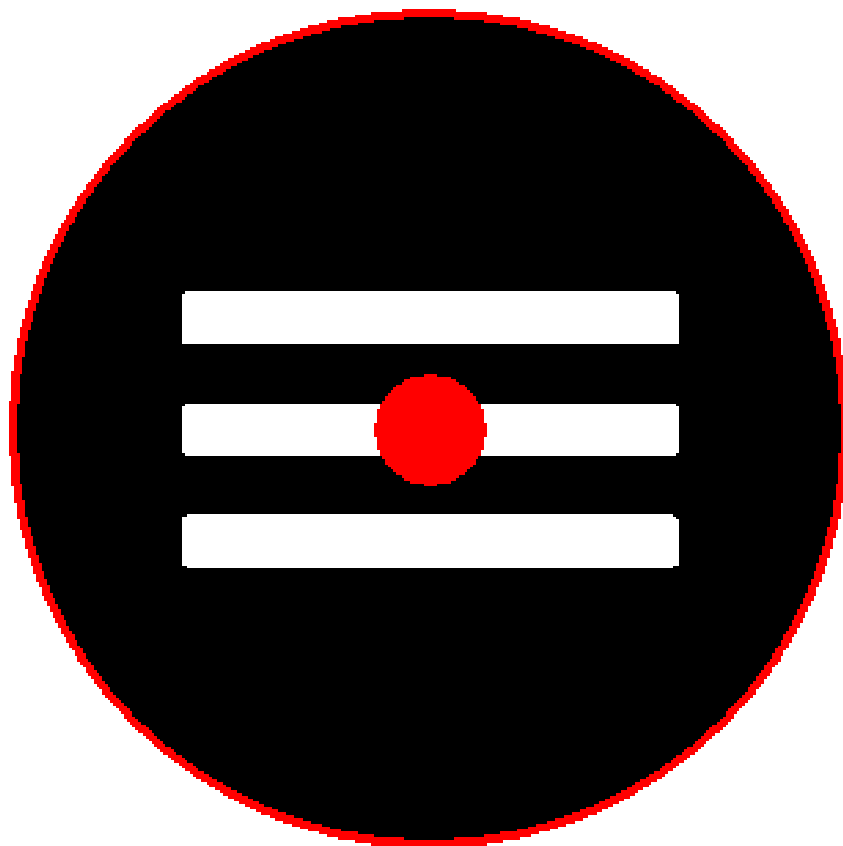


BREATHING AWARENESS

From the Old 'Psychology' to The New Yoga



Peter Wilberg

The term 'psychology' is understood to imply scientific knowledge of the *psyche*. The root meaning of the ancient Greek word *psyche* is 'breath'. Does this mean that 'psychology' understands itself as a science of the breath? Far from it. Instead it identifies the soul or *psyche* with the human 'mind', and knowledge of the *psyche* with insight into the functional workings of this 'mind'. Whether we speak of this mind's cognitive functions, its neurological functioning, its associative functioning or its functioning as an instrument of 'unconscious' or 'instinctual' drives, the result is the same. The *psyche* as 'mind' is seen as a functional instrument based on the functioning of a biological organ – the brain. This functionalist viewpoint sits comfortably with a general definition of health as 'functionality' and of illness, mental or physical as 'dysfunction'. The 'healthy' human being is defined as the *well-functioning* human being - whether their function be that of delivering the post, operating hi-tech military equipment or organising the transportation of other human beings to gas chambers.

The history of 'scientific' psychology cannot be separated from the history of the whole Western concept of 'knowledge' as such. The root meaning of the Latin *scire* ('to know') from which the term 'science' is derived, is to 'cut through'. Modern scientific medicine began with anatomy. The body is understood 'scientifically' through the cutting through and dissection of lifeless corpses. The ancient Greek word for body (*soma*) meant precisely that – a corpse devoid of life-breath (*psyche*). Understood in their root senses therefore, the separation of *psyche* and *soma* is the termination of the human being at death. From the point of view of the ancients therefore, the very use of the words *psyche* and *soma* as scientific 'terms' referring to separate entities is a termination of the living, breathing human being. The need to terminologically stitch together the two terms *psyche* and *soma* under the single term *psychosomatic* is stillborn – for it merely admits their *de facto* and terminal separation.

An even deeper issue than scientific terminologies lurks behind the terminal soullessness of 'scientific psychology' however. This is the historic identification of knowledge with having a proper 'idea' of things – with *seeing* them correctly. The word 'idea' comes from the Greek *idein* ('to see') and like the Latin *videre* (*uidere*) is related to the Sanskrit word for knowledge (*vidya*) – a word which also has the root

meaning of seeing (*vid*). Language points us here to a root concept of knowledge which identifies it with *seeing* – whether in the form of scientific observations, verbal ‘insights’, mystical ‘visions’, ‘clairvoyance’. The modern scientist, no less than the ancient *rishi*, is above all a ‘seer’. What difference is there then, between the concept of knowledge and the type of knowledge of the ‘soul’ or ‘psyche’ that belonged to ancient Greek, Indian and Oriental cultures and that which passes as ‘scientific’ knowledge and psychology in the West today? The essential difference is that in the Eastern wisdom traditions, knowledge in the form of ‘seeing’ and intellectual ‘ideas’ was understood not as the *starting point* but as the *end-result* of the cognitive process – a process that was understood as beginning not with seeing but with *breathing*.

