CHAPTER IX

ŚIVA AND ŚAKTI

ŚADHAKA, no Śāstra or community denies that the above-mentioned Ātmā, who is Śakti, is Brahmā. Differences of opinion exist among those whose knowledge consists of distinctions only, in respect of the three words Ātmā, Śakti and Caitanya. The word Ātmā is masculine, the word Śakti is feminine, and the word Chaitanya is neuter. As there are differences of gender between the three as names, so there are also differences of kind between them as things—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara are male, Śakti is female, and Caitanya or Brahmā is neuter. As there is no scope for distinction of kind in attributeless Citśakti the Śāstra has designated Caitanya or Brahmā as neuter. Again, owing to differences in the forms in which the Śakti of will, the Śakti of knowledge, and the Śakti of action appear, the Śāstra calls the Deva male and the Devi female, in accordance with the male or female principle inherent in all fathers and mothers in the world, beginning at the root from the Father of the world and the Mother of the world. This is no mere imagination on the part of the authors of the Śāstra; it is but a statement of what is really true. Femininity and masculinity exist wherever there is a description of creation, preservation, and destruction caused by māyā through a union of the two persons. The neuter state, or the state beyond that of a male or a female exists when the aspect above māyā is described. To speak of neuter does not imply complete absence of the male or the female principle; it implies only an unmanifested or undeveloped state of those principles (Śakti). Even in the bodies of neuters we see in life that both the masculine and feminine marks are found to be present. In some cases the neuter’s body is found to be more like that of a male, while in others it is found to be more like that of a female, the only distinction being that the male or the female principle is not fully developed.

From what the Śāstra says about the generation of neuters it appears that when neither the male nor the female principle can subdue the other,

1 That is, spirit, power, and intelligence or consciousness respectively.

2 Īcchhāśakti, jñānaśakti, kriyāśakti.
a neuter is created, in whom the two principles exist in a state of equilib-
rium. The Śāradātilaka¹ says: "An excess of menstrual blood causes
the birth of a female, an excess of seed that of a male, and an evenness
of the quantities of blood and semen that of a neuter. This is certain."

The Mātrkābheda Tantra says: "An excess of the Śakti's (woman's)
blood over the puruṣa's (man's) seed causes the birth of a female child;
its opposite causes the birth of a male child, and if the blood and the
semen be equal in quantity a neuter is born. This is certain." It has
also been stated what proportions of blood and semen mean equality
in quantity.

"At the time of procreation twenty-two ² units of menstrual blood
and fourteen units of seed are produced in the bodies of the woman and
the man respectively. This is equality. If the blood be in excess (that
is to say, if twenty-two units of blood mix with less than fourteen units
of semen), a female is born; and if the semen be in excess (that is to say,
if fourteen units of semen mix with less than twenty-two units of blood),
a male is born; and if the above-mentioned numbers of units of blood
and semen remain the same, a neuter is born."

Even in this equality of the numbers of units the excess ³ of half a
unit one way or the other leads to the appearance of female marks or
male marks in the body of a neuter; and according to these marks neuters
may be divided into male-neuters and female-neuters. But the Śāstra,
which notices the result only, has rejected this useless classification and
has ordinarily treated all neuters as the same. Nevertheless, although the
difference between male neuters and female neuters makes no difference
in the fruit, it makes some difference at the root and in the flower; other-
wise, the difference would not have appeared. At the root there is the
difference between the quantities of blood and semen, and in the flower
there are differences, physical, mental, and functional. The neuter whose
body resembles that of a male develops mostly masculine tendencies, and
the neuter whose body resembles that of a female develops mostly feminine
tendencies. Similarly, just as the male and female principles exist undeveloped in neuters, their developed forms being the male and female
entities, so both the principles of Śakti and Śiva exist unmanifested in the
Brahman, their manifestations being Umā and Mahāvāra, Lakṣmī and
Nārāyaṇa, Radhā and Kṛṣṇa, Śītā and Rāma, and so on. Besides this,
that blissful Brahman aspect of Śiva and Śakti, wherein They are manifest

