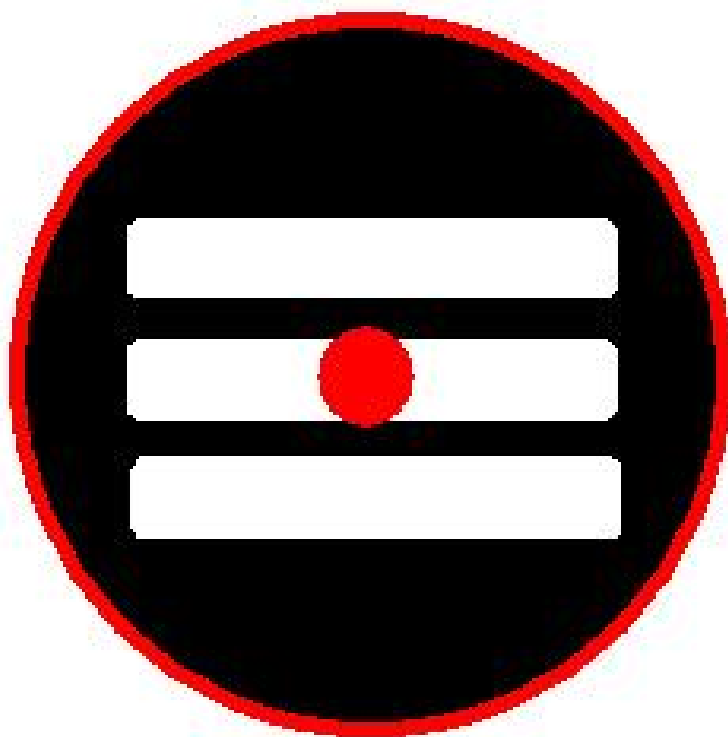


SOUL AND SENSUALITY IN TANTRIC PRACTICE



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TANTRA AND THE TRUE NATURE OF THE SOUL

Humanity has for long conceived of the 'soul' as something contained within the body, capable of departing it, if at all, only at death. Nowadays however the term 'soul' or 'psyche' no longer even figures in scientific terminology, not even in so-called 'psychology'. Nevertheless, most people's experience of life is still dominated by the false belief that their subjective awareness or 'consciousness' is bounded and contained by their bodies. They think their awareness of the world around them is only possible because they peer out at it through the peepholes of their body's sense organs, or because they receive sensory 'data' from that world that their BRAIN translates into a full-blown 3-D image of it. Yet no one ever asks what sort of 'real-world' sensory data can be received by the brain from a world which neuroscience itself claims to be a neurological effigy or figment OF the brain – a 'virtual' world. By contrast, Tantric philosophy does not see the soul as bounded by the body but rather as part of an unbounded ocean of awareness. And in THE NEW YOGA, the individual soul is itself one BODILY shape taken by this 'ocean'.

The belief that awareness is bounded by the body means that it is only through so-called 'ecstatic' or 'OUT-OF-BODY' states that human beings come indirectly to experience the fundamental truth that their awareness of the world 'out there' is indeed OUT THERE IN THAT WORLD - stretching to its very horizon - and is not confined 'in here', in our bodies or brains. Thus despite or even THROUGH so-called 'Out-Of-Body Experiences' (OOBES) the misconception persists that we are either 'in' or 'out' of our bodies - and that the body is therefore some sort of a bounding vessel or container of the soul. Yet the reality of such experiences is that as soon as people let their awareness be fully OUT THERE - beyond the illusory boundaries of the PHYSICAL body - they also reshape their awareness into a different sort of FELT body. Being out of one's physical body therefore does not mean having NO body but rather having a different felt experience of one's body - whether as a mere travelling point of light or a pseudo-physical body similar in shape to their human body.

AWARENESS BEYOND EAST AND WEST

The true nature of 'the soul' cannot be understood as long as we cling to the myth that our 'inner world' or 'life of soul' is something bounded by our bodies – and by the same token, hold to the idea that our body is a bounding vessel or 'container' of the soul. The result of these beliefs is that they reduce our soul to a purely private world of thoughts and feelings, dreams and images, and therefore leave us torn between this private 'inner life' and the life we lead in the outer 'public' world. We are left then, with only two ways of living on offer – one oriented in an 'introverted' Eastern way to one's inner psychological life and the 'inner self', and the other oriented in an extroverted Western way to the outer world and to the 'outer self' that has to deal with it – our 'ego' and public 'persona'. Torn in these two seemingly opposing directions, the individual's awareness then swings or has to be constantly balanced between the pull of the inner self and that of the outer world. 'Balance' then becomes the highest value and measure of well-being. Yet true health is a balance of balance and imbalance, and the true nature of awareness transcends the dualistic division between extroversion and introversion, body and soul. In Tantric philosophy, 'soul', quite simply IS awareness. And it is awareness - bodiless and unbounded - that forms itself into countless bodily shapes and forms, that BODIES itself.

“Awareness, Shiva, is the soul of the world.”

The Shiva Sutras

“The body is an awareness.”

Carlos Castaneda

Individual souls are individualised portions of that divine awareness – 'Shiva' – that is “the soul of the world”. As souls we do not 'have' bodies at all. Instead EVERY SOUL IS A BODY – a unique bodily shape of awareness. By the same token, every BODY, whether that of a molecule or cell, plant, person or planet, IS A SOUL – being an AWARENESS that extends far beyond its own apparent physical boundaries.

