CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS ŚAKTI? (Contd.)

In the case of the ordinary followers of the theories that Śakti is unconscious or that She is a great Vaiṣṇavi, we entrust judgment upon their opinions to the Śādhakas of these communities respectively.¹ Let them consider whether the above two classes adopt their respective conclusions because there is Śāstrik evidence in their support, or because of their inability to enter into the deep and weighty truth which the Śāstra reveals in the ślokās above quoted, or because they have not seen or heard of all this Śāstrik evidence, or lastly because, even if they have so seen or heard it, they do not, through vanity, care to take note of it. The above-quoted Śāstrik evidence proves that Śaktīttava is divided into two parts—first, māyāśakti, that is, Śakti whose substance is guṇas, and second, cītāśakti, which is above guṇas, and is massive bliss. By māyāśakti has this vast and variegated drama of samsāra been composed. In this drama cītāśakti appears as Puruṣa and Praikṛti who, though free from all attachment in their real aspects, as Jivās perform this vast Brahmanḍa play. Giving birth to all things from Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, to the minutest insect, and spreading the manifestations⁵ of Herself both as gross and intelligent substance,⁶ She pervades the world. If you and I were to understand the Mother’s māya, which charms the minds of even munīs, with whom will that Anandamayā play the play of the unconscious world? Blind man! should you be proud of your philosophical knowledge? False devotee! If, in spite of your being an enemy of Śāktas,⁴ you deem yourself to be a learned devotee, it is not the glory of the Śāstra which will be in any way dimmed, but it is you who will be liable to punishment. You and I may hate or be malicious towards Śāktas and yet not consider ourselves sinners, but Hiranyagarbha Brahma⁶ becomes a Śākta, and says:

¹ That is, the Śādhakas of the same communities to which these theorists belong are a superior order of men, not likely to be swayed by such foolish ideas. To their judgment, therefore, the question may be safely left. The theorists are those who form the bulk of the Nāstika and Vaiṣṇava communities. Nāstika as here used means a person who thinks that Śakti is unconscious.

⁵ Vibhūti. ⁶ Jaḍa and Caitanya. ⁷ Worshipers of Śakti.

⁶ Brahma, who sprang from the effulgent or golden womb.
"O Thou who art all things, how canst Thy greatness be hymned \(^1\) when Thou art the Śakti in everything, asat or sat,\(^8\) which is anywhere in the world? Who can hymn Thee by whom even Bhagavān, the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world, has been overcome through sleep? From Thee, Viṣṇu, Myself, and Iśāna\(^9\) have derived our bodies. Who is, therefore, capable of making hymn to Thee who art the origin of even Brahmā and others? Devī of unspeakable power, Thy own vast powers be praised: and do Thou charm these two indomitable Asuras, Madhu and Kaiṭabha."

Again, Viṣṇu says: "Devī, I know not any form in which Thou appereth, be it with attribute or attributeless. How, then, can I know the innumerable aspects of Her of whose form even I am ignorant?"

After the war with Mahiṣāsura all Devas, descendants of Devas, and Mahārṣis\(^4\) stood before Kātyāyanī, who visibly appeared to them, and said:

"We bow with reverence to the lotus feet, worshipped of all Devas and Mahārṣis, of the Mother who has assumed form by the withdrawal of all the Śaktis from the bodies of Devas, and who has, by Her own Śakti, created this world consisting of things moving and non-moving. May She grant us good things! May Cāṇḍikā, whose incomparable power and strength even Bhagavān, Ananta, Brahmā, and Maheśvara are unable to describe, resolve to maintain all this world and destroy pernicious fear! Mother of the world! Thou art the cause of all this world, but still Thou containest three guṇas. From Brahmā to Brahmāṇḍa everything is covered with these guṇas, so that not even Hari, Hara, and others are able to penetrate this covering and know Thy true reality. For Thy greatness is unfathomable. Thou art the shelter of all things. All this world is derived from a part\(^6\) of Thee and yet Thou art above this world. Thou art unchangeable,\(^6\) primal, Supreme Prakṛti,"

Advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious gross matter or force! O man! blundering Jiva as you are, will not your tongue become void of strength before it enounces your conclusions that that Śakti is unconscious\(^6\) whose nature even Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara have described to be indefinable and beyond the reach of mind and speech? By constantly thinking of Prakṛti-tattva as "Prakṛti of the world" your mind has become void of understanding,\(^8\) and so to-day you dare call

\(^1\) Stava or hymn in which the powers and doings of the Deity adored are lauded.
\(^2\) That is, jaḍa or caitanya (ante).
\(^3\) Śiva.
\(^4\) Great Ṛṣis.
\(^5\) That is, God, though in the world, is yet more than the world.
\(^6\) Avikṛtā: that is, Prakṛti in the state in which no viśāra (change) has occurred as opposed to the evolving state of Prakṛti.
\(^7\) Jaḍa.
\(^8\) Lit.: "become jaḍa."
Mahāprakṛti gross unconscious matter\(^1\), who is Herself existence, consciousness, and bliss. But have you ever considered Prakṛti-tattva in the light that “the world is of Prakṛti” instead of Prakṛti being of the world? Had you done that you would not have fallen into such a gross blunder as to the true nature of Prakṛti. Leaving aside philosophical theorems,\(^8\) if your knowledge extends to even the root meanings of words, I ask you, do the expressions “Prakṛta-tattva” and “Prakṛta-tathyaṃ”\(^8\) which you are wont to use, signify things false? Or do they signify things true? If the meaning of Prakṛta be “not true,” what will you call Vikṛta?\(^4\) In the Samsāra there are two things, one Prakṛti, and another Vikṛti. That which is instinct with Prakṛti is Prakṛta, and the rest Vikṛta. Leaving out of consideration differences of gender due to suffixes, Prakṛti and prakāra\(^8\) are one and the same thing. What is one’s svarūpa\(^6\) is one’s prakāra; as, for instance, the expression “Of what prakāra is such and such a thing?” means “What is its svarūpa?” Svarūpa is nothing but another name for Prakṛti. For this reason, to explain a thing as what it is, an idea of its Prakṛti has to be given. In common parlance, therefore, what is a thing’s Prakṛti is called that thing’s svabhāva.\(^7\) Analyzing the word svabhāva we get sva, signifying self, and bhāva, signifying substance,\(^8\) Svarūpa, Prakṛti, or Śakti. In conclusion, therefore, that which is the Svarūpa of Self is svabhāva or Prakṛta. Now, tell me, O philosophical advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious,\(^8\) is Brahman’s Brahmahood, Śakti, Prakṛti, or Svarūpa false? If not, on what authority do you call Śakti unconscious? Brahman of eternal consciousness is, as you say, truth in substance.\(^10\) Unless Śakti be false, it can never be separate from Brahman who is truth in substance; and unless it be something separate from Brahman, who is all consciousness, it can never be called unconscious.\(^9\) The ultimate conclusion, therefore, of this theory is that it is the Svarūpa tattva of Brahman who is all consciousness which is unconscious.\(^9\) Philosopher! praised be your knowledge of Śakti! Wonderful is your faith in the Supreme! It is from seeing and hearing all this that a Śādāhaka has said: “Who knows that Kāli, the darśana\(^11\) of whom the six Darśanas\(^12\) do not obtain?”

It is by trying to understand Prakṛti-tattva, according to the notion that “Prakṛti is of the world,” that Cārvākas\(^18\) have become sceptics. Different is the method of understanding for the faithful.

\(^1\) Jāda. \(^3\) Real truth. \(^4\) Untrue; that which is changed, transformed, or, as it is some times said, corrupted. \(^6\) Own form; what a thing or person really is. The thing or person in itself or himself. \(^8\) Tattva. \(^8\) Kind; nature. \(^6\) Satyasvarūpa. \(^7\) Own nature. \(^8\) Sātvatva. \(^9\) Jāda. \(^10\) Satyasvarūpa. \(^11\) Sight. \(^12\) Systems of Philosophy. \(^13\) Followers of the atheist Cārvāka.
The faithful will understand that Prākṛti is not of the world, but the world is of Prākṛti.

The expression "Prākṛti of the world" conveys no idea to a man; for the world is of infinite extent and destined to last till the end of the Kalpa, while the longest stretch of longevity for man is one lakh of years. And he, although superior to all other worldly Jivas, is yet liable to mistakes and blunders. The only wealth of man is his little intelligence and he is, moreover, oppressed by hunger and thirst, boyhood, youth and age, disease, sorrow, and fear. For man to judge of the substance of the Brahmāṇḍa is tantamount to the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of the sea by a shallow-water fish (that is to say, both are equally impossible). An Āryan Śādharma desiring to understand the Prākṛti-tattva of the world will have to become a slave of the Mother of the world instead of the world itself. He must adore Her world-embracing form by seeing Her reflection in the mirror of the Sāstra. He must form an idea of the appearance of the son by seeing the appearance of the mother; to know the truth concerning the Brahmāṇḍa by sinking into the self of Brahmamayā. Those who have known the matter in this fashion have earned immortality in mortal life and laid down their lives as an offering to the lotus-feet of Parameśvari! To say that Prākṛti is of the world first of all gives rise to the suspicion, in an ordinary mind, that if the world be nothing else than a composition of the five elements, then Īśvara, Devatā, Brahmā, Prākṛti, or Śaktī—in short, nothing superior to guṇas, māyā, and the world—can exist; for Prākṛti is then what the world is. Thus scepticism slowly appears in the field, and to a sceptic's eye the samsāra appears full of only such things as are perceptible to the senses. But if, with the vision of the faithful, it is realized that "the world is of Prākṛti," no danger of such doubts exists, for whether made of five elements, or unconscious (whatever the world may be), there is no possibility of such qualities being necessarily attached to the self of Prākṛti, because of the mere fact of Her being known through the world. It is not necessary that the mother's body should resemble the son's body limb per limb. On the contrary, there must be some resemblance of the mother in the son. Similarly, whether the Mother of the world has anything in Her of the world or not, the world has surely some sakti of the Mother in it. This is the method of understanding for those who are subject to differentiating knowledge, although, according to the spiritual vision of adepts in spiritual science, there is no difference between the world and the Mother of the world. Again, to know the world merely in relation to itself we

