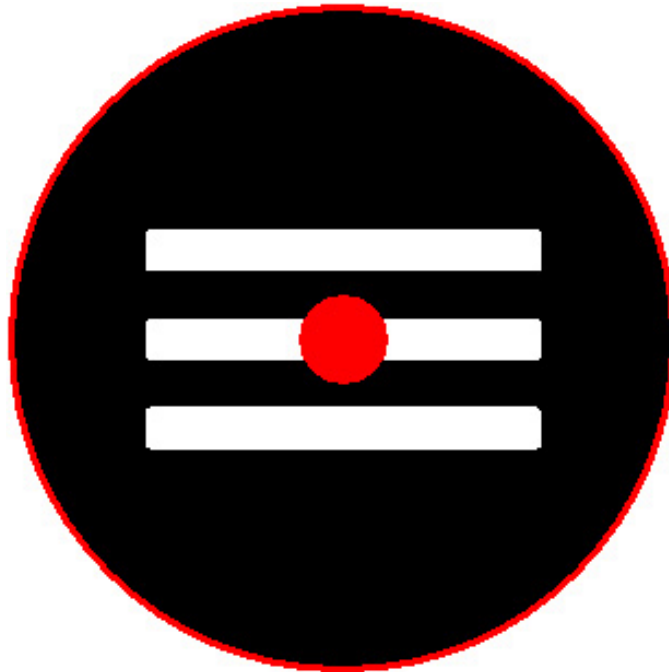


# **AWARENESS AND IDENTITY, EVERYDAY AND DIVINE**

**Tantric-Christic Perspectives**



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**October 28, 2005**

## Awareness and Identity, Everyday and Divine

God is not aware.

God *is* awareness.

You yourself are not aware.

You are a portion of the awareness that is God.

Awareness is not the property of any thing we are aware of,

Yet there is nothing that is not a portion of the awareness that is God.

Awareness is not the property of any self or 'I'.

Awareness *is* your very self, divine.

Do not then, identify with any

'Thing' you are aware of.

But be your true self.

Be awareness.

Be 'God'.

I begin this essay by seeking to show how such simple everyday questions as “How are you?” or “How are you feeling?” - and the everyday ways we answer them - conceal countless *questions within questions* – above all questions of awareness and identity. As such, I wish to show how these are also questions which place each of us in a deep but unknowing dilemma – for they are questions which not only have a profound bearing upon our everyday life and sense of self, but also upon our everyday relation to the divine – to ‘God’. The same questions, as we shall see, will also point to profound inner connections between the mystical tradition of East and West, in particular between Indian tantric ‘theosophy’ on the one hand, and esoteric or ‘gnostic’ Christianity on the other.

In answer to the question “How are you?” we may say “I am fine” or alternatively that we “feel” fine – or ‘awful’, ‘terrible’, ‘angry’, ‘sad’ etc. It seems then, that ‘to be’ is synonymous with ‘to feel’, just as it is in the two questions: “How are you?” / “How do you feel?”. In English the two formulations come together in a third: “How are you feeling?” The problem here is that we know that there are countless different ways in which we each experience ourselves feeling ‘fine’, ‘great’, ‘awful’, ‘sad’, ‘angry’, ‘happy’ or whatever. Yet all these feelings are something we feel foremost in a wordless bodily way, as underlying and often complex tones and textures of feeling or ‘moods’. “Every feeling is an embodiment attuned in this or that way, a mood that embodies in this or that way ... A mood makes manifest ‘how one is’ and ‘how one is faring’. (Martin Heidegger) All the different and often complex

moods that underlie our feelings – and all the different and often complex reasons we may have - are completely short-changed by such umbrella terms and emotional word- labels as ‘fine’, ‘great’, ‘awful’ or ‘terrible’. That is why questions such as “How are you?” or “How are you feeling?” can sometimes leave us inwardly speechless, or else turn the answers we give into more or less polite and ‘cover all’ formalities – formalities which generally conceal or cover up more than they reveal. That is also why the true sense of such a simple expression as “I feel awful’ is always on one level its logical contrary - “I do not feel awful”. For what I *actually* feel is not ‘awful’ but rather something much more specific, something felt in a wordless bodily way that *no word* such as ‘awful’, ‘terrible’, ‘sad’ or ‘depressed’ can possibly do justice to and express.

There are yet other questions concealed within the simple questions “How are you?” and “How are you feeling?” - and concealed also in the sort of answers we give to them. One basic question is who exactly *is* the ‘I’ that ‘is’ or ‘feels’ this or that? Is the ‘I’ that says it feels ‘fine’ the *same* ‘I’ that, at another time, in another situation might say ‘I feel awful’? If so, then once again such expressions as ‘I am fine’ or ‘I feel fine’ are actually saying the opposite - that ‘I’ am *not* fine. Instead they say simply ‘I am I’ – whatever or however ‘I’ *feel*.

