

FROM THE LIFE OF JESUS IN INDIA TO THE 2nd COMING OF PAUL

Tantric Christology and the Breath of Awareness



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“... sometime between the age of thirteen or fourteen Jesus of Nazareth set forth on a spiritual pilgrimage that would transform Jesus the Nazarene into Isha the Lord, the Teacher of Dharma and Messiah of Israel. In the Himalayan fastnesses Jesus was instructed in yoga and the highest spiritual life, receiving the spiritual name “Isha,” which means Lord, Master, or Ruler, a descriptive title often applied to God, as in the Isha Upanishad. Isha is also a particular title of Shiva. The worship of Shiva centered in the form of the natural elliptical stone known as the Shiva Linga was a part of the spiritual heritage of Jesus, for His ancestor Abraham [a name derived from ‘Brahman’] the father of the Hebrew nation, was a worshipper of that form.”

Swami Nirmalananda Giri

For uncounted millennia, India has been the spiritual lightland of the earth. It is in India that the divine soul-science of yoga – union with God through direct personal communion with him – has been preserved. That is why Jesus went to India as a youth ...

The ethical moral principles prescribed in the New Testament are the same as that in the Gita. The psychology and the metaphysics of these two scriptures, rightly interpreted, likewise coincide in every respect. The superficial difference is that the Hindu scriptures – of which the Gita is a sublime summation – were written in a higher age of civilisation, against a background of greater understanding among the general populace. Though Jesus himself embodied the higher wisdom, he expressed truth in a simple, concise language; whereas the scriptures of India are composed in Sanskrit terminology of extraordinary depth and scientific precision.

A scripture is a mute testimony of spiritual truths; a divine personage is veritably a living scripture.

He [Jesus] is disappointed because many are the churches and temples founded in his name ... but where is the communion that he stressed – actual contact with God?

Paramahansa Yogananda

Hidden meanings of the names of ‘Jesus’ - ‘Jeshua’ / ‘Yeshua’ / ‘Isha’

- JE-SHIVA / YE-SHIVA - ‘I am Shiva’
- YESHIVA - Hebrew word for a place of religious study.
From ‘Yeshivah’ - ‘sitting’, thus also studying and contemplating.
- ISHA – Sanskrit (I)shvara’, God or divine ‘Lord’, ‘Ish’ – to seek for

CHRIST IN INDIA AND KASHMIR

Ancient records of the life and teachings of a certain Isha (Jesus or Jeshua) in India, as well as that of his 'twin' Thomas have been studied and attested for by numerous travellers, researchers and scholars. According to the Nathanamavali Tantra "Isha Natha [Natha meaning 'Lord'] came to India at the age of fourteen. After this he returned to his own country and began preaching. Soon after his brutish and materialistic countrymen conspired against him." After his presumed death through crucifixion he returned to India and "established an Ashram in the lower regions of the Himalayas [Kashmir] and established the cult of the linga [Shiva] there."

"This assertion is supported by two relics of Jesus which are presently in Kashmir. One is his staff, which is kept in the monastery of Aish-Muquan and is made accessible to the public in times of catastrophe such as flood or epidemics. The other is the Stone of Moses – a Shiva linga that had belonged to Moses and which Jesus brought to Kashmir. This linga is kept in the Shiva temple at Bijbehara in Kashmir. One hundred and eight pounds in weight, if eleven people put one finger on the stone and recite 'Ka' over and over, it will rise three feet or so in the air and remains suspended as long as the recitation continues ... In ancient Sanskrit ka means to please and satisfy – that which Shiva does for his worshippers ... When teaching in Israel, Jesus told the people "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, speaking of his Indian disciples ... Ancient records say that frequently Jesus was seen in South India and mistaken for Saint Thomas. He and Saint Thomas were sometimes seen speaking together ... Nearly all those who accepted the teachings of Saint Thomas were devout Brahmins ... It may sound odd, if not outright fantastic, that Lord Isha and Saint Thomas – both 'foreigners' would be preaching Vedic religion to the Indians but at that time only a minority of Indians were followers of the Vedas, most being either Buddhists or Jains, and often confused with them. Those who did honour the Vedas were nearly all mere ritualists, who knew nothing of their spiritual or metaphysical side, and even denied its existence ... So both Isha and Saint Thomas had a legitimate spiritual mission in India ... The Ishannis [followers of Isha] never referred to themselves as Christians. Only after tremendous persecution had devastated their tradition did the descendents of the Ishannis begin calling themselves 'Saint Thomas Christians'...Many Ishannis conducted schools ... they also maintained shrines for the students in which images of the various deities were kept and worshipped ... It was the custom of all Ishannis to worship and make offerings in Hindu temples."

