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## [The Rich Allure of a Peasant Champion](#)

By [Keith Kloor](#) | October 23, 2014 3:29 pm

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[ABC Carpet & Home](#), for the uninitiated, is a sumptuous home furnishings mecca with a chic interior and socially conscious ethic. The flagship store in Manhattan's Flatiron district feels like a plush museum owned by a billionaire with a New Age affectation.



Reproduced antiques, decorative trinkets, candles, ethnic-themed clothing, Buddhist ornaments and much more are arrayed stylishly across six floors of a century-old building. The offerings are beyond the means of most browsers, but as one helpfully [points out](#), you can snag the \$500 vintage peasant blouse much cheaper on Ebay or Etsy.

The cavernous store is a masterful mix of hedonistic pleasures to ogle. "I can't afford to buy a darn thing at ABC Carpet except for spiffy soaps, but I sure do love trolling the floors here, as the goods on offer are simply exquisite," writes Pauline Frommer in her [review](#).

Even the display windows are exquisite, such as the [recent ones](#) calling attention to global warming.



ABC Carpet & Home proudly says it is "committed to trailblazing environmental work that alleviates the pressures triggered by climate change." [It's not clear](#) what pressures the store is referring to, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't admire its eco-sensibility. As New York Magazine [raved](#) several years ago:

Earth-friendly fashion comes in many forms: organic fabric, handsewn details, local production. But rarely do you see them all in one place, as with the new bazaar-like apparel floor at ABC Carpet & Home. Here, embroidered vintage caftans top driftwood tables, handcrafted Pamela Love pendants and Artemas Quibble leather messenger bags fill antiqued cabinets, and eco-luxe John Bartlett striped shirts hang near crystal chandeliers. Naturally, there's a premium on sustainability: Prices range from \$95 to \$1,500 and hover at the steep end with the shop's bigger-name labels, including Libertine and Donna Karan's Urban Zen

Perhaps you can better appreciate these earth-friendly accessories after you sink into a cushy, [\\$3,495 swivel chair](#).

Given ABC Carpet's [eco-minded, socially responsible philosophy](#), it should be no surprise that Vandana Shiva, a global environmental icon and champion of peasant traditions, has been the

guest of honor numerous times in glittering events held at the Manhattan store. In 2012 she shared the stage with Deepak Chopra, a popular New Age guide. [According to the store's blog](#):

Chopra and Shiva interwove the talk between the gifts and curses of science. Every agricultural problem, local to global, that has attempted to be resolved with science has created a problem by the very capacity of that science – global warming, mutated seeds, toxic soil. “What moves life around is nourishment, not money,” said Shiva. “When nourishment is replaced with toxins, what moves around is death” – making the colonization of seed literally a life or death situation.

Shiva, for those unfamiliar with the Indian environmentalist, is best known for her anti-GMO activism, including claims she has popularized that [myself](#) and [other journalists](#) have inspected closely in recent years. The most thorough examination of Shiva’s activism [was done](#) several months ago by Michael Specter in The New Yorker. Shiva is not accustomed to being challenged by journalists. She has grown used to the “rock star” treatment [accorded](#) to her by Bill Moyers, [Amy Goodman](#), and her many other admirers in the media. Perhaps that’s why Shiva was especially perturbed at Specter’s feature article (which science journalism professionals [lauded](#)), [registering numerous objections](#) that New Yorker editor-in-chief David Remnick soundly [rebutted](#).

So when I heard that Shiva was again speaking at ABC Carpet’s Manhattan store this week, I thought it would be interesting to hear what she had to say about biotechnology and agriculture. Would she repeat the same claims that have already been [demonstrably debunked](#), such as the one about Monsanto’s GMO cotton driving a quarter million Indian farmers to suicide? Would she address the nagging doubts about her truthfulness raised by Specter in his piece?

I’ll answer those questions in a minute. First, it’s worth noting how beloved Shiva is in circles where environmental activism, new age beliefs, and idealization of nature intersect. The audience of about 75 people seemed to be drawn from these three spheres. One woman I spoke with told me she worked in the personal development field (also known as self-help). Her speciality: “intuitive counseling.” She didn’t know much about Shiva, but after reading a [description](#) of the event, “I felt I had to be here,” she said.

