

Notes from Sally on the Tantric Tradition, the Shiva Sutras, and Our Method of Study

Dear Friends,

Working with a text like the *Shiva Sutras* is demanding, in that it asks us to step outside of our left-brain, daily universe and enter a zone where the language and the assumptions are mystical and devotional. Because the *Shiva Sutras* is essentially text of jnana yoga (the yoga of intuitive knowledge) the emphasis is on using the intellectual faculties to dismantle false conceptions about ourselves. One of the ways we do this is by ruminating over the sutras, holding them in awareness, internally repeating them and allowing them to sink into our consciousness. In short, treating them like mantras.

However, there is also an intellectual, interpretive aspect of the process, and that includes reading and trying to understand what the sutra is trying to show us. We'll be doing that explanatory process in class, of course, and answering questions through the listserv as well. Also, every few days I'll send out notes, or musings, on some of the key aspects of tantric understanding and sadhana.

These notes are optional, and those of you who've taken other classes on tantra with me will be familiar with the points. However, if you have the time, I suggest that you read the following notes at least once, and perhaps refer back to them, or come back to them when you have more time.

These are some basic points that underlie the tantric worldview. Like all mystical traditions, non-dual tantra has many branches. It also has an extremely rich body of texts and practices behind it, which cannot all be absorbed at once. However, certain core assumptions are carried through most the teachings of this tradition, and some of these assumptions are particularly liberating and fruitful for people like us. Here are some of them:

- 1) **Divine Awareness chooses to manifest as a world.** It does this because it is inherently creative and free. (That same creativity and freedom is within us, because we are manifestations of divine awareness.) The absolute freedom of divine awareness is its most important quality. It is free to be anything. It is free to become dense, and free to evolve into higher forms of consciousness.

It is also free to conceal its own vastness within a universe of dense matter and within a mind full of thoughts. It is also free to awaken itself inside an individual human or a whole society and give us the power to see that we and everything are made of one divine Awareness.

It does all this so that it can experience the vast play of diversity within itself, and also recognize Itself as all this. That Self-Seeing is the purpose of manifestation, and it is known as *pratyabhijna*, or recognition.

- 2) **Divine Awareness manifests this world as an expression of its own joy.** This remains true even when everything seems to be totally screwed up. It is the fundamental paradox of manifestation, at the core of tantra, that both ecstasy and

suffering can co-exist within the overarching awareness that is the known as the Great Heart, or Shiva.

- 3) **Reality at its heart is self-reflective.** It is conscious of itself. It is self-aware. As self-reflective Awareness, it has two aspects, which are part of its wholeness. These are known as Shiva and Shakti, also called *Spanda*. Shiva means Primordial Auspiciousness, and Shakti means Primordial Power.

The Shiva aspect is the absolute Beingness of reality. Reality is. That isness of reality has been called the “divine ground”, the “ground luminosity”, and the “fundamental beingness.” One meaning of the name Shiva means “{that which underlies.” Before anything exists, Reality exists. Whatever is manifested is manifested within reality.

The Shakti aspect is Reality’s inherent ability to feel, to be aware. This innate capacity for awareness is also the source of Reality’s creative power, its intrinsic dynamism, it’s creativity.

The Shakti aspect of reality is also called *Spanda*, because its nature is to undulate, or pulsate. These two aspects of Reality are the source of all that is and are also expressed in all that is.

We find them by looking into our own awareness—our own consciousness.

A human being has the capacity to experience the self-reflective Beingness AND Power of Reality in and AS our own consciousness. This experience is at the heart of true spiritual practice.

- 4) **Because every particle of existence is inherently divine, everything has intrinsic meaning.** In other words, the meaning of life is *not in what we do per se*. **The meaning of life is in the very texture of reality, the is-ness of reality.** (This, of course, is what is meant by the now-famous phrase “The power of Now.”) However, human beings are not aware of that, so we constantly search for meaning in our actions, relationships, and thoughts. The meaning of our life cannot be found by searching for it, because it is what we already are.
- 5) **The understanding of life’s intrinsic divinity and meaningfulness is self-revealing, which means that it shows up for us on its own, of its own accord, in its own time.** This is what is meant by “grace.” **Grace is the spontaneous self-revelation of the Divine.** Grace comes by its own will. However, by asking for grace, we both open ourselves to the presence of grace, and invite grace to reveal itself to us.
- 6) **The very fact that we are interested in knowing ourselves is a sign that we have been touched by Grace.**
- 7) **The truths stated in paragraphs 4, 5, and 6 do not imply that we aren’t supposed to do anything with our lives, or that actions don’t count, or**

that ethics are irrelevant, or that we don't need to do spiritual practice.