Swami Nirmalananda Giri

CHRIST, KRISHNA AND BRAHMAN-SHIVA

The concept of an incarnation or embodiment of Divinity is not at all unique to Christianity, nor did it originate with the birth of Jesus. For whilst Indian theology recognises all beings as unique incarnations of the Divine ('children of God') it also recognises the special nature and role of particular individuals - not Jesus alone but also Krishna and many other 'Avatars' of Divinity – these being souls who incarnate precisely in order to help others to realise the Divine nature of their own Self and 'yoke' themselves to it, this being the essential aim of 'yoga'.

From an Indian or 'Hindu' perspective, both Christ and Krishna were incarnations or Avatars of Divinity in this sense. Whereas Christianity speaks solely in personal and anthropomorphic terms of God as 'Father' and of his 'Son', Hinduism recognises the transcendental and trans-personal nature of God as a Universal or Infinite Consciousness - a Divine Awareness that is transcendent but also immanent in all things and beings. Christ and Krishna were personifications of 'Christ-Consciousness' or 'Krishna-Consciousness' – both these terms referring to the unity of individualised, personal awareness – that of Jesus and Arjuna - with the Divine Awareness. The Christian concept of Salvation, particularly as expressed by Paul, corresponds fully to the Indian concept of Self-Realisation - being a Realisation of our very Self ('Atman') as a unique centre of that infinite 'field' of awareness that IS the Divine (which is why Krishna is referred to as the 'Field Knower').

The 'Father' or Divine Awareness as such went by the names of Brahman, Vishnu and Shiva – and/or their 'feminine' counterparts or 'Shaktis' - the Great Goddess or Mahadevi symbolised by Durga/Kali and Parvati. Its 'Sons' went by the names of Jesus or Arjuna, these being incarnate individuals who achieved unity with the Divine Awareness through the medium of their own higher soul or overself ('Mahatma') known in Christian terms as 'THE Christ', rather than simply as 'Jesus'. THE Christ was incarnate not only as Jesus, but also as John the Baptist and Saul or Paul – for all three achieved 'salvation' or 'self-realisation' through awareness of THE Christ within them, and St. Paul's Salvation teaching in particular emphasised Self-Realisation through Christ-Consciousness. "Not I but the Christ in me" is the same mantra as 'Shivoham' - 'Shiva am I' or 'Je-Shiva'. The obstacle to Salvation was called 'The Flesh'. This did not mean the body as such (Greek 'soma') but the human tendency to identify with one's bodily consciousness alone - and along with this the belief that our Awareness or Selfhood is bounded by our bodily surface or 'skin' (the root meaning of the Greek word 'sarx' which is translated as 'flesh'). That is why Paul spoke of the resurrected Christ not only as a second spiritual self within us but as a second spiritual body – this being the vessel for a 'Second Coming'.

YOGANANDA ON 'JESUS' AND 'CHRIST'

The Indian theological tradition is a fundamentally inclusivistic one, rejecting the idea of truth being the exclusive possession of any one religion. That is why Yogananda (1893-1952), a guru who revered Jesus as an Avatar of Divinity, is still regarded by today's Christians as having spearheaded a dangerous 'counter-missionary' movement to the Christian West – dangerous precisely because of its inclusivistic approach to religion as such and to Christianity in particular.

“There is a distinguishing difference of meaning between ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’. His given name was Jesus; his honorific title was “Christ.” In his little human body called Jesus was born the vast Christ Consciousness, the omniscient Intelligence of God omnipresent in every part and particle of creation. This Consciousness is the “only begotten Son of God,” so designated because it is the sole perfect reflection in creation of the Transcendental Absolute, Spirit or God the Father.

It was of that Infinite Consciousness, replete with the love and bliss of God, that Saint John spoke when he said: “As many as received him [the Christ Consciousness], to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” Thus according to Jesus' own teaching as recorded by his most highly advanced apostle, John, all souls who become united with Christ Consciousness by intuitive Self-realization are rightly called sons of God....

The saviours of the world do not come to foster inimical doctrinal divisions; their teachings should not be used toward that end. It is something of a misnomer even to refer to the New Testament as the “Christian” Bible, for it does not belong exclusively to any one sect. Truth is meant for the blessing and upliftment of the entire human race. As the Christ Consciousness is universal, so does Jesus Christ belong to all ...

It is an erroneous assumption ... that great ones such as Jesus, Krishna, and other divine incarnations are gone from the earth when they are no longer visible to human sight. This is not so. When a liberated master has dissolved his body in Spirit, and yet manifests in form to receptive devotees ... it means he has an ongoing role to play in the destiny of the world. Even when masters have completed the specific role for which they took on a physical incarnation, it is the divinely ordained task of some to look after the welfare of humanity and assist in guiding its progress. Jesus Christ is very much alive and active today ... working unseen by the masses for the regeneration of the world.”