In the West, ‘theory’ and theoretical disciplines are still thought of as the foundation of ‘practice’ – of practical disciplines and applied knowledge. In the East, on the other hand, those practical disciplines known collectively as *yoga* were understood to be the very foundation of all theoretical ‘ideas’ and ‘insight’. At the heart of *yoga* was an understanding of the bodily foundations of all intellectual knowledge. Together with this went an understanding of the human body as a *breathing body* and not merely one equipped with sense organs. That which was blindly obvious to all – the fact that the *human body* could survive without seeing but not without breathing - was taken as a vital clue to the essence of the *human being*. Indeed it was taken as a clue to the essence of reality, truth or ‘being’ as such. The ‘old psychology’, which existed long before the term ‘psychology’ was coined, was one in which the word *psyche* still retained its root meaning of ‘breath’. In India this old psychology led to an understanding of the inner human being or ‘self’ as *atman* – a Sanskrit word echoed in the German for ‘breathing’ – *atmen*. Breath was named *prana* and the yoga of breathing called *pranayama*.

Today such terms such as *prana*, *chi*, *qi*, or ‘*reiki*’ are interpreted as referring to some form of universal life force or ‘energy’. This interpretation accords with the fundamental dogma - shared by both modern science and New Age pseudo-science alike - that ‘everything is energy’. This dogma conflicts radically with the *tantric* and yogic understanding that ultimate reality is not energy or matter but *awareness*. Similarly, the interpretation of *prana* as a form of subtle energy conflicts with the *tantric* understanding, echoed in both the Indian, Greek and Latin languages, that

awareness itself has the character of ‘air-ness’ – being something that surrounds, permeates, fills and flows between all things in space. *Psyche* means ‘breath’ as well as ‘soul’. Greek *pneuma* means ‘wind’ as well as ‘spirit’. The word ‘spirit’ itself comes from Latin *spirare* (to breathe), as in *respiration*, *inspiration* and *expiration*.

Modern anatomy would have us believe that breathing is merely an autonomous ‘function’ of our body’s respiratory organs. The *tantric* adepts understood things otherwise. They recognised that it is *we* who breathe and not our bodies, and that we do so with and through our *body as a whole* and not merely with specific respiratory organs such as lungs and diaphragm. Any trained singer knows this from experience. *Pranayama* - the yoga of the breath – was indeed a form of breath training, which like that of a singer, cultivated a subtle awareness or ‘proprioception’ of one’s entire respiratory musculature – which given the relation of breathing and posture (*asana*) ultimately embraces the body’s *entire* musculature. But *pranayama* had a quite different purpose and result to that of modern-day methods of breath control and meditation. *Awareness and control of breathing* was not an end in itself but a means to another end – a *controlled breathing of awareness as such*.

In the ‘animistic’ wisdom of all cultures we find a more or less explicit understanding that awareness is the very inwardness or ‘soul’ of all things – in particular that it is the soul of the elements – of earth, water, air and fire. In addition we find a more or less implicit recognition that, conversely, awareness has its own *elemental qualities* of spatiality, light, fire, warmth, air (diffuseness), water (fluidity) and earth (solidity). Put these two primordial truths together and we end up with the formulae that form the basis of a new psychology or ‘science of soul’. The first formula reads: the air of soul is the soul of air. In the same way so are the *solidity, fluidity, warmth, fire, light and spatiality of soul* (of awareness itself) to be understood as the very soul of earth, water, warmth, fire, light and space as such. Our awareness of space (*akasha*) and light (*prakasha*) is in its very essence or soul nothing but the very space and light of our awareness as such. This understanding, made theoretically explicit for the first time as a new science of soul, goes hand in hand with The New Yoga – a yoga of *awareness* which acknowledges its innate elemental and sensual qualities or ‘qualia’.

The soul-scientific principles and practices of The New Yoga constitute at the same time a new understanding of *knowledge* as such. They imply, amongst other things that we can only attain a true knowledge of the elements – of air for example - by allowing our awareness to flow into and with it – uniting the air of our own soul with the very soul of air and in this way gaining a deep and direct experiential knowledge of both, the type of knowledge that went by the name of *gnosis* or *jnana* rather than *vidya*. Breathing is as essential to the attainment to this *type* of knowledge as it was in the Old Yoga and the Old Psychology. For breathing is the living link between a knowledge based on *visual perception* and *seeing* and a type of knowledge based on *proprioceptive feeling*. Knowledge based on *visual perception* is one example of knowledge based on the five bodily senses. Knowledge based on *proprioceptive feeling* is knowledge based on *whole-body sensing* rather than localised sense organs.