¹ See also as to the process of sexual union, chap. ii, of the Mātrkābheda
Tantra, chap. i, Sāktamundatarangiṇī; Prānatoṣṇī, p. 29.
² See Śāradātilaka.
³ The equality is supposed to hold so long as there is not the difference of
one full unit.
and yet unmanifest and are inseparable from each other, and which can be worshipped only as an undifferentiated mass of consciousness and bliss—that aspect is Mahāvidyā, primordial, beginningless, worshipped of Brahmā and other Devas and sought by the three worlds.

We shall possibly, while dealing with the subject of sādhana, be able to present to the scrutiny of Śādhakas a sketch of a part of that aspect wherein bliss has its full play and which is monistic and eternal and above māyā. Here we must understand that Caitanya¹ is nothing but Śakti, although the word itself is neuter in gender. To this end we shall quote a single sūtra from the Tantra Śāstra, in which the all-luminous aspect of Brahmān is established. The Nirvāṇa Tantra ² says:

"In the Satyaloka ³, Mahākāli and Mahānīdra live, embracing one another inseparably. That eternal Śakti, possessing the lustre of the moon, the sun, and fire, taken together and united with the eternal Puruṣa, exists like a grain of gram. (That is to say just as the two halves of a grain of gram are attached to one another, so they too are attached to one another.) As a grain of gram is covered by an external shell, so She is covered by Her own covering of māyā. As the shell of a grain of gram is dark and hard compared with its brilliant and soft valves, so māyā also, discordant with its three guṇas, is dark and hard compared with Śiva-Śakti, full of brilliance and soft with supreme bliss. As the whole, consisting of two halves and a shell, is called gram, so the whole consisting of Śiva-Śakti and māyā, is called Brahma. To an ordinary observer, making his observation from outside the shell, a grain of gram seems to contain only one thing, but he who can see through the shell finds within that grain two halves facing and inseparably attached to one another. Similarly, he who judges Brahma-tattva through māyā finds Brahma to be but one. To the eyes, however, of an adept in such knowledge,⁴ an accomplished Śādhaka, who is aware of the deceptive character of māyā, there are manifested both His aspects of Śiva and Śakti, all full of supreme love. As sparks shoot from a burning fire, so Jīvas, forming parts of Her body, shoot from the limbs of the luminous Devī into infinite millions of Brahmāṇḍas."

The male and female forms, different from one another, are, whether they appear in the aspect of Iśvara or in that of Jīva, but instruments in the dualistic play. They are different only as instruments, but not as agents. The agent is the same for both the instruments, and that is Ātmā or Śakti. Again, as in the bodies of males and females, so in the bodies of neuters also, Ātmā or Śakti is the presiding Devatā. It therefore comes

¹ Consciousness.
² This is not to be confused with the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra.
³ See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
⁴ Tattva.
to this, that the bodies of males, females and neuters are alike seats of the play of Citiṣakti. There is no other alternative. It is an extremely erroneous conclusion that because words ending in the suffix “kti” are feminine, Śakti must always refer to the female body and have no concern with the male body.

But, then, it may be asked, Why does the word Śakti mean a female only? To this question we shall be bound so far as it will be in our power to give a suitable answer in its proper place. Here, we shall say this much alone, that the word Śakti, meaning the female principle, is Yogārūḍha,¹ for, fundamentally, Śakti is the same as Prakṛti, and males and neuters are but changed forms of that Prakṛti. The assumption of the male form by Śakti for the purpose of creation is but an exhibition of play. At the close of the play of samsāra, Mahāśakti will withdraw this form and exist in that which is really Her own. This is the conclusion of those who believe in a perfect Mahā-pralaya.² But the arguments and authorities in favour of this view are very weak.