FROM SUFFERING TO MYSTICAL TRUTH

The essence of 'suffering' is that people experience themselves and others, things and thoughts, only as passive OBJECTS of action, perception or thought - and not as living expressions of 'subjectivity' - of awareness itself. In the face of their suffering their final recourse may be an appeal to some 'God', or hope in some 'Force' or 'Energy' or Saviour figure, human or divine. The problem is that in seeking to feel a deep and real contact with this saving figure, force, energy or God, they effectively reduce it to just another thing or 'object' to experience or be AWARE OF - or else to a being or 'subject', human or divine, which is aware of them and for whom they are nothing but an OBJECT of judgement or salvation. In doing so they effectively BLOCK their own path to God - to religious truth and 'salvation'. For failing to recognise the FIRST FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION - between Awareness and Experience, people also fail to recognise a Fundamental Truth - namely that neither the Self nor God is a being or 'subject' which has or 'possesses' awareness. Awareness is not the PRIVATE PROPERTY of any 'ego', 'self' or 'subject' - of any thing or being, human or divine. Instead everything IS awareness - including both God and the Self. That is why awareness is the very link between the Self and God - and our only way of 're-linking' to God. This is the Fundamental 're-ligious' Truth of Tantra and of THE NEW YOGA - one that distinguishes it from all religious 'fundamentalisms'. Yet this FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH is impossible to realise - to make fully real in one's life - without recognising the FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION from which its truth derives.

Through the Fundamental Distinction between Awareness and Experience can we learn to so EXPAND the space or FIELD of awareness within which we experience things that we come to experience or Be Aware of far MORE of ourselves, other people and the 'mundane' world. In this way we can also come to a new 'mystical' EXPERIENCE OF AWARENESS ITSELF - as one's very Self and Body, as Space and Breath, Light and Power, the World and 'God'.

THE SECOND FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION

The FIRST FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION, that which formed the foundation of traditional Tantric philosophy is between 'Transcendental' or 'Pure' awareness – awareness as such – and its manifestation in and as all that we experience. This distinction forms the basis of the NEW YOGA FOUNDATION MEDITATION, allowing us to distinguish between anything at all we experience and the pure awareness of experiencing it. It is in this way that awareness becomes the key freeing us from identification with and bondage to our experience.

THE SECOND FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION, central to the philosophy of THE NEW YOGA, but never made fully explicit in any previous philosophies - Eastern or Western – is between anything we are conscious or aware of experiencing, and the different ways in which awareness as such can be experienced.

An 'emotion', for example, is something that we experience or are AWARE OF. A 'mood' on the other hand, being something that permeates, colours and tones our entire experience of ourselves and the world, is more like a basic sensual colouration or tonality OF AWARENESS itself. Similarly, a person's tone of voice or their patterns of thought and action, are all things we are aware OF. What they reveal to us however, are qualities of their awareness as such – its tones and patterns.

The SECOND FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION allows us to understand more deeply how pure awareness is able to give birth to and manifest itself in the sensory world of our experiencing. It can do so because it contains its own innate sensual patterns, tones and qualities. It is these innate sensual SOUL QUALITIES or 'qualia' that manifest – within awareness itself - as the 'objective' qualities of all things that we experience or are aware of. Just as the meaning of a painting or piece of music cannot be found in its pigments or sound tones but in the colours and tones of awareness they express, so is all 'meaning' or 'sense' an experience of sensual qualities of awareness – which are the very 'meaning of meaning' itself.

THE ESSENTIAL PATH OF THE NEW YOGA

Combined together, the two Fundamental Distinctions constitute the ESSENTIAL PATH OF THE NEW YOGA.

FROM A NEW AWARENESS OF EXPERIENCE TO A NEW EXPERIENCE OF AWARENESS

Through THE NEW YOGA, the cultivation of AWARE EXPERIENCING can lead to a new and profound EXPERIENCING OF AWARENESS. From out of an intensified AWARENESS OF SPACE can come a new experience of the SPATIALITY and SPACIOUSNESS OF AWARENESS. Each of the diverse new meditational disciplines or yogas that make up THE NEW YOGA as a whole – for example the yogas of spatial awareness, sensory awareness, bodily awareness etc. are expressions of its ESSENTIAL PATH, which can be formulated in all of the following more specific ways:

From AWARENESS OF SELF to THE AWARENESS SELF
From AWARENESS OF TONE to TONES OF AWARENESS
From AWARENESS OF LIGHT to THE LIGHT OF AWARENESS
From AWARENESS OF THE BODY to THE AWARENESS BODY
From AWARENESS OF BREATHING to THE BREATHING AWARENESS
From AWARENESS OF MOVEMENT to MOVEMENTS OF AWARENESS

Alternately, formulations such as the following can be used:

From SELF AWARENESS to THE AWARENESS SELF
From BODILY AWARENESS to THE BODYING OF AWARENESS
From SENSORY AWARENESS to THE SENSUALITY OF AWARENESS
From SPATIAL AWARENESS to THE SPACIOUSNESS OF AWARENESS

The 'from' part of each formula points to a specific dimension of experience we can become more aware of. The 'to' part of the formula indicates a corresponding experience of awareness. That is because, from the perspective of THE NEW YOGA, so-called 'Pure' or 'Transcendental' Awareness is not ultimately an awareness lacking or 'purified' of all qualities. For even the most sublime religious-mystical experience of the Divine – for example as absolute Formlessness, Eternity or Timelessness, Stillness, Light or Infinite Space are in essence sensual experiences of awareness – of TRANSCENDENTAL QUALITIES of the DIVINE AWARENESS.