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1 See post.  
2 Tattva.  
3 Pratyakṣa.  
4 Bhūtas; elements—earth, air, water, fire, ether.  
5 Bhedajñāna, vide ante.
have to know the world and the world's śakti, but to know the world in relation to the Mother of the world, we have to know the world, the world's śakti, and the great Śakti superior to the world. Although I am imperfect in the world, the Mother of the world is perfect, eternal Brahmā. Consequently in order to know Her I must rise above the imperfect existence of the imperfect world and reach that most perfect existence in which all things besides Herself are imperfect and yet all such imperfect things are full of Her perfection. For this reason Āryan worshippers, the best of faithful men, are averse to respect imperfect knowledge at the cost of a disregard for perfection, or to discuss created things in disregard of the supreme subject for our thought—the Creatrix of the Creator of all created things.

Another thing. It is indeed a terrible mystery that you should, through perceiving the visible world to be unconscious, have come to think that the great Śakti who has created that world is also so. If you consider the world to be unconscious, I do not want to dispute the matter with you for the present; but I wish to know on what authority you consider the Śakti who works the world to be unconscious. On the one hand, philosophers say that "although the Śakti of the world is unconscious it appears as conscious owing to the reflection of the Śakti of consciousness in it." On the other hand, Brahmā himself says: "Thou art the Śakti in everything, asat (jaḍa) or sat (Caitanya)." In each of these statements both the states of śakti have been demonstrated but with this difference, that while philosophers say that it appears as conscious on account of its reflecting consciousness thrown upon it, Brahmā says that it seems to be unconscious because unconsciousness appears in it (otherwise nothing is so). According to philosophers, the Śakti of the world is in reality unconscious, but appears as conscious because it reflects the Śakti of consciousness; and according to Brahmā, the Śakti of the world is in reality conscious, but seems to be unconscious because that state appears in it.

Now, whether the Śakti of the world reflects consciousness or unconsciousness, each of these views admits the existence of both consciousness and unconsciousness at least in the ordinary state of things, if not

1. Jaḍa. 2. Cit. 3. That is, in gross and intelligent substance. 4. That is, asat: that is, otherwise nothing in the world would be unconscious.

The meaning of these passages is as follows: Brahmā has said that Śakti is in everything, conscious and unconscious. On the next page it is said that unconsciousness is a false or māyik manifestation. Hence it follows that Śakti is in reality conscious, but sometimes appears as unconscious on account of the play of Māyā in it, and which Māyā also is itself nothing but a peculiar aspect of Śakti. Thus unconsciousness is but a māyik phase of conscious Śakti, and in this sense a thing which really exists; otherwise Brahmā's word that Śakti is in unconscious things is meaningless.
in the state of spiritual vision. It is admitted on all hands in the community of the faithful that unconsciousness has come out of consciousness, and that the Śakti of the world has its origin in the Śakti of consciousness. "The world is all full of Brahman." "One alone exists and no second." "The world is all full of Vāsudeva." "The universe is all full of Śiva and Śakti." "There is no difference between Thee and the universe." "Hari is the world and the world is Hari." "When Hari is both within and without, what is the use of performing austerities?" If all these great sayings of the Śāstra be true, if He alone exists and no second thing, whence have come this unconscious world and the Śakti of the world? In reply to this question, it must either be said that the world and the Śakti of the world are the Brahmanvibhūtis of that great Śakti, or that the world and the Śakti of the world have no existence. Otherwise, the singleness of Brahman or Śakti cannot be maintained. It can by no means be said that the world does not exist and again it is not the view of the Ārya Śāstra that anything besides and second to Brahman exists. It must, therefore, be said that the world, the Śakti of the world, or whatever else they may be, are all nothing but the pure display of that great Śakti; or, in other words, nothing really exists but the Śakti of consciousness. All which is seen as unconscious matter in the world, full of māyā, although it appears to be true, is not in reality so, but is only a display of error. Again, that error itself is a manifestation of Brahma-śakti and that manifestation is called māyā. Of that māyā, consisting of three guṇas, the part in which the rajas and tamas guṇas predominate is called avidyā; the state which includes everything from pure sattva guṇa to the attributeless Brahman is called vidyā; in that vidyā again, She who is turiya śakti above all, and whose substance is pure bliss, is called Mahāvidyā. Overpowered with joy in love for Her who is pure existence, consciousness and bliss, the ever-joyful Īśvara of all has said in the Cāmuṇḍa Tantra:

"Kāli and Tārā are Mahāvidyās; Śoḍaśi, Bhuvarṇesvari, Bhairavi, Chhinnamastā, and Dhūmavati are vidyās; Bagalā, Mātangi and Kamalā are Siddhavidyās." These ten Mahāsaktis are Mahāvidyās, Vidyās, and Siddhavidyās in order. That is to say, in these ten Mahāsaktis which embody perfect manifestations of the Śaktitattva must be sought the harmonious setting forth of Mahāvidyās, Vidyās, and Siddhavidyās, in the above order. This is the meaning of the above quotation as it appears from the wording of the Ślokas. In the Śyāmā-Rahasya, however, all the ten Śaktis have been called Mahāvidyās. "Kāli, Tārā, Śoḍaśi, Bhuvarṇesvari,

1. Jāda.
2. Caitanya.
3. Brahma manifestations (see post).
4. Vībhūti (see post).
5. Cītākṣaṇa.
7. Literally, "above all Tattva ".

"Kāli and Tārā are Mahāvidyās; Śoḍaśi, Bhuvarṇesvari, Bhairavi, Chhinnamastā, and Dhūmavati are vidyās; Bagalā, Mātangi and Kamalā are Siddhavidyās." These ten Mahāsaktis are Mahāvidyās, Vidyās, and Siddhavidyās in order. That is to say, in these ten Mahāsaktis which embody perfect manifestations of the Śaktitattva must be sought the harmonious setting forth of Mahāvidyās, Vidyās, and Siddhavidyās, in the above order. This is the meaning of the above quotation as it appears from the wording of the Ślokas. In the Śyāmā-Rahasya, however, all the ten Śaktis have been called Mahāvidyās. "Kāli, Tārā, Śoḍaśi, Bhuvarṇesvari,
Bhairavī, Chhinnamastā, Mātangi, Kamalā, Dhūmāvatī, and Bagalā are called Mahāvidyās." In another place of the same treatise it has been said: "In the Kali age Siddhi in all the Mahāvidyās is the best." Here the word "all," which expresses combination, and the use of the plural number, signify that all the ten are called Mahāvidyās. Besides this, in the Viśvasāra Tantra it has been clearly stated that "Mahāvidyā is preceded by the prefix mahā." For this reason all Tāntrik teachers are of opinion that in the last line—"etā daśa mahāvidyāh siddhavidyāh prakāritāh"—of the above quotation from the Cāmuṇḍā Tantra all the ten have been indirectly called by the general names of mahāvidyā and siddhavidyā. Hence, according to Viśvasāra Tantra, Kāli and Tarā are Mahāmahā-siddhavidyās, Śoḍāśi, Bhuvanesvari, Bhairavī, Chhinnamastā, and Dhūmāvatī are Mahāsiddhavidyās, and Bagalā, Mātangi, and Kamalā are Siddhahāsiddhavidyās.

In the Chapter on the play of Śakti, we shall attempt to show, so far as it will lie in our power, what appearances of massive Bliss they have in the aspect of turiya consciousness. At present we shall discuss, according to Śāstra, whether She is māyā or māyā is Hers.

The Mother's name is Mahāmāyā, and this, too, is a mahā (great) māyā of Hers. Blinded by this Māyā pandits of unripe intelligence fall into the pit of erroneous inferences, and losing themselves in it, think that māyā is nothing but the material of the gross unconscious world and that She, too, is māyā by whom that māyā is held, and who is primal, eternal, and perfect Brahman. If She too is māyā, then why has She the name Mahāmāyā? If māyā and the person possessing māyā are one and the same thing, if the seed and the tree are one and the same thing, then why should there be difference of conditions of names and aspects? In fact, wherever Śāstra has made mention of that Mahāsakti, with reference to the part of Her which is māyā, it has given Her the name of Mahāmāyā; and again, wherever it has made mention of Her with reference to Her Brahma-aspect, there also it has called Her Mahāmāyā. In both places the root-word mahat is the adjective of māyā with this difference that in the place where reference is made to māyā the samāsa is Karmadhāraya—that is to say, She who is mahat (great) māyā is Mahāmāyā, while in the place where reference is made to the Brahma-aspect the samāsa is Bahubrihi—that is to say, She who has mahat (great) māyā is Mahāmāyā. Just as the larva of a silkworm is both the instrumental and the material cause of the production of thread— instrumental because threads are produced by its will, and material because they are produced from its body—so Mahāsakti is both the instrument and the material cause of the

1 Jada.
2 Compound.
3 Descriptive.
4 Possessive.
work of the world. She is the instrumental cause because, being will itself; She has willed to create the world in Her blissful true resolve, and She is the material cause because She has spread māyā which is her own vibhūti,\(^1\) and out of it fashioned all things both moving and non-moving. That instrumental aspect is Śakti or Brahman, and this material aspect is Māyā.