The Tantra Śāstra, therefore, holds that the puruṣa side ³ is the cause of the bondage consisting of attachment to the samsāra, and that the śakti side is the cause of liberation ⁴ or cessation of attachment to the samsāra. There is no ground for the occurrence of a perfect great Dissolution ⁵ of the flow of worlds. For this reason, eternal are the creation, preservation, and destruction by Her who is eternally blissful. Eternal is Her bondage, and eternal also is Her liberation. In the eternal form of Her who is ever liberation itself, eternal also is Puruṣa as the seed of creation. But in the case of liberation in the form of perfect nirvāṇa, the Puruṣa-śakti exists only to enjoy the play of bliss. Waves of creation no longer play in Her.⁶

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¹ That is, a word which has an etymological as well as a special or conventional meaning, but is used only in the latter sense. Thus, pankajā, which etymologically applies to what is “mud-born,” is used only in respect of a particular thing—viz., the lotus of which it is the synonym.

² A pralaya (dissolution of things) after which there is no creation.

³ Literally, “part” (of Śakti)—that is, the Śakti of creation. Puruṣa is not here used in the Sāmkhya sense, but in that of the male side of creation. According to Hindu ideas it is the male who creates; the mother side is the support—ādhāra only.

⁴ In so far as Śakti represents the supreme motionless Brahmā, and Puruṣa the Dakṣiṇa-śakti its manifestation (see Mahākāla Tantra, Part).

⁵ Mahāpralaya. For karma is eternal, and after pralaya exists in the Brahman in a latent subdued form, which, on the reawakening, becomes the seed of new worlds.

⁶ That is, in liberation (mukti) that aspect of Śakti which is creative ceases to create, and there is then only lilānanda-mukti, the play of the supreme Divine Bliss.
For this reason, keeping that śakti¹ beneath Her as a mere instrument of play, the Mahāśakti, who grants liberation, stands upon it and, lost in the enjoyment of the sweetness of Brahma-bliss, assumes the part of a mad woman, subduing the inactive Puruṣa, or creative śakti,² under Her feet. She of dishevelled hair proclaims the victory of liberation, and, extending Her uplifted hands, gives assurance to Her children, frightened by the dread of existence, with the cry, “Fear not! fear not!” That Puruṣa, the creative śakti, is Mahākāla, and on his breast that Dispeller of the fear of death, that Delighter of the heart, Charmer of the mind of Kāla holds Her Kaivalya-play. It, has, therefore, been said in the Mahākāla Tantra:

“Puruṣa is called right (Dakṣiṇa, because he is the right side of the body), and Śakti is called left (Vāmā, because she is the left side of the body). So long as the right and left, the male and female, remain equally powerful, so long alone does the bondage of samsāra endure. When, by dint of intense sādhana, the left śakti has been awakened, when the left has overpowered Puruṣa, the right Śakti, and lost Herself in gracious joy on His body (that is to say, when both the parts of right and left are filled with Her power), then She (who is bliss unalloyed) grants highest liberation³ to Jīva. For this reason, the Mother, the saviour of the three worlds, is called Dakṣiṇā Kālī. Just as the body of a neuter, which represents the unmanifested state of both the male and female sides, is not produced without a union between a male and a female, so the Brahman aspect does not appear without the presence in it of Śiva and Śakti, the Father and Mother of the Brahmāṇḍa in an unmanifested state.

“As a neuter cannot give birth to children, so the Brahman aspect, which is above the three guṇas, is devoid of the creative, preservative, and destructive activities. Again, in its state with attributes there appear from it Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Sūrya, Gaṇeṣa, Sāvitrī, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Gaurī, and other forms, according to distribution of guṇas, and as the male and female agents for the control of those guṇas. It is from the same aspect of Śakti that the creation, preservation, and destruction of untold millions of Brahmāṇḍas take place.”