From the Introduction to 'The Second Coming of Christ: The Resurrection of the Christ Within You' by Parahamahansa Yogananda

ON THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF AN 'AVATAR'

The New Yoga can be understood as a 'counter-missionary movement' which, although coming from Western Europe, is presented as a return gift to the East – aimed at stemming the dilution, distortion or domination of great Eastern religious-philosophical traditions in the face of missionary American-style secularisation or Christianisation - and Islamisation. On the other hand, The New Yoga also acknowledges 'The Christ' in its multiple historic incarnations and personages - including not only Jesus or Jeshua (Je-Shiva) but John the Baptist and Paul - as principle human Avatars of the Divine Awareness. In addition, The New Yoga offers a new interpretation of the nature of an 'Avatar' or 'Descender' as such, understanding it as a state of identification with the Divine Awareness of such a high order that it breaks down the wall between this world and the next, thereby dissolving the artificial separation of discarnate and incarnate souls.

In this state 'discarnate' souls in the afterlife can freely manifest or 'desend' at any time in physical form. At the same time 'incarnate' selves - by virtue of realising that their awareness of their own bodies is itself something essentially bodiless or 'discarnate' - can come to experience themselves as neither incarnate nor discarnate, neither having or not having a body - but rather as continuously incarnating or 'bodying' in human physical form. That is not to say that the afterlife world is populated by souls without any bodily form. Instead it is a multi-dimensional world in which awareness itself, through the individual soul, can take on an infinite variety of bodily shapes and forms, human and trans-human. In contrast to their eternal and divine awareness body - the 'psychical body' or 'soul body' of the individual - the human physical body is more fixed in its biological form. It also has its own innate molecular, cellular and organic awareness - its own 'physical soul' or 'body soul'. The relation between the physical body and soul to its spiritual counterparts (the awareness body and awareness as such) corresponds in all respects with the relation between the 'Letter' of The Word and its 'Spirit' – the wordless awareness it gives expression to. The significance of Christianity lay in recognising through Jesus the nature of 'The Flesh' AS 'Word', the nature of the body as a living biological language of the soul. Together with this went a recognition of the primordial speech or 'Logos' of the soul itself - known in the Tantric tradition as 'Paravak'. Yet just as words carry or accumulate conventional meanings which can obscure or distort the speaker's meaning and restrict free expression, so too can our physical body consciousness and body language restrict a free and flexible bodily expression of our awareness. Jesus was an Avatar by virtue of being 'The Word become Flesh' in a special sense - able to freely 'shapeshift' and thus body or 'incarnate' the inner speech of the Divine Awareness.

A SELF-MANIFESTED SHIVA AVATAR – 'BABAJI'

Shri Babaji is acknowledged as the Shiva Maha-Avatar described by Paramahansa Yogananda in "Autobiography of a Yogi" - a Maha-Avatar [Great Avatar] being a human manifestation of the Divine who can materialize a body at will ... One manifestation of Babaji was around 1800 at which time He travelled extensively in the Kumaon region of the Himalayas ... Babaji's recent physical manifestation was between 1970 to 1984, when He appeared in a holy cave at the foot of the Kumaon Mount Kailash in a remote village called Haidakhan. Many people, from all over the world, have mystically been drawn to Babaji through extraordinary events, dreams and visions and are receiving His Blessings.

Babaji urged the people to "follow the religion that is in your heart." He said ... that he had come to revive the eternal and ageless religion, the Sanatan Dharma; the three basic principles: Truth, Simplicity, and Love. He emphasized constant repetition of the ancient Sanskrit Maha Mantra OM NAMAH SHIVAYA - and to live in harmony along with selfless service to humanity.

What one observes in Babaji's physical appearance depends upon what Babaji chooses to disclose. Sheila, an Indian devotee, first met Babaji in 1972. Raised in a family visited frequently by various saints and gurus, she had reached a saturation point; no longer interested in meeting any such persons. Somehow she was prevailed upon to see Babaji. When she first saw Babaji, she spoke to him internally. She asked that if he were what he was reported as being, he should disclose himself to her. For the next half hour, as she continually pinched herself to make sure she wasn't dreaming, she stared at his face, which changed like a kaleidoscope, from one form of God to another, running the gamut of Hindu and other deities. And on another occasion, I saw his face change to that of my mother. The exquisiteness of this experience equals almost any other ... His eyes are dark and sparkling, laughing, full of bliss, endless in their depth; seeming to contain or reflect the cosmos. I have seen Babaji angry in expression and voice, but never have I seen anything but softness, compassion and love in his beautiful eyes, reflecting an ocean of peace ... Though Babaji wears a man's body, his aspect as Mother Divine is undeniable. One cannot say he is man or woman. Both aspects are merged in him. The creator of all contains all within himself. The Father, the Mother, the Divine being immeasurably exalted beyond every human attribute. Often during the worship service that is performed to him, a shawl will be placed covering his head and shoulders. As he sits motionless, he is bedecked with flowers. At these times his appearance becomes completely that of Goddess. A 10th century Indian saint, Devara Dasimayya, addressing a poem to Ramanatha (a name for Shiva), captures Babaji's illusive, indefinable quality:

*If they see breast and long hair coming they call it woman,
If beard and whiskers they call it man.
But look, the Self that hovers in between is neither man nor woman.*

From babaji.net

ST. PAUL AND THE GITA – A CLASH OF TONES?

