

AWARENESS, PARAMSHIVA AND 'THE DREAMING'



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A Tantric Interpretation of Seth’s Creation Account

“At first, in your terms, all of probable reality existed as nebulous dreams within the consciousness of *All That Is*. Later, the unspecific nature of those ‘dreams’ grew more particular and vivid.”

“Potential individuals, in your terms, had consciousness before the beginning or any beginning as you know it. They clamoured to be released into actuality, and *All That Is*, in unspeakable sympathy, sought within itself for the means.”

Seth, in *The Seth Material* by Jane Roberts

Seth goes on to acknowledge that in a certain sense the initial dreams were so “nebulous” that there was as yet no clear distinction within them between *dreamer and dreamt*, between God or ‘All That Is’ and all the potential selves he dreamt.

‘In the beginning’ then, there was a primordial awareness that could be described as a *dreaming without a dreamer* – an ultimate or primordial ‘Dreaming’ lacking any dreamer or dreaming self clearly distinct from the selves it was dreaming. This corresponds to both the “pre-dream state” referred to by Seth, and also to the tantric concept of *turya* - a ‘fourth’ state of awareness transcending and embracing both waking and dream states of awareness, as well as the state of sleeping state from which dreams themselves arise - and corresponding to the ultimate or highest awareness known as *Anuttara* or *Paramshiva*.

Only as the selves that were being dreamt became more diverse and differentiated did this ultimate awareness first attain to an awareness of Being, and to an awareness of itself as a distinct ‘God-being’ (corresponding to *Shiva*) distinct from the selves it was dreaming (corresponding to ‘his’ *Shaktis*).

Having come to an awareness of its own actuality of being, in distinction and in contrast to the merely potential being or ‘non-being’ of the individuals it dreamt, what Seth calls the ‘Primary Dilemma’ and ‘Agony’ of that God-being arose. Its source lay on the one hand in the innate yearning or desire of the potential selves it was dreaming for their own free self-actualisation and fulfilment, and, on the other hand, an intense desire on the part of God to release them into actuality. Seth adds that these very feelings of agony and desire were themselves the foundation of that God’s awareness of being, for:

“The agony and the desire to create represented Its proof of its own reality. The feelings in other words, were adequate proof to All That Is that It was.” Seth

From out of a nebulous *dreaming* then, came intense *feeling* – agony and desire – and it was from *dreaming* and *feeling* that a sense of being was born – rather than the other way round. This alone did not solve the Primary Dilemma of a God who “in unspeakable sympathy” for the potential individuals who “clamoured to be released into actuality” sought “within itself for the means to do so”. (Seth)

In tantric terms, the means it found were identical with the means necessary to overcome *anavamala* - the sense of ‘own-ness’ or ‘mineness’ – for we are speaking of a God that was aware of *being* only by virtue of *feeling* itself as owning *the* countless potential selves and realities it dreamt. Shiva (‘All That Is’ in Seth’s terms) has himself had to let go of this sense of ‘own-ness’ and in doing so release all beings into their own autonomous actuality from the dark womb of non-being or potentiality that corresponding to the Great Goddess (*Mahadevi/Mahakali*).

“All That Is had to let go. While it thought of these individuals as its creations, It held them as part of itself and refused them actuality.”

‘Letting go’ meant letting all potential beings *be* by acknowledging their *distinctness* from the awareness out of which they emerged and took shape. In a sense then, God or ‘All That Is’ (Shiva) had to distinguish its own being *as* an ultimate *awareness* (*Anuttara/Paramshiva*) from the individualised portions and expressions of it that constituted its dreams (*Shaktis*). This is rather like a human dreamer becoming aware within a dream, that they are dreaming – in other words identifying with a pure *awareness* of dreaming distinct from each and all of the beings, selves, worlds and events being dreamt.