It therefore follows that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Sūrya and Gaṇeṣa, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Sāvitrī, Durgā, Rukminī, and whomsoever else, male or female, you may mention, are all aspects of Śakti. Brahmā is the aspect of Śakti in Her play of creation, Viṣṇu is the aspect of Śakti in Her play of preservation, and Maheśvara is the aspect of Śakti in Her play of destruction. Sūrya is the aspect of Śakti in Her

¹ That is, Puruṣa.
² Though the creative agent, He has ceased to create.
³ Mahāmokṣa.
play as light and heat.\(^1\) Gaṅeṣa is the aspect of Śakti in Her play as siddhi,\(^2\) Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvati, Śāvitṛi, Durgā, Sītā, Rukmiṇī and others are the aspects of Śakti in Her play as the Mahāśakti, who is at the root of all Śaktis, and in whom they all rest. If a Śadhaka is a Vaiṣṇava, his knowledge of Viṣṇu-Śakti will remain imperfect so long as he does not understand that that Śakti is not different from Śiva, Durgā, Sūrya, and Gaṅeṣa Śaktis; and if he is a Śākta his knowledge of Śaktitattva will remain imperfect so long as he does not recognize that the Adyāśakti\(^3\) is not different from Viṣṇu, Śiva, Sūrya, and Gaṅeṣa Śaktis. And this is the case whichever be the Śakti a Śadhaka may worship. And so long as knowledge remains thus imperfect, liberation is unattainable.

The Devatā I worship is the Devatā whom the world worships. I do not think of Śiva, Śakti, Sūrya, Gaṅeṣa, Viṣṇu, or whomsoever else you may mention, as nothing to me, and as one whom I cannot worship, for all of them are but different aspects, assumed in play, of Him whom I do worship. All these aspects represent the play which He loves, who is the life of my life and the dearest treasure of my heart. How can I dishonour those aspects, the beloved wealth, and the treasure of sādhana of Him who forms my most beloved treasure? When such perfect love appears with full force, the heart of the Śākta is rent, as it were, into a hundred pieces by the thunderbolt of discriminating knowledge\(^4\) were he to think of Kṛṣṇa as different from Kālī. The Vaiṣṇava, also, is sorely pained to think of Kālī as different from Viṣṇu. No one can be perfectly happy with an imperfect knowledge of the Devatā he worships. The Tantra Śāstra has therefore said, with a deep voice which stirs the community of Śadhakas:

"'O Devī! Nirvāṇa can never be attained without a knowledge of Śakti.' This message is as dear to the heart of the devoted Śadhakas, full of love, as it is painful to the community of Asuras in human form, who are inimical to Devas. It has always been a self-evident truth that words spoken by Devas pain the hearts of Asuras. We have, therefore, nothing to say on the point. Just as Śāktas have imperfect knowledge of Śaktitattva if they think that the term 'Śakti' denotes only such aspects as Kālī, Tārā, and Durgā, which are but fruits of Śaktitattva so Vaiṣṇavas have imperfect knowledge of Viṣṇutattva also if they distinguish Viṣṇu from Śakti, with this difference, however, that the latter consider themselves pandits to boot. But Bhagavān, the ocean of eternal knowledge, and the treasure which devotees worship, has in speaking of His own self, aid in the Tantra Śāstra:

\(^{1}\) Tejas.  
\(^{2}\) Success (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra)  
\(^{3}\) The primordial Śakti.  
\(^{4}\) Bhedañāna.
"‘Śakti, Maheśvara, and Brahman—these three words mean the same thing. The only difference which exists between them is that one is feminine, another is masculine, and another is neuter.

"‘This difference, however, belongs only to the words. In themselves there is, in the highest sense, no difference between them.’"

We fail to understand the notions which those people entertain of Paramēśvara and Paramēśvari who, when they observe marks of masculinity and femininity in the appearance of Devatās of worship, thereupon say that the forms of even Paramēśvara and Paramēśvari differ, in that the one is a male and the other a female principle. If the shape of Iśvara’s body be as fixed and material as that of the body of a Jīva, then of what does his lilā consist? That is called lilā which, though not really true, is done as if it were true in the excitement of the bliss enjoyed by the Self. Just as an actor has really no connection with the parts he plays, so Bhagavān or Bhagavati also has no connection with the forms which, in play, they assume in various ways.