Another attendee, a lanky young man with a long goatee, said he came because he was apprenticing in what he called “biodynamic agriculture.” I asked if this was organic farming. “It’s beyond organic,” he said. “It’s spiritual farming, its soil shamanism.” It was a tool to heal the land of environmental damage, particularly from GMOs, “which made the soil infertile,” he said. Biodynamic agriculture “utilized the energy vortex” to reinvigorate earth. “It helps the soil recover from depression,” he added.

Shiva, who frequently writes and speaks about the harms of industrial agriculture and GMOs, was in her element. She was introduced by Amy Chender, COO and Director of Social Responsibility for ABC Carpet & Home. Chender said to the assembled that it was “an honor” to welcome back Shiva, who has “been visiting us for many years.” She ticked off Shiva’s many accolades, including how she “has been likened to [Mahatma] Gandhi.” Chender also informed us of some recent news: The Harmony Foundation had just given Shiva its Mother Teresa award.

This is why Specter’s critical article of Shiva has been met with such disapproval in eco-friendly circles. He deconstructed the life of a saintly figure who is thought of by many as a cross between Gandhi and Mother Teresa. Talk about a thankless assignment!

As for Shiva, her [latest visit](#) to ABC Carpet & Home was timed to the launch of her new [book](#), Sacred Seed, a collection of essays on “the poignancy of the seed,” whatever that means.

Shiva did not disappoint her audience, who as I had observed in [another talk of hers I attended](#) several years ago at the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, were enrapt. She spoke at length about the sacredness of nature and explained why she had devoted her life to defending seeds. This was her mission, her calling. “Seed is the first link in life,” she said. It represents a sacred compact with

nature. GMOs, she went on to say, perverted that relationship. What does it mean “when I say what is a GMO?” She then answered her own question: “It is, creation and God move over.” This was a “violation” of the natural order.

Shiva also talked about “biopiracy” (this is how she refers to the patenting of seeds by biotech companies), and—sigh—the “291,000” Indian farmers who committed suicide since GMOs were introduced. “Most are in the cotton belt,” she said, alluding to states in India where genetically engineered cotton crops are grown. This is simply untrue (GMOs being the cause of the suicides), but Shiva has repeated it so often over the years that I think she has convinced herself it is true.

During the talk, Shiva presented herself as an advocate for peasant farmers, who she describes as living in harmony with nature. It was the peasant community in India, she recalled, that made her appreciate the purity of seeds. Her affinity and respect for the peasant farmer is unmistakable. It is a theme of her nature-centric philosophy. She is often [heralded](#) as a tireless “defender of the poor,” someone who “has courageously taken her stand among the peasant farmers of India.”

Let it be noted, however, that this champion of the downtrodden doesn’t exactly live a peasant’s lifestyle.

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**From:** Heather Colburn <hcolburn@apbspeakers.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 03, 2014 4:13 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Vandana Shiva-requested speaker information from American Program Bureau

Hi [REDACTED]

I hope this e-mail finds you well today. My name is Heather Colburn, one of the agents here at APB and I am responding to your inquiry for speaker information for Vandana Shiva. I also tried to call you, however the number you listed on your inquiry connected to a fax machine.

We do not have Dr. Shiva booked on those dates. She will clear her personal calendar once we have a formal invitation. **Her current speaking fee is \$40,000 plus business class travel from New Delhi.**

Please let me know how else I can help at any time.

All the best,  
Heather

**Heather Salsbury Colburn, Senior Vice President**

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If you’d like to learn what qualifies Shiva for a typical \$40,000 speaking fee, [here is how](#) her representatives package her. Judging by Shiva’s busy globe-trotting schedule, it would appear that she is in much demand.

For example, next week she travels to Arizona State University’s Global Institute of Sustainability, where she will [give a lecture](#) titled, “Future of food: Democracy or dictatorship.” The event is sold out. Several days later, she’ll travel back across the USA to Vermont [to speak](#) in support of the state’s new GMO labeling law. The week after that she’ll be in Louisville, Kentucky, [slated](#) as a feature speaker for an event organized by the “Slow Money” network. This is just a small sampling of Shiva’s non-stop international speaking schedule. Is it fair to ask: When does she find time to commiserate with peasants toiling on the land, the people who she is speaking on behalf of?