'AKASHA' - AWARENESS AS SPACE

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.

Chandogya Upanishad

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

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.

Vijananabhairavatantra

...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

EXPERIENCING AWARENESS SPACE

1. Bring your awareness to the sensed outer surface of your skin. 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 all that you experience both outside and inside you – the spaces AROUND your thoughts, emotions and physical sensations, the space around your own body and other bodies, whether objects or people.
7. Feel your body surface as a porous, breathing skin uniting the 'empty' space of pure awareness within you with the 'empty' space of pure awareness around your own body and other bodies.

SENSED QUALITIES OF SPATIAL AWARENESS

Each of the questions below contains spatial 'metaphors'. Yet if you can answer 'yes' to any of them, you have experienced something real in a literal sense – a spatial quality of awareness. Spatial qualities of awareness are so much part of our everyday experience we do not attend to them or recognise their psychological significance. Yet through them we can learn to sense and transform the quality of the 'space' we feel we are in.

Have you felt yourself inwardly 'hemmed in', 'trapped' or 'confined'?

Have you ever felt that you don't have enough 'space' for yourself?

Have you felt yourself 'pierced' or 'penetrated' by a look or remark?

Have you felt yourself 'falling' into a 'bottomless pit' or 'black hole'?

Have you felt 'on the brink' of feeling, knowing or doing something?

Have you ever felt 'crowded out' or 'overcrowded' with thoughts?

Have you ever felt no 'place' or 'space' for you in a relationship?

Have you felt yourself 'shrink' or 'withdraw' yourself into a shell?

Have you felt yourself 'shrinking' from something or someone?

Have you felt yourself 'on the edge' or 'falling into' an abyss?

Have you felt yourself 'bursting' with love, joy, anger or rage?

Have you felt your space 'intruded' upon or 'invaded'?

Have you ever felt yourself being in a strange 'space'?

Have you felt 'spaced out' without any 'boundaries'?

Have you ever felt yourself 'open up' or 'close off'?

Have you ever felt yourself as 'all over the place'?

Have you ever felt yourself to be 'out of place'?

Have you ever felt you have 'lost your way'?

Have you felt 'carried away' or 'uplifted'?

Have you ever felt yourself not 'taken in'?

Have you felt difficulty 'taking things in'?

Have you ever felt joyfully expansive?

EXPANDING BODILY AWARENESS SPACE

“Focus on a person, incident, or other memory. It might be something that is first on a list, or it might be whatever presents itself to you in the moment ... The body sensations from the emotions involved are more important than the thoughts or memories about the incident.”

Carlos Castaneda

USING EXPANDED TIME-SPACE TO OVERCOME DISCOMFORT

1. If anything is discomforting you, take time to be aware of where and how you feel that discomfort in your body - of the pure bodily sensation of it and not just the thoughts, emotions or events connected with or arising from the discomfort.
2. Now be aware of the space just around that region of your body where you most sense the discomfort.
3. Gradually expand that space to include all other parts of your body where you don't feel the discomfort, until the expanded space of your awareness embraces your whole body.
4. Now, instead of dwelling on and identifying with the bodily sense of discomfort, let yourself identify with your bodily sense of the space of awareness around it and around your body as a whole.

“Then become the eagle and fly high. Look down on that moment in your life, and the people involved. See the long stretch of time before and after the incident. Perhaps you can see several generations of families, and see their pain, fear, distractions, strategies, and their parasites domesticating the participants. The eagle sees the perfection of it all. The eagle sees where the succession of generations upon generations have created the moment of this event.” Carlos Castaneda

'PRAKASHA' – AWARENESS AS LIGHT

Just as without light nothing is visible, so without what Tantric teaching calls 'The Light of Awareness' ('Prakasha'), nothing can come to light IN our awareness. And just as light is the pre-condition for us seeing things, so is The Light of Awareness the condition for experiencing things in any way at all. Shiva, as The Light of Awareness, is that 'light' which IS awareness, bringing all things to light within itself. It is that invisible but primordial light or 'shining' which first allows things to appear or 'shine forth' as what and who they are.

The Sun shines not there, neither moon nor stars. There these flashes of lightning do not shine, nor does fire. It is that by whose shining all things shine. It is the Light of that which illuminates all this.

Shvetashvataropanishad

**Every appearance owes its existence to the light of awareness.
Nothing can have its own being without the light of awareness.**

Kshemaraja

The manifestation of The Light of Awareness is not like the ray of light from a lamp, sun or moon. When one frees oneself from accumulated multiplicity [of things experienced in that Light], this state of Bliss is like that of putting down a burden; the manifestation of the Light is like the acquiring of a lost treasure ... universal non-duality."

Abhinavagupta

"Universal non-duality" is the understanding that The Light of Awareness and all that it brings to light are inseparable - for nothing can come to light IN awareness that is not itself an expression and reflection OF its Light. Just as physical light is reflected in all that it makes visible, so is The Light of Awareness reflected in the accumulated multiplicity of all that it brings to light. Yet it is through this very multiplicity that that the Light of Awareness comes to recognise itself IN its oneness or singularity - as the Bliss of En-lightenment.

