

ROAR LIKE A GODDESS

EVERY WOMAN'S GUIDE TO
BECOMING UNAPOLOGETICALLY
POWERFUL, PROSPEROUS & PEACEFUL

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PROLOGUE

IT IS TIME TO ROAR LIKE A GODDESS

The authority and dominance associated with the act of *roaring* are not typically associated with the human female on our patriarchy-ruled planet today. Vocal expressions generally attributed to womankind usually fall into several categories: First there are the submissive, soft, melodious, sing-song, wispy, out-of-breath, cute-as-hell, daddy's-little-princess voices; next are the always-questioning, never-decisive voices, placating and overly persuasive, begging and imploring, "Can you help me? I am a damsel in distress"; then there are the nagging and whiny voices, and—*how dare women enter male territory*—the shrill, strident, bossy, and bitchy voices; and last but not least, there are the "come hither," foxy, sexy siren voices. Of course, these voices are not the real, fundamental representation of womankind. They have emerged from the internalization of a cluster of self-lessening beliefs collectively known as "patriarchy."

Patriarchy is a system of beliefs that put men first. It promotes a society dominated by men: sexually, emotionally, economically, religiously, and of course, politically. Patriarchy is not simply a phenomenon that invades individual minds, specific families, or isolated feudal cultures. It is a ubiquitous, insidious social disease, difficult for most women to ignore and still harder to uproot because patriarchal beliefs morph, adapt, and reappear in every era and every society, ancient or modern.

In a climate of patriarchy, the most difficult leap a woman will ever take is to trust her true voice—the one I compare to a roar. Despite the difficulty, it is time for all women to discover who they really are, to claim their true status in the human jungle and roar with their innate, lioness-like power.

Through spiritual knowledge that awakens and liberates us from stereotypical scripts, women can begin trusting themselves and learn to roar against the facades of conformity and other self-diminishing habits they have become accustomed to over time. As simply being human is not yet enough for women to feel safe and celebrated on our planet, it is time for women worldwide to look inward and roar with bold, goddess-like self-recognition!

If you are feeling skeptical about or unfamiliar with the concept of roaring like a goddess, it may be due to the way the term *goddess* has been defined to you, perhaps as some angelic entity in a faraway land. Let me reassure you that the *goddess* I am referring to is the same as your higher *Self*. She is not far away geographically, but near you. She is you. This goddess represents wholeness and alignment with your hidden spiritual Self and its power and true potential.

I grew up in the Hindu culture worshipping Divine Feminine as multiple goddesses, all representing different facets of One Supreme Goddess known as Shakti. What began as devotion to a divine entity situated somewhere far beyond me has culminated into a deeply affirmative “friendship” with the goddess who dwells very close to me, in fact right inside my heart as my own Self.

This single recognition, that the goddess is none other than my higher Self, helped me experience empowerment in my different roles as a teacher, daughter, mother, wife, and conscious citizen of our

planet. I am not simply a devotee anxiously waiting to be redeemed by goddess grace, but rather a roaring goddess-woman herself, who has found her true voice and who could actively help herself by exploring and unearthing latent goddess attitudes and strengths from within!

That is why throughout the book, I will keep gently reminding you that while you can certainly access divine grace by connecting to a goddess outside you, it is also important to recognize the goddess powers lying latent within you. Your true Self is a direct portal to the goddess dimension of this universe. This means you're not limited to seeking aid from an otherworldly feminine divinity; you can unearth goddess-like strength buried within your very being, here and now. In fact, every goddess power is available to you.

Goddess power is:

- **Divinely sourced from within**, not obtained from the world externally
- **Self-existing**, not created unnaturally
- **Self-celebrating** rather than self-effacing
- **Self-validating** rather than externally validated
- **Infinite and grows with expression**, not in limited supply
- **Bold** rather than fearful
- **Equal** rather than superior/inferior
- **Self-aware** rather than self-conscious
- **Vulnerable** rather than defensive
- **Sharing** rather than hoarding
- **Creative** rather than copying
- **Generating flow** rather than struggling
- **Peaceful** rather than worrying
- **Flexible** rather than rigid
- **Abundant** rather than scarce
- **Unifying** rather than divisive
- **Adorned** rather than garish
- **Critiquing** rather than criticizing
- **Direct** rather than harsh
- **Enjoying wellness** rather than illness

- **Joyful** rather than sorrowful
- **Roaring** rather than meowing!

In the chapters to come, you will meet the Supreme Hindu/Vedic Goddess Shakti and her chief goddess manifestations:

- Durga, the goddess of power and self-determination
- Lakshmi, the goddess of abundance and inner contentment
- Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom, peace, and self-actualization

In addition to sharing timeless goddess mythology, I also share a revolutionary revisioning of the Divine Feminine, bringing the archetype, personality, and behavioral traits of these three goddesses into a modern context, which I hope will help you discover these traits within yourself and lead an emotionally liberated life, in the here and now.