At the ABC Carpet & Home event Shiva headlined this week, I didn't see much evidence of peasantry in the audience. There was, however, a lot of passion about GMOs, the sanctity of seeds, and also anger about a corrupted media, including journalists Shiva at one point said were "writing fictions about me." That belief was echoed by audience members in the Q&A session, when one white haired woman stood up and angrily said that "we in the U.S. have our brains scrambled." Respectable science outlets, she complained, were publishing articles saying that GMOs were safe to eat. She specifically cited Discover magazine and the New York Times. Then she dropped a bomb: "Revkin at the Times is bought off!" My ears perked up. She was referring to Andy Revkin, the highly respected journalist who reported on climate change and other environmental issues for years at the Times, until leaving in the late 2000s to teach at Pace University and write for [Dot Earth](#), a popular blog he created for the paper's website.

After the Shiva talk officially concluded, I approached the woman, an environmentalist who focuses on water issues, and asked what proof she had that Revkin was being bought off. "He wrote an article saying GMOs are safe and everybody believed it," she responded. But how does that prove he was paid by the biotechnology industry? She didn't say, but she was still sure it was true. Even though she made this charge in public, the woman asked that I not reveal her name. (But I'm going to pass her contact info on to Andy, if he'd like to follow up with her.) Then she asked who I wrote for.

Discover magazine, I said, trying to keep a straight face.

I don't know what to make of the people who view Shiva as a saintly eco-warrior and uncritically accept everything she says. But I am certain that she gives them what they want to hear.

CATEGORIZED UNDER: [biotechnology](#), [GMOs](#), [science](#), [Vandana Shiva](#)

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Collide-a-Scape is an archived Discover blog. Keep up with Keith's current work at <http://www.keithkloor.com/>

About Keith Kloor

Keith Kloor is a NYC-based journalist, and an adjunct professor of journalism at New York University. His work has appeared in Slate, Science, Discover, and the Washington Post magazine, among other outlets. From 2000 to 2008, he was a senior editor at Audubon Magazine. In 2008-2009, he was a Fellow at the University of Colorado's Center for Environmental Journalism, in Boulder, where he studied how a changing environment (including climate change) influenced prehistoric societies in the U.S. Southwest. He covers a wide range of topics, from conservation biology and biotechnology to urban planning and archaeology.

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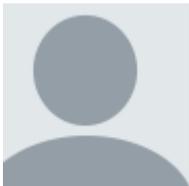
[Website](#)

## 65 Comments



Andy\_Revkin • 2 years ago

It always amuses me when folks assert I'm corrupted or bought off, given the riches that would come readily (\$40,000 is many times more than the best fee I ever got for a speech) If I shed my inconvenient focus on reality. There's a far smaller audience for reality than for the caricatured accounts of world events from the hot edges of discourse....



jbecket Andy\_Revkin • 2 years ago

She did not say that about you first of all. And secondly she does not get \$40,000 per speech. That's absurd. That figure got mentioned in one article and then everyone picked it up uncritically. Also the notion that she lives a wealthy life style is simply not true. She is a Gandhian and if you see where she lives and and how she lives it is very modest. She spends a third of her time on her farm Navdanya, a third more in India, and a third on the road. An article like the one above is really an opinion about her gleaned from being put off by her at a previous meeting and then speaking to members of the audience to further discredit her. When we look at the larger battle over the world's food supply between industrial chemical monoculture and biodiverse organic agroecology then there can be a serious debate without the need for assassinating the character of an intelligent and effective advocate for the small farmer.



Chris Preston jbecket • 2 years ago

The \$40,000 figure came from her agent, as a speaking fee.

Given the number of talks she has already given in the US this year, not to mention the ones in Germany, Sri Lanka and Canada, she must be fairly raking it in.

She frankly is a poor advocate for small farmers as she wants to keep them tied to the land as peasants barely making enough to eat. She is against virtually all modern agricultural ideas. The innovations that have changed India from being a net importer of food to being effectively self-sufficient.



Andy Buckley jbecket • 2 years ago

If she doesn't get \$40,000 per speech, what's that email from her agents in the middle of the piece? Plus first class intercontinental air travel -- add another couple of \$k!

JH jbecket • 2 years ago

"agroecology". snort. Hilarious. Ecomining. You bet.