'SHAKTI' – AWARENESS AS POWER

The words 'potentiality', 'potency' and 'power' share a common root. Our awareness of our own inexhaustible inner potentialities as beings constitutes the very CORE of our being – a core of pure potency, potentiality or POWER. The Light of Awareness is not only awareness of things actual, but of all things hidden, latent or potential – for it is these that it serves to bring to light - to release into actualisation. Potential realities are no less real than actualities, since for something to become actual it must already have reality as a potentiality. Potentialities by definition do not exist in the same way as actual things. Yet they have reality in AWARENESS and as potentialities OF awareness – all the potential different shapes that it can take. The reality of every being, in every situation and in every moment, abounds in potentialities. These potentialities are as much a part of their reality as all that is already actual in it.

Tantric science understands the relation of Energy, Matter and 'Light' in quite a different way from Einstein's famous equation: $E=mc^2$. For if 'matter' is the outwardness of 'energy' - its already actualised physical forms - then the inwardness of 'energy' is not 'light' in the form of photons or quanta of energy but The Light of Awareness itself. All true 'vitality' or 'energy' is a coupling of the LIGHT of Awareness with the DARKNESS (symbolised by the black goddess KALI) of its hidden, latent or 'coiled-up' potentialities ('Kundalini'). Out of this coupling comes the POWER of awareness to actualise these potentialities. It was Aristotle who mistakenly identified 'energy' (Greek 'energeia') with 'actuality' rather than with the DYNAMIC PROCESS OF ACTUALISATION (Greek 'dynamis'). It is this process that Kashmir Shaivism understood as the divine coupling of Shiva and Shakti - of awareness as LIGHT and awareness as POWER. In the Tantric tradition 'Shiva' is the male dimension of divinity identified with the LIGHT of awareness. His inseparable feminine counterpart – 'Shakti' – is identified with the POWER of awareness, its capacity or power ('Shak') to actualise its inner potentialities, from the dark source or womb of those potentialities that is MA KALI.

'PRANA' - AWARENESS AS BREATH

The Indian, Greek, Latin and Chinese languages all reflect a common understanding that the basic substantiality or 'aether' of 'aware-ness' has the character of 'air-ness' – being something that surrounds, permeates, fills and flows between all things. The words PRANA and PSYCHE have a common root meaning of 'life', 'breath' or 'life breath'. Similarly, the Greek PNEUMA – which also meant 'wind'. In Latin this is translated as 'SPIRITUS' – deriving from the verb SPIRARE (to breathe), as do such words as RESPIRATION, INSPIRATION and EXPIRATION. The Greek word for body (SOMA) did not refer at first to THE living body but to a corpse from which the life-breath (PSYCHE) had departed. In India, Greece and China, this life-breath (PSYCHE / PRANA / CHI) was understood as the 'animating' principle of the body – a breath which, like awareness itself, literally 'ensouls' the body - both Greek PSYCHE and Latin ANIMA also meaning 'soul'.

The Oriental terms 'CHI' and 'KI', like the Greek HORME (from which such terms as 'humours' and 'hormones' derive) have a common root meaning of 'that which flows' – like blood and breath, water and air. Awareness not only FEELS but FLOWS. And just as there are flows of air between and around bodies in space, including our own body, so are there air-like flows of awareness. When we can feel awareness as something that permeates and pervades our bodies like the air that we breathe in from the space around us, we literally expand the BREATHING SPACE of our awareness, which is now experienced as having the basic character of breath or PRANA. It is the breath of awareness – PRANA - that unites the spaces of our inner and outer awareness that went by the names 'soul' and 'spirit', PSYCHE and PNEUMA, the 'air within' and the 'air without', the 'Kingdom inside you' and the 'Kingdom outside you'. Our Awareness Body is that body with which we breathe in, digest and metabolise awareness. Above all it is a 'breathing body', 'body of breath' or 'Pranic Body' – that porous, breathing membrane, 'soul skin' or "tissue capsule" (Seth) through which we can absorb, breathe in and 'take in' all that we are aware of outside us.

BREATHING AWARENESS

Breathing is not simply an anatomical-physiological process whereby we draw air into our bodies and extract the 'life-breath' of oxygen from it. When someone suddenly comes across a vast, 'inspiring' or 'breathtaking' vista the breathing space of their awareness seeks expansion to take in or 'in-spire' what they behold. The initial result may be that they feel their physical breath 'taken away', leading them to hold their breath and 'gasp' in awe. This suspension of physical breathing however, allows them to more fully take in - breathe in or 'in-spire' - their very AWARENESS of the 'inspiring' vista or landscape. If they then find themselves opening their mouths and 'gasping' in awe, this is not simply to resume physical breathing. The renewed physical in-breath is a way of physically BODYING the pure inhalation or in-spiration of awareness that preceded the 'gasp'. Similarly, when someone sighs deeply as an expression of sadness, they are bodying a deep exhalation or out-breath of awareness. Something sad or tragic having been taken into their awareness, the sighing allows it to 'sink in' and 'sink down' into them. The anatomical outflow of AIR from their lungs goes together with a sinking downflow of AWARENESS within their Awareness Body. It is this descending flow of Awareness Breath - 'PRANA' - that allows them to find their inner ground, a place where their awareness can come to rest.

