



# Shiva and the Primordial Tradition: From the Tantras to the Science of Dreams

By Alain Daniélou

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An extensive examination of the underpinnings of the Shaivite Tradition

- Reveals the influence of Shaivism on the Western world
- Discusses Shaivism's understanding of sacred sexuality
- Presents the connections between Vedic poetry and metaphysics

In *Shiva and the Primordial Tradition*, Alain Daniélou explores the relationship between Shaivism and the Western world. Shaivite philosophy does not oppose theology, cosmology, and science because it recognizes that their common aim is to seek to understand and explain the nature of the world. In the Western world, the idea of bridging the divide between science and religion is just beginning to touch the edges of mainstream thought.

This rare collection of the late author's writings contains several never-before-published articles and offers an in-depth look at the many facets of the Samkhya, the cosmologic doctrines of the Shaivite tradition. Daniélou provides important revelations on subjects such as the science of dreams, the role of poetry and sexuality in the sacred, the personality of the great Shankara, and the Shaivite influence on the Scythians and the Parthians (and by extension, the Hellenic world in general). Providing a convincing argument in favor of the polytheistic approach, he explains that monotheism is merely the deification of individualism--the separation of humanity from nature--and that by acknowledging the sacred in everything, we can recognize the imprint of the primordial tradition.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Better known in Europe than in the U.S., the late French intellectual Daniélou (1907–1994) forged an eclectic career spanning several disciplines, though he is best known for his work on Indian music and culture. As a convert to the Hindu denomination known as Shaivism (which worships the god Shiva as the supreme being), Daniélou broke the rule of objectivity in his study of Hinduism, which has hurt his standing in academia. For the spiritual seeker, however, his work is immensely valuable in bridging the gap between polytheistic Hinduism and Western monotheism. One theme overarches: monotheism is the soul of error, both in the West, which has been "hardly interested in anything but philosophies infected by this germ," and in the East, where keepers of the "primordial" traditions have sought to ward it off. According to Daniélou, the healing power of Shaivism lies in opening oneself up to the divine spark in all things. More specifically, he shows how the disciplines of yoga and tantric sex, familiar to many in the West, derive from this ancient tradition and are doorways into a deeper and more fulfilling life. As is clear from this slight volume, Daniélou's Shaivic pluralism has much to say to our increasingly war-torn and materialistic culture and deserves a wide audience. (Jan.)

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### Review

"... this book as a whole, like all other works by Daniélou, commends itself for the author's original insights into various aspects of Hindu culture and spirituality." (Georg Feuerstein, *Traditional Yoga Studies*, Feb 2007)

"Better known in Europe than in the U.S., the late French intellectual Daniélou (1907-1994) forged an eclectic career spanning several disciplines, though he is best known for his work on Indian music and culture. As a convert to the Hindu denomination known as Shaivism (which worships the god Shiva as the supreme being), Daniélou broke the rule of objectivity in his study of Hinduism, which has hurt his standing in academia. For the spiritual seeker, however, his work is immensely valuable in bridging the gap between polytheistic Hinduism and Western monotheism. One theme overarches: monotheism is the soul of error, both in the West, which has been "hardly interested in anything but philosophies infected by this germ," and in the East, where keepers of the "primordial" traditions have sought to ward it off. According to Daniélou, the healing power of Shaivism lies in opening oneself up to the divine spark in all things. More specifically, he shows how the disciplines of yoga and tantric sex, familiar to many in the West, derive from this ancient tradition and are doorways into a deeper and more fulfilling life. As is clear from this slight volume, Daniélou's Shaivic pluralism has much to say to our increasingly war-torn and materialistic culture and deserves a wide audience." (Publishers Weekly, 10/30/2006)

From the Back Cover

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This rare collection of the late author's writings, selected and edited by Jean-Louis Gabin, contains several never-before-published articles and offers an extensive examination of the underpinnings of Shaivism. It provides an in-depth look at the many facets of the Samkhya, the cosmologic doctrines of the Shaivite tradition. Daniélou provides important revelations on subjects such as the science of dreams, the role of poetry and sexuality in the sacred, the personality of the great Shankara, and the Shaivite influence on the Scythians and the Parthians (and by extension, the Hellenic world in general). Providing a convincing argument in favor of the polytheistic approach, he explains that monotheism is merely the deification of individualism--the separation of humanity from nature--and that by acknowledging the sacred in everything, we can recognize the imprint of the primordial tradition.

ALAIN DANIÉLOU (1907–1994) spent more than fifteen years in the traditional society of India, using only the Sanskrit and Hindi languages and studying music and philosophy with eminent scholars. He was duly initiated into esoteric Shaivism, which gave him unusual access to texts transmitted through the oral tradition alone. He is the author or translator of more than thirty books on the religion, history, and arts of India and the Mediterranean, including *The Complete Kama Sutra*, *The Myths and Gods of India*, and *A Brief History of India*.

JEAN-LOUIS GABIN, Ph.D., began collecting and editing the various texts in this volume in collaboration with Daniélou while he was still alive. He is working on an additional Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion and Indology on the subject “Tradition and Modernity in the works of Alain Daniélou.” He also has edited and published five posthumous collections of Alain Daniélou’s work in French as well as serving as editor of the English edition of *India: A Civilization of Differences*.

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