This is one of the fundamental paradoxes of human existence.

- 8) Moreover, **even though everything is already inherently divine, and even though we already are that, the practice of Self-reflection is necessary in order to make this our daily experience.** This, of course, is another fundamental paradox.
- 9) **The gift of the tantric teaching is the experience of wonder, delight, and amazement that begins to infuse your life as you start to contemplate these truths.** Even the merest fragment of insight into the blissful, aware essence of Reality, and into the divine paradoxes inherent in Reality, is itself transformative and delightful!

The *Shiva Sutras* is the foundational sutra text of the Trika branch of the Kashmiri Shaivite approach to tantra. The author, Vasugupta, claims that the text was a direct revelation from Shiva himself, which probably means that the sutras were channeled by him in meditation. Unlike the *Pratyabhijna Hrydam*, which some of you have studied with me, this text is not systematic philosophy. It seems to be a work of spontaneous, intuitive revelation—recording insights about reality without systematizing them. However, the sutras are divided into three sections, based on the Upayas (methods of self-realization). The first section presents the material as a fully enlightened being would experience it through immediate revelation. The second section is presented through the lens of Shakti and of the unique language mysticism that is part of tantric non-dualism. The third section is presented from the point of view of an aspirant on the path, and deals with obstacles and signposts that one might normally experience during the spiritual process.

Sutras are inherently aphoristic. A vast amount of teaching is contained in the pithy phrases of these sutras. For that reason, they are always studied with commentaries that expand and expound on the highly condensed language of the sutras. In this case, both the sutras and the original commentaries on them was written by a sage steeped in yogic practice, whose point of view was highly devotional, and who had grown up from childhood embedded in a certain mythological framework.

They are, to put it mildly, aphoristic and compressed. Each verse conceals or encodes a vast amount of teaching into a very small number of words.

That, of course, is why they need to be interpreted and unpacked by teachers and by personal study.

That is also why many contemporary teachers who speak from the tradition (including me), often elect to take nuggets of truth from the tradition and unpack them in ordinary language, without specifically quoting or referencing the original texts themselves.

Truths from the tantras have become widely disseminated and are expressed, sometimes without recognition of the tradition they come from, by many contemporary teachers of yoga, meditation, Buddhism, etc.

In this class, we will work from the inside out, using the Sanskrit verses themselves. I will do ongoing explanation and interpretation, both in class and on the listserv and in notes like this. However, much of the value of this study will come from your own contemplative and meditative encounter with the verses.

So we'll be working with a contemplative process, which includes self-inquiry, meditation, and also inquiry into the ways in which these words apply to our lives.

In actually reading the Sanskrit and unpacking what the verses mean, it's helpful to start with the assumption that what the text is saying is true. That's part of the value of studying a text like this: to take it on its own terms, and let it impact you. The more you steep yourself in the text, the more the wisdom that is encoded in the verses begins to seep into you. It's a bit like walking in a mist...at first you don't feel it, but eventually you get wet.

There are multiple layers of teaching behind these sutras. So, interpretation is part of the way we study such a text. One way to interpret a sutra is to apply it in your ordinary experience and see what happens! However, even as we interpret, we do it from a position that honors the text.

Traditionally, in reading a text like this, you always begin by approaching the text with honor and submission, with an intention to understand it through contemplation.

In other words, you assume that what you are reading is the truth expressed by an enlightened sage, who knew what he was talking about because he was writing from a place of awake awareness, channeling truth from the very highest level of consciousness available at the time.

Maybe the sage isn't expressing it in clear, user-friendly language. That is usually because he was compressing a lot of teaching into a single aphorism or verse. Or, it might be because he was deliberately pointing to the truth rather than unpacking it.

Some texts are written in a kind of code that has to be unraveled, which is one reason why it's important to study a text with a teacher.

Just as important, if you want to receive the wisdom of a text like this, is to approach it in a meditative mood. Your intention is to allow the truth contained inside the text to unfold for you, sort of the way one of those scrunched-up Japanese flowers unfolds when you put it in water.

