

Seeing from the Fifth Eye of Shiva



The Third Eye

The spiritual world is swamped with ill-considered, fanciful, and mistaken notions about the third eye. If the original and true understanding of the third eye was ever known, it has been completely lost and forgotten. Many yogis misguidedly concentrate on the third eye chakra without having any real understanding of what the third eye is, all in the futile hope of reaching enlightenment. Others imagine that the third eye is a faculty which opens one to psychic perceptions and extraordinary visions.

The third eye is also often associated with the pineal gland, even though there is no evidence to suggest that this gland has any spiritual value. Interestingly, the pineal gland does indeed have a cellular structure similar to the eye's retina, and it might have functioned as an actual eye in humanity's evolutionary past. However, now its main purpose is the production of melatonin, which governs our circadian day and night rhythm. Melatonin, a serotonin derived stress-related hormone, is produced in the pineal gland. The production of melatonin is stimulated by darkness and helps us fall asleep at night. One wonders, then, if the pineal gland is in fact a sleep aid, how



could it have any role in our spiritual awakening? There is no convincing evidence or logical reasoning that confirms this association.


It is better to stick with reality, what we can verify through our direct and doubtless experience. The third eye of Shiva is not a visual eye. In fact, other than figuratively, it is not an eye at all. It is an 'I', not an 'eye'. The third eye is where essence-me awakens and is realized as conscious me. Initially, there is no actual seat of the soul in the human body. The potential for the soul, or the embryonic kernel of the soul that we are born with, is what we call 'essence-me'. And before essence-me has been met, awakened, and realized, it is as if everywhere – meaning that it is not associated with any specific point in the body. It is through awakening essence-me that our true self comes to have a location in the various centers of the body. When we begin our journey as a human, the soul can be likened to a quantum particle; it is nowhere until we look at it (i.e. begin to recognize it), and then we find it *somewhere*. And that 'somewhere' is the third eye.

So the third eye is a center of consciousness and of our higher identity. It is also the center from which we perceive the outer world, and as such, it is a bridge between the outer and inner worlds. As shown in the illustrations of Shiva, it is located above the eyebrows in the center of the forehead. One does not awaken the third eye by concentrating on this location or by doing any other esoteric exercises, but by turning the attention of consciousness back upon itself and meeting the essence of one's very subjectivity beyond the mind and the observer. We need to get in touch with 'who' is located in the third eye, rather than wasting time *concentrating* there.¹

The Fourth Eye

It has been suggested in Theosophical texts that the third eye was originally at the back of the head. This is an interesting concept, but a misnomer. There is an important center of consciousness at the back of the head, but it is not the third eye. It is what we could call the 'fourth eye'. The fourth eye is the hidden eye of Shiva, the eye that directly 'gazes' into the light of universal consciousness.

Some ancient societies, such as the Sumerians or ancient Egyptians, depicted beings whose heads were much extended at the back of the skull. It is possible that in ancient times there were in fact

¹ The third eye is also associated with the Eye of Horus, the Egyptian god of the sky, whose symbol is the Wedjat (seen pictured here). 



beings that had developed a natural connection to universal consciousness, in the sense that their individual consciousness was experienced in unity with universal I am, and whose heads were therefore elongated. According to the Sumerians, those with elongated heads were thought to resemble the gods. And perhaps this association was based on mythic or racial memories of real people who lived on the earth a long time ago. However, it is not really known whether these elongated skulls were natural, or if the shape of the head was intentionally deformed from birth. Artificially elongating the skull from birth was a practice present in a number of cultures in the ancient world, as it was venerated as a sign of nobility.² In some cases of elongated skulls, such as early Maltese ones, the longer head is thought to have been a natural feature. Still, perhaps behind the practice of purposely elongating the skull was an intent to copy legendary memories of beings of a higher spiritual order who had brains which were naturally expanded in this way.

In any case, what is interesting here is only the evidence that these people may have intuited something very significant: that the portal to universal consciousness is actually located at the back of the head. This portal is what we can call the 'fourth eye'. Only a man who has opened his fourth eye can really be likened to the gods, because he has become one with the universal light of I am.