Alternatively, statements such as “I feel X ”could be read as saying that “I *experience* X”, “I am *aware of* feeling X”, “I *experience myself* feeling X”, or “I am aware of *a self* that feels X.” Such formulations however, bring us once again to the question of *who* the self or ‘I’ *is* that *experiences itself* or is *aware of a self* that ‘is’ or ‘feels’ X? Who or what is the *experiencing self* or ‘I’ rather than *the experienced self* or ‘I’? ‘Experiencing’ means *being aware of something*. So when we experience sadness for example and say “I feel sad”, what we are also really saying is “I am *aware of* a self that feels sad” or “I am *aware of* a feeling of sadness”. Similarly, when we say “I think *this* about X” or “I think *that* about Y”, what we really mean is “I am *aware of having this thought* about X or Y”. That is also why *every single time* we use the simple word ‘I’ we are confronted with a fundamental choice - one that can affect our most basic, everyday sense of who we are. The choice is whether to *identify* with a particular thought, feeling or self we are aware of, to identify with some unchanging ‘I’ or ‘ego’ that is *aware* of that thought, feeling or self – or, alternatively, to identify with the very *awareness* of that thought or feeling, the very awareness of *a self* that thinks and feels a certain way. The choices are fundamental because they affect not only our everyday sense of who *we are* but also our everyday sense of *the divine* - of who or what ‘God’ is. In this way they go to the heart of our everyday relation *to* the divine.

'I' am aware of a world and aware of myself in a particular way within that world. 'I' am aware of a sensation or perception, feeling or emotion, thing or thought. 'I' am aware of feeling myself in a particular way – feeling a particular self. But who or what is the self or 'I' that is aware? There is a deep and profound question *within* this question, a question both deeply philosophical and deeply personal. A question that also challenges an assumption that has *rarely been questioned at all* – certainly in the West. This is the assumption that awareness is necessarily the *possession or property* of a self or 'I' – something it 'has' or 'owns'. Together with this assumption goes the belief that our true self is the 'ego' – that self which is the ultimate owner of 'our' awareness – and that knowledge is a relation between this self or 'subject' of awareness and every 'object' it is aware of. Western philosophy is rooted in this *dualism* of subjects and objects of awareness, a dualism in which knowing or awareness as such is just merely a bridge between subject and object. This dualism leaves only two dimensions to human existence: the world understood as a world of objects, and the ego for whom that world is the *object* of its awareness – and awareness that is its private property. Yet what if awareness need not be understood as the property of any self at all? What if the 'ego' is the *illusion* of an 'I' that possesses or 'owns' awareness? What if our *true self* is not a self that 'has' its 'own' awareness, but that self which *is* awareness, not 'its' awareness, yours or mine, but awareness as such? The tantric sages called *this* self – the self that does not 'have' awareness but *is* awareness – the 'awareness self' (*chaitanyamatma*). Put simply then: it is not the self that 'has' awareness or that is aware. Instead *awareness is our very self*. This was the central insight of Indian tantric theosophy, and indeed the first and most important 'thread' or *sutra* of the treatise or *tantra* known as the *Shiva Sutras* - 'Shiva' being the tantric God-name given to the infinite or divine awareness. Why is this *sutra* so important? Because if we stop thinking of our self or 'I' as something that 'has' awareness we also can stop it from identifying with whatever it is aware *of* or experiences - whether feeling 'great', 'terrible' or anything in between. Instead we can identify with *awareness itself*, pure and simple. The insight therefore gives us a basic and fundamental choice. We can identify with whatever it is we are experiencing – with whatever we are *aware* of thinking, feeling, sensing or perceiving. Or we can identify with that *awareness* as such. To identify with awareness does not mean to *dis-identify* from what we experience, to dissociate ourselves from it or to merely reflect on it in a detached way. On the contrary, it is to create a space of awareness in which we can fully *affirm* and even *intensify* what we are experiencing – yet without identifying with it.

For Westerners the idea of identifying with awareness as such is particularly difficult, because they are so attached to the belief that 'their' awareness is just that - their private property or personal 'consciousness' generated by their bodies or brains. They confuse awareness with

the 'I' that is aware, and lack any tangible sense of a *trans-personal* or divine awareness transcending that 'I' – a self that *is* awareness rather than an ego or 'I' that 'has' awareness. The 'awareness self' on the other hand is that self that knows itself *as* awareness and not as something that *has* awareness. Precisely because it *is* awareness, it both transcends and embraces *all possible selves* that we can be *aware of*. That is why tantric teachings emphasise that only the awareness self is truly *free*. Awareness alone allows us to experience ourselves in countless ways, both 'great' and 'terrible', without being bound to or identified with any. The key to *becoming* our awareness self is simply to *be* awareness. *Being awareness* means identifying *with* awareness rather than whatever we happen to be experiencing or aware *of* at any given time. Not with 'your' or 'my' awareness, mind you, but with *awareness as* such – pure and simple. To 'realise' the awareness self in this way enables us to *recognise* every self we experience (and every experience of that self) as but one self-expression and self-experience of an awareness that, paradoxically, is not itself the property of *any* 'self' or 'being' – even that of a god or God. For God too, does not 'have' awareness but *is* awareness – an *unbounded* awareness that is the divine source of all beings.