Every week, you'll be given contemplation or self-inquiry assignments, as well as several meditative practices, which you'll be asked to work with during the week. There will be several suggested practices, so you can experiment and find ones you're especially drawn to.

However, each one of them "works", if you do it. So, don't assume that you can't do the practice, or that you already know it and therefore don't need to do it. The contemplations and practices are what allows the wisdom in the text to begin to come alive in your inner world and in your outer life.

In addition, you have the option of doing self-inquiry, contemplation and discussion with a study partner. This partner work is optional, but many of you have elected to do it in past telecourses.

Some Truths about Consciousness

The practices we will be doing in our early classes—becoming aware of awareness, meditating on the space at the end of a thought, becoming aware that the body-boundaries do not actually separate us from the space “outside” the body, practicing with the central channel and the Ajna and Crown chakras—are intended to help you loosen your mental conditioning and open the doors for the flashing forth of revelation (unmesha).

They are considered core meditation practices of the tantras.

Why? Because these are among the most direct and accessible natural doorways for allowing the mind (which is contracted consciousness) to expand back into its source, which is Divine Consciousness.

When we keep bringing our awareness to the space at the end of a thought, we are making ourselves available for that Big Consciousness, which has contracted to appear as the limited, thought-filled mind, to expand back into its original vastness.

The first sign that this is happening is often a slowing down of the breath, a slowing down of thoughts, a sense of dropping or rising into a deeper state, or a literal feeling of expansion of awareness. Sometimes lights appear, or other manifestations of deeper levels of consciousness. Sometimes, the inner Presence, which is the true Self, simply surges forward, and we experience a shift out of ordinary mind into the Big Mind, Consciousness itself.

Between the thoughts can be found a trapdoor into stillness, the state known as *Samadhi*. That stillness is the abode of the full, concealed, power of the primordial shakti, the goddess.

When you attend to the space between thoughts, you invite the underlying Presence, which is vast and deep and filled with wisdom and love, and is usually concealed, to come forward into awareness. Then, the movement of the breath becomes still, the rapidity of thought becomes quiet, and we discover the underlying vastness that is our true Self.

Similarly, when you focus on the pure sensation of the body meeting the air, without naming it as “inside” and “outside”, the pure energy of Awareness that is the ground of all sensation reveals itself.

Ordinarily, the true Presence that is living through us—the Shakti—is concealed behind the ceaseless flow of experiences and thoughts. The practices of the tantras are ways to coax it to reveal itself.

The whole universe conceals much more than it shows us at any one time. The great analogy for the way the universe conceals the vast potential hidden in its folds is the fertilized ovum.

When a sperm penetrates and joins with an egg, it exists as a mass of cells. There is no such thing as a differentiated human being in there. The being is pure potentiality, hidden inside a tiny cell of matter, enfolded inside the plasma of that zygote. If you look at the zygote under a microscope, you'd have a hard time seeing the human being. Yet there's intelligence within that potentiality that is unfolding the zygote into an embryo and the embryo into a full human infant. The infant is fully concealed, yet fully alive within the zygote.

In the same way, different layers and levels of reality are concealed, yet fully alive within the folds of this manifest universe. We are able to apprehend only a tiny fraction of the reality within our experience of this manifest universe. This is true even on the so-called physical level—think of the wonder and awe with which we greet the new brain research—and true on a much deeper level when it comes to the subtle underpinnings of our universe.

So, one principle for entering the tantras is to recognize that much of what is concealed will be revealed, but that revelation will happen in its own way and its own time. As we'll see—and those of you who've studied this text will know already—concealment is an innate aspect of the divine.

Levels of Consciousness and Your Experience of Life

Our sense of what is, of our bodies, our minds, our thoughts, and of what the so-called external world shows us, is going to be totally different at different levels of consciousness, and even in different states. Robert Kegan, the developmental psychologist, has a formulation that describes the way this process works: *"The subject at one stage becomes the object of another."*

Our understanding of who "I" am shifts as we grow. One of the first stages of spiritual awakening is the recognition that we are defined by our thoughts. We begin to realize that our awareness, our sense of Self, can actually be separated from thoughts, and that instead of believing every thought we have, we can witness our thoughts and emotions.

Eventually—especially if we study tantra!—we begin to realize that our thoughts and emotions have energy. One thought might have expansive energy, another thought might feel sharp and dense. We begin to realize that the energy in our thoughts and emotions is actually more significant than the content.