“Now these two revelations to humanity, the Bhagavad Gita and the Epistles of St. Paul, are outwardly very different from one another; and this external difference acts upon the soul in every part of these works. We not only admire the Bhagavad Gita for the reasons we have briefly given, but because it strikes us as something so poetically great and powerful; because from every verse it radiates forth to us the great nobility of the human soul; because in everything spoken from the mouths of Krishna and his pupil, Arjuna, we feel something which lifts us above everyday human experiences, above all passions, above everything emotional which may disturb the soul. We are transported into a sphere of soul-peace, of clearness, calm, dispassionateness, freedom from emotion, into an atmosphere of wisdom, if we allow even one part of the Gita to work upon us; and by reading the Gita we feel our whole humanity raised to a higher stage. We feel, all through, that we must first have freed ourselves from a good deal that is only too human if we wish to allow the sublime Gita to affect us in the right way. In the case of the Pauline Epistles, all this is different. The sublimity of the poetical language is lacking, even the dispassionateness is lacking. We take up these Epistles and allow them to influence us, and we feel over and over again how what is wafted towards us from the mouth of St. Paul comes from a being, passionately indignant at what has happened. Sometimes the tone is scolding, or — one might say — condemnatory; in the Pauline Epistles this or that is often cursed; there is scolding. The things that are stated as to the great concepts of Christianity ... all this is stated in a tone that is supposed to be philosophical, that is meant to be a philosophical definition but is not, because in every sentence one hears a Pauline note. We cannot in any single sentence forget that it is spoken by a man who is either excited or expressing righteous indignation against others who have done this or that; or who so speaks about the highest concepts of Christianity that we feel he is personally interested; he gives the impression that he is the propagandist of these ideas. Where could we find in the Gita sentiments of a personal kind such as we find in the Epistles in which St. Paul writes to this or that community: “How have we ourselves fought for Christ Jesus! Remember that we have not become a burden to any, now that we laboured night and day that we might not be a burden to any.” How personal all this is! A breath of the personal runs through the Pauline Epistles. In the sublime Gita we find something of a noble purity, quite impersonal, calm and passionless, was given to the Hindus; while the original documents of Christianity — the Epistles of St. Paul — bear, as it were, an entirely personal, often a passionate character, utterly devoid of calm ... Let us, therefore, inscribe this antithesis on a tablet of bronze, as it were, during our subsequent considerations.” (ibid)

THE 'CLASH OF TONES' IN THE PAULINE TANTRA

“... he who wishes to develop according to the Krishna teaching, aspires to become something like a Paramahansa, that is to say, a high Initiate who leaves all material existence, behind him, who triumphs over all he has himself accomplished by his actions in this world of sense; and lives a purely spiritual existence, having so overcome what belongs to the senses that he no longer thirsts for reincarnation, that he has nothing more to do with what filled his life and at which he worked in this sense-world. Thus it is the issuing forth from this maya, the triumphing over it which meets us everywhere in the Gita. With St. Paul it is not so. If he had met with these Eastern teachings, something in the depth of his soul would have caused the following words to come forth: “Yes, thou wishest to rise above all that surrounds thee outside, from that also which thou formerly accomplished there! Dost thou wish to leave all that behind thee? Is not then all that the work of God, is not everything above which thou wishest to lift thyself created by the Divine Spirit? In despising that, art thou not despising the work of God? Does not the revelation of God's Spirit dwell everywhere within it?” It would be well, my dear friends, if we were to inscribe these words of St. Paul - which though unspoken were felt in the depths of his soul - deeply into our own souls; for they express an important part of what we know as Western revelation. In the Pauline sense, we too speak of the maya which surrounds us. We certainly say: We are surrounded by maya: but we also say: Is there not spiritual revelation in this maya, is it not all divine spiritual work?”

This unspoken but implicit message of Paul expressed by Steiner is exactly that of the Tantras – except that in place of the word ‘work’ they substituted that divine ‘power of action’ (Shakti) which they acknowledged as the divine reality manifest in the material world of ‘Maya’. Tantra also acknowledges the message of the Gita that action as such should not be seen as the ‘work’ of an agent - the ego - but rather as arising from awareness as ‘the Christ within me’ – that Self which says ‘Shivoham’ or ‘Je-Shiva’ - ‘I am Shiva’. The clash of tones then, is not so much between the Gita and the Epistles of Paul as between the message and militant tone of the latter. This cannot be reduced to a clash between a tone of divine, impersonal calm and one of passionate human feeling on the other - for even anger has its place in the personal teaching of the Guru. Instead the true clash is one between a tone of judgemental militancy and one arising from intimate soul communion. That is also why, in speaking of the ‘Second Coming’ as a re-incarnation of the ‘third personality’ of the Christ - Paul – Seth speaks specifically of Paul's mission to make up for the over-militant nature of the tone that he himself set in his original teaching - whilst retaining its essential message: “Not I, but the Christ within me” – that Self through which all can be linked in intimate Communion.