In most depictions, Shiva, Buddha, and even various Christian saints have halos behind their heads. While there are different theories, the origins of this are not known, even though these depictions of halos have been replicated over and over through the centuries. Some interpret the halo as representing the crown chakra, though this does not make sense, as that would then be above the head rather than behind it. In fact, the halo positioned behind the head indicates the realization of universal consciousness through the fourth eye.

The knowledge of the fourth eye has long been lost, and no spiritual teaching that we know of points to the importance of horizontal surrender through the portal at the back of the head. In some Taoist teachings, there are references to 'internal gazing', which has some resemblance to shifting attention towards the back of the head, but it is not clear if this relates directly to reaching unity with universal I am. First of all, activating the portal at the back of the head is not done

² In Egypt, there were times when the pharaohs and other members of the royal family and nobility, including Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen, and Ramses II, show signs of having had elongated skulls. In parts of ancient Australasia, people with elongated skulls were believed to be more intelligent and closer to the spirit world. In Central America, the Maya intentionally elongated the skulls of children so they would resemble their maize god. (<http://www.ancient-wisdom.com/cranialdeformation.html>)



through gazing or looking, but by surrendering from pure attention through the portal into universal I am. If we are 'gazing' or 'looking', it suggests that our identity is still in the observer, and the observer cannot cross through the fourth eye – in fact, it cannot enter the back of the head at all.

Pupul Jayakar's biography of J. Krishnamurti notes: "He showed them how to see from the back of the head. This was to let seeing flow backwards and to see from depth." Furthermore, in one of his own diary entries, Krishnamurti writes: "Early in the morning when the sun was not yet up and the dew on the grass, still in bed, lying quietly, without any thought or movement, there was a seeing, not the superficial seeing with the eyes but seeing through the eyes from behind the head. The eyes and from behind the head were only the instrument through which the immeasurable past was seeing into the immeasurable space that had no time." This means that Krishnamurti had some understanding of the need to establish the horizontal depth of consciousness, but this was not evident in his teaching. It also does not seem to be that he embodied this realization. Additionally, there is a misunderstanding here about the nature of perception. The fourth eye does not look into the world. It 'looks', so to speak, into universal I am. It is an entirely internal identity: the fourth eye is not aware that the outer world exists.

The fourth eye of Shiva has remained hidden from humanity; it is not depicted in any of the known artwork. And yet that depth of embodied consciousness is the foundation of our perception. The perceiver is actually the third eye, the conscious me. When Krishnamurti felt he was seeing from behind the head, he needed to turn that seeing eye in the opposite direction – backwards. Then, he might have discovered the space through the portal behind the head, the mysterious realm of the original light of consciousness.

In opening the fourth eye, we shift our consciousness to the back of the head, and we begin to experience ourselves from that place. In addition to developing a relationship of surrender with universal I am, our own deeper identity, the subjectivity of the fourth eye, needs to be met. This identity is what we call 'pure me of consciousness'. Pure me is not merely present at the back; she must surrender through that portal into the space behind the physical head. In this way, she attains horizontal samadhi, absorption in universal I am. This is when our individual consciousness, the soul, reaches unity with universal consciousness.



The horizontal portal is located approximately two inches above the inion (the small protruding bone at the base of the skull). Its location corresponds to the location of the visual cortex that is connected through the optic nerve to the physical eyes. And this may explain why it is much easier to open this channel through practicing with open eyes.



Statue of Akhenaten: 1356-1340 BCE,
ancient Egypt



The Nefertiti Bust: 1345 BCE,
ancient Egypt



Depiction of Shiva: Unknown date,
India



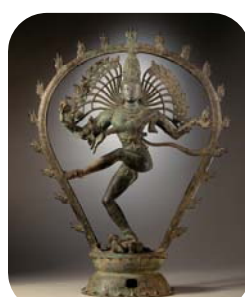
Duccio di Buoninsegna's *The risen
Christ appearing to the Eleven*:
1308-1311 BCE, Siena, Italy