In the context of tantric metaphysics, there is a distinction between the ultimate awareness as *Anuttara* (the ‘non-higher’) and as *Paramshiva*. For the very term *Parama Shiva* or *Paramshiva* is paradoxical, capable of being taken as a sign for the supreme or ‘highest’ Shiva and that which is higher than or ‘beyond’ (*para-*) *Shiva*. These senses of *Paramshiva* are two sides of the same coin - for *Paramshiva* is only *Parama Shiva* – the ‘highest’ Shiva - by virtue of knowing himself both as an *expression* of and *as* that ultimate reality (*Anuttara*) higher than or beyond himself. The emergence of *Shiva* as a supreme

God-being was understood in the Shaiva *tantras* as the internal 'negation' (*Nigraha*) or 'withdrawal' (*Tiridhana*) of his 'transcendent' aspect as *Anuttara* itself. This withdrawal however, can be understood precisely as that which makes space (*Akasha*) for the actualisation or *coming into presence* of his 'immanent' aspect – all those potential beings hitherto concealed in the darkness of Non-Being. The process of creative emergence of beings is essentially a *withdrawal-into-presence* of the Divine Awareness.

"Desire, wish and expectation rule all actions and are the basis of all realities."

This statement of Seth echoes and affirms the tantric metaphysical understanding of a triad or *trika* of primordial powers or *Shaktis*. These were called *icchashakti* ('will' in a sense corresponding to 'desire and wish'), *jnanashakti* (knowledge and knowing intent in a sense corresponding to 'expectation') and *kriyashakti* (action and the process of actualising 'all realities'). The first power or *Shakti* that Seth refers to is 'desire' and 'wish'. It is this that brings us from 'ultimate metaphysics' to Freud. For the uniqueness of his work lay in his deep and determined *desire* to find the ultimate truth of the human condition – a desire that, paradoxically, was fulfilled by the discovery that this ultimate 'truth' was nothing but *desire as such*. Freud's genius lay in succeeding to pursue his desire for and rationally lay out an understanding of the truth of the human condition in a way which recognised desire itself *as* that truth. This was what marked his work out from both 'scientific' and purely 'philosophical' understandings of 'truth' or 'reality' – both of which ultimately identify truth with *reasons* for things being, rather than with a primordial *desire* to be.

In this way Freud made 'ultimate truth' something human and *personal* as well as trans-human and impersonal. His ambivalent relation to both science and philosophy can be understood as arising from an awareness that their supposedly 'pure' and 'rational' search for ultimate 'truth' could simply be a defence against discovering what their most intimate personal *desire* was – the object of psychoanalysis. That does not mean we need see 'desire' in purely Freudian or psychoanalytic terms – as desire 'for' some object or satisfaction. Instead we can understand desire on a much deeper metaphysical level – as an innate "yearning" for fulfilment of potentialities within us all. If we do so then Freud was essentially right in identifying desire itself with ultimate truth – rather than reducing truth to any form of purely cognitive or reflective, scientific or philosophical

cognition expressed in the form of ‘true or false’ propositions. Seen in this way, Freud was not only right, but right in tune with the *affirmation* of desire that distinguishes Hindu tantrism from the *transcendence* of desire sought through Buddhism and adopted by Schopenhauer under its influence.

Both Buddhism and Hinduism recognise not just the realm or plane of the physical but higher realms of awareness (*Loka*) and higher beings within them (*Buddhas* or *Devas*). Different levels or orders of beings can be compared to the circles within circles characteristic of Australian aboriginal paintings, just as the aboriginal notion of ‘The Dreaming’ corresponds to the notion of a primordial dreaming awareness – a Dreaming without a dreamer.