Awareness of breathing and breath control ('Pranayama') have always played a central part in traditional yogas. What distinguishes THE NEW YOGA OF THE BREATH from such traditional yogas is its understanding of 'Pranayama' as a way of transforming our AWARENESS OF BREATHING into a pure BREATHING OF AWARENESS. PHYSICAL BREATHING has an aerobic character. PRANIC BREATHING on the other hand - Awareness Breathing - is 'anerobic' - requiring almost no intake of air and oxygen at all, and allowing us to slow our physical breathing to a point of almost complete suspension. That is why the essence of 'Pranayama' is 'Kumbhaka' - a 'suspension' of PHYSICAL BREATHING that allows it to transform into PRANIC BREATHING.

THE NEW YOGA OF THE BREATH

It is psychical flow currents of awareness breath or 'Prana' - 'vital breath' and not 'vital energy' - which are the very life of our Awareness Body as a 'psychical', 'pneumatic' or 'pranic' body. It is with our Awareness body that we literally breathe our awareness of ourselves, other people and the world around us and its psychic 'atmosphere'. Respiratory disorders such as asthma arise from people being unable to breathe their awareness of the psychic atmosphere around them and of their own or other people's emotions. This results in them feeling 'stifled' – not initially through a lack of air but through a felt lack of space, of breathing space in which to be aware.

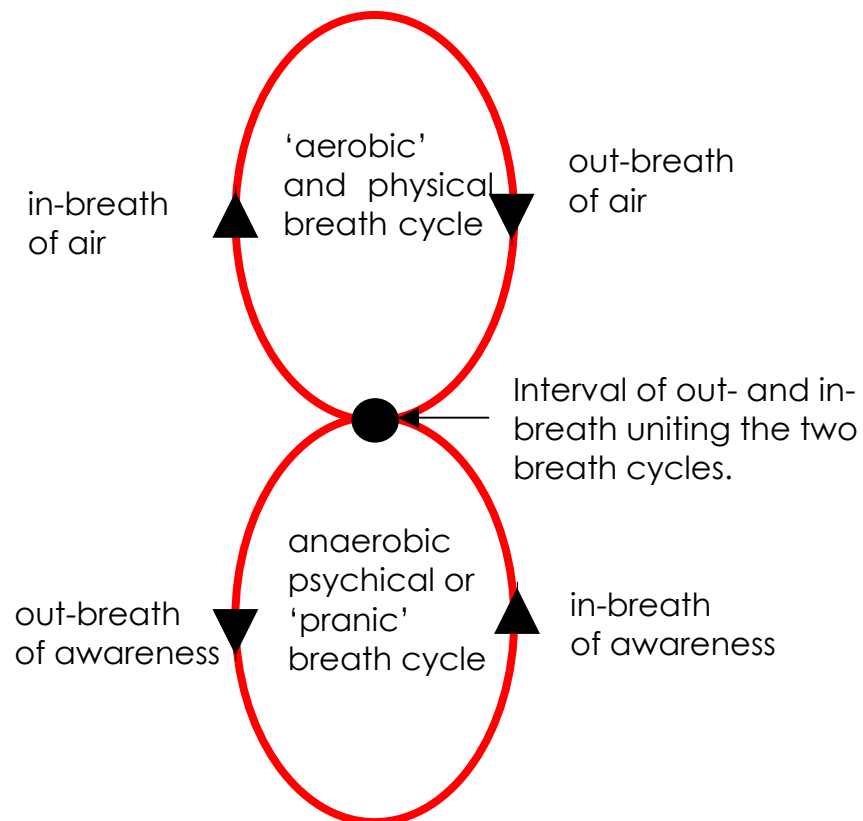
THE NEW YOGA OF THE BREATH is designed to increase our awareness of breathing in order to transform air breathing or aerobic breathing into a pure 'anaerobic' BREATHING OF AWARENESS - thus expanding the BREATHING SPACE OF AWARENESS, inner and outer, we feel we have. The key to this lies in an intensified awareness of our body surface as a whole as a porous and breathing membrane – for like our skin itself, our felt body surface is a major organ of respiration.

The other key lies in recognising that the intervals or transition 'points' of the ordinary aerobic breath cycle - the transition from in-breath to out-breath and vice versa - can be elongated ('Pranayama') in such a way that within it a second entirely anaerobic breath cycle takes its course – a pure breathing of awareness. If the meditational breathing methods of THE NEW YOGA are followed, aerobic breathing with the physical body is slowed by progressively elongating the periodic intervals of the breath cycle. This does not require effortfully holding our breath for long periods. Instead our very need to breathe in air is progressively diminished by the pure breathing of awareness that takes its place. This is why practiced yogic saints, ascetics or 'Saddhus' can allow themselves to be buried alive for long periods, as if no longer needing to breathe.

PRANA AND THE DOUBLE BREATH CYCLE

Through the slowing of our breathing and the suspension of breath ('Kumbhaka') during the interval between physical exhalation and inhalation we can experience this interval in the ordinary, aerobic breath cycle as a transition point to a second breath cycle – one in which we feel ourselves continuing to exhale and inhale pure awareness breath or Prana. The diagram below shows the DOUBLE BREATH CYCLE that unites the aerobic physical breathing of air to the anaerobic psychical or 'pranic' breathing of awareness.