I have personally found great solace in these three goddesses. Durga models how to embody courage in the face of challenges and how to enjoy healthy goddess-like rage when that rage is necessary to discover our true voice. Lakshmi teaches us how to love ourselves, value ourselves, and *be* ourselves. Saraswati demonstrates the way to finding lasting peace within by expressing our goddess roar at last.

Their stories and teachings will help you free yourself from the invisible prisons of patriarchal control and begin leading a more empowered, abundant, and enlightened life with an enhanced ability to love yourself, champion yourself, and reach the goals you set for yourself, undeterred by internalized misogyny or institutionalized patriarchy. It's true that strides have been made in gender equality—and it's important to acknowledge and celebrate those advances—but as a society and culture, we still have a long way to go.

The oppression of women is multilayered and has been upheld by cultural norms, tradition, and religions through inequalities in the workplace, the law, and even the home. Some of the glaring examples still affecting Western women, as reported by the

Guardian, are “a legal system historically designed by men; the lingering misrecognition of rape as simply an excess of male desire; a police force carrying a legacy of sexism; the cultural and religious shaming of sexually active women; the objectification of women’s bodies; pornography; the fact that women in general are discouraged from speaking out.”¹ This is why, despite doing all the right things in their womanly roles and “ticking all the boxes,” many women—consciously or unconsciously—believe that they will never be enough. When you internalize these three goddess archetypes, however, you will embody *unapologetic power, prosperity, and inner peace!*

HOW THIS BOOK IS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER GODDESS BOOKS

In this book I offer an in-depth exploration of the Hindu goddess archetypes, for the purpose of breaking free of patriarchal conditioning and letting go of internalized misogyny. Like all books on mythology, this book also sheds light on fascinating legends that transpired “once upon a time” involving allegorical characters, humans, beasts, demons, gods, and of course the goddess herself. But I don’t stop with the verbatim retelling of the tale. Since I am a scholar of Hindu scriptures, like the Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita, I use my expertise, collectively known as “Vedic wisdom,” to decode the symbolism behind each goddess and offer insights and practices you can implement in your life, right away.

Therefore, the goddess stories in this book will not just move you or thrill you with supernatural adventures of goddesses in a bygone era, but they will also potentially transform your life forever by imparting spiritual insights and psychological tools to help you roar with your true voice, today.

Currently, you may be a *sleeping goddess*. To awaken to your goddess powers, all you need to do is embrace new goddess attitudes and a lifestyle of abundance and wisdom. Then, you will step outside the imprisoning boxes of patriarchy, transform your life through lived power, and even become a source of empowerment for countless other women.

Nothing in your life is random, not even the darkness. Nothing is an accident. All that you encounter in life are gifts of the highest order.

Acharya Shunya
Fifteenth Day of November, 2021

Note: Although I use the term “women” throughout this book, all beings who identify with the feminine gender or who have suffered any kind of oppression (no matter their sex at birth or gender identification) can benefit from this book because the desire to be truly powerful, prosperous, and peaceful is an ancient, unforgettable instinct. To roar with authenticity and inviolable self-respect is an innate human inclination.

The terms *Vedic* and *Hindu* are used interchangeably throughout the book. The word *Goddess* is capitalized only when addressing a goddess by name. Finally, I have provided my own original translations of the verses, hymns, and other chants quoted from ancient goddess texts, unless otherwise noted.

INTRODUCTION

THE SEARCH FOR THE HIDDEN GODDESS

It takes a certain emotional willingness to step beyond stereotyped roles to access goddess consciousness, which represents total and absolute emotional and spiritual freedom. You need the defiance to belong to yourself first before others can claim you as theirs, a penchant to celebrate your true colors without resorting to trendy and approved masks to please others, and an insistence on honoring your inner flame despite the possibility of your relationships getting scorched by its intensity.

To be a real-life goddess, accumulating degrees and intellectual and professional accomplishments can be helpful and should be celebrated, but they are not enough—such achievements don't have to be a woman's ultimate accomplishment. Beauty and glamour alone, without empowered attitudes, don't do the job either. Neither does a picture-book life with a husband, children, and a dog or cat, in a house with a white picket fence. In fact, in so many cases, the workplace accomplishments, the body and its beauty, and the home and

family that women yearn for—and will do anything to have and hold on to—eventually become chains, binding them tightly within the restrictive lines of the patriarchy.

There is nothing wrong with wanting and having these things, but empowering and freeing spiritual instruction is needed alongside every worldly pursuit, so we women can realize our desires and not become damaged goods in the process. I wish our planet had “goddess wisdom schools” to impart the skills that deeply empower ALL women—such a thing would create a radical paradigm shift on our planet. Until that happens, it is up to the women who understand the art of living, and are roaring like goddesses, to teach the women who are ready to follow their lead.