Mark Stolzoff jbecket • 2 years ago

are you blind, or can you not read? She obviously does get 40k per speech, the picture is right there in the article

jbecket Mark Stolzoff • 2 years ago

Fair enough Mark. My point is it is absurd to think she gets \$40,000 per speech. Let's work backwards. Yesterday she spoke in Toronto. She received no fee for that, but she did get travel expenses. Before that she spoke in Halifax and did not receive a fee. These are grass roots organizations with volunteer workers and she wants to support them to build a movement across the board whether it's agroecology, climate change, water rights, human rights etc. She was in Los Angeles on the weekend of November 8. She spoke at the Hammer Museum and I cannot speak to what fee she received though I hope she did get the full fee as advertised. She also spoke for no fee at another event in LA. My point is the effort to paint a picture of Vandana Shiva as a 'wealthy activist' is absurd. She lives in India a Gandhian life, neither fame nor fortune interest her. And the money she can receive from her speaking engagements go to support Navdanya, her organic farm and university. More power to her. This is just part of the effort to discredit her. Over the range of issues she is involved in, it is the GMO issue rather than climate change for example that has struck a nerve. In that area the debate should really be over which system of agriculture, industrial chemical or biodiverse organic can best feed the world and which is sustainable over the long run. This touches on really different philosophies of our future such as what is a real democracy. Anyway I don't think I'm blind and I was able to read your comment. I hope I have addressed it.



MarkStolzoff jbecket • 2 years ago

" neither fame nor fortune interest her. "

If that's true then why does she blatantly lie to puff up her academic credentials

jbecket MarkStolzoff • 2 years ago

Okay Mark. This is the last communication. She neither lies nor puffs up her resume. She was a science prodigy who received one of India's top science scholarships to pursue her studies. She received her Msc in Physics from Punjab University. She was the first woman hired by the Indian Atomic Energy Agency. Disillusioned with nuclear power given the dangers, she pursued her studies in quantum physics. She then joined an elite group in Canada that for five years was delving into quantum physics. She began to question the basis of the mechanistic model of physics of Descartes, Newton, etc and going in that direction she received her Phd in philosophy. At any point she could have pursued a lucrative career whether at the Atomic Energy Agency or in academia but she returned to India to work with the Chipko movement and her career since has been based on service. Her genius and her scientific mind have been employed in a whole range of fields. It's interesting to me why you would be so hostile to her. On what do you base such language as 'blatantly lie and puff up' when I don't think you took the time to look into it. It brings up the question of what do we base our opinions and our knowledge on. And then for example in your case the language is more emotional than rational. What can I say but have a nice day and I wish you'd give this extraordinary woman a second look.

MarkStolzoff jbecket • 2 years ago

She earned her doctorate not in physics, but in philosophy. Her dissertation in the philosophy of science (not in physics) at the University of Western Ontario focused on the debate over a central notion in physics known as Bell's Theorem, which is concerned with "testing whether or not particles connected through quantum

entanglement communicate information faster than the speed of light," and which has been called the "most profound theory in science." The abstract of Shiva's dissertation states, in part: "It has been taken for granted that Bell's theorem is based on a locality condition which is physically motivated, and thus his proof therefore falls into a class by itself. We show that both the above claims are mistaken"

Small problem.. Bell's theorem HAS been proven scientifically correct. The main thesis of quantum mechanics that she challenged has since been confirmed by experimental physics, meaning that her thesis stands at odds with factual reality.

She's never been a physicist, , she doesn't even have an advanced degree in physics so no point could have pursued a lucrative career at the Atomic Energy Agency

jbecket MarkStolzoff • 2 years ago

An Msc is an advanced degree. I'm no expert in Bell's Theorem, but I don't think having a thesis that is disproved disqualifies one from being a scientist. That would greatly thin the ranks as science is a process. I still don't understand why you have it in for her. Of all the points she's attacked on, her scientific credentials are the most solid. She's never misrepresented herself on her website. And I don't see how what you cite here means she wanted this college where she had an engagement to cover her 'lies'. They say it was their mistake not hers. Clearly she can do no right. But I still wonder why the vitriol?



Miles Stockdale jbecket • 2 years ago

I realize that these comments are more than 3 weeks old, but I just wanted to say that Shiva does not have an MSc in physics.

First she lied saying that she had a PhD in physics. Did so for years and years. Finally when her thesis was tracked down at Western U, the gig was up, so she switched to claiming that she had an MSc in Physics and a PhD in philosophy.

However, her Masters thesis has also been tracked down, and it is not really a surprise that it is actually a philosophy MA from U of Guelph.