In the process of creation also, in the body of the Jīva, the Brahma-aspect is Ātma and the Māyā aspect is antahkarana.\(^3\) In the illustration of the larva of the silkworm itself there appears another phase of māyā. Imprisoned in the web of threads produced by itself, which it thinks belongs to itself, it remains for some time bound by them and yet does not feel itself to be so. In course of time its aspect undergoes a change under that covering of threads, and after a while that very larva assumes the form of a butterfly, rends the sheath formed of its own threads, and with its sublimely beautiful body flies forth, spreading its fine and transparent wings in the infinite sky, in perfect bliss, with an unfettered life and a free heart, leaving behind on earth only its rent sheath of threads. Similarly, the māyā aspect, mind, which is bound by the self-created threads of samsāra and is attracted to and crushed by that samsāra, controls, by means of self-restraint, all affection, attraction, and attachment of and to the samsāra, and is even while confined in the womb of samsāra, absorbed in the thought of the beauteous lotus-feet of Her who holds the universe in Her womb and dwells in the heart of Vishvēvara. Thus absorbed, its form changes of itself, unknown to the three worlds; then, in the fullness of time, it rends, with its own strength, the māyā-sheath of samsāra. Blessed with the merciful regard of the Charmer of Mahākāla\(^5\) and dispeller of the fear of death, it spreads its two wings of discrimination\(^4\) and dispassion,\(^5\) and taking with it the brilliant and shining Ātma which then forms its body, the pure and sāttvika māyā, which is mind, becomes a Prajāpati (Lord of the Universe through Śakti). As Vidyā\(^6\) it rises above the universe and soars high in the infinite expanse of heaven towards the seat of existence, consciousness and bliss, which belongs to Mahāvidyā. The flame of the forest fire is lost in the orb of the sun; lightning shot from its region is lost in the body of the cloud of massive bliss.\(^7\) The broken cage of mind—that is to say, the body composed of five elements—is alone left behind in the samsāra.

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1 Manifestation.
2 Mind, etc. (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
3 The Devi.
4 Viveka, the power to distinguish the real and the unreal.
5 Vairagrāya, indifference to worldly things.
6 Spiritual knowledge; as the soul which knows (vide post).
7 Ānandaghana.
It is this phase of māyā consisting of spiritual knowledge which is called vidyā. By virtue of this vidyā one reaches Her, the Mahāvidyā, who is adored of all the world, and is the object of sādhana. Sādhaka, he alone in the world has acquired useful knowledge whose knowledge is employed not to earn worldly riches, but spiritual wealth or Mahāvidyā. In this vast sea of samsāra he alone is past master of the art of sailing across the world who has moored his vessel in the port of Kulakūṇḍalinī. Thus, O Sādhaka, the Mother is yours. Am I, then, motherless? Have I no mother, although the three worlds have their mother? Say then, O Mother, that you are the Sādhaka’s Mother. Extremely ignorant and devoid of siddhi and sādhana as I am, what will become of me? Although a son of Mahāvidyā, I have, O Mother, been blinded and benighted by deep avidyā.¹

What, then, will be my fate? This vessel of mine is drifting down the stream of samsāra with the ebb of pravṛtti.² I cannot hold it back; I have not the power to stay it with nivṛtti.³ Nay, Mother, the vessel is unable even to drift on any longer. It is a small craft, and has, moreover, nine openings in it.⁴ The sea has, by constantly breaking over it, filled it with its salt waters, and has left not even standing-room. Now I shall sink, and that not to rise. Daughter of the earth’s supporter,⁵ hold me, hold me, O Mother. There is no strength left in these my weak arms. Extend for once, O Mother, your two hands of blessing and assurance.⁶ Merciful Mother, turn once and look at me. My Mother, in this vast sea this witless, helpless child of yours has none else whom he can call his own. O Mother, Mother Kula-kūṇḍalinī, be a mother and take me up once into your bosom. Let this vessel sink for good.⁷ The Śāstra says that you are Mahāvidyā, because you can be reached through vidyā. But, I ask, how are you Mahāvidyā unless you can save the child of yours who is destitute of vidyā? Through my vidyā I sink.⁸ Now through your vidyā save me, and prove that you are rightly called Mahāvidyā. Let the vanity which this sinner entertains of having acquired vidyā, such avidyā as has led to his downfall, be destroyed. Glory to you, Mother Mahāvidyā!

¹ Ignorance ² The path of desire. See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
³ Cessation of desire.
⁴ The vessel is the body. The nine openings are the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth, the genitals, and the anus.
⁵ Dharādhara, the mountain.
⁶ The Devi’s hands make the mudrās, vara and abhaya.
⁷ That is, let the vessel sink for good so that it may not have to struggle again on the surface of the worldly ocean of samsāra. Let it sink in Her bosom where there is no such struggle.
⁸ This vidyā is “my vidyā” which is really avidyā.
Whether I have the power or not, you are the wealth which the world seeks in sādhana.

Sādhaka, just as mental Śakti, which is manifested māyā, is called vidyā when it becomes free from the bonds of samsāra and rushes towards the Mahāsakti with dishevelled hair; so it is called avidyā when it forgets Her and is intoxicated by the things of the world—wife, children, and the like. In this connection we may cite the following from the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa:

“That Devī Bhagavatī Mahāmāyā forcibly draws the mental faculties of even the wise, and gives them over to delusion. By Her is created all the world, consisting of things moving and non-moving, and She alone, the dispenser of blessings, when pleased, grants salvation to Jīva. That eternal supreme Vidyā is the cause of liberation. She, again, is the cause of Jīva’s bondage in samsāra. She is theĪśvari of all Īśvaras.”

Again: “King! although eternal, that Devī Bhagavatī incarnates Herself again and again in the manner aforesaid, and maintains the world. By Her is this universe deluded, and She gives birth to the universe. If pleased, She grants wealth and knowledge to all who beg it of Her. Lord of men! at the time of the great Dissolution this entire universe is pervaded by that Mahākāli in the form of a great destructive power. She it is who at times appears as a destructive power; She it is who again appears as the creation; and, again, it is that unborn eternal Devī who at times preserves all things. In prosperity She is Lakṣmī in the houses of men granting increase. In adversity She becomes Alakṣmī for their ruin. (Here it may be objected, why, then, worship Her, if, according to men’s lot, She appears as Lakṣmī and Alakṣmī in prosperity and adversity in order to do service or disservice to them? In answer to this question the following is said): When duly prayed to and worshipped with flowers, incense and the like, She grants wealth, progeny, and other things to the Sādhaka who desires such things, and beneficial attachment to dharma to him who does not desire them.”

Again, in the following Chapter it is said: “Oh King, I have thus related to you the greatness of the Devī, which is the best of all things which man can relate. So wonderful is the power of the Devī who supports the world. Even as She holds the world under the spell of māyā-moha, so also the same Bhagavatī Viṣṇu-māyā provides it with vidyā. That māyā has deluded and deludes you, this, Vaiṣya, and all other people

1 Mahāpralaya.
2 Mahāmārī, which generally means a great plague.
3 Duty, religion (see Introduction to Tantra Sūtra).
4 The delusion which is caused by māyā.
5 Spiritual knowledge.
who have the faculty of discrimination,¹ and will delude all such people
born in future. Great King, seek the protection of that Paramēśvari. 
Being worshipped, She grants worldly happiness, heaven,² and liberation³ 
to men.” *Here, too, the Rṣī has in view two aspects of Śakti. In relation 
to the bondage of samsāra, He speaks of the māyā aspect, and, again, for 
liberation from that bondage he points out the Brahma-aspect for worship, 
and says: “Seek the protection of Paramēśvari.” “She alone, the Dispenser 
of blessings, grants liberation to Jīva when pleased.” “O Devī, a spell of 
delusion spreads over all this world. Being pleased, Thou alone in the 
world can grant liberation.”*

It is when the Mother of the world, in the aspect of māyā, appears as 
the deluder of the world that She assumes various forms, the variety of 
which is due to differences in sattva, rajas, and tamas guṇas in them, and 
it is then that She plays the Acts and the Scenes of the drama of Samsāra. 
Such forms are intelligence, sleep, hunger, chhāya,⁴ power, thirst, forbear-
ance, caste and class, shame, peace, reverence, beauty, wealth, function,⁵
memory, mercy, contentment (inclination), error, intellect, earth, nourish-
ment, brilliance, restraint, and other innumerable śaktis. At the root of 
all these forms lies She who is eternal consciousness, and who, again, is, as 
māyā, known in the three worlds by the name of Viṣṇu-māyā. It is a 
sight fit only for the divine vision of Devas. When, therefore, through 
fear of Sumbha and Niśumbha, they began to worship Her who dwells in 
the heart of Sambhū, they first of all showed that She was the Ordainer of 
the universe as māyā, and then made prayer to Her by calling Her 
“Saviour”. So at the beginning of the hymn it is said:

“To the Devī who is Viṣṇu-māyā in all things, obeisance, obeisance, 
obèisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance. To the Devī who is called con-
sciousness in all things, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, 
obèisance, obeisance. To the Devī who exists in all things as intelligence, 
obèisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance,” and 
so forth.