The same assumption that prevents us from recognising that awareness is essentially *not* the property of any being or body, self or subject, ego or 'I', also prevents us from recognising the true nature of the absolute – of God or divinity. For it forces us to see God as one being among others 'with' awareness, albeit a 'supreme' being - rather than understanding that God *is* awareness. And awareness is indeed the *only possible candidate* for any absolute, ultimate or divine reality. In contrast, the dogma shared by both modern science and New Age 'spirituality' is that everything is 'energy'. But energy cannot be conceived as absolute, for it is just another measurable 'thing' that we are aware of or conceive of *within* awareness. Nor can the absolute be conceived of as a being – even a divine being. Awareness alone is the only conceivable absolute and only conceivable *reality* of the divine. That is because it is the *condition* for our experience of any self or being, energy or body whatsoever - including our own body. As such, it cannot be the property or 'function' of any experienced self or being, energy or body. Yet if the absolute – God - *is* awareness, then everything we can possibly experience or be aware of is indeed 'within God' and a part of God. Conversely, God is within everything we can possibly experience – from a glorious vision *of* the divine to the direst experience of disease or despair.

The divine awareness can and has often been compared to an ocean. An ocean is the living source of all the fish and other life-forms within it. That does not mean it is itself but one big 'God-fish'. To see 'God' as a being, even a supreme being, is like seeing the ocean of awareness as a huge God-fish. In reality the beingness of God is the *beingness of awareness*

as such. That in turn is nothing but the *awareness of being* – an awareness which embraces all beings. As human beings dwelling in the divine ocean of awareness we may experience ourselves as ‘fish’ separate and *apart from* one another and from the ocean as a whole. Alternately, we can experience ourselves as *part of* the ocean of divine awareness and connected to all other beings, human and non-human through it. The awareness self however, is the ocean’s awareness of itself in and as every being within it - as you, me and as every other being. Identifying with the ocean of awareness we can come to experience our very self not only as part of it but as one *self-expression* of it – one unique way it comes to experience itself *as a self*.

“There is what you may call a god, but hardly in terms of which you can conceive. Using your terms, you are indeed part of this god. You are indeed infinite. You have immediate, instant, personal connection with this god, using your terms. You are directly connected to this god ... This is a personal god because this god represents the part of that which is, which is yourself, you see. No one else can speak to this particular portion of this god ... because god is also in this respect, yourself. Though hardly the self you see in the mirror.” (Seth)

Though God is not a self or person, the awareness self is our most *personal link* to God - to the unbounded and divine awareness which *is* the divine. For whilst the divine awareness *is not a person*, it is aware of itself in a most intimate way as *every person* – as me, you and everyone. Again, God is not a person. Yet as a person, *you* yourself are that unique aspect of the divine awareness – of God - that is aware of itself *as your person*, as *being you*. *You alone* therefore can know this aspect of God personally – not through your *personal self* alone but through your divine *awareness self*. Your awareness self is both your most personal link to God and at the same time your most unique and *personal god* - for it is that aspect of God that *is you alone*, and is most intimately *aware* of you alone as a person. Yet God as such is not a person. As for the Christian notion of God as a trinity of ‘persons’ – ‘Father, Son and Holy Spirit’ - this is merely a *symbol* of the relation between the unbounded and divine awareness that is God (‘the Father’), the individual’s awareness self (‘the Son’) and the ‘Holy Spirit’ that links them – which is nothing other than *awareness* as such. None of these three are ‘persons’. Yet they are all part and parcel of who you are – and the very source of *your* personhood. Hence the words of St. Paul: “It is not ‘I’ who live, but Christ who lives in me.” For here Christ serves a living symbol of the awareness self.

“We are such stuff as dreams are made on.” (Shakespeare). Indeed we are such stuff as gods are made of. For we are each made of the God-stuff that is awareness. Yet we are also each unique creations of that God-stuff, thus unique gods in our own right. God, as the unbounded

awareness field that is the source of all that is, has an innate propensity to individualise and diversify itself. It is not man who creates gods. God is that which *gods*, individualizing and ‘polytheising’ the singularity of divinity – what Michael Kosok has termed “the singularity of awareness”. The singular awareness that is God knows itself not just as every possible being, self or person but as every *body* - indeed as every atom and particle of matter. And yet it is not itself a being. That is because every being - every body and every self - is a *bounded* awareness – comparable to a circle drawn on a sheet of paper. Just as we can draw countless circles within circles, so there are countless selves within selves. The divine awareness on the other hand, is not those circles themselves, but is comparable instead to the white spaces around and inside them – without which no circle could be drawn or appear. That is why it has been described in Christian terms as ‘The Kingdom’ that is both “outside and inside you” (Gospel of Thomas). Just as it is also stated in the *tantras* that “Having made itself manifest, awareness abides as both the inner and the outer.” (Utpaladeva)

Every being and every body, like a circle, is a *boundary*. And yet “There are no boundaries to the self.” (Seth). That is because, paradoxically, a boundary itself, like the boundary formed by a circle, *does not itself have any boundaries* – for both the spaces surrounding it and the space it surrounds are ultimately unbounded - part of a singular space or field of awareness, comparable to an infinite blank page. Every body that, viewed from the outside, appears bounded, is an awareness that, from the inside is inwardly unbounded. Thus the human body, viewed as an object from the outside, appears bounded – like a container of the human being’s ‘private’ awareness. From the inside however the human being’s awareness does not end at the boundaries of their body. Instead it embraces and fills the entire space around it. Were the space around our bodies not a space of awareness, we could not in any way be aware of any other body or object within it. That is why the awareness self is not bounded by the physical body – the body as viewed from without. Nor is it bound to the physical plane – to the world of physical objects around it. Instead it inhabits countless bodies and countless planes or dimensions of awareness. It is that self which *embodies* itself in countless incarnations, and in countless forms, both physical and non-physical. Its identity is thus infinitely broader than the personal ‘psychological’ self. Portions of our larger identity dwell within other planes or systems of reality “and these are more advanced than your own psychological self ... These can be compared in this context ... to minor gods, and your mythologies are full of these.” (Seth)