Doesn't matter, I know jbecket will continue to defend her lies.

munza Miles Stockdale • 2 years ago

Okay. She got an Msc in particle Physics from the University of the Punjab. She did get an MA in philosophy in Canada as she needed that to pursue her doctorate in Philosophy.



Miles Stockdale munza • 2 years ago

Baloney. Shiva, the pathological liar, never claimed that her degree from the University of Punjab was an MSc (it was always a BSc) until her previous lie was exposed, after the one before that was exposed, and the one before that. All you have to do to see that is go back to her promotional material before she switched to her current lie. If her current claim is true what was her thesis on? It doesn't exist, because she did not do a masters there. How many lies does she need to tell before people like you will stop defending her?



hyperzombie Miles Stockdale • 2 years ago



MarkStolzoff jbecket • 2 years ago

She Supports Arsonists, and would rather let millions of kids die, then admit she's wrong about something. (Golden Rice) . She hails herself as "one of India's leading physicists." when she's never even been a physicist.

in the 1950s, India was a agricultural basket case. Prior to the introduction of Normon Borlaug's technological innovations and new seed varieties, it had suffered more than 60 million famine related deaths. After the Green Revolution between 1965 and 1970 alone, wheat yields nearly doubled in the countries of India and Pakistan as a result of the embrace of modern agricultural techniques. Yet She Claims That revolution was a FAILURE!

She claims she's written over 300 papers yet she's only written 42.

jbecket MarkStolzoff • 2 years ago

Okay Mark i surrender. i can read Entine too. There is a reasonable answer to each of your statements. But that won't change anything. So better we both go about our business.

srini1990 jbecket • 2 years ago

Karl Popper would agree with you.



MarkStolzoff jbecket • 2 years ago

Play Hide

Vandana Shiva supporting arsonist Marie Mason most emphatically, This is just one of the reasons I have a problem with her

sleezter jbecket • a year ago

Btw.. here's a GIGANTIC list of all the groups she's involved with and all the tax shelters she's built to accept

sleezter jbecket • a year ago

Complete nonsense. Please note that she receives millions a year in grants and charity from huge anti GMO groups who she's beholden to. She also sells many different products and potions in her own stores. You're brainwashed and misinformed.



MarkStolzoff jbecket • 2 years ago

She even got her college to try and take the blame for her lies

"On Feb 4, 2014, at 6:09 PM, Joshua Moore wrote: Dear Mr. Entine, In your piece in Forbes Online op-ed section, titled "Vandana Shiva, Anti-GMO Celebrity: 'Eco Goddess' Or Dangerous Fabulist?", you make mention of Dr. Shiva's selection as Weissberg Chair in International Studies at Beloit College.

Dr. Shiva will, indeed, be in residence on our campus in late March and early April of this year, and we very much look forward to engaging in important discussions on the connections between food, gender, sustainability and human rights. As we are a liberal arts institutions dedicated to fostering critical thinking and informed action in the world, we expect that, in addition to Dr. Shiva's remarks throughout the week, critiques of her work will be a vital part of the discussion.

Regarding the inaccuracies you reported in Dr. Shiva's biography, they are entirely the fault of our staff and should, in no way, reflect any intent by Dr. Shiva to misrepresent herself. Several websites (i.e. Borgen Magazine, The Green Interview) use similar language, and others mention "training in physics and a Doctorate of Philosophy," which could be construed to mean a PhD in Physics. Still others (i.e. The Right Livelihood Award) mention her PhD and the subject of her dissertation (particle physics), without mentioning her discipline. The original misrepresentation on our website was our error, not Dr. Shiva's, and has been corrected.

Sincerely, -- Josh Moore Associate Director Office of International Education Beloit College(608)363-2831www.beloit.edu/oie "



midnight rambler jbecket • 2 years ago

It was the questioner in the audience (a "white-haired woman") who said Revkin was "bought off", not Shiva.

JH Andy\_Revkin • 2 years ago

"There's a far smaller audience for reality than for the caricatured accounts "

For me though the conspiracy thing always goes back to that famous quote from Ben Franklin: "Three people can keep a secret if two of them are dead".