THE DOUBLE BREATH CYCLE



MEDITATIONS IN BREATHING AWARENESS

EXPANDING THE OUTER BREATHING SPACE OF YOUR AWARENESS

1. Be more aware of your breathing – using awareness of the breast and abdominal muscles to feel how deeply or shallowly, rapidly or slowly you are breathing.
2. Being more aware of your breathing, breathe more fully with awareness.
3. Feel your body surface as a whole, in particular the front surface of your eyes, face and chest, as an open, porous breathing surface.
4. Feel yourself breathing in through that surface – breathing in your AWARENESS of the space and of the light all-around you.
5. Along with and after each in-breath of air feel your body become lighter and more porous through an on-going in-breath of awareness, permeated by the air and light of awareness and brightening your awareness.

EXPANDING THE INNER BREATHING SPACE OF YOUR AWARENESS

1. Practice breathing entirely with your abdominal muscles, using them to pushing your abdomen right out like an inflating balloon to breathe in, and drawing it like a concave hollow in to breathe out.
2. Feel the interiority of your head, chest and abdomen as hollow spaces that fill with an up-flow of awareness ('Udana') from below as you breathe in – first filling out your abdomen and then rising from within it to fill the inner spaces of your chest and head.
3. Along with and after each out-breath of air, feel a down-flow of awareness ('Apana') descending from the inner space of your head and chest to your abdomen, and from your entire upper body to your entire lower body below the waist.

UNITING INNER AND OUTER BREATHING SPACES OF AWARENESS

1. Along with and after each in-breath of air, suspend your breath and feel your body filling with awareness from within and without.
2. Along with and after each out-breath of air, suspend your breath and feel a radiant out-flow of awareness from your surface and a descending down-flow of awareness within it.

THE THREE 'GUNAS' AND HUMAN NATURE

The Gunas ... successively dominate, support, activate, and interact with each other. Sattva is buoyant and shining. Rajas is stimulating and moving. Tamas is heavy and enveloping.

Ishvarakrishna Samkhyakarika, translated by Gerard J. Larson

The three 'Gunas' – called 'Tamas', 'Rajas' and 'Sattva' - are those Transcendental Qualities of Awareness, which are at the same time basic constituents of both the natural universe and of HUMAN nature. Symbolised by the colours black, red and white respectively, each can dominate and colour our experience of the others. Each individual embodies a different combination and balance of Gunas, each of which is characterised by a fundamental mood, feeling tone or 'colouration' of awareness, and finds expression as a quite different disposition or 'inner bearing' towards the world. Unlike the Old Yoga, The New Yoga distinguishes between the Gunas as such, and the different ways in which they manifest in both nature and human experience.

Tamas – symbolised by the colours black or dark-blue is the realm of latent, obscured or occult potentialities. In physical nature it finds expression as gravity and inertial mass. In human nature it is felt essentially as a downward-pulling sense of inertia and heaviness. If and when it dominates the individual however, it may be experienced somatically as 'fatigue', 'lethargy' or 'lack of energy', experienced mentally and emotionally as 'dullness' of mind or 'depression', expressed outwardly as 'laziness' or 'sloth', or embodied as physical weight or obesity. It finds positive expression as dignified 'gravitas' or 'groundedness', as depth or 'weightiness' of character, the ability to 'bear', 'support' or 'pull' weight. Essentially it is potentiality experienced as latent 'power'. Theologically it is associated with the primordial darkness and power of the primordial mother goddess known 'The Great Black One' (Maha-Kali). Temperamentally it is the Guna uniting the 'phlegmatic' with the 'black bile' of the 'melancholic'. Anatomically and medically it is associated with the bowels, belly ('Hara') and womb, psychiatrically with clinical depression.

Rajas – symbolised by the colour red, has essentially to do with the autonomous drive towards the activation, actualisation or ‘coming to presence’ of the potentialities hidden or latent in **Tamas**. In nature it finds expression as the process of ‘emergence’ (Greek ‘Physis’) that is actually the root meaning of the term ‘physical’, and with ‘energy’ in the root sense of this word - ‘activity’, ‘actualisation’ and ‘actuality’ (Greek ‘energein’). That is why the **Rajas** Guna is principally associated with physical impulses, drives and desires, with ‘red-blooded’ vitality or passion, with anxiety or agitation, with the natural aggression necessary to release and empower physical action, and also with hot-blooded anger and rage – with ‘seeing red’. Temperamentally it is the Guna uniting the sanguine with the choleric. Anatomically it is associated with the genitals and heart, blood and menstruation, psychiatrically with bipolarity and paranoia. Tantricians favour the Rajasic type – the hero or ‘Vira’.

Sattva – symbolised by the colour white, is a reflection of the light of awareness in which alone all potentialities of awareness can come to light as existent beings and manifest phenomena. As a natural quality this Guna is associated with radiance, light and lightness, and thereby also with the expansion and expansiveness of space. Its root meaning is ‘being’ (Sat). This Guna is favoured by Vedists, being is associated with pure being (Brahman) and with well-being. Yet the flip side of the ‘well-being’ experienced through the Sattva Guna can be bland equanimity or blankness of mind disguised as meditative ‘calm’ and ‘tranquillity’ - or the idealisation of asceticism and ‘spiritual’ transcendence at the expense of embodied presence and depth of soul. Just as ‘black’ is not intrinsically the colour of ‘evil’ so is white not intrinsically the colour of ‘goodness’ and spiritual purity – for it is also the colour of fearful pallor, of ghosts and of the skeleton - and, in the East, of death itself. Temperamentally the Sattva Guna unites the phlegmatic with the sanguine. Anatomically it is associated with the lymphatic and immune systems, medically with anaemia, and anorexia, and psychiatrically with schizophrenia.