The awareness self is our “whole self”. It is also our “private multidimensional self” - that portion of the divine awareness which embraces all that we are and can be in every plane or dimension of awareness. We dwell within the *divine embrace* of that space which is

awareness itself. It is because the divine awareness field, like an infinite piece of paper, makes space for and embraces every aspect and portion of our identity - all that we are and can be - that it has an inherently *healing* power – the power to restore a sense of wholeness to the personal self. The healing power of ‘spirit’ is not ‘energy’ or any such ‘thing’ which we might be *aware of*. Spirit, quite simply is *awareness as such*. In tantric terms spiritual healing is the innate healing power (*Shakti*) of divine awareness (*Shiva*). It is not the transmission of a spiritual or quasi-physical ‘energy’. Rather it is the direct impartation of the inner light and breath of *awareness* to the body of another. More essentially, it is that very act of *identification* with spirit - with awareness - which awakens us to our awareness self, that self which is also our whole self or soul. Identifying with awareness - *being awareness* - we become our awareness self. As this self we can directly impart the healing light and breath of awareness to the bodies of others - opening up the inner and outer spaces of awareness out of which they form - the divine ‘Kingdom’ of Spirit that is both “outside and inside you.” (Gospel of Thomas)

“Just as a man who has been ill for a long time forgets his past pain completely when he regains his health, absorbed as he is in the ease of his present condition, so too are those who are grounded in *pure awareness free of thought-constructs* no longer conscious of their previous state.” (Abhinavagupta)

“Now the Lord *is* Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there is freedom*.” 2 Cor. 3:17

*Being awareness* and *becoming our awareness self* needs first and foremost to be an act of the ego. The ego is that portion of ourselves that normally regards awareness or ‘subjectivity’ as its private property - like a torchlight it can turn on itself, other people and the world. Yet this is a torchlight that turns all immediate subjective experiencing into an object. The ego’s objectification of subjective experience however, can also serve as a substitute for *aware* experiencing and become a defence mechanism against intensities of subjective experience - sensual, emotional or sexual. Thus if a person is unable to identify with and abide in their simple *awareness* of an intense sensation, emotion or impulse, containing it in an expanded spacious field of awareness, they *need* their ego to defensively manage, control and ‘cope with’ it, to physically restrain it and hold it in - a process that can lead to somatic symptoms. Or else they feel impelled to simply react from and ‘act out’ intensities of emotion in their behaviour. To do so they require an object for those emotions which they can react to.

People use their egos to either turn their subjective experiencing into an object, or else they seek and find an object - external or internal - that they can point to as a ‘cause’ of their



experience or blame for it. As a result, they also turn *themselves* into an object – either of their own ego, or of some thing or person. Thus when someone feels ill they look for an internal or external object they can identify as its cause – whether a virus or a vaguely named ‘thing’ such as ‘stress’ or ‘negative energy’. Or when someone cannot contain an intense subjective emotion of anger in awareness they blame something or someone for ‘making’ them angry – thus not only experiencing themselves as an unwilling object of that ‘angry-making’ thing or person, but also turning it into a counter-object *of* their anger. Being *identified* with the anger rather than identifying with the awareness of it, the anger itself is focused entirely on the thing or person that is its *object* - rather than felt as part of the awareness that is the individual’s own *subjectivity* or self. If a person has been (mis-)handled or (mis-)treated as an object in the process of ego development during infancy and childhood, they will use their own ego to handle and treat themselves and others in the same way that they were handled and treated – or else experience others as handling and treating them as adults in the same way that they were handled and treated in infancy and childhood.

The ego experiences the world only as a set of objects and ‘object relations’ and relates to self and other only as objects. For the ego, the world is nothing but a conglomerate of objects related by causes and effects. The ego experiences itself as a mere *object* of other people’s subjective awareness - of their perceptions, thoughts or emotions, approval or judgement, love or hate, expectations or disappointments, needs or frustrations - and in turn *turns* other people into counter-object of its own perceptions, thoughts and emotions, approval or criticism, expectations or disappointments, needs or frustrations. The only relationships the ego knows are ‘object relations’, whether in the form of personal relationships or relationships between things. Object relations are convenient for the ego because they can be understood as causal, calculable and thereby controllable relationships. Just as one object can be identified as the cause of some effect in another so can people be seen as objects and blamed as ‘causes’ for the way they affect us. Even when it turns its gaze inwards the ego finds only a world of internal *objects* – of thoughts and feelings, sensations and emotions, dreams and mental images, all of which it fears to experience in a directly subjective way - in awareness. So despite filling its world with objects the ego constantly feels ‘something missing’ – a nagging lack of true subjectivity and selfhood, and of true inter-subjective resonance with others. Yet it experiences this very lack not as a lack of subjective awareness but only as the lack of some *object* – whether thing or person - thus turning once again to its world of objects and material possessions to make up for this lack. Only through the experience of ‘depression’ is the lack experienced subjectively - precisely *as* a lack of *subjectively experienced* meaning and motivation, ultimately an absence or lack of divine awareness in everyday life. The sense of dwelling and having our source *within* God, just as our bodies dwell within space or a fish

dwells within the ocean, has been historically distorted by Judaeo-Christianity into something completely different - the idea of a separate, all-seeing being 'above' us who, like a huge God-fish, constantly watches over us and judges us. This is a 'God' for whom - like the *ego* - we are all *objects*. Indeed this concept is nothing else but a *divinisation* of the human ego itself - for which both self, other and world are all mere objects of its actions and reactions, thoughts, judgements and emotions. That is because, over time the human ego has become a portion of our awareness that seeks to act as God or 'Lord' over all the objects it surveys, externally and internally - always narrowly focussed on some 'thing' it can conceptualise and control, react to or act on.