Humans, among their many foibles, are arrogant. Like everyone else, liars and cheaters are usually too proud of their accomplishments to allow them to go unrecognized for too long.



mem\_somerville • 2 years ago

Someone also pointed out to me recently that India does not allow patents on seeds. So I really cannot fathom how these non-existent seed patents have caused all these problems she claims were caused by patents.

Maybe she'll come by some chi-chi shop in Boston and I can ask. I think we have some of those stores around. Typically I prefer thrift stores, but maybe they'd let me in to a high end one if I can borrow some \$200 shoes.

First Officer mem\_somerville • 2 years ago

You just gotta believe ! :)

Nom de Plume • 2 years ago

That Shiva gave her lecture in a swanky New York City boutique and not a feed and seed in Iowa pretty much tells us all we need to know.

Tom Scharf • 2 years ago

KK is hippy puncher, hippy puncher... ha ha.

Yeah, she definitely seems to be the Steve Jobs of "sustainable agriculture". Quite a reality distortion field.

Just like the right has it's embarrassing crazy uncles, the greens have this set of environment as a religion types. It would be impossible to write an article that didn't come off as a parody here.



Anita Tom Scharf • a year ago

I'm well aware of Steve Jobs's reality distortion field. Please don't put Vandana Shiva in the same class as Steve Jobs. He never made up a story about mass suicides at Apple caused by Microsoft, let alone took \$40,000 a pop for giving talks about the lie.



Pdiff • 2 years ago

Thanks for writing about this. I'm glad someone like you with a higher profile has finally put this up front. Several of us were throwing it around Twitter for a while, but it gets no traction there. It's pretty clear that "Shiva" is a brand to be sold to those who can/will pay.



Chris Preston • 2 years ago

It must have been an interesting evening for you Keith.

Sitting on the outside, it seems to me that Shiva has made a career out of being invited to events to tell people what they want to hear, rather than how things really are. Witness her regular incorrect statements about GM cotton.

Because she does this in a way that plays to some of the the urban public's notions of what agriculture should be like: happy peasants in small fields getting spiritual nourishment from pulling weeds, they just lap it up. As evidenced by the gentleman trainee in biodynamic agriculture you spoke to.

I have always wondered how people who get into biodynamic agriculture feel about the anthroposophical underpinnings of the movement. Or do they just ignore it?

First Officer • 2 years ago

"Revkin was being bought off". She's truly unhinged. What will it take to break the spell she has on her followers? Though, 75 people is not that many, especially in Manhattan. I was at the Whitney Museum this past Saturday and the line was halfway down the block to get in for the Koons Exhibit.

kkloor Mod First Officer • 2 years ago

Just so you're clear: It was an audience member who blurted that out, not Shiva.

First Officer kkloor • 2 years ago

I stand corrected. But hasn't Shiva alluded to others that were critical of her as paid lackeys?



Warren Lauzon First Officer • 2 years ago

Yes she has. I don't recall if she has actually named any names, but she has definitely used the general accusations of people being bought off by "big Ag".

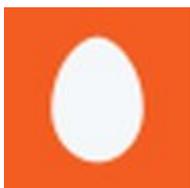


bobito • 2 years ago

soil shamanism? LOL!!!

kkloor Mod bobito • 2 years ago

My wife got a kick out of the soil depression quote. She told me that Big Pharma should come up with a pill to put in the soil to make it happy.



Oemissions bobito • 2 years ago

why not?



bobito Oemissions • 2 years ago

Because I don't believe in "the spirit world" nor its ability to alter soil conditions:  
Shamanism (/ˈʃɑːmən/ SHAH-mən or /ˈʃeɪmən/ SHAY-mən) is a practice that involves a practitioner reaching altered states of consciousness in order to encounter and interact with the spirit world and channel these transcendental energies into this world.



Mischa Popoff • 2 years ago

JH • 2 years ago

Is that coffee table in the upper photo made from a sustainable tree stump?  
I dunno about Shiva. If it wasn't her it would be someone else. Safe to say those who need...er...guidance will always find someone to get it from.



ishmael2009 • 2 years ago

I wonder if those well-meaning eco-types at their boutique know that Shiva is also quite a hard-line nationalist and supporter of India's BJP party. I have a copy of a conference transcript where Shiva wonders if religious strife could be recruited to the anti-GM cause by spreading rumours among Muslim clerics that some GM seeds have pig DNA in them.