What we ordinarily call ‘consciousness’ is consciousness of something – focussed on a localised ‘object’ of perception or thought. Awareness focussed on a localised object goes hand in hand with a sense of ourselves as a localised ‘subject’ or centre of awareness – a centre that is felt by most people as located in the sensed inner space of their heads. What I term ‘awareness’ is more than just ‘consciousness’ – awareness focussed on a localised object and localised in a centre of awareness. For essentially awareness has a non-local or *field* character. Whole-body sensing is a *field awareness* of ourselves and the world around us. Through it we no longer sense ourselves as localised centres or subjects of sensory perception. Instead we sense our *entire body surface* as a porous skin through which we absorb or *breathe in* our sensory experience of the world. Our localised bodily organs of sight and hearing are instruments of focussed awareness – of ‘consciousness’ or ‘ego-awareness’. Our body as a whole on the other hand, is truly a sense organ of the ‘soul’ – of our own field-awareness of ourselves and of the world.

Through awareness of our body surface as a whole we can feel the space, light and air around us as the very space, light and air of our awareness. We feel our awareness of the light around us as the very light of our awareness. We feel our awareness of the space and air around as the airy spaciousness of our awareness. As a result we can feel our own breathing as a breathing of awareness.

Through awareness of our body surface as a whole we can also feel the sensed inwardness of our bodies in a quite different way – not as a space filled with tissue and organs but as a hollow inner space of awareness. This awareness is permeated by its sensual qualities - of heaviness or lightness, darkness or brightness, warmth or coolness, fluidity or rigidity, diffuseness or density. Such qualities are not reducible to bodily sensations or sensory qualities that we are *aware of* - qualities such as hotness or coldness. Instead they are sensed and sensual qualities of our own *awareness* of ourselves. Such sensual qualities *of* awareness may be aptly described as soul qualities – for through them we experience our own warmth or coolness of soul, our own brightness or darkness, lightness or heaviness of soul. As qualities of our own bodily self-awareness, they are what give tangible bodily shape to our sense of self.

Through ordinary bodily breathing oxygen enters our blood from the air we draw into our lungs and in this way permeates our entire body, nourishing every cell. Through *pranayama* – understood as a breathing of awareness or ‘soul-breathing’ – we use our entire sensed body surface to draw in our sensory awareness of the world around us. From this sensory awareness we extract the ‘oxygen’ of meaning or sense – transforming the sensory qualities we are aware of into inner soul qualities, and letting these soul qualities permeate our inwardly sensed body as a whole. An example would be listening to a piece of music, a process in which by absorbing our outer awareness of sensory sounds we sense also the soul of the music – we sense the sound tones as soul tones, and by fully absorbing these soul tones allow them to fill and permeate every corner of our soul – our inwardly sensed body as a whole.

In seeing or hearing we are not normally aware of our localised bodily organs of sense - our eyes or ears. The focus of our awareness is instead on the object of our sight or hearing. Whole body sensing on the other hand is impossible without a proprioceptive feeling awareness of our own bodies as a singular sense organ – a sense organ of the soul. In particular it is impossible without awareness of our entire respiratory musculature – which includes not only the muscles of our chest, diaphragm and abdomen but our neck and back muscles, and the muscles of our scalp and face, jaws and mouth, ears and eyes. From the point of view of external anatomy and physiology – the body as perceived from without - it seems outrageous to describe *eye muscles* as respiratory muscles. In relation to the inwardly sensed body, on the other hand, that is

just what they are – for the eyes are a microcosm of our *inwardly sensed body as a whole*. Opening our eyes wide brings our awareness to the *sensed outer surface* of our *inwardly sensed body* - opening the breathing pores of that inwardly sensed surface to the sensed space around it and allowing us to feel that ‘outer’ space as the expansive space of our own awareness. Closing our eyes, on the other hand, allows us to ‘look inside ourselves’ - to become more aware of the *sensed inner space* of our bodies, and to feel this space as the space of our own inner self-awareness. Our bodily eyes are the embodiment of our ‘inner eye’. This eye is not a ‘third’ eye located in the pineal gland. It is nothing but the instrument through which we alter the modality and direction of our awareness or ‘gaze’ - which can be turned inward or outwards, concentrated at a centre, spread out over a surface periphery, and expanded or contracted in the inner and outer spaces of our sensed body as a whole.

The sensed inwardness of the body is made up of subtle flow currents of awareness linking different centres of awareness. The sensed space around our bodies is also made up of subtle flow currents of awareness – in this case currents that link us with the bodies of others. Through awareness of our own breathing and respiratory muscles we can learn to modulate and direct these flow currents. What is more, like the currents of breath that we exhale as voice tones, we can also learn to lend them a specific feeling tone and to modulate that tone. Through simply becoming more aware of our abdominal muscles and breathing primarily from the abdomen we can learn to *re-centre* our awareness in the sensed inner space of our abdomen. In doing so we feel our out-breath not simply as an outward exhalation of air from our nose or mouth but as a subtle downward flow of awareness from the inner space of our head to that of our abdomen. We can use subtle awareness of the musculature of our eyes to aid this process. For by just relaxing our eyelids we can keep our *eyes* open whilst at the same time turning our *gaze* inward – directing it towards a centre of awareness in the abdomen and helping us to re-centre itself there. Indeed through muscular awareness of both our eyes and our sensed body as a whole we can let our awareness sink down even further down – descending in a current to the very ground beneath our feet and to an underground space of awareness beneath it.