KRISHNA ON THE GUNAS (1)

From the Bhagavadgita

Krishna said:

Sattva or goodness, Rajas or activity, and Tamas or inertia; these three Gunas of mind bind the imperishable soul to the body, Oh Arjuna.

Of these, Sattva, being calm, is illuminating and ethical.
It fetters the embodied being,
The Jiva-atma, by attachment
To happiness and knowledge, O Arjuna.

O Arjuna, know that Rajas
Is characterized by intensity,
And is born of desire and attachment.
It binds the Jiva by attachment
To the fruits of action.

Know, O Arjuna, that Tamas, the deluder of Jiva,
Is born of inertia. It binds by ignorance, laziness, and
sleep.

Oh Arjuna, Sattva attaches one to happiness,
Rajas to action, and Tamas to ignorance
By covering the knowledge.

Sattva dominates by suppressing Rajas and Tamas;
Rajas dominates by suppressing Sattva and Tamas;
And Tamas dominates by suppressing Sattva and Rajas,
O Arjuna.

KRISHNA ON THE GUNAS (2)

Arjuna said:

What are the characteristics of those
Who have transcended the three Gunas,
And what is their conduct?
How does one transcend these three Gunas, O Lord Krishna?

Krishna said:

One who neither hates the presence of
Enlightenment, activity, and delusion
Nor desires for them when they are absent; and

The one who remains like a witness;
Who is not moved by the Gunas, Thinking that the
Gunas only are operating;
Who stands firm and does not waver; and

The one who depends on the Lord
And is indifferent to pain and pleasure;
To whom a clod, a stone, and gold are alike;
To whom the dear and the unfriendly are alike;
Who is of firm mind; who is calm
In censure and in praise; and

The one who is indifferent
To honour and disgrace; who is the same
To friend and foe; who has renounced
The sense of doership; is said
To have transcended the Gunas.

WORKING WITH THE GUNAS IN THE NEW YOGA

Each of the Gunas can be passively experienced or suffered in many different ways, not least as mental-emotional and somatic states of 'dis-ease'. Thus Tamas Guna may be experienced as 'darkness or 'blackness' of mood, mental dullness or confusion, Rajas as 'red-hot' rage or prickly irritation, and Sattva as fear or faintness, blanking or 'whiting' out. The Old Yoga identified the HUMAN expression of the Gunas with the ordinary human EXPERIENCE of them - and thus sought only their complete transcendence ('Nirguna'). Yet in themselves, none of the Gunas is a 'cause' of pain or pleasure, suffering or joy - these come about only through our human experience of the Gunas, or through the one-sided dominance of one of them. THE NEW YOGA offers a different way of working with the Gunas, not only by transcending them in awareness, but also by using awareness to transform our experience of the typical mental-emotional-somatic states that are their human expression. If we feel distressed by a feeling of anger for example, then instead of just thinking that we are 'angry' - and getting angry - we can think and feel the 'anger' as an expression of the Rajas Guna. If we can then feel the basic SENSUAL quality of this Guna permeating our whole bodies - affirm this feeling as natural and healthy and/or balancing it with a felt sense of other Gunas - then we have 'transcended' the Guna in awareness by TRANSFORMING our experience of it. According to the Guru-Gita, the syllable 'Gu' in 'Guru' refers to transcending the Gunas, whilst the syllable 'Ru' means devoid of form or quality. 'Guru' is one who transcends the Gunas through a formless transcendental or 'witnessing' awareness. This formless awareness has the character of colourless light - the pure light of awareness. The 'white' of the Sattva Guna is a REFLECTION of this light - hence its symbolic association with pure awareness and with Shiva. Yet light is not white - or any colour. That is why true transcendence of the Gunas does not come about simply by identification with the sense of well-being associated with the Sattva Guna - and why Shiva is also symbolised by 'red' (called 'Rudra' or 'reddening') and by the black 'Linga'.

THE GUNAS AND COLOUR MEDITATION

Rudolf Steiner understood 'red' as light seen through darkness. Conversely he understood blue as darkness seen through light. The association of skin darkness with blue in Indian iconography, the association of Shiva with white, of Shakti with red, and of both with black (Kali) hints at a deeper relation between the colours of the three Gunas as an expression of that primary interplay of light and darkness from which all colours arise. Colour is also a principal medium through which we can transform or 'heal' states of dis-ease by feeling the Gunas or basic qualities of awareness beneath them. Everyday language contains many colour metaphors to describe different character traits ('red-blooded', 'yellow-bellied', 'green'), and states of dis-ease (feeling 'blue' or 'browned off'). A colour can only 'symbolise' psychological feelings and traits because it is itself the sensory expression of a specific feeling tone or 'colour tone' of awareness – exemplified by the colours of the Gunas. Yet just as colours can become blurred, mixed up or muddied, so can the feeling tones which colour our mental, emotional and bodily states of consciousness. That is also why visualising states of consciousness as pure colour tones – not least those of the primary triad of Gunas – is a powerful way of getting to feel the basic qualities of awareness that lie beneath those states, and transforming any dis-ease accompanying them. Any specific colour tone that is felt to reflect our mental-emotional-somatic state can be used to transform our overall state of consciousness into an experience of a pure Guna - a quintessential quality of awareness. The starting point of 'colour healing' in THE NEW YOGA is therefore to visualise our state of consciousness AS a colour – and then meditate the nearest pure colour tone to it. To meditate a colour it is not enough just to see or visualise it with our mind's eye. One must FEEL oneself inside the colour. One must also use one's BODILY imagination to feel the colour inside oneself – as if it filled or lined the entire inner surface of one's body. This is a bit like wearing a garment of that colour or painting one's body with it, but painting the colour or wearing the garment INSIDE one's body rather than outside.