Vinashak ishmael2009 • 2 years ago

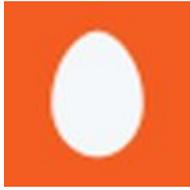
Bullshit... she is one of those fake leftwingers who detests BJP as much as muslims do

Tom C • 2 years ago

If you ask me, ABC Carpet and Home is every bit as much a phony enterprise as Shiva.

Jeffn • 2 years ago

The University of Arizona charges in-state students \$87,000 for a bachelors' degree if they do it in four years. In other words, for the price of a small house in Tempe, AZ, you could instead be really poorly educated!



Oemissions • 2 years ago

so she gets big money for a talk or 2 or 3 or 4  
how she uses the money is what matters to me



Pdiff Oemissions • 2 years ago

More like a dozen, but yes, you are right. If there was evidence that she uses it to help those in need, it would be more justifiable. I have never seen such evidence, however. Maybe now that this is getting better exposure, she will shed some light on that.

First Officer Pdiff • 2 years ago

She could simply charge less and ask the money be given as donations to a worthy cause.

Loren Eaton First Officer • 2 years ago

Oh, I don't think so. Remember what the Cardinal at the Vatican said to comedian Buddy Hackett when it was pointed out how many hungry people could be fed with the proceeds from one art masterpiece? "Abscondi obeseri illegitimo." "Get out of here you fat b@\$@&%."



marcdraco • a year ago

So, like Dr Goodall, Vandana flies all around the world making speeches about protecting the sanctity of the planet.

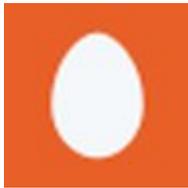
When she could do the SAME THING without ever leaving New Delhi and contributing to all that CO2 that is poisoning the atmosphere.



Mike Lewinski • a year ago

Since this blog was published she has updated vandanashiva.com, stating that Dr. Shiva is not represented by APB Speakers International.

However, APB still has her speaker profile page via the link in this story.



amatya • 2 years ago

Mr. Koor, I am completely at a loss to understand what could be your personal grudge against Ms. Shiva. Irrespective of what her credentials are, she does raise the right kind of issues. If there are people willing to hear her at whatever cost (USD 40000), what is your problem ! It is between them. Your article clearly smacks of unethical and dishonest journalism. I should stop here. No one gives you a right to be a Judge just because you claim to be a Journalist. Best,



stringrll • 2 years ago

Wow - what a nasty article!! Because a person is well-off, they cannot "speak for the down-trodden?" If that is so, then no one in the US Congress should ever speak about or for the working class or the poor? That is ludicrous! What about the POPE, for God's sake?

There is no way I can refute every spurious remark in the article or in the comments, nor will I waste my time trying. But I will refer the following article, to anyone who is interested in the facts of whether Biotech can feed the world.

<http://www.natureinstitute.org...>



August Pamplona • 2 years ago

Another attendee, a lanky young man with a long goatee, said he came because he was apprenticing in what he called "biodynamic agriculture." I asked if this was organic farming. "It's beyond organic," he said. "It's spiritual farming, its soil shamanism." It was a tool to heal the land of environmental damage, particularly from GMOs, "which made the soil infertile," he said. Biodynamic agriculture "utilized the energy vortex" to reinvigorate earth. "It helps the soil recover from depression," he added.

I have a feeling that you probably already know a lot about biodynamic agriculture but, for those who do not, this old article gives a good sense of what it's about:

<http://www.sfweekly.com/sanfrancisco/voodoo-on-the-vine/Content?oid=2170162&showFullText=true>



Warren Lauzon • 2 years ago

There is a certain injustice in the world when scammers and woonatics like Shiva can make more money selling fear and pseudoscience than the actual scientists.



Steve Miller • 2 years ago

Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Bronx Botanical Garden



Schratboy • 2 years ago

The GMO skills can never get enough bashing against their arch-foes.

fair? • 2 years ago

No, I don't think it's fair to ask whether a middle-aged woman from India who is also a global activist "has time" to speak to the working class of her own country. I agree that Vandana Shiva perpetuates anti-scientific attitudes about GMOs, but it is unfair to suggest that she somehow lacks cred in the peasant department. Please choose another way to discredit her; there are many.

FosterBoondoggle fair? • 2 years ago

Huh? She's claiming to speak for some sort of Platonic ideal peasantry. It's fair to ask whether she has any basis for tying that philosophical conception to the real world.