Awareness of breathing is the key to the *breathing of awareness*. For through awareness of our respiratory muscles we can learn to modulate those flow currents of awareness that constitute the very breath of our own soul or psyche. It is these flow currents of awareness, and not currents of ‘subtle energy’, which make up our soul body – a *psychical* body or ‘breath’ body’ in the deepest sense. *Awareness of our inwardly sensed body* is the key to sensing this body - *to sensing our inner body of awareness*. This awareness body is a *psychic* or *pranic* body for it is made up of those subtle flow currents of awareness that constitute soul-breath (*psyche/prana*). But these *psychic* or *pranic* currents have in turn their own multiple and varying sensual qualities of warmth and light, colour and tone, fluidity and density. That is why the awareness body can be experienced not only as a diffuse and *air-like* body but also as an elemental body, a spacious or etheric body, and as a body of inner warmth and light, colour and tone. Nevertheless the awareness body remains in its essence a *breath body* - for all its other qualities belong to those flow-currents of awareness that constitute *prana* – the life-breath of awareness that is the true meaning of *psyche*.

Yet in almost all contemporary yogic teachings and practices *prana* is still misunderstood as something made up of flow currents (*nadis*) and centres (*chakras*) of ‘vital energy’ or ‘bioenergy’ rather than awareness. Hence the need for a New Yoga, and in particular a new yoga of breath or *prana yoga* – one based firmly on the understanding that awareness *is the very inwardness of energy*, just as matter is its *outwardness*. That is not to say that practices of *pranayama* that belong to The New Yoga are themselves entirely new. Though they were re-discovered experientially and not from modern instruction manuals or ancient treatises, they echo the teachings or *shastras* of those treatises or *tantras* – in particular the compendium of meditational practices called the *Vijnanabhairava Tantra* – a work central to the *tantric* tradition of 7-10th century *Kashmir Shaivism*. To begin with however, we need look no further than the *Bhagavad Gita* to see their essence distilled. For as it is written in the *Gita*:

**“As the mighty air which pervades everything, ever abides
in space, know that in the same way all beings abide in Me.”**

The ‘Me’ refers to the all-pervading and infinite awareness *field* that is the Supreme Lord, (*paremesvara*) whether named as *Brahman* or as *Lord Shiva*. In the

Vijnanabhairava on the other hand, we see meditational practices that implicitly make use of meditations on the body, space, air and light to awaken a sense of the airy spatiality and light of awareness as such – and through this achieve the enlightenment of experiencing awareness as the divine essence of one’s own selfhood and bodyhood:

The Old Yoga of Breath

Meditate on space as omnipresent and free of all limitations.

Think ‘I am not my own body. I exist everywhere’.

Meditate on one’s own body as the universe and as having the nature of awareness.

Meditate on the skin as being like an outer wall with nothing within it.

Meditate on the inner emptiness of the central *nadi*.

Meditate on the void in one’s body extending in all directions simultaneously.

Meditate on one’s own self as a vast unlimited expanse.

Meditate on a bottomless well or as standing in a very high place.

Meditate on the void above and the void below.

Meditate on the bodily elements as pervaded with voidness.

Contemplate that the same awareness exists in all bodies.

Whether outside or inside *Shiva* [pure awareness] is omnipresent.

In his book on *Tantra*, Julius Evola quotes a Tibetan meditation similar to those of the *Vijnanabhairava*:

“Visualise the physical body as being internally vacuous, like the inside of an empty sheath, transparent and uncloudedly radiant.”

Terms such as ‘vacuum’ or ‘void’ however, must not be understood in the Buddhist sense, and certainly not in terms of an abstract ‘quantum vacuum’. Where *tantric* and Buddhist metaphysics differed was precisely in their understanding of The Void (*shunya / nirvana*). The *tantric* metaphysicians did not see the spatial void within and around all things as an absolute void or as mere emptiness but as a void pervaded with the pure, contentless *awareness (nirvikalpa / samvit)* represented by *Shiva*. Their argument against the Buddhists was simple: were the void an absolute void - devoid of awareness, no awareness of it would be possible. Therefore it was a contradiction

on the part of Buddhist philosophers to speak of *nirvana* as both an absolute void, devoid of awareness, *and* as a supremely enlightened state of awareness. The expanded spaciousness of pure awareness associated with Shiva was seen as the foundation for experiencing his consort (*Shakti*) as the air-like substantiality of awareness known as *pranashakti*. It was also the basis for transforming one's bodily awareness of breathing into an experience of one's *pranic* or breath body – a body with its distinct own centre and a circumference. Here the central meditational method of *pranayama* outlined in the *Vijnanabhairva* was to suspend the breath and focus awareness at the centre of the body in the interval between out-breath (*prana*) and in-breath (*apana*), and to allow one's awareness to expand into the *dvadashanta* [a field surrounding the entire body to an extent of around twelve finger widths or nine inches] during the suspension interval between in-breath and out-breath (*prana*).