It is here that the philosophers who advocate the theory that śakti is 
unconscious⁶ have given supreme evidence of their intelligence and learn-
ing. They think that all these śaktṣis held in the body of the Jīva are gross⁷

¹ Literally, “possessing viveka”. This is ordinary discrimination which 
distinguishes one thing from another in the common world of appearance, as, 
for instance, happiness from sorrow, and not the higher form of discrimination, 
which distinguishes the “real” from that which appears to be such.
² Svarga.
³ Muktī.
⁴ Lit.: shadow or reflection. (See A. and E. Avalon’s “Hymns to the 
Goddess.”)
⁵ Śānti. The vṛtti of a thing is the work that it does, and therefore function.
⁶ Jāda.
śaktis. The Devas have said: "The Devī who is called the Śakti of consciousness in all things," "who pervades this entire universe as consciousness, obeisance, obeisance, obeisance to Her." The Devas say that She is consciousness itself, but the philosophers possessing so-called acute vision, think that She is unconscious. For this we cannot blame the philosophers, for of course nothing that they say is unsupported by reason. And the reason here is this: If She is not unconscious, 1 whence have the philosophers got such an idea, notwithstanding Her being intelligence, memory, and the like? What they say is, therefore, true. What difference would there be between Deva, Dānava, and man, if what Devas see as conscious does not appear as unconscious to the eyes of men? Whilst the sight of a lovely child makes the milk flow from a mother’s breast it causes the lolling tongue of a wolf to quickly waggle. The form in which She appears before a person depends on the peculiar tendencies with which he is endowed by Her. Moved by fear for Madhu and Kāṭabha, Bhagavān Brahmā made prayer to the tāmasī jaḍa-śakti, 2 appearing as sleep, and instantly that sleep, which robs people of consciousness, became consciousness itself, and, assuming the aspect of a four-armed Devī riding a lion, stood forth in the firmament. Philosopher, if you are a believer, if you have faith in the words of Devas, explain to me by means of reasoning and arguments why you understand this Śakti to be unconscious 1 Śakti. What shall I say to you? To Her alone I say, O Mother, in the Satya age you destroyed the Daityas Śumbha and Niśumbha by first spreading your vibhūti śaktis 8 and then withdrawing them, but how much longer will you allow these Daityas of the Kali age to live? Or who is such a Śādhaka in this Kali age as can, like the Devas, bring You to earth with his prayer? I, therefore, ask, O Mother, when will such a powerful Śādhaka be born as will be able to sacrifice these Daityas before You, and with their blood make the current of your worship again flow strong in India?

So much about what philosophers have understood. What Śādhakas will next hear will astound them. The very remembrance of the thing makes me feel as if the gates of hell are opening under me. The Brahmadaityas 4 of the nineteenth century have arrived at still another conclusion. They say that the Śākta-Dharma 5 is a result of the coalescence between Hinduism and Buddhism. 6 In sorrow for such things as this have poets

1 Jaḍa.
2 The unconscious śakti, whose substance was the tamas guṇa.
3 Kauśika, Kālī, and so forth.
4 The sect of Brāhmaṇas, against whom the book wars, and who are called demons of the nineteenth century.
5 The religion of the worshippers of Śakti.
6 See Introduction to this book.
sung: "What do not people see when the sun sets! Innumerable stars shine in the sky, lights show their power in every house, and even the tiny young of glow-worms spread their lustre in every direction." There is nothing in what they (the Brähmos) say which deserves a reply rather than mere ridicule. To-day the sun of Bhārata's Dharma has, in circling round Bhārata-Sumeru, disappeared on one side, and in the darkness which has ensued Daityas, Dānavas and Piśācas have made their appearance. Community of Sādhakas! this state of things will not last much longer. Ruddy rays of the young sun have become visible on the summit of the Sumeru. She who grants all desires Herself stands forth to reply, and, with high arms outstretched, says: "Fear not, fear not! Sit for one more moment on the vīra's seat of śava-sādhana in this great cremation ground and firmly continue the japa of the great mantra of the great Śakti. The sun of siddhi for the Tāntrik world is about to rise. She to whom the Tantra belongs says: 'No Paśus will remain on earth, but only Kaulas.'"

Even here the trouble does not end. Towards the close of the above-mentioned saying of the Devas relating to the aspects of the Devi, and while dealing with the māyā-vibhūtis of the Māyāmāyī, they say: "To the Devi who exists in all things as error, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance." But this expression of truth from the small hearts of Devas has found no place in the large heart of this little religion. A thief's wife may enter into the apartments of a queen and steal her ornaments, but on reaching home she is at her wits' end to know which ornament to put on which part of her body.

Similarly, the eclectic fraternity, which is bent on establishing concordance between all schools of thought, has, by purloining this statement of the aspects of Māyā-Brahma from the Mārkaṇḍeya-Caṇḍī, put it on the head of the new Brahman of theirs, which is partly with and partly without attributes, and have at last found, with utter astonishment, that "The Devi exists in all things as error." Horror of horrors! This cannot be. The Merciful Father can never exist as error; for everyone professing the "little religion," is unerring and above all error. The Brähmo has, therefore, substituted the expression "as good" (mangala-rūpeṇa) for the expression "as error" (bhūntirūpeṇa). O what depth of learning! His knowledge of versification is commensurate with his knowledge of

1 India.
2 Mount Meru.
3 Demons and filthy and malignant spirits.
4 An allusion to the Tāntrik rite in which the sādhaka recites mantras seated on a corpse.
5 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
6 Māyā-manifestations.
7 Upadharma—that is, Brähmoism.
Brahman! The Brahman who is supposed to be formless, taintless, and made of all sorts of negation, has nothing to do with whatever is frightful, horrible, oppressive, and dangerous, or with the darkness, sorrow, grief, disease, dirt, abomination, damnation, and sin which there are in the world, but sits still and alone in a formless abode of peace, selecting and gathering by Its side only such things as are good according to Brähmas. Around It the infinite multitude of Jivas inhabiting the infinite universe are consumed in the fire of sin, trouble, grief, sorrow, disease, and suffering. But Brahman, who is Isvara and Bhagavan, and aware of their existence, takes no heed of them, but in hatred and disgust turns His face against them. Tell me, brother Brahmajñāni, does not this bespeak onesidedness on the part of the universe-pervading Creator of the Universe? Brother, you take pride in your knowledge of Brahman. But what is the meaning of the word Brahman? The verbal root “bringha” means pervasion. What is all-pervading is called Brahman. Is it possible for Brahman who is all-pervading to be so one-sided as to be associated with what is good to the exclusion of what is bad, with smiles and not with tears, with heaven and not with hell—to be in virtue and not in sin? Our Brahman is a quite different thing; the Brahman of the Āryaśāstra, from which you have obtained the name of Brahman, exists as well in heaven as in hell, as well in virtuc as in sin, as well in desire as in cessation of desire, as well in good as in evil, as well in creation as in destruction, as well during awaking as in sleep, as well in Ātmā as in mind, as well in prāṇa as in the senses. It exists the same everywhere, in every molecule and atom of the innumerable millions of universes, consisting each of fourteen worlds; It exists everywhere in unconsciousness, consciousness, and in the play of consciousness. It is She who causes bondage, and it is She, again, who brings about liberation. For this reason, after the killing of Mahiṣa, the Asura, the Devas understood that just as the worshipping propensity in their hearts came from Her, so the fighting propensity in the hearts of Asuras also came from Her. Just as She provided the Devas with Svargalakṣmi for their prosperity, so also She was the cause of the fatal night of Asura Mahiṣa’s death. When the Devas perceived this, they said:

“O Devī, who art Lakṣmī in the houses of virtuous men, Alakṣmī in the houses of sinful men, intelligence in the hearts of cultured men, reverence in the hearts of pious men, and shame in men born of good

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1 Knower of Brahman; here, a Brähmo.
2 Aṇu and paramāṇu.
3 Bhuvanās.
4 Jāda.
5 The tutelary Devī of Svarga, or Heaven.
10 The opposite of Lakṣmī.
families, I bow to Thy lotus-feet. O Devi, maintain the universe.” It is because, as avidyā, which is error, 2 She can bind, that as vidyā, which is knowledge, 3 She can again remove the bondage. Otherwise, who is She to liberate who has not the power to bind? It can never be that while the judge will order imprisonment, the jailer will give release. Just as the judge’s order is necessary for imprisonment, so it is also necessary for release. The Āryaṣāstra is not so blind, so foolish, and so erring, as to be terrified on hearing that “She exists as error.” The Śāstra therefore says: “That eternal supreme Vidyā is the cause of liberation. She, again, is the cause of Jīva’s bondage in samsāra. She is the Iśvari of the Iśvaras of all! Although, according to prison rules, a prisoner can sometimes obtain temporary freedom to walk in the prison yard, such freedom cannot give him permanent release, for his hands and feet remain still firmly bound by iron chains. Similarly, although one can live in heaven 4 and similar regions 5 in consequence of having performed works of high religious merit, one does not thereby become free from the bondage of māyā. Unless Mahāmāyā, in whom are the three guṇas and who holds in Her hand the cords of the three guṇas constituting the bondage of māyā, Herself removes the bonds, who else in the world can grant release? The Śāstra has, therefore, said, “She is the Iśvari of the Iśvaras of all”—that is to say, although Brahmac and other Devas are Iśvaras of all, they have to pray to Her, the supreme Iśvari, for the removal of their bondage and liberation. She is the sole Iśvari of the Iśvaras of all.