Yet there is a deeper religious meaning to the term 'Lord'. That is the *spiritualised ego*. The spiritualised ego is the ego that can relinquish its need for control and instead re-link itself (*re-ligare*) to the awareness self. It does so by identifying with awareness. By doing so it becomes aware of itself as but one tiny portion of a larger self or identity – the awareness self. Christians refer to *Jeshua* (Jesus) as 'Our Lord'. So too, in the tantras is Shiva referred to as 'Lord' (*Ishvara*) or Supreme Lord (*Parameshvara*). This was not intended to imply that Shiva is or was a person like *Jeshua*. Instead it was understood that the very act of calling upon a divinity under the title of 'Lord', or of calling upon a divinity by a name such as Shiva, transformed the calling into *mantra* – meaning a word which serves to 'guard' (*tra*) awareness (*man*). By uttering a divine name or title as mantra the ego implicitly recognises, calls upon and addresses itself to the *awareness self*, thereby letting itself be spiritually guarded and transformed by it. In tantric theosophy the purpose of mantra and of 'worship' as such is *theosis* – to *become* the god one worships by recognising it as one's own innermost self. By making itself subservient to the god as 'Lord', the worshipper intentionally yokes their ego to their own *divine awareness self*, thereby spiritualising their own ego. The word 'yoga' means 'to yoke or bind'. The same *yogic* principle is at work in Christian prayer – in particular the *mantra* of *Jeshua*: "I and the Father [the divine awareness] are one."

Here we see again how, as Rudolf Steiner points out, there is absolutely no contradiction between Eastern and Christian mystical theosophy. The importance of both lies in their power to bring human beings, not simply to 'belief' in or knowledge 'of' things spiritual, but to a full experience of the *reality* of the spiritual world and of the 'Spirit' itself. "The impulse going forth from the Christ is, in the fullest sense, reality." Both etymologically, spiritually and historically, this reality is ultimately that *same* 'light of awareness' symbolised in Eastern theosophy by Shiva, and in Christianity by the names *Lu-cifer* (the 'light bringer' and *Jeshiva* (*Jeshua*). For both names mean 'I am Shiva' - in other words 'I *am* the light' (*cifer*). That is why, as Steiner understood it: "The torch of the resurrected Lucifer, the Lucifer now

transformed into the good, blazons the way for Christ.” What is necessary though, is to distinguish the historic ‘Jesus’ from ‘the Christ’ as a spiritual being – the former being an incarnation or embodiment of the latter. “Lucifer (like Jeshua/Jeshiva) is the bearer of the Light. Christ *is* the Light.” (Rudolf Steiner) In this statement we can read an understanding of ‘Lucifer’ as the *light-bearing* ego or ‘I’ of the human being, whereas ‘Christ’ is the Light itself - the awareness self of which that ‘I’ is just one portion. Lucifer ‘resurrected’ in Christ is the newly spiritualised ego or ‘I’, the ego or ‘I’ that is reborn from and within the awareness self and recognises itself as a part of that self – the self that *is* the Light and is Awareness. This newly spiritualised ego is what Jeshua referred to when announcing that “You shall be illumined by the *new* Spirit, the Holy Spirit.”

The awareness of any ‘thing’ - any object or body in space - is not itself any thing, an object or body in space. Whilst it is ‘no thing’ however, is it not ‘nothing’ – an empty void. Instead it is the very space of awareness in which that object or body stands. Just as the awareness of a thing is not a ‘thing’ in itself, so is the awareness of a word or *thought* not itself a thought or word. It is something thought-free and wordless, free of verbal concepts, symbols or ‘thought-constructs’ (*vikalpa*). It is for precisely this reason however, that through the simple *thought* of awareness expressed in a concept or name - whether Awareness, Light, The Lord, Lord Shiva, or ‘Our Lord Jesus Christ’ - we can come to abide in the ‘Light’ - the realm of thought-free and word-free awareness (*nirvikalpa*). For the awareness of the divine in the form of a thought, word or name is itself nameless, wordless and thought free - *is itself the divine* – but freed of any representation ‘in’ thoughts, words or names. This is the true meaning of *mantra* as understood by the great tantric adept and theosopher Abhinavagupta:

“Just as the man who thinks intensely that he is a sinner becomes such, just so one who thinks himself to be Shiva, and none other than He, becomes Shiva. This certainty, which penetrates and affirms itself in our *thoughts*, coincides with an awareness free of thought-constructs engendered by ... mental representations, the object of which is our identity with Shiva.”