The New Yoga of Breath is designed to explicitly transform awareness of breathing into a breathing of awareness. One key to this lies in an intensified awareness of our body surface as a whole, allowing us to experience it as a porous and breathing membrane - filled with an inner space of awareness and surrounded by an outer space of awareness. The other key lies in recognising that the transition 'points' of the ordinary aerobic breath cycle (the transition from physical in-breath to out-breath and vice versa) can be experienced as elongated intervals or *periods* of awareness in which another complete breath cycle takes its course – an entirely non-physical and anaerobic breathing of awareness. If the meditational methods of the New Yoga are followed, aerobic breathing with the physical body is slowed by progressively elongating the periodic intervals of the breath cycle. This does not require artificially holding our breath - instead our very need for air is progressively *diminished* by a pure breathing of awareness in the intervals of the breath cycle.

The New Yoga of Breath

1. Feel the inner space of your head as a hollow filled with awareness.
2. Feel the inner space of your chest as a hollow filled with awareness.
3. Feel the inner space of your belly and abdomen as a hollow filled with awareness.
4. Feel your entire body surface as a porous, breathing membrane.
5. Feel the entire space around you as a space of awareness.
6. Feel your entire sensory environment as your own larger body.
7. Feel a progressive elongation of the interval between out-breath and in-breath.
8. Feel the end of each nasal out-breath of air as the start of a down-flow of awareness in your body to a deep centre of awareness in your abdomen.
9. Feel the beginning of each nasal *in-breath* of air as the continuation of an in-breath of sensory awareness through your entire head and chest surface.
10. Feel a progressive elongation of the interval between in-breath and out-breath.
11. Feel your outer awareness heightening and your body field expanding beyond your skin surface in the period of the interval following each in-breath.
12. Feel awareness flowing into and pervading your inner body space in the interval preceding each out-breath.

The modern identification of ‘health’ with ‘aerobic’ breathing i.e., the oxygenation of the blood, stands in contradiction to its complement – the promotion of ‘anti-oxidant’ vitamins and dietary supplements. Similarly, the idea that inhibition of breathing goes together with the inhibition of feeling and emotion – a fundamental belief of body-psychotherapies such as ‘bioenergetics’ or ‘rebirthing’ is also in contradiction with the tendency to hyperventilate and over-oxygenate the brain that is associated with extreme emotional stress. Today it is also recognised that *asthmatic* attacks can be prevented by deliberately slowing and diminishing aerobic breathing instead of gasping for breath. The gasp for air and its asthmatic blockage can only be understood as the expression of a blocked breathing of awareness. Far from inhibiting emotional feelings, it is only through the breathing of awareness that we can truly breathe in such feelings and not just air. The inhibition of aerobic breathing is only an inhibition of feeling awareness if it does not lead to a *disinhibition* of ‘awareness breathing’. For by its very nature, awareness breathing does not inhibit but intensifies feeling awareness, allowing us to fully breathe our *awareness* of intense emotions.

“The soul is an exhalation that perceives.”

Heraclitus

The psychotherapist who claims to perceive but does not *breathe* their awareness of a client's feelings cannot truly absorb and understand those feelings. Such a psychotherapist is no true *psychologist* – no true scientist of the *psyche*. The Old Yoga had no place for any concept akin to that of modern ‘psychology’ because it was *psychology* in the deepest sense – a science of the soul's innate kinship with breath or *psyche* and thereby also with speech (*logos*).

‘The New Yoga’ is yoga reborn as true ‘psychology’ and true psychology reborn as yoga. What distinguishes the New Yoga from the old is a new but fundamental distinction between an awareness of breathing and the breathing of awareness. What also distinguishes it is an emphasis on using the breathing of awareness not to meditatively intensify and expand our bodily awareness of Self but to meditate The Other. By this I mean switching from a mode of relating based on perceiving another person's body as a mere visual ‘body-object’ to one based on fully breathing in and absorbing our awareness of their body as a whole. In this way we cease to simply ‘see’ the body of the other as some sort of physical appendage to their head and conscious mind. Instead we come to sense it as a *sensory image of their soul*.

It is only through our own whole-body awareness - in particular through a whole-body awareness of *breathing* - that we can feel our own body as a whole as a sense organ of the soul – one through which we can breathe in our sensory awareness of others as if through every pore of our skin. In this way we cease to be simply aware of our own body but know it as an *awareness body* – a *psychical* body or ‘soul body’ capable of sensing the soul or *psyche* of another in a tangible bodily way. The most important *psychological* application and benefit of The New Yoga lies in the way it can teach us to meditate others, and come to ‘know’ other human beings in a different way – not simply through visual perception, emotional empathy or intellectual insight but through attending to the body of the other and in this way taking them in as ‘some-body’ - not just as a ‘talking head’, a set of mental-emotional processes or cognitive and behavioural patterns.

Breathing Awareness

In the presence of others, whether in a social situation or group, or in a one to one encounter, use the opportunity to engage in the following meditations:

Meditation 1: breathing your awareness of the sensory outwardness of the other

1. Become aware of your body as a whole through a whole-body awareness of your own breathing and respiratory musculature.
2. Aware of your own body as a whole, attend solely and entirely to your sensory awareness of another person's *body as a whole*.
3. Without making direct eye-contact, attend to every feature of their bodily bearing or comportment - including posture, facial expressions and looks in their eyes.
4. Feel yourself breathing in your sensory awareness of the body of the other through every pore of your skin.