The aforesaid physical saktis—intelligence, sleep, hunger, thirst, beauty, memory, intellect, restraint, etc.—which appear unconscious 6 to us in our ordinary vision, are not in reality unconscious. Just as light cannot be dark, so sakti cannot be unconscious. Different parts of the māyā-sakti which consists of the three guṇas, sattva, rajas, and tamas, can only differ from each other in so far as one or other of the guṇas predominate; for instance, the sattva guṇa predominates in saktis like mercy, peace, beauty, shame, forgiveness, and reverence; the rajas guṇa predominates in saktis of passion like desire, anger, greed, effort, intoxication of mind 6 and vanity; and the tamas guṇa predominates in saktis like delusion, lethargy, error, drowsiness, and sleep.

Of these, the sāttvik saktis are always naturally manifest and conscious; the tāmasik saktis are always unmanifest and seemingly unconscious, full of delusion, and insensible; and the rājasik saktis are partly manifest and partly unmanifest, partly conscious and partly unconscious. On seeing

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2 Bhūmi
d
3 Jāna
4 Svarga, one of the fourteen regions (lokās).
5 Lokā (see post and Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
6 Jada
7 Mada
the tāmasik śaktis above-mentioned, a person may easily arrive at the conclusion that they are unconscious. But does he never ask himself, whence have these śaktis come? According to Jiva’s destiny, from the very time that he takes a body, an inseparable relationship is established between him and the enjoyment of happiness and suffering of sorrow. The senses, the mind, the function of life and the whole of the Jiva’s body are made in such a manner as to be suitable for this enjoyment and suffering. For this reason sleep is as much necessary to him as food. And according to this necessity She, as Jiva, appears both as enjoyment and suffering as well as sleep. If She does not exist as consciousness at the root of sleep, who, then, is its cause? Light in the moon, radiance in the sun, power of burning in fire, motion in air, coolness in water, smell in earth—these śaktis may ordinarily appear to be unconscious, but in reality they are not so. They merely seem to be unconscious. To admit that all these śaktis are really unconscious is almost to accept the atheistic principle; for self-origination of material śakti is the same thing as creation, preservation, and destruction of the world by Nature. In the eyes of the faithful there is nothing really unconscious in the dominion of the Mother, who is made of consciousness. All the things which we know to be unconscious are, to the sight of wise men, nothing but emanations of consciousness from Her whose substance is consciousness; only, by reason of the incapacity of the world which is composed of the three guṇas to manifest pure consciousness, they are darkened just as are the sun’s rays when passed through a blue glass, with this difference—that while the sun’s rays and the blue glass are different things, in the case of this light the sun, the rays, and the glass are one and the same thing.

In the root She is all-Brahman; in the stem She is all-māyā; in the flower She is all-world, and in the fruit She is all-liberation. Brahman, Īśvara, Māyā, and Avidyā—these are Her four aspects. Dividing Herself into these four parts, the Player of the blissful play throughout the world becomes Herself mad in the intoxication of Her own joy—Herself taking birth, Herself dying, Herself dancing in Her own cremation ground, and Herself becoming Śiva in Her own corpse. She Herself enjoys the play. She is Herself Puruṣa, Herself Prakṛti, Herself the spouse of Mahākāla, Herself attachment, inclination, and goal, and Herself the daughter of Supreme bliss. She is Herself māyā, Herself non-māyā, and Herself She who yields māyā. She is Herself vidyā, Herself avidyā and Herself the eternal Devī who is the object of sādhana. Ask the Vedas, the Vedāntas, the Purāṇas, or the Tantras, and every one of these Śāstras will bear unmistakable testimony to this Her (monistic) character. In this śāstrīk

1 Nāstika.  
2 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
vision of faith, a sādhaka sees the Brahmāṇḍa-play in both Her aspects of vidyā and avidyā, and sits on the Mother’s lap in both bondage and liberation. The world regards the bondage as due to māyā, but he sees it to be caused by the Mother. It then inspires him with love and a feeling of wounded pride. Softened by that love, and hardened by that feeling of wounded pride, he sits lovingly on the lap of the Mother, holding Her hand with his hands, which are bound with the bonds of māyā, and, overwhelmed with tender feeling, says: “Mother, what a mad girl you are!” The mad Sādhak Vilāmbara has therefore said, addressing the mad mother: “Is it for nothing that I tell you, O Kāllī, that you were a magician’s daughter? Otherwise, why should you have enchanted the whole world with māyā-magic?”

Again, the peaceful Sādhaka Kamalākānta has sung: “Tell me, what is bad and what is good in you. Some you save by granting them knowledge in the form of vidyā. Others you cover with avidyā and draw down into the pit of delusion. Many people say that every Jīva is Śiva. Why, then, does He who is ever joyful become destitute of joy? Mother Kālī, I, Kamalākānta, tell you my mind. Some enjoy happiness followed by happiness, while others pass their lives in sorrow.” After seeing, hearing, and thinking over all this, one can only say: “I always seek Thee who art above māyā, full of māyā, universal māyā, eternal, pure, blameless, one without a second, and, again, the cause of the world’s liberation through māyā, the bridge over the sea of existence.”

Those who, on merely hearing the name of sakti, leap to the conclusion that sakti is māyā without understanding the three-fold division of sakti-tattva into vidyā, avidyā, and paramā, and without knowing the difference between māyā-sakti and Brahma-sakti—to them it is needless to show any evidence other than the words of that Māyā and professor of Māyā; for these words are sufficient. When the Mother of the world was born of the womb of Menakā in the house of Himālaya, the King of mountains was astonished at the sight of Her form possessing the lustre of a crore of suns, bearing on Her head the crescent moon, large-eyed, and eight-armed and, bowing down to the earth before Her, with folded hands, and voice trembling with reverence, said:

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1 As pointed out by Babu Dinesh Chandra Sen (“History of Bengali Language and Literature,” p. 119), the English word “mad” does not convey the meaning of the word “pagla,” for in Bengali it is tinged with a feeling of tenderness, and persons so called are greatly loved. The term denotes rather a person of amiable and eccentric character, and is akin to the Persian dūsānā.
2 Māyā is here both the binder and the liberator (see note). As binder She is universal māyā, and as liberator She is above māyā. In what sense Māyā can liberate, is explained, see note.
3 Here meaning sakti.
4 10,000,000.
5 Bhagavatīgītā, in the Mahābhāgavata.
"Mother, who are you of wonderful form, possessing large eyes and auspicious marks? My child, I fail to discover who you really are. Yourself tell me the truth about Yourself."

In reply to this question put by Himālaya, the Devi said:

"Know Me to be (supreme) Śakti, the Genitrix of the world, under whose protection Mahēśvara lives, whose substance is all aśvaryas and knowledge, and who is the cause of all activities and the ordainer of creation, preservation, and destruction. I dwell in the hearts of all things; I carry men across the sea of samsāra; I am eternal bliss; I am eternal, Brahmān in substance and Īśvarī. Father, pleased with the austerities practised by you and mother Menakā, and worshipped as daughter by you both, I have, through your wonderful good fortune, taken birth in your house." Here, also, She has described Herself as parama-Śakti, above māyā.

Again, in the same book, where reincarnation is dealt with, She says:

"On coming out of the mother's womb, Jīva is deluded by my māyā, and forgets the pains it suffered therein."

"Father, for his liberation from the chains of body a seeker of salvation should contemplate me as blameless, subtle, beyond the reach of speech, pure, attributeless, transcendentally luminous, all-pervading, the sole cause of creation, preservation, and destruction, without a second, without beginning, whose substance is existence, consciousness and bliss."

"Great King, deluded by my māyā, Jīvas fail to know that supreme and undecreasing form of mine which is in everything and is without a second. But those who worship Me with devotion cross the great sea of this māyā."

Himālaya also himself says: "Do not delude me any longer with Thy supreme māyā. O Īśvarī of the universe, I bow to Thee."

In the Devī Bhāgavata, and other books also, the same thing has been said. Now tell me, O advocate of the māyā theory! If Śakti Herself is nothing but māyā, what is that other māyā which She specifies as "my māyā"?

The following appears in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra:

"The Devī asked: What is the form of Mahākāli who is the origin of mahat and other tattvas; who is subtler than the subtlest, greatly luminous, and the primal Śakti? Form is possible in only such things as are the work of Prakṛti. But She is above Prakṛti, and supreme beyond all. Deva, be pleased to dispel thoroughly this doubt from my mind."

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1 Qualities of lordship of Īśvara (see post).
2 Ruler.
3 Tapas (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
4 Supreme Śakti.
5 Chap. xvii.
6 13th ullāsa.
7 Buddhi (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
Now, if She is merely Prakṛti, why, then, does the Devī say that it is not possible for Her to have a form originated from Prakṛti?\(^1\)

In the Kulārṇava Tantra, Mahādeva says to the Devī: “He who is deluded by Thy māyā sees not while he sees, understands not while he hears, and knows not the truth\(^2\) while he reads.”

(Here, also, if the Devī is only māyā, why, then, does Mahādeva say “Thy māyā?”) The Śāstra says that She is māyā, whose substance is māyā, and who is yet above māyā. Advocate of the māyā-theory! forget for once the māyā of māyā and be charmed by the māyā of the Mother. Know this māyā to be not māyā only, but the Mother’s māyā—seeing the māyā-play of the Mother sink in the sweetness of māyā. It is because this māyā exists that as children of the Mother we strive to sit on the lap of the Mother. It is with reference to this māyā-theory that in Gitānjalī\(^3\) it is said: “The Vedas say that all efforts are in vain; for, O brother, everything is māyā. The Tantras say that Mahāmāyā smiles through māyā, for it is the Mother’s māyā.”