In the sections of his *Tantraloka* cited by Deba Brata SenSharma, Abhinavagupta describes many orders and sub-orders of beings. The highest are called *Shuddha Pramatas* – translated as ‘pure experiencers’ but essentially what could be described as ‘Awareness Beings’ (*Chaitanyas*) or ‘Awareness Powers’ (*Shaktis*). The highest of these *Pramatas* are called both *Shiva* and *Shivas*, being plural and yet essentially singular - a plurality of *Shivas* knowing themselves as singular – as *Shiva* – in the realm known as *Shivaloka*. According to Deba Brata Sen Sharma:

“All of the *Shuddha Pramatas* are said to possess bodies made of the *Bindu* - divine Shakti in potentialised form.”

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In other words they are the very unity or non-duality of Shiva and Shakti, each being an awareness (Shiva) with an immense and ever-active *power* of actualisation at its core. SenSharma describes them as “...incapable of participating in worldly activity in the absence of a physical body made from material elements.” This accords with the nature of what Seth calls higher trans-physical “entities” – not least that particular one above and beyond him which Jane Roberts called ‘Seth 2’. For in *its* own words:

“We gave you the patterns, intricate, involved and blessed, from which you form the reality of each physical thing you know ... The entire webwork was initiated by us.”

The Seth Material Jane Roberts

“Webwork” of course is another word for *tantra* as such - with its root meaning of ‘weave’ or ‘web’ on the one hand, and its relation to the Sanskrit term for spider (*tatra*) on the other. In my understanding, it’s the very *highest* and *least* physical of such higher Entities or Awareness Beings (Shivas) which constitute at the same time those Awareness Powers or *Shaktis* which create and sustain the seemingly ‘lowest’, most basic building blocks and elementary forms of physical reality.

Thus it is that the physical form taken by these Powers is that of the most powerful of all cosmic phenomena – supernovae, stars and the black holes at the centre of whole galaxies or galactic clusters.

Thus it is that in the pre-history of mankind human beings not only worshipped but directly *perceived* cosmic bodies such as the Sun or Moon as higher beings, and also worshipped the most elementary or ‘elemental’ physical phenomena such as fire, wind and water.

Thus it is also that those higher Awareness Beings or ‘gods’ that are constantly bringing all physical things into actuality can also communicate through religious statues or ‘idols’ (*Murti*) made of the most seemingly ‘insentient’ and elementary physical materials such as stone, wood and metal. For if such idols are themselves crafted from the artisan’s direct experiences of the Divine Awareness, then they are not merely *artefacts of matter* but *artefacts of awareness* - capable of embodying and transmitting the awesome intent (*Ichha*), knowledge (*Jnana*) and action (*Kriya*) that are the powers or *Shaktis* of the highest order of *Shuddha Pramatas* - the *Shiva(s)*. That is why *Murti Darshan* – sitting in the presence of a powerful *Murti* - can become an almost instantaneous source of initiation, allowing one to receive an active impartation of higher awareness and inner knowing from the idol or *Murti*, to experience it as a medium of communion and communication with higher Awareness Beings, and to know it as it knows both itself and us - as an expression of the infinite field, space or ‘clearing’ that is the Ultimate and Divine Awareness itself – *Anuttara*.

"... all individuals remember their source, and now dream of *All That Is* as *All That Is* once dreamed of them." Seth

In Seth's account, having freed ourselves from the reincarnational cycle, each of us will evolve, on higher planes of awareness, into an “entity” such as Seth himself, then into a higher entity (such as the one who speaks in the Seth Material as 'Seth 2') and into yet 'higher' and 'higher' entities – until a state is reached when, individually and collectively, we become 'All That Is' in its original state 'before' Creation. In tantric terms, our destiny is to become *Shuddha Pramatas* – to become ‘Shivas’ - and in this way both return to and recreate that Ultimate Awareness that is *Anuttara* or *Paramshiva*.

A profound reason why individuals “remember their source and now dream of *All That Is* as *All That Is* once dreamt of them” is, ultimately, to sustain and indeed *recreate* the very *reality* of ‘All That Is’ - the Divine - now that it has released them as beings from ‘The Dreaming’ that once bore all individuals in a state of potentiality or ‘non-being’.