Meditation 2: breathing your awareness of the soul inwardness of the other

1. Use whole-body awareness of your breathing to sense the inner spaces of your head, chest and abdomen respectively, feeling each of them as clear, hollow spaces of awareness.
2. Attending to your sensory awareness of another person's head, chest and abdomen, intend also to feel the quality of awareness inwardly filling their head, chest and abdominal spaces respectively.
3. Feel the sensual tone and textures of awareness filling the inwardness of their 'head' space in your own head space, the quality of awareness filling the inwardness of their chest and abdominal space in the inner space of your own chest and abdomen.
4. Feel the aware inwardness or soul of the other person's *body as a whole* in the inwardness of your own body as a whole – your own soul.

The 'New Yoga' is not a yoga of the physical body but of this *psychical* or soul body – itself essentially a breath body or *pranic* body. In the West this body has gone under many esoteric names such as 'subtle body' (Jung) or 'astral' and 'etheric' body. It was called an 'astral' body because it had ultimately the same unbounded spatial dimensions as cosmic or astral space. The terms 'space' and 'ether' are both Western translations of the Sanskrit word *akasha*. The awareness body was called an 'etheric body' because it was once thought of as composed of the same 'aether' that was once supposed to fill the apparent emptiness of space. This is not some quantum-mechanical construct nor some fine material substantiality but soul substance - the primordial substantiality or 'aether' of awareness as such, permeating all space.

Yet the pure awareness we can experience through identification with the emptiness of space can also be permeated or contaminated by more-or-less healthy psychic and emotional 'climates' or 'atmospheres' in which people dwell – whether economic or political, familial or institutional, domestic or public, cultural or religious. To speak of the 'climate' of an encounter, the 'aura' of a person or object or the atmosphere of a place or institution is no mere metaphor. Such psychic atmospheres have as much reality and substantiality as the very air we breathe in them. In reality they *form* that very air and imbue its physicality with their own psychic qualities. Mass psychic and emotional climates are also the true basis of changing weather conditions. It is psychical pollutants and 'psycho-smog' and not air-borne chemical pollutants, ozone holes in the upper atmosphere or 'aether', or industrial smog that are the primary source of those 'allergens' held responsible for conditions such as asthma. Each individual's *pranic* body contains its own 'micro-climate' of emotional weather patterns - including warming emotional seas, rising emotional moisture, more or less cloudy emotional atmospheres, emotional droughts and floods, rainstorms and monsoons, whirlwinds and tsunamis, thunder and lightning. The term 'etheric' is derived from the Greek 'aether', meaning the upper atmosphere that surrounds the earth. In its *basic* structure however, the psychical is a sphere composed of 'aetheric' flow-currents of awareness – circulating and spiralling, radial and axial, centrifugal and centripetal. Einstein's theory of relativity seemed to make the long-standing idea of a cosmic aether filling space redundant. This is not so, if, as in Stephen Rado's modern aether cosmology or 'aetherometry', the aether is conceived of as a flowing but frictionless gaseous medium. In reality however there is no such thing as an ideal,

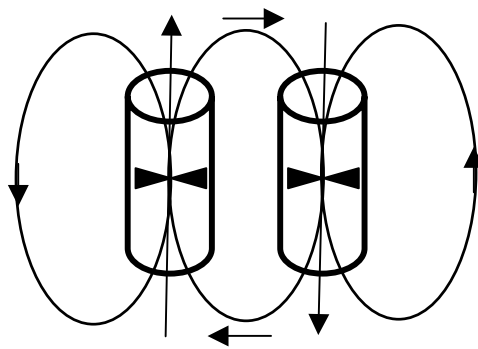
frictionless gas. Only *awareness* as such has the ideal characteristics of Rado's aether, capable of flowing in the same way as a gaseous aether. That is why in all primordial cultures awareness was sensed as something like air - flowing like currents of breath (*psyche*) and wind (*pneuma*). That is also why the supposed 'founder' of modern medicine – the Greek Hippocrates – saw 'ill-winds'- as the primary cause of illness. In reality the 'ether' or 'aether' is not any fine or frictionless gas that physics can detect but consists purely and simply of flow currents of awareness as such.

Just as energy currents can form themselves into more or less stable field-patterns or material units, so can flow currents of awareness form themselves into more or less stable field-patterns or units of awareness. All material bodies in space are formed not simply from stable energetic patterns in the form of atoms and particles but from basic particles or units of awareness. The root meaning of *prana* is that which precedes (*pra*) the existence of all material atoms (*anu*) or energetic units. The *pranic* body is only an 'etheric' body in this sense - being formed from the same basic *pre-physical* units of awareness from which air itself and all units of matter and energy are formed. Such units have no fixed size. The psychical body is an awareness body unit and has the same basic structure as all awareness units. This basic etheric structure is formed from patterned flow currents of awareness (*nadis*) that are *spiral* in character (another word with the same root as 'spirit' and 'respiration'), and is well illustrated in the cover illustration of Madhu Khanna's book on *rta* – the Sanskrit term for the cosmic order known in Greek as the *logos*.