Viewed with a little discrimination, the very māyā which is nothing but the cause of bondage in samsāra appears as attractive as an elysium of bliss. Cannot the very same māyā, by the influence of which we become attached and bound in love to father, mother, wife, children, etc., also liberate us, if through it we become attached by love to the Mother who is all full of māyā? It is because this māyā exists that there exists the difference between the worshipper and the worshipped. Once the tie of this māyā is broken, the relation between the worshipper and the worshipped will cease, as much as that between father, mother, wife, children, and the like. A devotee is, therefore, afraid lest māyā should disappear, and he should thus be debarred from taking the name of Mother. Although a jñānī\(^4\) desires to be altogether free from māyā, a bhakta,\(^5\) while he throws off māyā so far as the samsāra is concerned, secretly and carefully nourishes māyā for the Mother in the core of his heart. Leaving the samsāra of māyā, he enters into the samsāra of the Mother. All who live in this samsāra of the Mother constantly sing: “Pārvatī is our Mother, Deva Maheśvara is our Father, the Bhairavas are our brothers, and the three worlds are our home.”

But lest, through the influence of the Mother’s name, which is antagonistic to māyā, this māyā should disappear, leaving no means of

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\(^1\) That is, if Mahākāli is, in substance, nothing but Prakṛti, then it is but natural that She should arise out of Prakṛti and have a form. The very fact that the Devī thinks it impossible for Mahākāli to have a form arising out of Prakṛti proves that She is more than Prakṛti.

\(^2\) Tattva.

\(^3\) The author’s work of that name.

\(^4\) He who follows the path of jñāna, or knowledge.

\(^5\) He who follows the path of bhakti, or devotion.
protecting the self, I desire, while there is yet time, to take the name of
the Mother to my heart's content; lest, when the Mother and the son will
meet, there should be left no opportunity for the son to take the Mother's
name; lest there should be for the rest of my existence an end to my
taking the name of Mother—the Gitanjali mournfully says:

"The day passes; it will last no longer. How much longer, O
Mother, shall I bear the torments of the bondage of existence?"

"To this samsāra full of māyā you make me return time after time,
under the influence of māyā. My heart is rent; I can bear it no longer."

"If everything in samsāra is possessed of māyā, then grant me, O
Mother, that māyā in which the son knows none but the Mother.

"Untie the cords of the present māyā, and tie, O Mother, the cord of
that māyā by virtue of which the fire of māyā will not touch me."

"Putting away from me the three-fold fire, take me up, O Mother,
on Thy lap. Let me, for the last time in my life, call 'Mother, Mother,'
and then I shall call no more.

"My life burns with an intense hunger. Give me, O Mother, the
nectar of Thy milk to drink. The fire of woes burns constant and furious.
It will not be extinguished but by that nectar."

"O Spouse of Śiva, do not fear that if once I get that nectar I shall
not seek it any more. Simple child! do you not know that the thirst for
nectar is not satiated with the drinking of it?"

Such Paurāṇik evidence as has so far been produced on the subject of
Śakti-tattva proves that it is from Śakti that the entire and universal
Brahmāṇḍa takes its birth; that She alone creates, preserves, and destroys
it, and that She alone is the highest and the best, and the object of
worship to even the Devas whom the world worships. Because of this
Saivas, Vaiṣṇavas, Sauras, and Gaṇapatyaś should not think that Śiva,
Viṣṇu, the Sun and Gaṇapati avail nothing. As a matter of fact, all the
Devas who are worshipped according to the five forms of worship
(pañcopāsana) are equally instinct with Śakti; none is superior or inferior
to another. When Rṣis have had it in mind to intensify the piety and
devotion of a class of Śādhakas, they have described the character and
play of a particular Devatā in a Purāṇa, and shown that Devatā of that
Purāṇa to be the highest of all Devatās. So much is this so that in books
like the Devī Bhāgavata, the Skanda Purāṇa, the Kālikā Purāṇa, and the
Kūrma Purāṇas, the greatness of Śiva, Viṣṇu, or Śakti has been described
in such a way in one part, and in such another way in a

1 That is, instil vidyā in order that avidyā may be dispelled.
2 That is, the three-fold sorrows (tāpatraya).
3 Worshippers of Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Sun, and Gaṇapata respectively.
4 That is the four Devas above mentioned and the Devī.
subsequent part, that the two parts seem to be mutually contradictory. The contradiction, however, lies in our human vision, full of differentiating ideas. It did not in the least exist in the divine vision of the great Rśis, who were endowed with the non-differentiating faculty. They say that the Devatā whose greatness they were describing in one place under the name of Kāli or Śiva, was Viṣṇu Himself, and that the Devatā whose greatness they are describing in another place under the name of Viṣṇu was none other than Kāli or Śiva. Questions of inconsistency, superiority, exaggeration, or false imputation, did not, therefore, at all arise in their minds. They revealed for the liberation and benefit of the followers of the five forms of worship, the manifestations of Brahman (of which great Rśis, possessed of divine virtue, had direct knowledge), in the course of their description of the play of the particular Devatās the latter individually worshipped. This point will be more elaborately explained in the section on “Concordance between the five forms of worship”.

Śādhakas will, on inquiry, find that Devatas like Śiva, Viṣṇu, and others, have been extolled immediately before or after the places from which we have quoted evidence on the subject of śakti-tattva. There is scarce room in the small volume of the Tantra-tattva for illustrations of every instance of this kind. It is only with the object of acquainting Śādhakas with the learning and intelligence of this class of precocious, avidyā-born, and matricidal monsters, who give expression to their malice against Mahāvidyā by calling Her māyā, jaḍa, avidyā, a great Vaishnavī, and so on, that we have said a few words concerning the Mother of the world.

“O Devī, nirvāṇa cannot be attained without a knowledge of Śakti”—this is the conclusion of the Tantra Śāstra. At first sight it would seem to mean that no Devatā other than Śakti has the power to grant nirvāṇa salvation. But if this matter is understood in accordance with the purpose for which, and the manner in which, it has been explained in the Tantra Śāstra, there will remain no ground for any such conclusion.

We shall therefore quote here what the Tantra Śāstra itself has said in brief about Śakti-tattva:

“Brahmāṇi creates, and not Brahmar. So, O Maheśvari, Brahmar is undoubtedly a mere preta. Viṣṇu preserves, and not Viṣṇu. So, O Maheśvari, Viṣṇu is undoubtedly a mere preta. Rudrāṇi destroys, and not Rudra. So, O Maheśvari, Rudra is undoubtedly a mere preta.

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1 Tattva.
2 Vibhūtis.
3 As explained in preceding pages.
4 This term literally means the human spirit after death and before the performance of the Śrāddha; in the general sense, a ghost. Here used in the sense of a dead body.
Without the part of Śakti which they possess, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and other Devas are all without power, for it is beyond all doubt that without Prakṛti they are unable to do anything by their own efforts.”

Now it remains to be considered what is the true nature of that which is called Śakti. But here we are in a difficulty. All Śāstras have at the conclusion of their specification of all aspects of Her nature, merely said the term “Śakti,” and, after a low obeisance, retired from the field. How can it then be possible for us to specify the nature of that Śakti who is Herself Herself? The juice of the sugar-cane when boiled becomes molasses, the molasses when boiled becomes uncrystallized sugar, the uncrystallized sugar when boiled becomes crystallized sugar, and the crystallized sugar when boiled becomes sugar-candy. After the state of sugar-candy, the juice admits of no more condensation. Similarly, the consequence of Brahman is the Brahmāṇḍa; of Brahmāṇḍa māyā; of māyā Īśvara; and of Īśvara Śakti; that is to say, in order to know what there is in the cause it should first of all be seen what there is in the effect. To understand the truth concerning Brahman, it is necessary to understand, first of all, that concerning the Brahmāṇḍa. If the beginning, middle, and end of the Brahmāṇḍa is considered, the sole and final conclusion is māyā. In order to understand the fundamental truth concerning māyā, it is necessary to fix the mind on Īśvara, the possessor of māyā. And in order to know the fundamental nature of Īśvara, it is necessary to fix the mind on Śakti. Beyond Śakti there can be no discussion of anything. Śakti is the real nature of all things, but the nature of Śakti is nothing but Śakti Herself. The sun reveals all things, but nothing reveals the sun save itself. However that may be, just as the Śakti of the seed can be guessed by observing the fruits, flowers, leaves, branches, roots, stem of the tree, so we shall proceed to open the Tantra-door of the temple of Śakti-tattva by observing the process of creation, preservation, and destruction of Brahmāṇḍa, the seat of Her eternal play.

May the Mother of the universe hold the lamp of Self-revelation in Her hand, and showing to Her children, who are living separate from their Mother, the path leading to Her own Self, ultimately take them up on Her lap.

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1. Jāda.
2. The above is from the Kubjikā Tantra.
3. Svarūpa: who is Herself Herself.
4. Guḍa.
5. Śarkara sīkā, called dalo.
7. Sītopala, called misri.
8. Tattva.
9. The universe, or “egg of Brahmā”.
10. Śakti is the svarūpa, or thing in itself.
The word "śakti" is formed by adding the suffix "kta" to the verbal root "śak" in the passive voice. The verbal root "śak" means "śakti" just as the word "gam" means "gati" (motion). The philosopher would explain "Śakti-tattva" by means of discussion.

This method, however, has little pertinency. At the very outset the grammarian has, in trying to define the term "Śakti," found himself at sea, and left the matter exactly where he found it. The root "Śak" means "Śakti"; the passive voice means the same thing as does the root—that is to say, "Śakti"; and the word that is formed by adding the suffix to the root is also "Śakti." It therefore comes to this, that the grammarian has explained the word "Śakti" as Śakti, Śakti, Śakti; as if he has sworn thrice and said: "In the name of dharma, the word 'Śakti' means Śakti, Śakti, Śakti'."