The spiritualised ego no longer acts or reacts from or for itself alone. Instead it acts from and with *awareness*, and does so for the sake of others. It attends not only to the *objects* of its thoughts, actions and perceptions but to the subjective *awareness* of them. It is not only capable of contracting or concentrating awareness to a single mental *focus* but also of expanding it into a spacious bodily field. For the spiritualised ego the human body is no longer a mere sensory object but a *sensory image of the soul* - an embodiment of the awareness self. The spiritualised ego draws its inspiration not from the dry intellect alone but above all from the entire world of *sensory and sensual experiencing*. That is because it is in

touch with the awareness self - a self that does not merely peer out at the world through the peepholes of the senses, but experiences the *body as a whole* as a *sense organ of the soul*.

For the spiritualised, enlightened or liberated ego “the body is an awareness” (Carlos Castaneda). Conversely ‘awareness’ is no mental abstraction but something with its own innate *sensuality* - its own ever-changing bodily forms and feeling tones, its own spatiality and substantiality, light and darkness, warmth and coolness, heaviness and lightness, and its own elemental qualities of spaciousness, airiness, fluidity and earthy solidity. Just as “the body is an awareness” so also can we say that *awareness is a body* – the ‘awareness body’ (*vijnanadeha*). The awareness body is not the ‘physical’ body but the inwardly *felt* body – the body of the *awareness self*. The *physical* body is the awareness body as perceived from without. The awareness body is the physical body as *felt* from within. And it is *from* the awareness self and *through* the awareness body that the physical body itself is formed and transformed. Our every action, thought and perception, sensation or emotion, is not only felt in a particular way in our bodies, but also influences our overall bodily self-experience. To use *words* such as ‘great’ or ‘terrible’ to describe how we feel or what we experience is one thing. Yet only by identifying with our *bodily* experience of all that we are aware of – how it makes our bodies feel to us, and how it makes us feel in our bodies - can we come to identify with awareness as such.

“Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, there stands ... an unknown sage - whose name is Self. In your body he dwells. He is your body.”(Friedrich Nietzsche).

“In him dwells the whole fullness [of divinity] somatically.” (St. Paul).

“Glorify God in your body.” (St. Paul)

“...one should think of the body as full of all the paths [... to enlightenment].” (Abhinavagupta).

To stay in touch with our self as a whole, our *awareness self*, we need above all to stay in touch with our bodily self-awareness – with our *awareness body* and all its shifting sensual qualities. The methods of The New Yoga - as ‘tantra reborn’ - are designed to provide methods by which, through their own bodily awareness and sensual awareness body, individuals can attain a state of intimate sensual contact with their own awareness self – a self that is at the same time their most personal link with God and their most personal ‘god’. The New Yoga begins with the simple suggestion to identify with awareness rather than (a)

anything we experience within our awareness or (b) the egoic 'I' that objectifies both ourselves and our experience. As a result, instead of looking at a person or thing as an object, we can feel ourselves receiving them into the outer space or field of our awareness. Or instead of thinking *about* this or that 'thing' or 'person' – thus turning them into *objects* of thought – we experience our very thoughts themselves *subjectively*, as things arising within the inner awareness space of our heads. And instead of thinking that it is our 'I' or ego that acts, we let awareness *act in and through us*.

The methods of The New Yoga also follow the inner sense of the Christian principle that "Where two or more are gathered in my name, I will be there." Awareness is automatically amplified through the bodily *co-presence and mutual resonance* of two or more persons. Being their common and divine source it is always there, like the common space in which they dwell – or like a third person that transcends the boundaries of personal identity that normally separate a first person 'I' and a second person 'You'. Awareness is that third person 'It' through which, in the linking of an 'I' and a 'You' *the link is opened* between the everyday and the divine. The awareness self of *each* individual is their personal link to others, to their own larger identity and to the countless planes of awareness that dwell within the divine awareness (Greek *noos*). 'The Christ' or the 'Christ entity' on the other hand, is that awareness self which links *all* individuals on *this* plane (the awareness sphere or 'noosphere' of our planet) and the divine awareness. "Where two or more are gathered..." we can enter that noosphere where He will "be there" - because that is where He *is*.

We do not *possess* awareness. We are *blessed* with awareness. We are embodiments of its divine light and breath - the light of awareness (*prakasha*) which delights in everything and every self that we are aware of, and the breath of awareness (*pneuma / prana*) which permeates all bodies as their divine soul or *psyche*. Awareness is the supreme reality and supreme identity of the Self and of the Divine – both enfolding and enfilling us - not 'owned' by us but something that can once more be felt as 'enowning' us (Heidegger). Awareness is also 'The Word' become 'Flesh' in each and all of us. Not through the limited language of words but through the sensual language of *sound* as such. *Per-sonare* – 'to sound through'. God is not a person but that awareness which 'per-sonifies' itself in us, 'sounding through' us as our "fundamental tone". This is that unique tonality of awareness, which, in all its countless harmonics and mood-colours, is what gives shape, tone and texture to all that we experience as our bodies and as our many selves. The divine awareness is also the *Om-kara* - "the Great unspoken Mantra which, eternally manifest, is the life of all beings." (Kshemaraja). It is what *utters* us as beings when we say 'I'.