**The *psychic, pranic* or '*etheric*'
body as a *spiroid* soul-sphere**



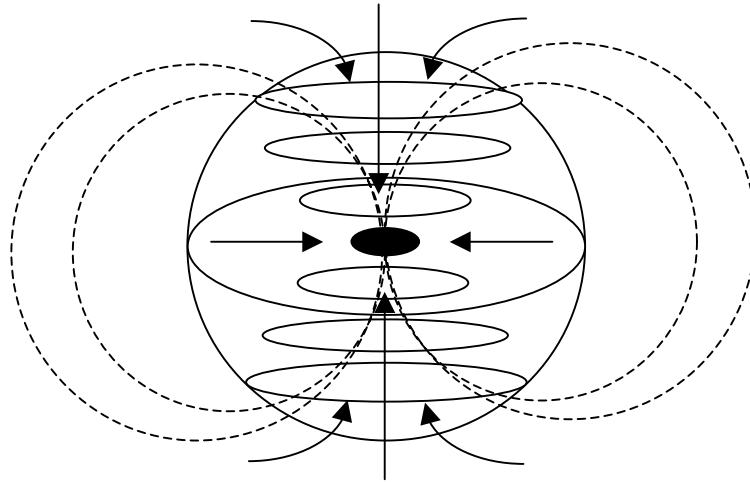
In Stephen Rado's new aether model of cosmology or 'aetherometry' he asks us to visualise two parallel cardboard tubes with motorised fans inside them. The fans in each tube rotate in different directions. The result will be a circulatory flow coupling of air currents of the sort shown in the diagram below:



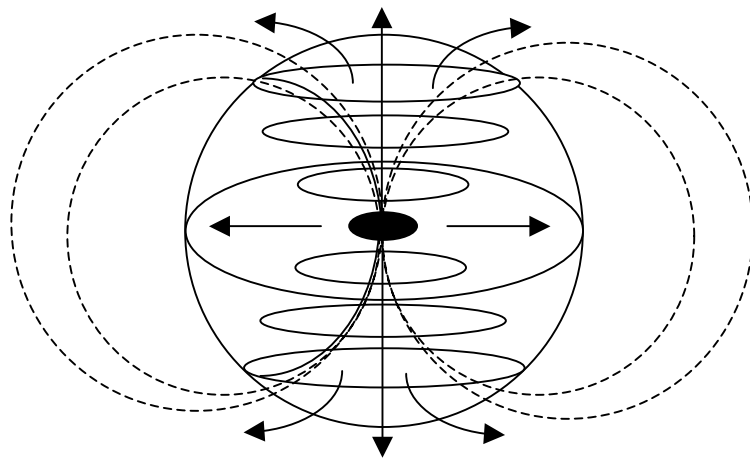
This is Rado's new aether theory of *magnetism*. For the coupling of circulatory air flows in the two tubes will attract them like magnets. The cardboard tubes however, can also be taken to represent the human physical body, and their hollow interiority the central *nadi* or flow channel of awareness known as the *sushumna*. The circulatory flows themselves can also be compared to the magnetic field of the earth – or of any spherical body - visualised as above as a *spiroid* sphere. The human *psychical* or *pranic* body is itself such a sphere – a *soul-sphere* made up of flows of awareness. There are two basic 'proto-sexual' flow patterns which can be *combined in many*

different ways: an inward-gathering and centripetal flow from circumference to centre (proto-feminine) and an outward-radiating and centrifugal flow (proto-masculine) from centre to circumference.

Proto-feminine Flow

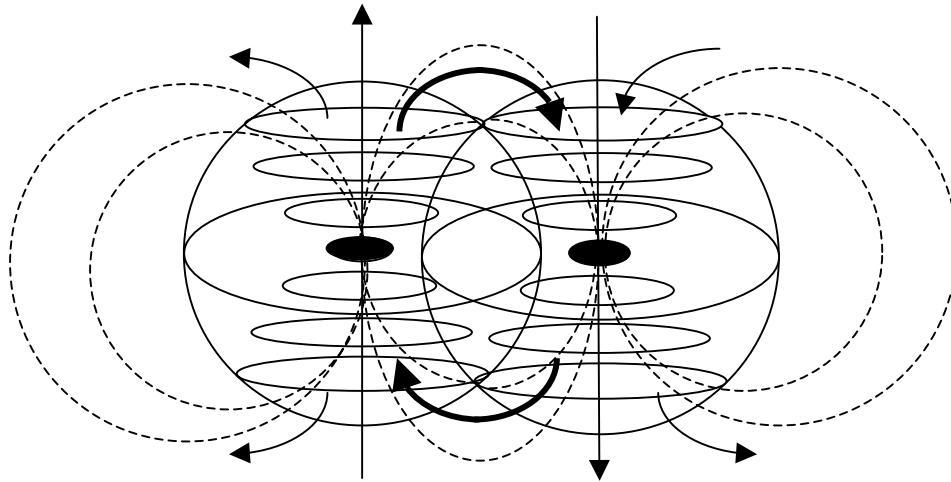


Proto-Masculine Flow



Together these *proto-sexual* flow patterns create a *proto-sexual coupling* of flow currents of awareness. It is this proto-sexual coupling that first gives the proto-sexual flow patterns their characteristic ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ nature, resulting in:

1. a feminine soul-sphere that draws or sucks in flows of awareness from below but itself possesses a centrifugally expansive and outwardly radiant or ‘light’ nature.
2. A masculine soul-sphere whose flows enter and fill the feminine soul-sphere from below, but which itself possesses a centripetal, inwardly radiating or ‘dark’ nature.