TANTRA, CHRISTIANITY AND THE 2ND COMING

Jesus of Nazareth was as a Hindu by faith at the time of Crucifixion and he had by that time rejected Judaism. Jesus spent his adulthood in India, Iran, Afghanistan and Burma, the seat of world civilization in his time. Jesus taught Hindu Buddhist Mysticism to Jews. The religion of Jesus, Judas, Mary Magdalene, Thomas, Philip and other Apostles was based on Hinduism, Buddhism and Tantra. Only the Apostle Peter and Andrew didn't accept Hindu and Buddhist mysticism. Hellenic Jews hijacked the leadership of the Early Christian Church and used force to impose Judaic ideas on Early Christianity. The religion of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Thomas and Philip was not Judaism and they all rejected Judaism, Torah, Sabbath and Circumcision. Bishop Marcion had correctly argued that Old Testament should not be part of the Christian New Testament. Christianity of the 21st Century shall reject the Old Testament and develop Christian theology and doctrines based on its original roots in Hinduism and Buddhism and by severing Christianity's roots in Judaism. Bhagwan Zeus, 'Da Vinci Code as Clash of Religion'

Unfortunately the impulse to "develop a new Christian theology and doctrines based on its original roots in Hinduism and Buddhism" is not one in any way likely to arise with institutionalised Christianity of any denomination. On the contrary, it will have to arise outside institutionalised Christianity and outside of Hinduism and Buddhism too – but not outside the non-institutional tradition of Tantra. The New Yoga of Awareness is the most far-reaching attempt so far to initiate such a 'Tantric re-Hinduisation of Christianity'. Yet it does so in a way which transcends not only 'Christianity', but also current 'Hinduism' and 'Buddhism' too - taking us "**behind the symbolism upon which religions have relied for centuries**" (Seth). That is also why, as Seth foresees:

The 'new religion' following the Second Coming will not be Christian in your terms, though the third personality of Christ [Paul] will initiate it ... This personality will refer to the historical Christ, will recognise his relationship with that personality; but within him the three personality groupings [John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul] will form a new psychic entity, a different psychological gestalt. As this metamorphosis takes place it will initiate a metamorphosis on the human level also, as man's inner abilities [Siddhis] are accepted and developed."

From 'Seth Speaks, The Eternal Validity of the Soul', by Jane Roberts

Jeshua said: "There is light within an enlightened person, and it shines on the whole world." That light is the Light of Awareness as such - recognised in the 21st century New Yoga - as in the 11th century Shaivist Tantras - as that Awareness transcendent and immanent in All That Is.

THE NEW YOGA AND THE 'SPIRITUAL'

The Principles and Practices of Awareness - both in their traditional exposition as millennia-old Eastern philosophical principles and practices and in their exposition as 'The New Yoga of Awareness' - share in common a crucial understanding of the 'spiritual', albeit one which is concealed by the very terms 'spirit', 'holy spirit', 'spirituality', 'the spiritual world' etc. Western 'spirituality' gives metaphysical and religious primacy to the notion of 'spirit' - even though its nature is never exactly defined. In contrast, Indian religious metaphysics gives primacy to the notion of awareness itself - as space or 'Akasha' (pronounced 'aakash'), as light or 'Prakasha' and as breath or 'Prana'. Space is understood as a primary dimension of subjectivity or awareness, indeed as identical with the pure or transcendental awareness which is 'God'. That is why one of the most important if not primary Practices of Awareness advocated in both The New Yoga and the Shaivist Tantras (in particular the 'Vijnanabhairavatantra') is the expansion of awareness through identification with space.

The term 'Akasha' is translated both as 'space' and as 'aether'. That is because it is understood as pervaded by 'Prana' - this being the primordial 'air', 'wind' or 'breath' of awareness. It is Prana that corresponds to the root meaning of 'spirit' in its derivation from Latin 'spirare' (to breathe), the term 'spiritus' being a Latin translation of the Greek 'pneuma' (air/wind) and cognate also with the root meaning of the Greek 'psyche' (breath). To be 'spiritual' in the Indian yogic sense is to be capable, quite literally, of a different type of re-spiration or breathing. In the New Yoga this new respiration is a 'transpiration' in which we sense ourselves breathing in our awareness of the clear, luminous expansiveness of the space around us, not through our lungs alone but through every pore of our skin. In this way we can come to experience breathing as an in-breath of the pure 'air' of awareness itself. It is not just the immaterial nature of this higher air or 'aether' of awareness, but this long-lost experience of breathing this immaterial air that lies concealed behind the otherwise vague Western notion of 'spirit'. In contrast it is given much richer definition through the yogic term 'Prana' - understood as that invisible breath or 'air' of awareness that pervades the entirety of space - both the space around us and the space which constitutes the larger part of every atom of 'matter'. The twin-meaning of 'Akasha' as (1) 'space' and (2) aether, together with the meaning of 'aether' itself as a 'purer', 'higher' - indeed less air-filled and thus more spacious 'air' - is symbolised by the Himalayan mountaintop, both as a place of meditation and as the very abode of Shiva - that deity who is both Lord of Yoga and who personifies and embodies both the divine awareness as such and the awareness self or 'Atman', that Self experienced through the breath of pure awareness.