Having read all these thoughts ‘about’ awareness, about ‘being’ awareness and ‘becoming’ the awareness self, the reader might still be asking themselves the question - ‘How?’. *How* can I identify with awareness? *How* can I ‘be’ awareness and ‘become’ my awareness self? How can I dwell or abide in awareness? The same question has been addressed to me, the apparent thinker of all these many thoughts ‘about’ awareness. I have been asked how I myself, the thinker of all these thoughts about awareness, identify with and abide in awareness. My answer is that I do not *think about* things at all – even ‘awareness’. Instead of putting effort and awareness into thinking, I attend every moment of every day to my *sensory* experience of myself, my feelings, my body and the sensory world around me. I can abide in awareness because I, ‘the thinker’, *do not think*. Instead I let thoughts come to me, I find them arising in my awareness. Yet I do not focus my awareness narrowly on my thoughts when they come to me. Instead I abide in awareness of all that I am experiencing *besides* my thoughts - above all my *bodily* and *sensory* experiencing. What makes me ‘a thinker’ then, is *not* that I put more intense intellectual effort into thinking than others, but rather that I feel more *questions* in all that I experience than others, feel those questions as more important than others do, and feel also a stronger *intent* to find answers to those questions.

“Questioning is the piety of thinking.” (Martin Heidegger). It is as a result of being a *questioner*, of feeling questions in my experience where others feel none, that I am a *thinker* - that so many thoughts come to me. Many more thoughts than come to those who apply *effort* to thinking – and yet who so *narrow* their awareness to their thoughts that they lose awareness of *everything else* there is to *experience* and be aware of in each moment. For me, as for Martin Buber, whatever and whoever we experience *addresses us* and thus also calls upon us to find a response within ourselves. To ‘think’ in an aware and meditative way is essentially to be *response-able*. For it is to feel what is questionable and thought-worthy in all we experience, to let ourselves feel personally addressed by the questions we feel, and to commit ourselves to identifying and finding a *response* to them. We do not fulfil this responsibility by intentionally thinking *about* things, but by letting thoughts come to us from out of an awareness that is grounded in all that we *experience* besides our thoughts and their objects - what they are ‘about’. The famous sculpture of ‘the thinker’ as a figure with his head bent down, chin resting on his hand, his eyes closed, his gaze focused only on his own thoughts - shows just how little the true nature of meditative thinking is understood. The image presents a bodily comportment or *mudra* of a sort that is least conducive to meditative thinking – which requires that we keep our head up, our eyes and ears open, our senses alive. Awareness is expanded by the breadth and richness of what we allow ourselves to experience in each moment. To narrow the focus of our experiencing to our thoughts is to narrow and impoverish the space of our awareness to our heads – forgetting our bodies and our senses.

Conversely, to abide in an *expanded* awareness means to keep open the spatial expanse of our sensory experiencing and to feel and cherish its infinite subtlety, vitality and richness. This means to be always looking out as well as in – the special comportment or *mudra* known by the tantric adepts as *Bhairava mudra*. Hence the words of those adepts themselves, and those of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Western adept, Rudolf Steiner.

“How wonderful it is that although only one sound, that is, Shiva’s name, is always on the tips of their tongues, yet [His] devotees can taste the ineffable relish of all the objects of the senses.” *Utpaladeva*

“With one’s intent inside while gazing outside, eyes neither opening or closing – this is Bhaivara’s Mudra kept secret in all the Tantras.” *Abhinavagupta*

“He whose ultimate intent is internal yet whose vision is directed outward attains the highest realisation.” *Abhinavagupta*

“The power (*Shakti*) which resides in the heart of awareness is freedom itself. The purpose of its creative activity is the group (*kula*), the entire range of experienced self, experienced object and process of experiencing.” *Abhinavagupta*

“The wishing tree of Self-Awareness, with its mighty branches, standing full-grown in the region of the Heart, has the loveliness of Experience for its flowers, and the festive splendour of unimpaired Bliss for its fruits.” *Somananda*

“Through physical life itself the world will be spiritualised in ever-increasing measure. Men will grow in goodness, strength and wisdom and will gaze with ever-deepening vision into the foundations and origins of existence...Thus the Earth will become more and more an expression of its Spirit, of the Christ-Spirit. Spiritual science will be apprehended in the light of the world’s foundations, apprehended as a real and active power.”

“And as once the ‘tongues of fire’ hovered down as a living symbol upon the company of the apostles, so does the ‘Holy Spirit’ announced by Christ himself reign as Light over the Lodge of the Twelve. The Thirteenth is the leader of the Lodge of the Twelve. The ‘Holy Spirit’ is the mighty Teacher of those we name the ‘Masters of Wisdom and of the Harmony of Feelings’.”

*Rudolf Steiner*

## MEDITATION AS 'BEING AWARENESS'

**Whatever is there, whatever you are aware of, just *be* the awareness of it.  
*Being awareness* lets everything we are aware of just be, without *binding* us to it.  
Being awareness is the pure awareness of Being that lets all beings be - in freedom.  
To be awareness is thus to be *truly free*, and to let ourselves and others just be.**

### The Basic Principle:

The *awareness* of any thought we might have is not itself a thought, but is thought-free. Similarly, the awareness of a sensation or tension, pain or pleasure, concern or anxiety, need or frustration is itself *free* of sensation and tension, pain or pleasure, concern or anxiety, need or frustration. If our focus is on anything we are aware *of* – an impulse, train of thought or emotion for example - we tend to identify with it, and thus also to act or react from it. In that way we become unfree - binding ourselves to it, losing our awareness in it and letting it determine our actions. The alternative to this state of unfreedom is 'Being Awareness' - not identifying with anything we are aware of but rather with the simple *awareness* of it. Being Awareness is 'liberation in this life' - freeing us from bondage to anything we experience or are aware *of*. It is also intrinsically healing, for 'sickness' is identification with part of ourselves rather than with our whole self – that self which does not 'have' awareness but *is* awareness. To learn to *be* awareness means first of all learning to distinguish each and everything we experience from the *spaces* of awareness in which we experience it. The key to Being Awareness is therefore *keeping open* an expanded space or field of awareness - a singular space or 'unified field' of awareness that embraces and makes space for all that we experience both within and around us. 'To be' means 'to abide' or 'to dwell'. 'Being Awareness' also means Being *in* Awareness – abiding or dwelling *within* it as we abide and dwell in space itself.