My mother, a true roaring one, was my first goddess teacher—caring but strong, compassionate yet fierce in her convictions, generous but not beyond her own sovereign boundaries. She raised my sister and me with a lionhearted spirit in the India of the 1960s. Even then, most of society was estranged from its spiritual roots and entrenched in institutionalized patriarchy. My mom, supported by her ultra-progressive and loving husband (my father), undeterred and unintimidated by anyone or anything, taught us how to feel good in our own skin and appreciate our feminine bodies—and to feel “enough” in who we are, as we are. On her deathbed, she said, “Don’t forget, goddess is with you, always looking out for you. She lives within you; you will never be alone. When you have no one else, not even me . . . you will have the goddess in your heart! Just call out to her!”

For many years after Mom’s transition, which was shortly after my tenth birthday, something was missing in my life . . . a living and breathing feminine role model in whose heart great storms and greater stillness coexisted. Someone whose self-awareness was so vast that she could hold all my growing feminine angst. Someone with ancient soul wisdom, who would help me break down my doubts and apply goddess wisdom to my own life.

That is why even though I was quite the little goddess myself as a kid, self-assured and self-shining under my mother’s care, I started losing some of that fire after she died. And my goddess flame was

all but wiped out when I got married for the first time and left my progressive-minded family to join my husband's more conventional family with their entrenched values. My partner back then at least made a pretense to meet me where I was, but his immediate and extended family explicitly rejected my power and challenged my right to be who I was at every step. Subconsciously, without even being aware of it, I began to allow their patriarchal voices to grow strong in my head. Their voices suppressed my voice. Slowly, my inner goddess became concealed by the dust of false, self-limiting, societally imposed beliefs that I had bought into—*hook, line, and sinker!*

When we become forgetful of our spiritual truth, we abandon ourselves, suppress our needs, lose our true voice, neglect the goals we set out for ourselves, and never really undertake the journey to wholeness and self-acceptance we yearn for deep inside. Habituation, powerlessness, and fear conceal our divine potential from us. That is what happened to me.

Because I knew that “light” intimately in my own heart (if only a short time as a young girl), I did not stay in darkness for long. I questioned my “conformity” every time I said yes to stereotypical expectations, and I pushed against the “compromising” walls of my own mind incessantly. When enough was enough—a point that arrived sooner than later, thankfully—I embarked on an outward journey, leading my way out of a suffocating and unequal relationship.

Remembering the goddess training I received from my family, I quietly undertook a second, even more important journey within to uncover and reclaim my true Self . . . the hidden goddess. Deep down, I knew how liberating it feels to *roar like a goddess!* I was fortunate that my grandfather, Baba Ayodhya Nath, whom I simply refer to as “Baba,” was a renowned yogi, Vedic Guru, and Ayurvedic healer. He was a champion of women's rights even before I was born, which was somewhat unusual for a man born in 1900. Baba was a devotee of the Divine Feminine, and through his male body, truth-telling speech, and truth-evoking eyes, I found a different kind of mother talking to me, guiding me—the Mother of the Universe, whom we Hindus know as Divine Mother, *Maa* (mother) *Shakti*, and her divine incarnations as Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati.

I remember Baba telling me about the Divine Feminine with words loaded with meaning:

Shunya, goddess is the creative power surging through every atom of your body. She is the essence of your living body, mind, and soul. She is not far from you. She dwells not only in the realm of cosmic consciousness; she dwells inside you, too, as your own true Self. A wave is small, fleeting, short-lived, while the ocean is infinitely large and permanent. But the reality is that the nature of both, the wave and ocean, are water, and from that viewpoint, there is no difference between consciousness as goddess and expressions of that consciousness as us humans.

The search for my inner goddess was, I am happy to report, fruitful. It helped me understand my true worth at last, and as a result, I became inwardly powerful as well as peaceful. I don't need to be a super woman or an accommodating woman. I simply need to remain an awakened woman, no longer asleep to my own goddess capacities. That is enough.

Now I share what I discovered with you.

VEDIC WISDOM ON DIVINE FEMININE AND EMPOWERED WOMANHOOD

*O Goddess, you are known through the path of the Vedas.
You are the very essence of the Vedas.*

SRI KAMALA STOTRAM, VERSE 2

The wisdom Baba was referring to when he gave me such empowering and freeing teachings comes from the Vedas, which are the oldest scriptures of Hinduism and which also gave birth to the spiritual lineage I have belonged to from birth. Once exclusively transmitted orally from a guru to a trusted disciple in Vedic spiritual lineages, the great wisdom of the Vedas can be found easily today, published as four big books called the *Rig Veda*, *Sama Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, and *Atharva Veda*. They are rare among sacred texts in that they have