RUDOLF STEINER ON BREATH AND THE 'ATMAN'

“The Veda stream is most emphatically a philosophy of unity, it is the most spiritual monism that could be thought of; the Veda philosophy which is consolidated in the Vedanta is a spiritual monism. If we wish to understand the Veda philosophy, we must, in the first place, keep clearly before our souls the fact that this philosophy is based upon the thought that man can find something deeper within his own self, and that what he first realises in ordinary life is a kind of expression or imprint of this self of his; that man can develop, and that his development will draw up the depths of the actual self more and more from the foundations of his soul. A higher self rests as though asleep in man, and this higher self is not that of which the present-day man is directly aware, but that which works within him, and to which he must develop himself. When man some day attains to that which lives within him as “self,” he will then realise, according to the Veda-philosophy, that this “self” is one with the all-embracing self of the world, that he does not only rest with his self within the all-embracing World-Self, but that he himself is one with it. So much is he one with this World-Self that he is in two-fold manner related to it. In some way similar to our physical in-breathing and out-breathing does the Vedantist picture the relationship of the human self to the World-Self. Just as one draws in a breath and breathes it out again, while outside there is the universal air and within us only the small portion of it that we have drawn in so outside us we have the universal, all-embracing, all-pervading Self that lives and moves in all things, and this we breathe in when we yield ourselves to the contemplation of the spiritual Self of the World. Spiritually one breathes it in with every perception that one gets of this Self, one breathes it in with all that one draws into one's soul. All knowledge, all thinking, all perception is spiritual breathing; and that which we, as a portion of the world-Self, draw into our souls (which portion remains organically united to the whole), that is Atman, the Breath, which, as regards ourselves, is as the portion of air that we breathe in, which cannot be distinguished from the general atmosphere. So is Atman in us, which cannot be distinguished from that which is the all-ruling Self of the World. Just as we breathe out physically, so there is a devotion of the soul through which the best that is in it goes forth in the form of prayer and sacrifice to this Self. Brahman is like the spiritual out-breathing. Atman and Brahman, like in-breathing and out-breathing, make us sharers in the all-ruling World-Self. What we find in the Vedantas is a monistic spiritual philosophy, which is at the same time a religion; and the blossom and fruit of Vedantism lie in that which so blesses man, that most complete and in the highest degree satisfying feeling of unity with the universal Self powerfully weaving through the world.”

From 'The Bhagavad Gita and the Epistles of St. Paul'

AWARENESS, AKASHA, AETHER AND 'ENERGY'

The Tantric principle that 'everything is awareness' stands in direct contrast to the dogma - shared by modern science and 'New Age' pseudo-science alike - that everything is 'energy'. As a 'Theory of Everything' this 'Energy Principle' is dogmatic because it rests on a notion of 'energy' that is wholly unquestioned and a gross distortion of its root meaning. Even in modern translations of Tantric metaphysics this Greek derived word is distortedly used to translate the Sanskrit term for the feminine aspect of divinity - 'Shakti'. A far better translation of this word is not 'energy' in its current sense - but 'power'. Power in the sense of 'power of action' or 'power of actualisation'. This translation of 'Shakti' fully accords with the root meaning of the term 'energy' itself – not as some 'thing' but as the very action or activity (the Greek verb 'energein') that gives form to all things from within that infinite space or 'aether' of awareness that is known in Sanskrit as 'Akasha'.

Today many scientists advance the highly plausible but still unorthodox hypothesis that space is no mere void or vacuum, but an infinite source of 'potential energy' or 'power of action'. This hypothesis is in perfect correspondence with the Tantric understanding of the universe as an expression of countless Shaktis or 'powers of action' emerging within an infinite space or 'aether' of awareness (Akasha) and manifesting as countless patterns or matrices of action ('matter'). From the point of view of The Awareness Principle, awareness is not awareness of actual realities alone but also of potential realities. Potential realities however, can, in principle, only have reality 'subjectively' - in awareness itself rather in actuality. These subjective potentialities do not merely exist as imaginary possibilities however, but as infinite potential shapes, patterns and qualities OF awareness or subjectivity - infinite potential beings, 'consciousnesses' or 'subjectivities'. 'Energy' in its true meaning is the autonomous power of actualisation of these potentialities – something possible only through the very awareness of them. Together with the scientific notion of 'space' as a potential source of limitless 'free' energy goes the project, pursued by many great scientific minds, of creating machines to 'tap' this energy as a source of power. The Awareness Principle (TAP) on the other hand explains how everything that exists in the universe constantly 'TAPS' from a hidden power source behind it - a power of action that is not some mysterious new form of energy or matter but is nothing other than Awareness as such in the form of its Aetheric spatiality – Akasha. Each of us experiences this aspect of The Awareness Principle - and realises the idea of free 'space energy' - each time we feel revitalised by taking a walk outdoors, however short. For no matter how little bodily breathing or 'exercise' is involved we are breathing awareness of a wider space - and tapping fresh vitality or 'power of action' from the very air of awareness itself.