Their connection with the assumption of forms is the same as that which exists between an actor and his acting. Nevertheless, although the assumption of forms is not really true so far as they are concerned, it is perfectly and undoubtedly true so far as a Jīva is concerned. For, to their eyes, the samsāra is as much a play as their own bodies, but so long as this samsāra does not appear to you and me as a play. Their bodies also do not appear to us as such. Secondly, if for the sake of peculiarities of terms, it be necessary to admit that their forms follow those peculiarities, then, like the female and male forms of Śakti and Śiva, or Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa, the form of Brahman becomes neuter owing to the term Brahman being neuter; but in reality the thing denoted by the term Brahman is not neuter, although it is so according to the gender of the terms. Similarly, the things denoted by the terms Śiva and Śakti are not in reality always bound in male and female forms respectively, although they are male and female, according to the gender of the terms.

There is, however, this particularity to be noted here, that as forms for play are impossible in the state of an attributeless neuter, He assumes male and female forms as a being with attributes for the purpose of creating, preserving, and destroying the dualistic world, fulfilling the desire of Śādhakas, and that the sweetness of the play be enhanced. Worship of an attributeless being is impossible. The Tantra therefore says:

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1 Play (see Introduction to this book).
2 Prapātha; literally things formed by the combination of the five elements.
3 Gandharva Tantra, 34th paṭāla.
"The neuter state of monistic existence, which is the result of the union of Šiva and Šakti, is revealed of Itself, without any separate worship thereof. The attributeless aspect, which is the fruit of all sädhanas, and in which, at the conclusion of all sädhanas, the worshipper sinks and loses himself, cannot be attained while sädhana continues. It is attained by the great siddhi known as nirvāṇa."

Whatever form She may assume in Her aspect with attributes is but Her form. That Šakti alone who grants enjoyment, salvation, and devotion, is in all such forms. Now the Sādhaka may, if he so desires, know Her as Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, Šiva, and Rāma, or as Kāli, Tārā, Rādhā, Durgā, Sītā, and Lakṣmī, or please himself by calling Her mother, father, friend, and well-wisher. It does not matter whether the Vaiśṇava considers Her as Viṣṇu in the form of Šakti, or the Sākta considers Her as Šakti in the form of Viṣṇu. When we sink in the ocean of Her substance, which is Cit-šakti,\(^2\) forgetful of all differences of masculinity and femininity appertaining to forms, then Kṛṣṇašakti, Šivašakti, or Kālišakti, and all other Šaktis, will be mingled into one by the waves of that ocean.

That Mahāšakti is everywhere the real giver of liberation, from whomsoever it may come, whether Šiva, Viṣṇu, Durgā, Ganeša, or Śūrya. This condition of unity does not arise without a knowledge of Šakti-tattva.\(^8\) Nirvāṇa liberation is impossible so long as all things do not combine into a state of unity. It is for this reason that the Tantra has said: "O Devi! Nirvāṇa can never be attained without a knowledge of Šakti." Ramaprasada\(^4\) also, whose life was in the Tantra, has sung the same air: "You assume five principal forms, according to differences of worship. But, O Mother! how can you escape from the hands of him who has dissolved the five and made them into one?"

To our great misfortune, our doubts thicken round the very names of the Mother of the world on account of that very sädhana, with which devoted sädhakas sink into the sweetness of Her being\(^5\) and are blessed and liberated from the state of a Jīva. One of Her names, which are suspected to contain imprints of Māyāvāda,\(^6\) is Viṣṇumāyā. It is out of this name that Her title of "great Vaiṣṇavi" has been evolved. It has been said in the Yogini Tantra:\(^7\) "Remembering the time when,