# THE FOUNDATION MEDITATION

The FOUNDATION MEDITATION of The New Yoga can be practiced alone, in silence, at any time and in any place or situation, as many times and for as long a time as possible - until the practice of BEING AWARE, BEING-IN-AWARENESS, and BEING AWARENESS becomes 'second nature' to you. To begin with however, you may find it more effectively to engage in the meditation jointly with others - for any length of time from five minutes to an hour. Yet there is also a much deeper meaning to engaging in the Foundation Meditation as a joint meditation. That meaning is expressed by the saying: "Where two or more are gathered in my name, I will be there." For the "I" in question is that Self in all of us (whether symbolised by Jesus or Buddha, Brahman or Shiva) which does not 'have' awareness but IS Awareness - and is therefore a portion of the Divine Awareness that is God. Since it IS awareness, that Self is also united to the Selves of all others THROUGH awareness – through the 'Holy Spirit'. By conducting the Foundaton Meditation in the co-presence of others, each is graced by that Spirit – by that Divine Awareness which embraces all things and beings and is present within each.

## THE MEDITATION

**Note:** If engaging in the Foundation Meditation as a joint meditation, always do so with explicit intent, at an agreed time and for a mutually agreed period of time.

1. **Take time to become aware** of your BODY SURFACE as a whole, and use it to sense the entire space around your body.
2. **Take time to be aware** of different things you sense and perceive in the space around your body - but in such a way as to maintain awareness of that space as a whole – both the space around that object and around your body.
3. **Keeping your eyes open** and continuing to sense the space around your body, sense the inwardness of your body too as a SPACIOUS INWARDNESS, - uniting the sensed inner spaces of your head, chest, belly and lower abdomen.
4. **Be aware of anything you sense** within those inner body spaces – whether thoughts arising in your head space, sensuous textures of feeling or intensities of emotion, felt needs or desires, or muscular impulses to act or speak.
5. **Be aware primarily** of your immediate BODILY sense of each and every thing you are aware of sensing both within and around you - from the sensory qualities of things and people, to thoughts that arise in your head space, or anything you sense in your chest, belly and abdominal spaces.
6. **Sensing the spaces within and around your body** at the same time, begin to feel them as one singular field or space OF AWARENESS and identify with that UNIFIED FIELD OF AWARENESS as a whole.
7. **Let your awareness wander freely** between different things you are aware of within this spacious field of awareness and let new things arise within this field – but without losing your awareness of the spacious field as a whole, or letting your awareness getting lost in any one thing or thought you are aware of within it.

### Prayer Meditation:

There is nothing and no being that is not God, is not Spirit - is not *awareness*. I do not *have* awareness. Nor is it "I" that am aware. Instead I *am* the awareness of all I experience. The awareness that I *am* is not any self I experience or am aware of, for it is the *experiencing* self, the self that *is* awareness - the *awareness self*. The awareness self is not limited by any way of experiencing of myself, but embraces every possible self I have experienced or can experience, now and forever. The awareness that I am does not end at the boundaries of my physical body, but *extends* beyond my body into the entire space surrounding it, embracing every other body in that space. The awareness that I am also extends and descends into the sensed inner space of my body, of head, chest and abdomen, making space for all I can experience there. The awareness self is not a self bounded and contained by the body. The body itself is but a shape taken by – and *within* – the spaces of awareness that I am. I do not have a body. I *am* a body. I *body*. The body is no bodily 'thing' but a *bodying* of the awareness that I am. There is no tone or texture strand or quality of awareness that I cannot body – that I cannot give shape to, express and communicate in a bodily way. The awareness that I am is both 'soul' and 'spirit', *psyche* and *pneuma*. It is *prana* - the breath of awareness that *enfolds and enfills* my body like air, as it does all bodies - thus linking me to them both outwardly and inwardly. My body itself is but the boundary between the inner and outer spaces of awareness that I am. But a boundary has itself no boundaries. By identifying with my bodily boundary I cease to have any bodily boundaries. I become a singular *unbounded* space of awareness. There are no experiences however subtle or intense, distressful or disturbing, that I cannot affirm and feel as *safe* within the unbounded space of awareness that I am. There is no thing and no person, no being and no body, no experience of myself, of others or the world, that I cannot fully embrace and *take into* the unbounded space of awareness that I am. The awareness that I am is my *awareness self*. The body that I am is my *awareness body*. *Being* the awareness that I am, I *become* my awareness self. *Bodying* the awareness that I am, I *become* my awareness body. The awareness self and awareness body are one. An immortal self and immortal body, divine. Amen.