RUDOLF STEINER ON 'SPIRIT' AS 'SPACE'

In a lecture on 'Chaos and Cosmos' Rudolf Steiner spoke of human beings in earlier epochs as has having **"quite another concept of Spirit than man has today."**

"Space, to them, was not a great infinite void in which there is absolutely nothing, as it is to the man of today. For those who stood on the ground of Occult Science, space was the all-spreading spirit whose parable they saw in the unclouded gas. In it they saw the source from out of which all seeds of things are created, and spring forth through the Word of the original Divine Spirit. Not endless emptiness is space; space is originally Spirit. We are ourselves condensed space, for space is Spirit. If all things were dissolved again, seemingly there would be an endless void around us; but this apparent void would contain all things that have ever been. It is no empty nothingness. The visible world is space condensed.

"This was clear to Helmont [discoverer and inventor of the term 'gas']; he knew the world foundation, the world origin, from out of which all beings are condensed. Van Helmont had this thought: the gas is very thin, transparent; the light goes through. You do not even divine its existence. But in relation to the world origin, even the gas is a condensation. Nevertheless, one can understand, one can conceive the cosmic origin thereof. You can gain an idea of the Spiritual if you imagine that the gas is itself a vapour of the Spirit, just as the steam is vapour of the gas. With this conception in his soul, Van Helmont said: "I have described this vapour by the name 'gas;' it is not far removed from the Chaos of the ancients. Helmont coined the word 'gas' from the word 'chaos.' It is an extremely interesting connection in the world order."

"We are thus led by Helmont to a living conception of space, not empty and infertile like the concept of space for the man of today, but a concept of space appearing infinitely fertile, bearing countless seeds. The infinitude that is spread out is the seed from out of which we issue. Everything that is in the world is space condensed; it is the infinite Spirit who shows Himself to us in place of a mere empty space."

Here Steiner reverts back circularly from the ancient (Indian) concept of Spirit as Space to a conception of Space itself as "the infinite Spirit". Yet in speaking of the world as 'space condensed' he recognises the essence of both Space and Spirit as 'Akasha', an infinite space of Awareness permeated by that invisible 'gas' or aether known in the West as 'Spirit', to the Indian sages as 'Prana' - and understood in The New Yoga as the elemental 'air-ness' of Pure Awareness.

'TANTRA' AS EXPANDED SPATIAL AWARENESS

The truth is that the human being is not by any means confined within his skin ... One of the worst forms of Maya is the belief that man remains firmly within his skin. In reality you extend over the horizon your survey. Rudolf Steiner

The term 'Tan-tra' refers to a spreading, expansion or expanded span ('tra') of awareness. The most fundamental Practice of Awareness central to The New Yoga is the practice of maintaining and expanded spatial field of awareness, one that unites the felt inner awareness space of one's body with the space around and surrounding it. The guiding formula for this Practice of awareness is **'from an expanded awareness of space to the spatial expansion of awareness'**. This requires constant mindfulness and regular recall of the following twelve questions – all of which have to do with how clear and expansive the 'Kingdom' or awareness space is in which one dwells.

- 1. How much of my skin body surface am I feeling right now?**
- 2. How much clear space can I feel within this felt surface boundary?**
- 3. Where do I feel my awareness centred in this inner space?**
- 4. How expansive or contracted, crowded or empty, muddied - or clear do I feel the inner space of my head, chest and abdomen?**
- 5. To what extent can I experience the inner space of my head, chest and abdomen as singular space of clear, translucent awareness?**
- 6. To what extent can I sense the space around my body surface?**
- 7. How far can I feel my awareness extending into this space?**
- 8. To what extent can I feel the space around me as an expanded space of awareness – one that embraces both my own body and that of every object and person within it?**
- 9. How permeable or impermeable, open or closed, do I feel the bodily surface boundary between the spaces within and around me spaces, in particular my chest surface?**
- 10. To what extent can I feel my chest and surface boundary as an open, porous in-breathing membrane – or alternatively as a closed off boundary, keeping my awareness firmly within my skin?**

'AKASHA', 'PRANA' AND 'KHECHARI MUDRA'