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1 That is, the male and female forms are assumed by the Supreme for sädhanas. When a sädhaṅka has attained siddhi in any of these forms, the neuter form reveals itself before him without any further effort on his part.
2 See post.
3 The truth relating to Šakti.
4 Ramaprasada Sen, the great Bengali poet, Tantrik, and worshipper of Kāli Mā; born 1718, died 1775.
5 Lit.: "sweetness of Tattva."
6 Māyā theory.
7 10th paṭala.
after the destruction of the Asura, Ghora, in the waters of pralaya, Ādyā-śakti gave to Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara the charge of creation, preservation, and destruction respectively, Mahādeva said: ‘O Spouse of Śambhu! that Mahākāli granted us the śakti of will, the śakti of knowledge, and the śakti of action for doing the work of creation, preservation, and destruction. She gave the śakti of will to Brahmā for creation, the śakti of action to Viṣṇu, and the śakti of knowledge, which is the embodiment of all śaktis, to me.’

According to differences in the mutual relation of the guṇas of mâyā which consists of three guṇas, the rajas guṇa gives rise to the śakti of will, the sattva guṇa gives rise to the śakti of action, and the tamas guṇa gives rise to the śakti of knowledge. In Her play, wherein She appears as embodied beings, these three forms of śakti constitute the forms of Brahmān, Vaiṣṇavi, and Maheśvari. In these three forms She is as much Brahmamāyā and Sivamāyā as She is Viṣṇumāyā; but still, in most places, the Śāstra has spoken of Her as Viṣṇumāyā. The reason for this is that from the commencement of creation to time of pralaya, Jivas, in this samsāra are subject to the preservative Śakti. The preservative Śakti rests in Viṣṇu, and the presiding Devī over the act of preservation is Vaiṣṇaviśakti or Viṣṇumāyā. The Devas have therefore said in this hymn to the Devī:

“O Devī! thou art Vaiṣṇaviśakti of infinite power, Thou art Parama (supreme) Māyā, which is the seed of the universe. All this world is deluded by Thee, and Thou, again, when pleased, grantest liberation to Jivas.” Although as Māyā She is Śivamāyā and Brahmamāyā also, the Devas said: “Thou art Vaiṣṇaviśakti, Thou art Parama (supreme) Māyā,” because preservation of the Universe is impossible without the influence of Vaiṣṇavi-Māyā. For this reason they again said: “Thou art the seed of the Universe,” because “all this world is deluded by Thee”—that is to say, without delusion the Universe cannot exist. It is under the power of Viṣṇuśakti that Jiva is overcome by delusion, and for this reason one of the names of Viṣṇu is Janārdana, or He who overcomes Jana.

The world, whilst in the condition of preservation, has not so much concern with the Māyā of Brahmā, by which it was created in the past, or the Māyā of Maheśvara, by which it will be destroyed in the future, as with the Māyā of Viṣṇu, which has operation in the present time. At the time of creation Jivas had no independence in the matter of coming into the world, for the Jivahood of Jivas was created by the force of the will of Him who also created the world by His will. Again, at the time of the great Dissolution, Jivas will have no independence in the matter of leaving the samsāra for the Jivahood of Jivas is withdrawn by Him who

1 Māyā and moha.  
2 An Asura.  
3 Mahāpralaya.
also destroys the world. Neither, therefore, at creation or dissolution have Jivas an opportunity to think or even a right to pray independently. At those periods Jivas are naturally bound to enter into the womb of Prakṛti, and to issue from it even against their will, just as a child is bound to enter into and issue from the womb of its mother. As from the time of conception to that of delivery a mother remains pregnant with child, so from the time of creation to that of dissolution Māyā remains full of the spirit of preservation. It is during this period that She is called Viṣṇumāyā. The Śāstra says: “The child in the womb grows according to the quality of the food which the Mother takes.” Similarly, we, the children in the womb of Prakṛti, will be built or grow according to the things She enjoys in the samṣāra. The best efforts of the Jiva should therefore be directed towards seeing that the things enjoyed by Prakṛti become free from elements of rajas and tamas guṇas, and full of the sattva guṇa. Customs, principles, practices, rules and regulations, sādhanas and bhajanās, mantras and tantrās, all are required for this end.