I recently read CP Snow's "Two Cultures" essay and found this quote (less well known than the widely quoted one about scientific ignorance) which I think captures the immorality of Shiva and her fellow travelers perfectly: "It is all very well for one, as a personal choice, to reject industrialization — do a modern Walden, if you like, and if you go without much food, see most of your children die in infancy, despise the comforts of literacy, accept 20 years off your life, then I respect you for the strength of your aesthetic revulsion. But I don't respect you in the slightest if, even passively, you try to impose the same choice on others who are not free to choose." He was talking about intellectual Luddite opposition to industrialization, but the premises fit the agricultural anti-technology contingent perfectly.

Nom de Plume FosterBoondoggle • 2 years ago

CP Snow makes a good point. There doesn't seem to be many spiritual farming experiment stations.

That said, there are some things to ponder. Such as the trade-off of increased yield through growing crops closer together, increased use of fertilizer, and irrigation, as compared to more traditional dry land farming

techniques that doesn't have the added expense of irrigation and as much fertilizer, but more cost of labor and fuel due to increased cultivation. It would be interesting to see a cost per yield study.

JH Nom de Plume • 2 years ago

People can farm that way if they want, can't they? They don't - right? - because they can't make a living doing it.

Nom de Plume JH • 2 years ago

Herein lies the heart of the question. It goes back to an anecdote from decades ago. I was trying to rediscover the family heirloom corn for no other reason than "just because," bought some seed that I thought looked about the same, and planted maybe an acre. It was planted the same as another cultivar we used, and in the same manner. It was a dry summer, and the corn I planted, which wasn't the family heirloom corn, BTW, had a better yield in those conditions than the other variety. Now, since this was before Open Pollinated was cool, the variety I planted was probably as much a hybrid as the other cultivar. Yet it raised a question with us: Was the cultivar we planted "optimized" for another region, or for irrigation?

That's been on our minds since, and usually my father and I discuss it every year. Farming has changed a great deal since those days, with planting crops closer together to increase yield, and it does indeed work.

The drawback is that this new way of farming requires increased fertilizer and irrigation, or the crops will suffer. You can see this in fields where the "end guns" on the irrigation don't quite reach. It's also how we used to get a quick evaluation, before the days of automated meter reading, of whether a farmer was using his irrigation as little as he claimed. Yet it comes at the cost of increased fertilizer, which isn't cheap, irrigation equipment, and the diesel or electricity to run it.

The old dry land farming methods have lower yields because each plant is further apart. But this also means that you don't use as much fertilizer and irrigation may not be required except in drought conditions. The other drawback is increased cultivation costs, both to produce what's called a "dust mulch," which may or may not actually reduce water loss, and to control weeds, which are greater due to the wider spacing between crops. Could it be that this results in a greater cost net profit per bushel than the more expensive production methods?

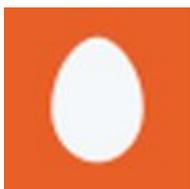
I don't know. But that's what agricultural experiment stations are for. It would be interesting to compare the profit per bushel of the old dry land techniques with that of the new farming methods, and see which is lower.

It would also be important to look at this on an acreage basis, because even if it turned out that profit per bushel is higher with the old method, the profit per acre of the new methods may be higher due to increased yields. Assuming - and at this point it's merely an assumption - that the old methods have lower cost per bushel, there would be a point where increased yield from the new methods offset this advantage.

Again, I don't know. Maybe a study has already been done. But it's interesting to think about.

Loren Eaton fair? • 2 years ago

When I think back to what I was taught about India as a child, two things come to mind: the caste system and famine. Obviously, this is over simplified, but I don't think it is a coincidence that Shiva was raised in an upper level caste and probably never had anything to do with starvation. This would be like me (a middle aged white guy) going to Denmark and telling them ALL ABOUT life in Watts and Compton.



amatya Loren Eaton • 2 years ago

Both these two things told to you about India is a typical notion that was cleverly planted by British, to perpetuate their colonial interest. India is just not about these two issue, it is many times much more than that...

Nom de Plume fair? • 2 years ago

I don't know Shiva from Adam's house cat, but she seems like the sort of well-meaning activist who is from the outside looking in instead of the sort who has worked alongside those they want to help. The problem with looking in from the outside is that you often don't really know the problems and issues faced by those you wish to help,