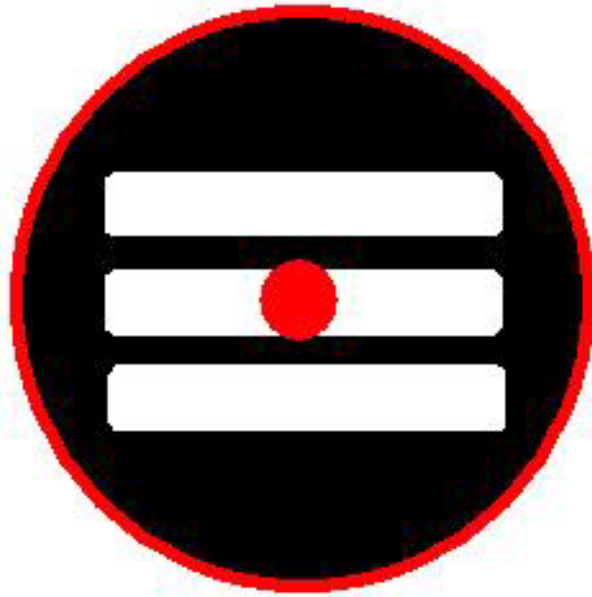


THE NEW 'TRIKA' PHILOSOPHY



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THE 'TRIKA' PRINCIPLE OF TANTRIC PHILOSOPHY

A fundamentally trinitarian principle runs through the religious philosophy and metaphysics of The New Yoga, echoing the triadic or 'Trika' school of Kashmir Shaivism - itself not so much a 'school' as a principle of 'triadism' or 'threefolding' that runs through all its main schools or doctrines. The key signifiers of this threefold are Shiva, Shakti and their dynamic relation: Shiva-Shakti.

In 'the doctrine of recognition' (Pratyabhijna) the threefold takes the form of:

1. pure awareness as such (Shiva)
2. its manifestation and reflection in all experienced phenomena (Shakti)
3. its self-recognition in and as those phenomena (Shiva-Shakti)

In 'the doctrine of vibration' (Spanda) it takes the form of:

1. pure awareness (Shiva)
2. its dynamic potencies or potentialities (Shaktis)
3. the primordial vibration (Spanda) of Shiva-Shakti through which they become manifest.

In the 'Kaula' school or doctrine it takes the form of:

1. Akula – the space or field of awareness within which all experienced phenomena and all bounded units or monads of awareness – all beings - come to be (Shiva)
2. Kula – any and all 'bodies' in the universe understood as bounded units or monads of awareness (Shakti)
3. Kaula – the union of Akula (Shiva) and Kula (Shakti) understood as a relation of 'non-duality' between all embodied monads of awareness (Kula) and the space of awareness around them (Akula), a relation of non-duality or inseparable distinction comparable to that between space and any object in it - the objects being both distinct and inseparable from the space within which they stand out or 'ex-ist'.

ADDING NEW DIMENSIONS TO TRIKA

The New Yoga adds two *further* fundamental triads or threefolds to the Trika principle.

The first is based on a new understanding of the divine as an Awareness both transcending and embracing three basic 'ontological' dimensions of reality.

1. Awareness of 'Being' – understood as the entire realm of actuality – of all that *is*.
2. Awareness of 'Non-Being' – understood not as nothingness but as a realm of boundless potentiality, one no less real than all that is actual.
3. Awareness of 'Becoming' – understood as the process of actualization by which all possible or potential beings constantly come to be or 'be-come'.

The second new threefold is based on a new scientific doctrine of 'qualia' rather than energetic quanta – qualia being understood not simply as the outwardly experienced sensory qualities of experienced phenomena such as their colour or shape but as innate sensual qualities of pure awareness itself.

1. pure awareness
2. its innate sensual qualities (the space, light, air, breath and fire of awareness etc)
3. their manifestation as manifest sensory qualities

This threefold not only reinforces and refines the traditional tantric affirmation of sensuality, but is also of profound relevance to tantric *practice* - recognising the latter as an iterative cycle or spiral based on three repeated stages:

1. the experiencing of phenomena (and of their sensory qualities)
2. the pure sense-free awareness of phenomena and their sensory qualities
3. the sensuous experience of pure or transcendental awareness as such (for example as the space, light or fire or air of awareness)

TRIKA AS A TRIADIC CYCLE OF AWARENESS

The threefold practice of (a) attending to our sensory experiencing of phenomena (b) identifying with the pure, sense-free awareness of the sensory (c) experiencing the innate sensuality of pure awareness itself – this whole cycle itself needs to be ‘iterated’ or repeated in order that:

1. the absolute or ultimate awareness (Anuttara) not be reduced to any specific experience of it - no matter how sublime, blissful, powerful or profound
2. all experiences of pure awareness be both sustained by abiding in a higher-level awareness of them, and
3. ‘spirally’ transformed into a yet higher-level experience of pure awareness.