There is a type of eternal and Divine Cycle then, within which religious God-concepts, God-names and God-images, together with the qualities of devotional feeling (*Bhakti*) associated with them and amplified by religious worship play an integral part. The Cycle ‘begins’ with God 'goddling' – the Divine Awareness (Shiva) creating multiple distinct god-beings or ‘entities’ within Itself, each endowed with specific qualities and powers (Shaktis) of this Awareness. These gods in turn ‘world’ – creating a boundless multiplicity of worlds and of aware beings such as human beings. Yet that is just one half of the cycle. For since they are themselves innately endowed with divine awareness and its creative potentials, human beings themselves begin to 'god' - differentiating their at first 'nebulous' sense or 'dream' of the Divine within themselves, and letting diverse god-images, symbols, names and concepts arise from it. In doing so they re-link themselves (*re-ligio*) to the divine awareness that is the inner *source* of this religious creativity. Yet by granting, through different forms of religious meditation and worship, ever more *awareness* to their own dreamt or imagined gods, human beings also endow the gods or higher ‘awareness beings’ they dream and give form to with their own *independent awareness and reality*.

A well-known tantric saying is that ‘To worship a god is to become that god’. The Divine Cycle can be summarised as follows: God 'gods', those gods 'world' or 'create', then their creatures in turn feel, dream, give form to, worship and eventually *become* the gods they worshipped - leading to a stage at which these gods or higher beings in turn become that

singular God or Awareness out of which all beings 'first' arose. This explains the continuous power and importance of religious myths, symbols and dramas arising from the realm of the 'imaginal' - and why the visualisation of diverse gods and the cultural practice of different forms of religious worship is indeed innate in our make up - in our dreams and in our genes. It is innate not just for some Darwinian purpose of furthering the biological 'evolution' and 'survival' of human beings as a species. Instead the true evolutionary process it serves is the evolution of gods and of God as such - a continuous cycle of *divine evolution* that ensures God's survival. Human beings then, neither simply imagine, invent, create or 'make up' gods and God - and nor are they simply made or created by them. Instead 'creation' is a *continuous co-creation of God and human beings*, one mediated by higher beings - by 'the gods'.

Just as granting awareness to plants, animals or other people actually grants them more life and vigour - and helps sustain their life - so does granting awareness to gods grant them life, serving to sustain their living reality, and that of God as such - the awareness (Shiva) that is the source of all creative power (Shakti). The essence of religious 'worship' then is 'thanking' God in the very specific sense of *returning* or giving awareness back to its source in that ultimate or divine awareness which *is* God - in this way both opening ourselves further *to* that awareness and sustaining Its ultimate or divine *reality*. Different gods are the medium through which we do so - by which we worship or grant awareness back to God. The imaginal forms of these gods do not spring from nowhere however, any more than do the images of our dreams, or our sensory perceptions of the world around us. For the world of sensory forms cannot be divided into a realm of 'imaginary' perceptions on the one hand, and 'real' perceptions on the other. Instead the sensory qualities of all things are but our way of perceiving the soul qualities behind - those innate qualities of awareness that we experience when, in Rudolf Steiner's terms, we pass from the realm of Imagination to that of Intuition, feeling from within what we previously only perceived from without.

Just as the tantric maxim is that "To worship a god is to become that god", so Steiner's maxim was that "In the spiritual world we *become* what we perceive." Yet *what* we become always has the nature of both God as such and the unique 'god' that we each *are*. For since we are each inseparable *portions* of the ultimate and universal awareness as a whole, we each *are* that whole- we are each 'God' or *Paramshiva*. And yet being individually

distinct portions of that inseparable and singular whole we are also each ‘a god’. And not just us. For ultimately there is not a single thing or phenomenon that is not a manifest sounding or *playing forth* (the root meaning of ‘Deva’ and ‘Devi’) of a unique and singular soul tone in the great symphony of creation that is *Shiva-Shakti*.

Bibliography:

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