When we begin to be able to set aside the content of thoughts and tune into the energy, we start to enter into subtler and subtler levels of our own consciousness. And eventually, we begin to recognize consciousness itself, and to realize that on the deepest level, we ARE awareness, consciousness.

As we become more established in that recognition, we begin to experience more and more freedom and power. This is known as awakening.

At a later stage of development, we may recognize that this awareness that "I" am is part of a larger awareness that actually contains and threads through all that is. Tantra

describes this recognition as self-realization, or *atma vyapti*—the experience that awareness pervades everything.

At a still later stage, we recognize that “*I am the whole of reality*,” the great awareness that contains all the parts. Our individual ego-awareness literally melts into the recognition of Awareness, or Presence, the vastness that is the source of all. We realize as an actual felt experience that the awareness that I am includes all that is and is actually the fully empowered creative source of the universe.

This state is known as *Shiva vyapti*, or the experience of being that which is the source and ground of all. This is the highest stage of development according to the tantras. The personal “I” is then experienced as a shell or garment that the Godness, the Great Consciousness, assumes or discards at will.

Our sense of self, our perspective on self, keeps enlarging, growing, always transcending itself, yet including all previous perspectives of who we are.

Different Levels of Reality

In the meantime, here we are living our lives, having emotional ups and downs, and trying to figure out how to reconcile this very high, sublime teaching (which many of us have been contemplating for years, have received from our spiritual teachers and books, and from our meditation experiences) with mundane reality. The tantras, like most eastern traditions, have several ways of explaining the fact that we experience reality differently at different levels of development. First, they point out that reality feels different in different states—in other words, the “truth” we experience about the world in the waking state is not the same in meditation or dream, and what is true for us in deep meditation may not be true at the breakfast table. This idea is central to the tradition...the idea that there are different levels of reality: ordinary reality, or *vyavaharika* reality—sometimes translated as the reality in which we do business—and ultimate reality—*paramarthika*, having the quality of the highest truth.

Yet, tantra also says that the so-called ordinary reality is not false or unreal. This is a crucial difference between tantra and non-dual *advaita* paths, which tell you that your daily experience of life is actually false, not to be trusted, as ephemeral as a dream, and that your historical self and identity and the wants and wishes of your historical self are unreal. The historical result of this view has tended to be a tendency to withdraw from the world and consider it unimportant.

Tantra, of course, says that all the so called ordinary or intermediate levels of reality ARE real *while we are experiencing them*, even though they are not the only reality. (Even a dream is totally real while we are dreaming it!) Therefore, we must act in the reality we are currently experiencing with maximum skill and presence. The *tantrika* strives to act in the world with intelligence, artfully, because s/he recognizes that the world is not unreal, but is actually an expression of divine consciousness, and therefore totally sacred. There are many implications of this view, which it is important for a would-be *tantrika* to contemplate. The fundamental *koan* for a *tantrika* always is, “Given that everything around me is sacred, how do I treat my world? My food? My garbage? My neighbors? And

how does this attitude of experiencing everything as sacred be made congruent with the necessity to discriminate between safe situations and dangerous ones, between ‘good’ actions and ‘harmful’ actions? How do we acknowledge sacredness while maintaining boundaries?” “How do I see everything within me as sacred while acknowledging that there are qualities in me that are not helpful to my own happiness or the happiness of others? How do I bring about inner change in a context of sacredness?” “How do I honor my meditation experiences without assuming that they are the ultimate truth?” “How do I welcome my meditative experiences, insights, and awakenings without being tossed aside either by fear or excitement?”

These are some of the questions that a *tantrika* confronts and works out in life. It is a matter of being able to hold multiple perspectives.

For example, on a societal level, you recognize that the current political situation is real and important at the level of our daily experience as citizens, even though from a different perspective we could see it as its part of a much larger historical movement, as the unfolding of our collective destiny, as part of the natural cycle of birth, maintenance and dissolution, or simply as a play of awareness.

At a personal level, you recognize that emotions arise strongly, but that they also subside. You see that certain personal tendencies are present at certain moments, while at others, you are free of them.

With this understanding, you begin to be less controlled by your emotions and tendencies, as well as by the culture of the society you live in. In the same way, you recognize that opinions change, that relationships grow and decline, and that depending on your perspective you can see this as painful or as interesting, or as an expression of impermanence, or as part of the cosmic dance of Shakti manifesting in your personal field of consciousness.