The result is a ‘magnetic’ flow coupling of the sort already illustrated through Stephen Rado’s cardboard-tube model. The proto-sexual coupling of flow currents of awareness between awareness units or soul-spheres allows their aggregation into those larger units which appear to us externally as material structures, including that larger soul-sphere or *awareness body* which is our own *psychical* or *pranic* body.

The different flows of awareness that make up our *pranic* body are not merely spiritual-scientific abstractions represented in neat schematic diagrams. They are what make us sensitive in a bodily way to the atmosphere around ourselves and other people and to all those winds or draughts of awareness (*pneuma*) that flow between and within ourselves and others – draughts that can draw us towards or away from one another, deeper into or further out of ourselves. Draughts that can also draw us into and out of *one another* - allowing our own soul or *psyche* to flow into the body of the other, and their soul to be drawn like a draught into ours. The German word for ‘relationship’ – *Beziehung* – derives from the verb *ziehen* – to pull or draw. The therapeutic relationship is ordinarily thought of as one in which the therapist ‘draws’ the client out, draws insights from the ‘material’ presented by the client and/or helps the client to independently draw insights from their own experience. In general we speak of people feeling more or less ‘drawn’ to one another, being ‘drawn to’ particular ideas, places or people, or being ‘drawn into’ discussions and endeavours. And yet neither in psychotherapy nor in everyday life do people either think or feel the ‘draughts’ that draw them hither and thither in a *bodily* way, as flow currents of awareness comparable to draughts of air. A therapist may be aware of ‘drawing out’ a client verbally, but this is quite different from attending to the atmosphere or ‘aura’ of their bodily presence and actively drawing it towards us – feeling it as a tangible

‘draught’ of awareness that we can then absorb or breathe in with our whole body. It is easy for the human being to be ‘drawn’ or ‘sucked’ so deeply *into* a set of ideas, a pattern of relating, or any some element of their everyday activity and experiencing, that they are drawn *out* of themselves – sometimes to the point of feeling sucked dry and depleted, lacking sense of their whole self. The natural reaction is then to ‘withdraw’ back into themselves, temporarily or permanently closing themselves off from the world and retreating from the pull or draw of relationship as *Be-ziehen* - to be ‘drawn’ or ‘draughted’ by someone or something. If the process of withdrawal back down into our own deeper self is blocked it may be experienced as the downward pull of ‘depression’. To not be ‘drawn out’ of ourselves to the point of losing ourselves in the world however, does not require us to close off and ‘withdraw’ from the world. For the opposite of letting our awareness be passively drawn out or ‘sucked in’ by something or someone is not to close off but to open ourselves and to actively *draw in* and absorb our awareness of all that we experience, inwardly and outwardly - to *breathe awareness*.

Postscript

Modern psychologists attend exclusively to their client’s experience of themselves, other people and the world, to their ways of reflecting on their self-experience or reacting to others. They may seek to help them to ‘cognitively’ reflect in different ways on their experience, thereby altering their way of reacting to or ‘behaving’ towards others. Alternatively they may prescribe medications to alter an individual’s inner self-experience and outward behaviour. Yet in all modern *psychologising* - of whatever form - there is no real place for the *psyche* understood in terms of fields and patterned flows of awareness. That is because awareness cannot be reduced to an experienced phenomenon or complex of phenomena of any sort. Awareness, quite simply, is not an *experience* – whether the experience of a perception, sensation, desire, impulse, emotion, thought or action. Awareness is *awareness of experiencing*. Our awareness of an experienced perception, sensation, desire, impulse emotion, thought or action is not that experienced phenomenon. This was understood in the philosophies of the Old Yoga, which recognised the essential reality of the soul or psyche as a field of awareness transcending all experience and all experienced phenomena. Today things are very different. ‘Pre-reflective’ *awareness of experience* has been replaced by *reflection on* experience and by the conceptualisation of

experienced phenomena. We have forgotten that “all reflection on experience is part of experience” (Kosok) - that thoughts and concepts too are things we experience. That is why the most sophisticated psychological reflections *on* experience cannot free a single individual from their own experienced dis-ease or distress without the cultivation of an awareness distinct from *all* experience – precisely the type of ‘transcendental’ awareness cultivated through the Old Yoga, and recognised in the ‘Old Psychology’. For this was a ‘psychology’ in which the all-pervading and flowing character of awareness was correctly understood as the living essence of air and ‘breath’ – as ‘life-breath’ or *psyche*. The Old Yoga was such a psychology. That is why, to revitalise ‘psychology’, a ‘New Yoga’ is called for - one which, by cultivating *awareness*, prevents us from reducing the human *psyche* to an *experiential object* of lifeless ‘scientific’ knowledge. For no true insight into the human psyche can be attained by any form of professional knowledge or training without first of all deepening and expanding the professionals’ own bodily, *breathing awareness of themselves and their clients* as living, breathing human beings.