COLOUR MEDITATION IN THE NEW YOGA

1. Take time to become more aware of the colour or colours of an object or visual image.
2. Do not only observe a specific colour from the outside but sense its unique colour hue and tone, and feel yourself into it.
3. Looking away from the object, close your eyes, feel the inner surface of your forehead, and use your mind's eye to hold a mental after-image of the precise colour tone there - seeing the colour as if it were painted on a small canvas lining your forehead.
4. Open your eyes to look at the colour again as many times as you need until you are able to sustain an exact mental image of its precise hue and tone.
5. With the after-image of the colour in your mind's eye, resonate back and forth between seeing and visualising the colour, until you can sense its tone as the expression of a unique tone and colouration of feeling.
6. Feel yourself BREATHING IN the unique feeling tone or 'soul quality' of the colour, letting it colour and permeate your whole bodily self-awareness. In this way, pass from SEEING the colour tone to BREATHING IT and BEING it.
7. As you do so do not just sense yourself seeing or feeling a colour such as 'black', 'red' or 'white'. Instead feel your awareness - your soul - reddening, blackening or whitening.
8. Sense the spatial qualities of the colour's feeling tone, whether it tends to dissolve your sense of bodily boundedness, to expand your awareness beyond your body surface and draw you out of yourself, or to draw you more deeply down into yourself from that surface.
9. Sense the soul qualities that correspond to the feeling tone of the colour (for example the vital surface radiance of orange, the soulfulness of deep blue, the soft warmth of a pink or magenta, the deep seriousness of indigo).

10. Sense the elemental quality of the colour's feeling tone—whether it makes you feel more or less solid and substantial or diffuse and airy, firmly bounded or fluid, outwardly radiant or inwardly concentrated.

11. Feel the dynamic nature of the colour – for example 'yellowing' as a dissipating, outward radiation or 'shining' of awareness; 'bluing' as an inward radiation of awareness; 'greening' as a balancing of outer and inner radiance, 'reddening' as awareness bringing itself to a surface and bounding that surface, whitening as awareness reflected from a surface; 'blackening' as awareness absorbed and drawn in from a surface, 'indigo-ing' as awareness literally 'going in' from a surface towards a central black hole or 'singularity' of awareness.

12. Use the methods of **Tantric Pair Meditation** to meditate the same colours with another, communicating the feeling tone of the colour through your eyes and with your whole body.

COLOUR HEALING IN THE NEW YOGA

1. Feel and visualise the colour of your overall mood, or of the state of consciousness accompanying a specific mental, emotional or somatic state.
2. Look around for an object with a colour most closely corresponding to your overall mood colour.
3. Use the colour meditation to become that pure colour tone, feeling its qualities as a pure and unmuddied colouration of awareness or 'soul colour'.

MEDITATING THE GUNAS

Meditate each of the Guna colours in turn (black, red and white) alone or with a Partner, passing on from them to meditating the all-pervading translucent colourlessness of the Nirguna.

THE GUNAS AS RELATIONSHIPS TO BEING

Behind the symbolism of the three Gunas lies the basic triadic ontology of awareness (from the Greek 'Ontos' – 'being'), which is central to THE NEW YOGA as a reinterpretation of the triadic or 'TRIKA' school of Tantra. That is because each of the three Gunas and their colours expresses and offers us a direct experience of a primary truth of awareness in relationship to BEING. Together the three Gunas point to a fourth truth ('Turya') beyond the Gunas ('Sat Nirguna'). The four truths can be formulated as four Mantras:

1. TAMAS, BLACK – awareness experienced as a total NEGATION of your being and of beings - as NON-BEING.

Mantra: As awareness you do not 'exist' - you are NOT any actual being or anything you actually experience yourself to be. You are all your potentialities of being – which are no less real than your actual experience of yourself or of any actual being.

2. RAJAS, RED – awareness as the immanent source and total AFFIRMATION of all beings - their coming-to-be or BECOMING.

Mantra: As Awareness you BECOME all you experience yourself to be and all beings, for awareness is the immanent source of all beings and everything you can experience yourself to be.

3. SATTVA, WHITE – awareness as **total transcendence** of all you experience yourself to be and OF all beings.

Mantra: As Awareness you TRANSCEND all beings and all you experience yourself to be. Your being and every actual being, like the colour white, is a reflection of the pure light of awareness.

4. 'NIRGUNA', COLOURLESS – the invisible, colourless or 'translucent' light of awareness that pervades all that is - transcendent and immanent, reflected in all beings (white) but with potentialities (black) that are never fully expressed or embodied in them (red).

Mantra: As Awareness you both ARE and ARE NOT, both BECOME and TRANSCEND all you experience yourself to be. The invisible and colourless light of awareness pervades your being and all beings, being the very source of all that is and can be.