Sādhakas will here see that, if the interpretation of the word itself has led to such difficulty, how much more difficult must be the interpretation of the thing denoted by the word. In the opinion of philosophers "mutual dependence" is a fault, but grammarians adopt it as the fundamental principle for safe guidance. The object of grammarians is to state the true nature of a thing in conformity with its use, while the object of philosophers is to explain a thing with a show of learning and intelligence. A grammarian will plainly say, The root "gam" means "gati" (motion); but a man, if a philosopher, will, with a show of keen intelligence, explain the same thing as: "Going is that particular form of action in which there is produced a cessation of touch confined to one place with a view to establish at the same time a touch confined to another place." 1 The word "gati," consisting of two syllables only is thus explained by thirty-five syllables. And one can easily increase this number by adding to the interpretation a few more "tva-tva-avacchhinna."

* But what is the result of so much labour? If a grammarian asks a philosopher, "Have you eaten?" the latter will most probably reply, "I have made food to go"—that is to say, "I have made food to leave the plate and be deposited in my stomach." Again, when the same food leaves the stomach and returns to the earth as in vomiting, a great difficulty arises if this action, too, has to be named according to the definition of leaving one place and establishing touch with another. After all the trouble taken over the interpretation, eating, going, and vomiting become one and the same thing.

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1 Pūrvadēśavacchinnasamyoja bhāvasahakṛtottaradeśavacchinnasamyojugāṇukula vāyupāraviśesogamanam.

* Limitations, such as "ness," "ness," "confined to," etc., for which the Nava Nyāya school here satirized displays such predilection. It is commonly believed that a logician will in his next birth be born a jackass.
To avoid this difficulty the clever philosopher has added the expression "a particular form of action," meaning thereby that every act of abandoning one place and establishing touch with another place is not going, but that a particular form only of such action is called going. Now, if it is asked, What is this particular form of action which is called going? the philosopher will reply: "It is touching another place with the feet." But in that case kicking also becomes going. One is therefore at last obliged to say that "going" is the name of that action which people call "going." It thus comes to this: "gamana" (going) means "gati" (motion), and "gati" (motion) means "gamana" (going). It is because he will, after all, have to die this death that the old and intelligent grammarian has at the outset accepted the death, and said in plain terms that "gamana" means "gati." But the philosopher will not easily accede to this. He will die the same death at last, but with a frown on his brow. This is what is called having too much intelligence. A philosopher's wisdom consists in puzzling the intelligence with a voluminous combination of words while he knows full well that there is no other means than "mutual dependence." It must therefore be understood that the loquacious philosopher and the sādhaka who knows the truth concerning things are not one and the same person. The fundamental principle of a sādhanā śāstra is attainment of siddhi, while the fundamental principle of philosophy is merely looking abroad with the eyes wide open. In the present discussion of Śakti-tattva we shall therefore depend entirely on Sādhanā-śāstra, and have nothing to do with philosophy; for millions of systems of philosophy may disappear from view, but not the least change can occur in a sādhanā-śāstra. However that may be, what we understand from grammar is that, as in the case of "gati," there is no means of understanding śakti with the help of any term expressive of quality other than the same word "śakti." Considering the manner in which the word "śakti" is ordinarily used, it appears from the adjuncts of śakti in such expressions as intellectual śakti, mental śakti, mnemonic śakti, visual śakti, aural śakti, active śakti, vital śakti, etc., that śakti merely takes different names according as it manifests itself in different places, while in reality the thing śakti is everywhere the same. What is the root of the śaktis which are in the branch, the leaf, the fruit, and the flower? What is that śakti under the influence of which these śaktis disappear? And what, again, is that śakti under the influence of which they appear? It is universally admitted that the answer to this question is, that Ātmā is at the root of all these śaktis. Now we must understand what this Ātmā is.

There is a class of believers who, when they hear the Upaniṣads taking the name of Ātmā, become senseless with emotion, and say that

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1 Tattva.  
2 Tantra.
Atmā is "attributeless and omnipresent". On the other hand, there is a class of sceptics who take up the sword at the very mention of the name of Atmā, saying that it is "a false and fanciful thing". Put under the edges of the saws applied by these two classes of people, Atmā has, in the nineteenth century, become finer and finer, and has ended in being something almost non-existent. It is only because Atmā has an Atmā of its own that it has not altogether ceased to exist. For this reason, in order now to find out the true nature of Atmā, it must be rescued from the hands of both these classes of people, kept in a separate place, and viewed from there.

In dualistic vision cause and effect are two different things, but looked at from the monistic point of view, they are the same. That which is the effect is also the cause, and that which is the cause is also the effect; for what did not exist in the cause cannot exist in the effect, and what does not exist in the effect cannot have existed in the cause. The Sakti which does not exist in the seed can never appear in the tree, and the Sakti which does not appear in the tree cannot have existed in the seed. A consideration of the similarity between the seed and the tree leads to the conclusion that the seed is the latent state of Sakti while the tree is in its patent state. Similarly, all the Saktis which appear manifest in life—the senses, the body, and the mind—are but patent states of Atmā, that great Sakti of the seed. To say that Sakti resides in Atmā is to present the thing in the form in which it may be understood by means of ordinary intelligence. The final decision of the Sāstra, however, is that in reality Sakti is Atmā and Atmā is Sakti. It is but a mode of speech to say that fire has the power (Sakti) of burning. The truth is that fire exists as power of burning and the power of burning appears as fire. We in our ordinary vision see only the material and gross aspect of fire.

The Sāstra has therefore called that easily perceivable aspect by the name of fire, and designated the power of burning as its Sakti (power). But leaving the material aspect aside, spiritually speaking fire is nothing but Sakti. Although the expression "My Atmā," used in ordinary parlance by worldly people, means, in reality, "What is Atmā that I am," yet, by falsely considering the physical body to be the person (Atmā) we are wont to say "my Atmā" in the sense that Atmā exists in this my physical body. Here, also, if we leave out of consideration the physical side, Atmā becomes nothing but Sakti, because no such thing exists in the world as the Sakti of Atmā. That which is Atmā is Sakti, and that which is Sakti is Atmā. In many places in the Sāstra there is mention of the Sakti of Atmā, but in all such places it is Atmā alone which has really been spoken of, just as people speak of the water of the Ganges, the head

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1 Prāṇa.
of Rāhu, the refulgence of the sun, the light of the moon, etc., although, in reality, the water is Ganges, the head is Rāhu, the refulgence is the sun, the light is the moon, and so on. Just as, in order to express the power of Śakti, a distinction has to be imagined in ordinary usage, and expressions like "the water of the Ganges" have to be used; so although what is Śakti is Ātmā, yet authors of Śāstras have, in order to enable people to understand the Śakti-tattva, often spoken of the Śakti of Ātmā; but in conclusion they have unanimously, and with one voice, said: "There is no distinction between Śakti and the possessor of Śakti." In spite, however, of this absence of distinction, they have had, even while establishing such absence, to speak of two—namely, Śakti and the possessor of Śakti—in order to explain the matter to people whose knowledge consists of distinctions. Without two there can be no distinction, and without distinction there can be no establishment of the absence of distinction.

There is yet something more for consideration. What is the true nature of that Ātmā over which there is so much quarrel, dispute, and discussion? Why do we admit its existence? Looking at this part of the question we see that the body of the Jīva is unconscious, his senses are unconscious, and even his mind is almost so, for although the mind possesses a little of consciousness, it cannot exist independently and supported by itself. It is, therefore, a subject for consideration under whose subjection all these dependent things exist. This matter has been very clearly decided in the form of a question in the Kena Upaniṣad. There it is asked, By what are the senses of work, the senses of knowledge, mind, intellect, etc., able to perform their respective functions? What is the true nature of Him who is the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the life of the life, the mind of the mind? He has been called "the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the life of the life," but not the Ātmā of the Ātmā; because if the nature of Ātmā is decided first of all, the question "By what?" cannot at all arise. For that is the final point, the ultimate goal. However that may be, after all these questions the Kena Upaniṣad goes on to say: "Indra, Candra, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Agni and other Devas who preside over the senses in the Jīva's body were directing the working of the universe with their various powers and boasting of their victory over Asuras, when suddenly a mass of indescribable brilliance appeared before them. Unable to make out what that enormously powerful mass of light was, Agni and other Devas, deputed by Indra, went over one by one to It and were asked by It who they were. First of all Agni said that he was Agni.

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1 One of the navagrahas (planets).
2 Subject of or principle concerning Śakti.
3 Tattva.
4 Water.
5 Moon.
6 Air.
7 Fire.
8 Tejas.
PRINCIPLES OF TANTRA

(fire) and Jātaveda,1 and that he could burn the whole world. Therefore that Devatā made of light, placed before Agni a blade of grass and said, “Burn it.” Agni tried his best but failed to burn the grass.

Subsequently, after Vāyu and other Devas had been equally put to shame and had returned, Indra himself went, but in an instant that Devatā, the refulgent mass of light, disappeared. Seeing the mass of light disappear, Indra understood that it had disappeared because, although He was the ruler of the three worlds, He was yet not a fit person even to approach that Devatā. Thus shattering the pride of Indra, She, who is perfect Brahman and eternal, assumed the fairest form of Gaurī and appeared before the Devas, illumining the firmament with Her lustre. Then, when the Lord of Devas4 questioned Her about Her real nature, She replied. . . .