Of course, the fact that our experience needs to be taken seriously doesn’t mean that it’s ultimately true. This is really important, and this is where traditions, like science, draw distinctions that are important.

The famous example is the fact that our experience of the earth is that the earth is flat. This is authentic experience. It’s real to us. But it isn’t actually valid from a scientific point of view.

The tantric philosophers make the claim that many points of view may be authentic in that they are genuine experiences. Yet they are not valid in terms of the actual truth.

The point is always context: the recognition of the larger frame for experience. So tantra never invalidates personal experience. Never says that the mind and ego are to be discarded per se—on the contrary, they are incredibly valuable (actually, crucial!) instruments for human/divine experience.

In the same way, the genetics, the physical conditions, and the psychological conditioning that affects our relationship to ourselves and our world are also real. So are the cultural prisms that serve as the lenses through which we see reality—all these things

are real in the sense that they exist and help determine our experience at certain levels of consciousness.

However, and this is really important, they are NOT necessarily true at all levels of consciousness. Just as the pain in your arm disappears when you're asleep, and the suffering of losing a loved one can disappear when you're watching a movie, the different identities you identify with keep changing as you age, change jobs, move between different roles, and especially between different levels of consciousness.

This is especially apparent when we're doing spiritual practice.

At one level of meditation, your inner world may be full of thoughts, at another level full of insight, revelation, stillness, lights, feelings of bliss, and at still another level, an experience of total nothingness. Beyond that nothingness, you might enter an experience of total ecstatic oneness with everything. Each of these experiences is true and real as far as they go.

Tantra aims at getting us to place all these levels of experience within a larger context. This is one reason why it's such a helpful set of teachings for meditators and yogis.

The larger context in tantra is the context of the wider deeper truth, the truth of Consciousness itself, Consciousness as the container, the context, the source, and the underlying reality behind and within our multiverse, our wildly disparate and multifarious experience. Consciousness as absolute freedom, wildly dancing, ultimately recognized as Us.

A Small Glossary: Working Tantric Definitions of Common Spiritual Terms

For the sake of clarity, I'll be periodically offering specific working definitions of some of the common 'spiritual' terms I'll be using. As we know, many of the English words we use for spiritual experience are understood differently in different traditional contexts.

Depending on the tradition we've been trained in, and the spiritual books we've read, we are used to assigning different meanings to certain key words. In other words, when we use words like "self" "god" "consciousness" "liberation" "love" "bliss" "enlightenment", we often understand them in a particular way, depending on the tradition we've trained in.

Take for instance, the concepts of "self" and "ego."

Those of you who've been trained in one of the Indian traditions based on the Vedas, (including Kashmir Shaivism) use the word "self" when you mean your true nature, the core of conscious awareness that underlies all experience. You also use the word "self" as a synonym for the first-person experience of God.

Those of you who've been trained in Buddhist traditions, may understand the word "self" to refer to the illusion that ego creates, through which I might assume that my personal I is a permanent identity defined by my body, my experiences, my thoughts and opinions. So when a Buddhist uses the word "self", he or she is referring to the phenomenon that a student of a non-dual Indian tradition would call the ego. The word Buddhists use for what the Indian traditions call Self, is something like Buddha Nature, or Original Face, or Big Mind.

If you're a student of western psychology, ego might have a different meaning altogether—it refers to the structure that integrates human experience into a coherent whole. If you're a Jungian, the word Self refers to that in you, which integrate the disparate parts of you into a unique essence that is connected to the collective essence. Then, if you're a Christian or a Jew, or a Hindu or a Muslim, you very often have a unique and particular relationship with a vast transcendental force called God, and a whole language for talking about God that is unique to your tradition. Some of this language is shared, some is not.

So below, I offer you working definitions of some of the English words we normally use in spiritual discourse, as they are used in the Kashmir Shaiva tantric tradition.

Self (atma): The fundamental beingness that is experienced by all living things as the core of their existence. The Self is the same in all beings. It is unconditioned—that means, not affected—by personality or thoughts or physical conditions, even though it is the basis of our existence. personality and thought. The Self has three basic qualities: It exists. It has Being. It is real. One word for this quality of the Self is presence—an inarguable sense of Being that we usually take for granted because it is so basic. The Self is aware or intelligent—it has the capacity to know, to experience, to be aware or cognizant. The Self is innately contented, or blissful. When we are in touch with any of these qualities in ourselves—presence or being, awareness, or unconditioned feeling of blissfulness—we are in touch with the Self.