Artificially elongated Mayan skull:
Unknown date



Statue of Buddha: 1st-2nd century
CE, Pakistan



Statue of Shiva Nataraj: 11th -
12th century CE, Chola Dynasty,
India



Elongated skull excavated in Iran:
Circa 7000 BCE

The Interconnection between the Third and Fourth Eyes

What is the relationship between the third and fourth eyes? The third eye is the true center of consciousness, the domain of our essence-me. It is the home of our essential 'I', our master-consciousness. This I is the true ruler of the whole of our consciousness. The fourth eye is the secondary center of our consciousness, where pure me of consciousness is established. Pure me lives at the portal at the back of the head, from where she 'looks' into universal consciousness. Universal consciousness is the powerhouse and source of all consciousness in existence, and it is the source of all mes. It is through its power that we are each gifted with the seed of essence-me. Through surrender, pure me returns to that source, merges with it, and embodies it. The third and fourth eyes are connected through the horizontal channel, which allows consciousness to flow in two directions: outwards towards the world of perception, and inwards towards universal subjectivity.



The flow in both of these directions is extremely important, and each has unique functions in our existence. An awakened being embodies these two centers simultaneously at all times.

There is no doubt that the complete use of the horizontal channel is pivotal to the awakening of consciousness. Ordinary people only use one small aspect of this channel, which is the flow of external attention moving from the observer into the outer world or the mind. Their consciousness, accordingly, has neither depth nor identity. They live in the superficial world of the observer, which has no continuity and is disconnected from the inner reality. Opening the horizontal channel inwards awakens the two centers and pillars of consciousness (conscious me and pure me). Consciousness then flows through the horizontal channel in both directions: inwardly from essence-me to pure me and I am, and from universal consciousness through pure me, essence-me, and the observer into the world of manifestation. The center of our perception is essence-me, which is realized first as conscious me, then as primordial me, and then finally as primordial I. To open the horizontal channel fully and to embody the third and the fourth eyes through our soul heralds the true awakening of consciousness.

The Fifth Eye

Shiva can be seen as an archetype of the perfect yogi, an individual who has embodied his divine individuality. But in his original form, Shiva represents universal I am. Through the horizontal channel, the individual Shiva attains unity with the universal Shiva. Similarly, for us, as we reach horizontal absorption, pure me merges with I am. And I am itself is not found in the fourth eye. Rather, I am is what we could call the 'fifth eye', the all-seeing eye. The fourth eye gazes into the fifth eye, and the fifth eye looks back through the fourth eye into the third eye, so that ultimately it can embody essence-me as I am. Through completing our horizontal samadhi, pure me embodies I am and is transformed into universal me. Although universal me is in unity with I am, the natural identity of me and the link to our individuality is retained. It is I am that continues as the ruling fifth eye, the center of all worlds.

Seeing the World from Universal Consciousness

So, how does one see the world through the eyes of Shiva? It is said that when Shiva opens his third eye, the whole world is destroyed. What this means is that the world of illusion and ignorance is destroyed, and it is replaced with the real world. Seeing the world through the eyes of Shiva is to



see the real world of pure subjectivity, where even the relativity of manifested appearances is embraced by universal consciousness. The seat of the seer is in the third eye, where the true I abides. But perception flows from the seat of universal consciousness in the fifth eye, through the fourth eye (embodied by pure me), and then passes via the horizontal channel through the third eye into the outer world. Pure me does not see the outer world because it does not possess the function of external attention. It is our primordial I, the ancient seer, the transformed essence-me, who sees the world. It does so through the lens of the transparent observer, with a seeing that is based on its unity with the light of universal consciousness.

To summarize: When the horizontal channel is fully open and the third and fourth eyes are awakened, consciousness flows uninterruptedly and without obstruction into universal I am. This is the inward stream of consciousness. But consciousness also flows outwards from the fifth eye, through the fourth and third eyes, and into the manifested world. This is the outward stream of consciousness. Universal consciousness looks through the eyes of the self-realized being by using her third eye as the center of her perception. Here, it is I am that is looking through our human eyes into this world, and everything becomes illuminated. This is how the divine enters her creation: through the portal of an individual Shiva who has become an open doorway to and from the beyond.

Blessings,
Anadi

For a full glossary of terminology please visit our website www.anaditeaching.com/glossary