We are unable to divulge Her reply to the public, for that is Upānīṣad. We shall, however, quote, from the elaborate account of this subject given in the Devī Bhāgavata, that portion in which the Devī’s reply is contained. From this sādhanas will know Her real nature.

The Devī said: “This aspect of mine is Brahman in reality, the cause of all causes, the seat of māyā, witness to all and free from all defect. Divided into two parts, I create the entire world. One of these parts is Śacchidānanda-Prakṛti and the other is Māyā-Prakṛti. That māyā is my Parama5 Śakti, and I am the Iśvarī who possesses that Śakti. But just as moonlight is not distinct from the moon, so I am not distinct from māyā. O Lord of Devas! during the dissolution4 of the whole world this māyā exists inseparable from me in a state of equilibrium, and again, in consequence of the past karma of Jīvas, this unmanifested māyā becomes manifest. The aspect of Śakti, in which She is inward looking, is called ‘māyā,’ and that in which She is outward looking is called ‘avidyā’. It was from tāmas, the outward-looking avidyā, that sattva, rajas, and tāmas, the three gunas, appeared at the beginning of creation, and from that threefold division appeared Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. The rajas guṇa predominates in Brahmā, the sattva guṇa in Viṣṇu, and the tāmas guṇa in Rudra, who is the embodiment of all causes.”

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1 A Vaidik name for Agni. The word means “known by all things that are born,” or “known as it is born” (spreads) (Śāyana’s commentary on Rgveda).
2 Indra.
3 Supreme.
4 Pralaya.
5 The Bengali word is “Kāraṇa.” All effects lie in a potential state in their causes. This potential state represents tāmas guṇa. Rudra, in whom tāmas predominates, thus holds all effects in him as their cause.
"In this Brahmāṇḍa (which is but a manifestation of avidyā consisting of tamaś) Brahmā is like my gross ¹ body, Viṣṇu is like my linga ² body, Rudra is like my causal ³ body, and I myself am turiya Caitanya.⁴ It is in my state of equipoise that I reside in all things. Beyond that, I am Parabrahman, devoid of form. I have two aspects, according as I am with and without attributes. The aspect which is above māyā is attributeless, and the aspect with māyā is with attributes. Thus, possessing two aspects, I create the world as Māyā, enter into it as Brahmā, and send Jivas along their respective paths, whether good or bad, according to law and karma."⁵

"It is I, again, who appoint Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Mahēśvara to do the work of creation, preservation, and destruction of the three worlds. It is out of fear of me ⁶ that the wind blows, the sun rises and sets, Indra gives rain, fire burns, and death takes the lives of Jivas. For this reason I am called 'the best of all' (sarvottama), 'the ruler of all' (sarveśvari.) It is through my grace that ye triumph in all things. Ye are but puppets in my hand. Being will in substance, I ever act according to my own will, and according to your karma I grant victory at one time to you, and at another to Asuras. Through pride, and overpowered by intense delusion, you forgot me, the dweller in all things. For this reason, in order to favour ye, my energy,⁷ the Śakti, which is 'the best of all,' emerged from out of your bodies and appeared before you as what you thought to be a Yakṣa."⁸ (That is to say, separated from that great Śakti, you failed to recognize your individual Śaktis and also were unable to do the works for which you are appointed in the world.)

"Henceforward, by all means shake off pride and seek the protection of me, who am existence, consciousness, and bliss." (That is to say, knowing me to be the controller of all, attribute the fruits of all works, done or undone, to the full exercise of my great Śakti, and be gratified on thus resigning yourselves to me.)

Ādiyā-Śakti (primal Śakti) says: "Divided into two parts, I create. One of these parts is Sācchidānanda-Prakṛti, and the other is Māyā-Prakṛti." Again, when māyā is Her Śakti She is the Iśvari possessing Śakti. Spiritually speaking, Śakti is not different from Her, just as moonlight is not different from the moon. It is the said part which is pure Sācchidānanda which has been designated as Ātmā in all Sāstras. The body, the senses, the mind, the life, all are subordinate to Him, all

¹ Sthūla.  ² Subtle body.  ³ Kāraṇa.  ⁴ Consciousness in its fourth state (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
⁵ See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
⁶ That is, in obedience to me.  ⁷ Tejas.
⁸ That is, as some being of a high order deserving honour and adoration.
functions are within His control; for all things in the body are unconscious and that Ātmā which is consciousness is the sole cause of their being possessed of consciousness.

Just as the sun is the only source of all light during the day, so Ātmā is the only source of all physical consciousness. As the sun is not a different thing from its light, so Ātmā is not a different thing from Śakti or consciousness. The ultimate point to which ātmā-tattva leads is, therefore, Citsākti. What we know as consciousness is called Śakti. In explaining the word Śakti it may finally be said that Śakti is that thing which makes able—that is to say, that power by virtue of which the body, the senses, the mind, and the prāna, which are all unconscious, become able to act like conscious things. It is because Śakti is universe-pervading that its other name is Ātmā. What pervades is Ātmā; He who pervades all is called Ātmā.

In the driving of a carriage we see that the carriage, the driver of the carriage, the person driven, and the horse, all four in fact, are in motion. Of these four, only one is independent and conscious, two are dependent and conscious, and the remaining one, though itself unconscious, is drawn like a conscious thing. The horse, though conscious, is under the control of the driver; the driver, though conscious, is under the control of the person driven; and the carriage, though itself unconscious, is successively under the control of all three—viz., the person driven, the driver, and the horse. Sādhakas constantly see such a carriage-driving within their bodies. The body composed of five elements is nothing but a carriage for carrying a person in and out on this journey of samsāra. The ten senses are its ten horses, the mind is its driver, and Ātmā, that great Śakti, is the person driven. Just as the driver guides the horses according to the directions of the person driven, so the mind also, urged by the Śakti of Ātmā, sends the senses to their individual pursuits.

As the carriage runs drawn by the horse, the body moves drawn by the senses. The mind and the senses are both conscious under the influence of the consciousness of Ātmā. In all the pursuits of the senses the body appears as conscious. The body is subordinate to the senses, the senses are subordinate to the mind, the mind is subordinate to Ātmā. Of the four, therefore, three are dependent, and only Ātmā is independent, all the others being subordinate to Him. There is, however, this peculiarity here, that, unlike the ordinary person, seated in a carriage, the person who is driven in the carriage of the body does not travel along any path fixed by Him; He simply orders the driver to drive the carriage

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3 The discussion of the Ātmā—spiritual science.

1 Consciousness is the ultimate Śakti.

2 Vital principle.

4 That is when dualistically considered as separate things.
and then retires. The driver is left to choose whichever path he likes, and
to enjoy or suffer from the comforts and discomfits of the path on which
his choice may fall. The person driven has neither comfort nor dis-
comfort. Ātmā is ever free from attachment.

The driver may, with unerring discretion, take the carriage safely
through the paths of sin and virtue which the Śāstra indicates; but if he is
weak, there is danger for him. The ten wayward horses draw the
carriage in ten different directions and, consequently, the small carriage,
built with five pieces of wood¹ and full of innumerable joints, breaks
down in mid-path. Besides this, the hero who has taken charge of driving
the carriage is hardly able to control himself, not to speak of controlling
the horses. He has a dread of the two reins śama and dama,² which are
prescribed for controlling the horses. Even the thought of them often
greatly frightens him, and, in many cases, he is of opinion that the idea of
handling and using them in tightening or loosening the hold on the horses,
is but an incredible fancy. It is owing to such weakness on the part of
the driver that in the hunt for happiness in the samsāra, Jīva so often
forgets his aim.

It is here in the samsāra that the terrible catastrophe begins.
Although the driver is weak, he can cast his eyes towards the person
sitting in the carriage, and then, forgetting fatalism,³ one becomes
inclined to say: “O Mother! what play is this of yours? The strength
and intelligence of the driver are not unknown to You; why, then
knowing everything, have You placed the carriage in charge of such a
worthless driver? True it is that I am a great sinner, but for that You
cannot abandon me. In this great crisis neither the driver nor the
person driven⁴ can save himself. I know that I must suffer the fruits of
my own karma; but still, O Mother! I desire to see You once in this
broken carriage⁵ of mine.”

“As in Rāvana’s last drive in a carriage, so in this last drive of mine
appear for once, O Mother! mad and shouting, ‘Fear not! fear not!’.
Stand in the carriage, holding me to Thy bosom. Do not disappear, but
appear for a moment in my heart, so that I can for once see the lustrous
glory of your world-encompassing beauty, filling my eyes, filling my mind,
filling my life. O Mother! let the light of that death-conquering black

¹ The five elements.
² Equanimity and self-restraint, external and internal.
³ Adṛṣṭa vāda.
⁴ There is no escape for the driven, because he, too, is associated with the
sufferings of the Jīva, though he does not feel them.
⁵ The human body.
beauty of yours, which has the lustre of a million moons, dispel the darkness of my fear of death. O Mother! may I, climbing to your bosom and becoming yours, die the death\(^1\) for which even immortals, regardless of their privilege of immortality, long. So I say, come, O Mother! let us two, Mother and son, together undertake today the journey by carriage. Let me for once see, O Mother! your Car-journey\(^2\) in the carriage of my body, in the carriage of my eyes, in the carriage of my mind, in the carriage of my heart. I have heard that there is no return journey\(^3\) in your carriage, and hence this desire on my part.”

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\(^1\) Of the individual self in the bosom of the Mother.

\(^2\) Rathajātra, or car festival, in which the Deva or Devi is drawn in a car. Here the human body is the Devi’s car.

\(^3\) To the worlds of birth and death.