This cyclical or spiral threefold is the foundational practical principal or Fundamental Formula of The New Yoga:

**from a new or higher *awareness* of experience
to a new and higher *experience* of awareness**

Unless this principle of tantric practice is recognised, the danger is that whenever religious devotees or yogic practitioners attain a profound, powerful or blissfully transcendent experience of the divine as pure awareness they identify the particular felt and sensual *quality* of that experience with God - with pure awareness *as such* - instead of recognising it as one among countless possible sensual-transcendental qualities of the Divine Awareness. Whilst most of the religious philosophies behind different streams of Hinduism and schools of Yoga pay lip service to union (‘Yoga’) with the Divine – and many recognise its essence as Pure Awareness – yet no *single* Hindu stream, teaching, sect or community has shown itself capable of spiritually *transcending* the specific *quality* of pure awareness, flavour of devotional feeling or dimension of mystic experience that is its historic source – reflected in its religious symbols and god-images, sustained through its religious rituals or yogic practices, pervading its ashrams or temples and permeating its communal ‘spirit’. In all religions this spirit will bear a specific taste or flavour (‘Rasa’), one that will attract some and put off others, depending on their ‘taste’ or affinity with this flavour – one capable in equal measure of both *opening* them to the Divine and *limiting* their felt experience of it.

THE SEMIOTICS OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM

“Shiva is the meaning; the word is his wife.” *Linga Puranan*

‘Semiotics’ is the study of signs, in particular the relation between the sign as ‘signifier’ and what it signifies – its ‘signified’. Even though we might only be able to give it expression *through* signifiers such as words, names, gestures, acts and symbols, the signified sense or ‘meaning’ of any such signifier - of any word, name, symbol, act or symbol - is *not itself* a word, name, symbol, act or gesture. Nor is it any ‘objective’ thing or being ‘referred to’, ‘represented’, ‘named’ or ‘denoted’ by the signifier. Instead, like the sensed meaning of a word, the meaning or ‘sense’ of any signifier is essentially an intrinsically *symbol-free* and *wordless* sense. Only if our ‘reading’ of any text, or our understanding of any word, name, sign or symbol – not least religious scriptures and symbols - is ‘referential’ or ‘representational’, will we take its signifiers as referring to or representing ‘objective’ entities or events, things or beings. ‘Literalistic’ understandings of religious words and symbols however, belie their whole purpose, which is to defy any form of referential or representational reading or understanding and lead us instead into wholly *wordless* and *symbol-free* dimensions of awareness – dimensions of awareness that not only transcend but can totally transform our everyday experience of the world. The true role of religious symbols then, is to re-link (*re-ligere*) unite or con-jugate us (*yoga*) with that ultimate, primordial or divine awareness - *pure and symbol-free* - that is the source of all words and all worlds, all symbols and all languages. It is in this way that religion can help rid us of the primary *delusion* that has become the accepted ‘scientific’ view of truth. This is the naive belief in a pre-existing universe of objects that are perceived by the senses and then merely ‘signified’ - referred to or represented – by signifiers such as words and symbols. The deeper spiritual truth is that the most self-evidential scientific ‘fact’ is not the *existence* of a material world of bodies in space and time (or even a spiritual world of aware or sentient beings) but *awareness* of such a world, a world in which things themselves are ‘words’ or ‘signifiers’ - possessing innate meaning or significance. We ourselves are not aware because we ‘are’ - because we are pre-existing bodies or beings, material or spiritual that can be named. Instead we only *come to be* and to be *aware* from out of an ultimate, primordial or divine *awareness* of being - and of all possible beings and names. The Divine is not some supreme being signified by the word ‘God’ but *is* this primordial awareness - one that we can re-link with because we are each portions of it. In contrast, the very idea of ‘proving’ the ‘existence’ of God is a contradiction in terms, implying that the signifier ‘God’ refers to some objectively existing being ‘out there’ - rather than reflecting that absolute awareness or ‘subjectivity’ within which all beings first *come to be* and within which they forever abide. Beings as such are not merely entities signified in language but *languages in themselves* – meaningful patterns of awareness woven in the great ‘loom’ of awareness that is the essence of ‘tantra’