey—but we must regularly invoke the beneficent, loving, and charitable powers of the universe to guide us.

This book is full of wisdom, revelation and love. Let readers prepare themselves for transformation—and a joyful willingness to engage consciously in their own *sadhana*—their own spiritual path.

Stephen Larsen, Ph.D.
The Center for Symbolic Studies
New Paltz, NY
March 2000

Principle Chakras of the Subtle Body

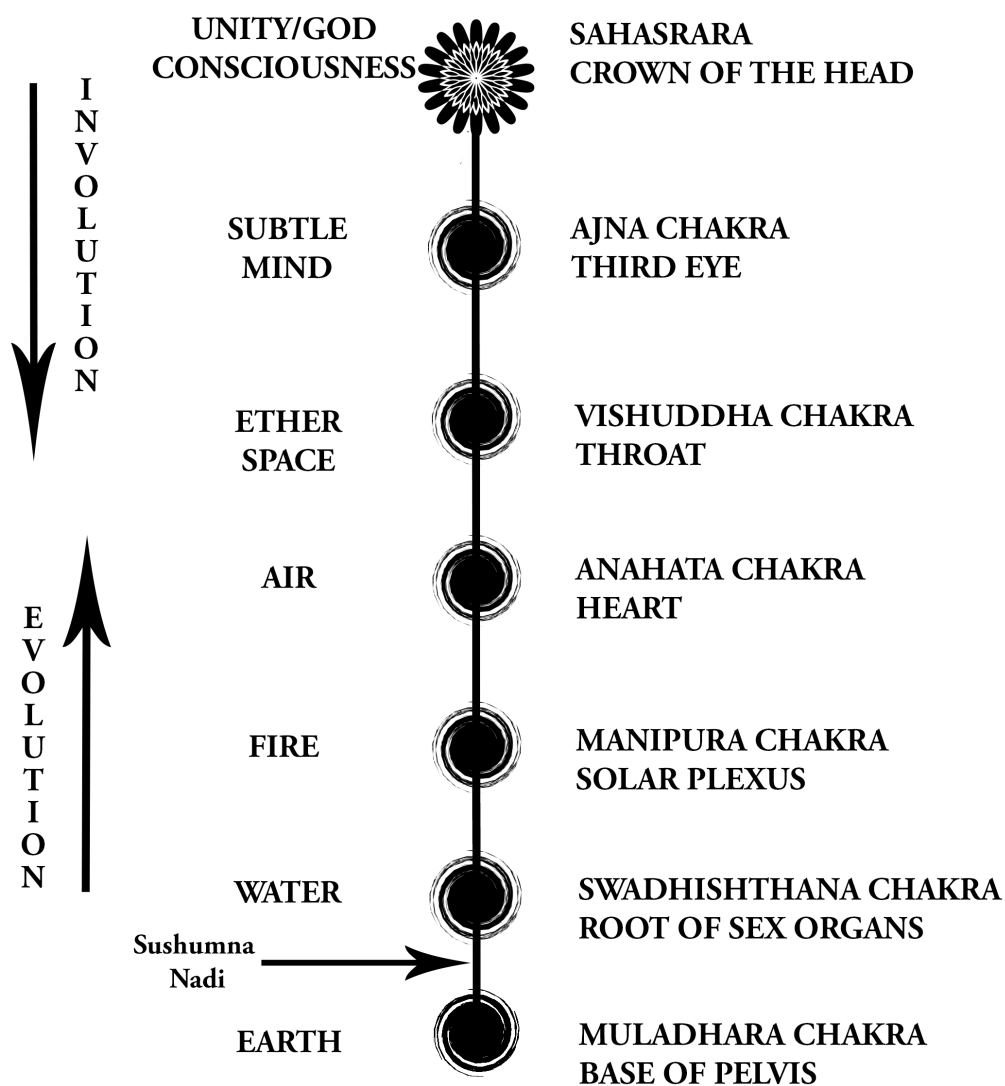


Figure 1

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Chapter Notes

Foreword

1. Joseph Campbell, *Brahman and Baksheesh: The Indian Journals*, ed. Stephen and Robin Larsen (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995).
2. See: *The Gospel according to Sri Ramakrishna*, ed. Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda wrote of the invaluable assistance he received from Joseph Campbell in the editing of this work; *see also: A Fire in the Mind*, Joseph Campbell's biography by Stephen and Robin Larsen. For more information about the Larsen's unique work and The Center for Symbolic Studies you can visit their website: www.mythmind.com.
3. See also: *Technicians of the Sacred* by Jerome Rothenberg; and Larsen's discussion of this in *The Shaman's Doorway*.
4. From *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Chapter One

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Chapter Two

1. Lex Hixon, *Mother of the Universe*, ©1994, p.76, (This material was reproduced by permission of Quest Books, the imprint of The Theosophical Publishing House – www.questbooks.net, Wheaton, Illinois).
2. Sir John Woodroffe, *The Serpent Power* (Madras, India: Ganesh and Co., 1973). Sir John Woodroffe's *Serpent Power* is one of the best works on Kundalini and the subtle-body. I highly recommend it as the most comprehensive exploration of this miraculous possession of ours.
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Chapter Three

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Chapter Four

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11. Prabhavananda and Manchester, 48.
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13. Lawrence Edwards, *Psychological Change and Spiritual Growth Through the Practice of Siddha Yoga* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1986), unpublished doctoral dissertation.
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Appendix

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2. See Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and Roger Walsh's article "The Consciousness Disciplines and the Behavioral Sciences: Questions of Comparison and Assessment," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 137 (1980), pp 663-73. Much of this discussion of the clash

- between traditional Western psychology and the Eastern or consciousness disciplines is derived from Walsh's article.
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