Among the various meanings of 'Mudra' are to 'to seal' or 'to rejoice'. In understanding of The New Yoga, a Mudra is not simply a gesture of the hand, but any bodily gesture or comportment, which serves to fix or 'seal' a particular meditative inner stance or 'bearing'. It is a way of relating to or 'comporting' oneself in relation to both outer and inner space – whether through one's bodily posture or stance as a whole, through a look on one's face or in one's eyes, or through a gesture of one's arms, hands and fingers. That is why what was called 'Khechari Mudra' is referred to in the Tantras as one of THE most important meditative inner stances or bearings – allowing a rejoicing (Sanskrit 'Mud') in the experience of space ('Akasha') as a field of pure awareness in which the soul can flow freely and 'etherically' like air itself. 'Khecari' means 'moving in the void' or 'she [the goddess] who moves in the void' – this void being no vacuum but the infinite field of pure awareness that we ordinarily perceive only as 'empty' physical or cosmic space.

The starting point of Khechari Mudra is identification with space itself, both the space around and surrounding our bodies ("the Kingdom outside") and the sensed inner spaces of our bodies ("the Kingdom inside") rather than with anything at all that we are aware of within those spaces. This leads to a new experience of space as something identical with pure awareness itself. Only through The Practice of Awareness that is Khechari Mudra can we experience the distinction, fundamental to The New Yoga between awareness as such and anything we are aware of - whether thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, our own bodies, or the bodies of objects and people around us.

This in turn frees us from being or becoming identified with any elements of our outer or inner life-world or experience. As a practice of identifying with, breathing and moving in the apparent emptiness of space, Khechari Mudra is both a 'Yoga of Space' ('Akasha Yoga') and a Yoga of the Breath ('Prana Yoga'). It leads us to a state of total equanimity in which, like the vaulting sky itself ('Vyoman') we can rise above all mundane, earthly experiencing – feeling ourselves as the very space that surrounds all bodies, and feeling how, as space, we also pervade them like a subtle 'aetheric' air, wind or breath ('Prana').

As an expansion of awareness in space, Khechari Mudra expresses the root meaning of 'Tan-tra' itself – to protect ('tra') awareness by spanning, spreading, extending or expanding it ('tan'). The term 'Khechari' itself derives from the Indo-European root KHE or KHA, from which arose also the Greek KHAOS – misunderstood as mere 'chaos'.

'AKASHA' IN THE TANTRAS AND UPANISHADS

Verily, what is called Brahman – that is the same as what the space outside a person is. Verily, what the space outside a person is, that is the same as what the space within a person is – that is the same as what the space here within the heart is. That is the fullness, the quiescent.

The Chandogya Upanishad

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

The Bhagavad Gita

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 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.

The yogi should contemplate the entirety of open space (or sky) as the essence of Bhairava [Shiva]...

One should, setting aside identification with one's own body, contemplate that the same awareness is present in other bodies than one's own.

The Vijnanabhairavatantra

...the power of space [Akasha-Shakti] is inherent in the soul as true subjectivity, which is at once empty of objects and which also provides a place in which objects may be known.

Abhinavagupta – 'Tantraloka'

PRACTICING 'KHECHARI MUDRA'

Note: this meditation is to be practiced in the true Tantric manner – attentive to your 'inner space' but with your eyes kept fully open. This is so that you can stay aware of the entire space around you ('Bhairava Mudra'), expanding your awareness into that space and experiencing everything in it as an expression of it. This practice of Khechari Mudra – uniting the Kingdom outside with the Kingdom inside - is the key to all the miraculous 'Siddhis' exercised by great Yogins, Gurus and Avatars.

- 1. Bring your awareness to the inwardly sensed surface of your chest and body as a whole. From that surface sense the empty spaces in front of, above, behind and to either side of your body.**
- 2. Attend entirely to your awareness of regions of empty space - those above and around your body, and those above, around and between other bodily objects or people.**
- 3. Be aware of the sky above and of the unlimited expanse of cosmic space, and of all empty regions of space in your immediate vicinity or scope of vision.**
- 4. Sense all regions of 'empty' space as part of an unlimited space of pure awareness – a space totally untainted by any psychical qualities, by the psychical 'atmosphere' of places, or by the emanation or psychical 'aura' of people and the qualitative 'spaces' they are in.**
- 5. Feel your body surface again, this time sensing a hollow space of pure awareness within it – a space equally untainted by any thoughts, feelings or sensations you experience within it.**
- 6. Identify with the spaces of awareness around and between all that you experience both outside and inside you – the spaces around and between your thoughts, emotions and physical sensations, the space around and between your body and other bodies.**
- 7. Feel yourself breathing in the luminous translucency of the space around you, first through your chest and then through your body surface as a whole - experiencing this as a breathing of pure awareness.**
- 8. Feel your chest and body surface as an open, porous, in-breathing skin or membrane uniting a content-free space of pure awareness within you with the 'empty' space of pure awareness surrounding your own body and all other bodies.**

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