God: Known in the tradition as Shiva (underlying ground of all), Shankara (giver of Goodness), Shiva-Shakti, Parameshwara or Paraameshwari, Paraamashiva (supreme auspicious ground of being), Paraashakti (supreme power), or Paraamaatmaa (supreme Self). A non-theistic way of describing this ultimate reality is as Chid Ananda (Awareness-Bliss) or Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). All these are names for the vast, utterly free and transcendent essence and source of all that is. God possesses infinite powers, which are intrinsic to his/her nature, and through which s/he manifests all that exists within his/her own consciousness. God is self-luminous and self-reflective.

To experience, to know, and to create is the very nature of God. This capacity to experience, to know, and to create runs through everything in this universe. Shaivism would say that the universe is intelligent because it is an expression of the innate intelligence and creativity of its Source. As we said above, God is seen as both transcendent—beyond everything—and as immanent—within everything. And God in Tantra has two aspects, known in the tradition as Shiva and Shakti. Shiva is the divine ground of everything, the pure light of awareness, expressed as absolute stillness, the eternal witness. Shakti is the dynamic power inherent in Awareness—the power to know itself, the power to create, the power to will and act. These two aspects of God are not different, though we separate them in order to speak about them.

I am (aham): The sense of being oneself. “I am” is experienced differently at different levels of consciousness. When we identify I am solely with the body, mind, personal history, we experience limitation, suffering, constriction, and all the manifestations of egoism. At that level, “I am” always has an object: “I am Cathy, I am tired. I am sexy. I am the mother of Danny.” When identified with the Self, or God, or Truth, it gives the experience of the self as totally pure Consciousness, one without a second.

Then, the I is identified with all that is, as in “I am Everything” “I am pure awareness,” or “I am Shiva/Shakti.” When acting through a body and mind, according to the qualities of that body, personality, and culture, the I Am is capable of recognizing itself as a unique person expressing God through its body and personality, while simultaneously being aware of itself as one with the Wholeness. This is the state that the tantras call Jivamukti, or Self-realization.

Ego (ahamkara—literally, the “I-maker”): The inner mechanism that identifies with the body, emotions, thoughts, personal history—the “story”, and regards the pleasure and pain experienced by the body, emotions, thoughts as belonging to the self.

Bliss (ananda): The intrinsic joy that exists in every living being and in all that exists. Bliss, like the experience of I am, can be experienced at different levels of consciousness. Some of these are transitory, passing states. At the deepest level, however, bliss is seen at the unending truth. In tantra, it is understood that the fleeting experiences of blissfulness are glimpses of the Blissfulness—the intrinsic joy of the divine. This is why some significant Shaiva practices (as in the *Vijnana Bhairava*) focus on experiences of bliss in eating, listening to music, sexual experience, the wonder of seeing something beautiful, or other sensory experience—while being aware of these experiences as doorways to the great Bliss.

Awareness (chit or chaitanya): The capacity for knowing or experiencing. Also, the subtle substance or essential beingness that is the “ground” of experience. In tantric tradition, awareness can be contracted, in which case we experience it as our “small” or garden-variety capacity for being aware, or expanded, in which case awareness reveals itself as the supremely free ground, the source and the essence of everything; in other words (to use a convenient shorthand term) as God.

Consciousness: a synonym for awareness. Consciousness expanded is the ground within which all worlds appear. Consciousness contracted is a human mind.

Liberation: 1) Freedom from the recurring cycles of birth and death. 2) Freedom from the bondage that comes when we believe in our thoughts and emotions.

Self-realization: 1) The felt, intuitive immediate experience of the Self as awareness and love, unbound by your conditioned ideas and experience. 2) The experience that your Self pervades everywhere.

God-realization: 1) the recognition that your consciousness is not different than the Absolute. 2) The experience that all things arise within your consciousness. 3) The recognition that you, as Consciousness, are the creator of all this, able to will, know, and act with complete freedom. It is the experience of your self as everywhere and in everything that eventually expands into a recognition of your “Shiva-ness”, marked by a recognition of total freedom and complete empowerment and omniscience.

We’ll be looking at more commonly misunderstood words as the class goes on!

With love,

Sally