He who, by satisfying the Prakṛti of the self with sāttvīk food, and being himself nourished by the high quality of that food, is able in due time and with safety to issue from the womb of Māyā; he alone is able, after Her delivery, to see the child-bearing aspect of Mother Mahāmāyā, and will fondly be placed on Her lap. Just as on issuing from the womb a child who has, while living within it, suffered indescribable pains, forgets them all at the sight of the affectionate face of its mother, so, issuing from the womb of Māyā, a great yogī, who has attained siddhi, forgets all the sufferings of the dualistic samsāra at the sight of the refugent liberating beauty of the face of Mother Brahmamāyī, full of love for the universe. When confined in the womb of Māyā, the Sādhaka saw the terrors of the darkness of delusion; but issuing from it he to-day takes shelter in the lap of the same Mother of the Universe.

He now, instead of being in darkness, sinks in the sea of an existence made of light, brilliant with the lustre of a hundred crores of autumnal moons, and beauteous with bliss. Rocked on the lap of the Mother by the waves of his emotion and the ripples of affection, he now plays, and sees that Māyā no longer exists as Māyā, but has become Mother Māyamāyī. For this reason I said that in conformity with the custom of entertaining a pregnant mother in sādha, so all the sādhana and bhajana in

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2 Worship.

4 Kaivalya.

8 See past.

4 The Mother whose substance is māyā.

5 Sādhā, is the entertainment of a mother during the eighth or ninth month of her pregnancy, so that no desire for food may be left unfulfilled.

8 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
the samsāra are but eatables offered to Prakṛti for Her sādha. In preparing for this entertainment it is only necessary to understand that these infinite millions of Brahmāṇḍas receive their conception from the Śakti of Brahmā, or the Śakti who is Brahmā; that the nourishment of the child in the womb comes from Viṣṇuśakti, or the Śakti who is Viṣṇu, and that the delivery is caused by Śivaśakti or the Śakti who is Śiva.

The Śakti in whom the rajas guṇa predominates causes the creation of the world of Jīvas; the Śakti in whom the sattva guṇa predominates causes its preservation; and the Śakti in whom the tamas guṇa predominates causes its dissolution—that is to say, release from the bondage of Māyā. A change in the creation which proceeds from Brahmaśakti is impossible, so that any desire on the part of a Jīva to alter the physical creation by means of worship of Brahmaśakti or Brahmamāyā is futile; but if the worship is intended for any other object, that is a different thing altogether. Every Jīva is, in the present state, subject to Viṣṇuśakti or Viṣṇu-māyā. The question of destroying the rajas guṇa and the tamas guṇa can arise only in the future state when, by means of sādhana and bhajana practised in the present state, the sattva guṇa has been developed. It is only then that one becomes fully competent to worship Śivaśakti, the Destructrix and Dispeller of the woe of samsāra.

Fundamentally, the very tamas guṇa with which, as Avidyā, She creates the samsāra, is again destroyed at the time of the great dissolution by Herself in Her aspect of Śivaśakti, as is eternal knowledge and bliss; but this competence for worship arises only with the perfection of sattva guṇa. All the instructions of Śāstras are meant for the development of the sattva guṇa during the period that Jīva lives in the womb of Avidyā, overpowered by the rajas and tamas guṇas. In explaining māyāttattva to those who have acquired competence for sādhana, the Śāstra has therefore in most places referred to Māyā as Viṣṇumāyā, who exercises direct power in the present state instead of as Brahmamāyā or Śivamāyā, whose work concerns the past and the future respectively. The reason why the Śāstra does this is that the Jīva’s direct knowledge of Māyā must be derived from the present display of Her power in the samsāra.

By Viṣṇumāyā or Viṣṇuśakti is not meant māyā or Śakti subordinate to Viṣṇu. Such Vaiṣṇavas as are ill-disposed towards Śakti will probably refuse to understand this; but we say that whether Vaiṣṇavas understand it or not, Viṣṇu Himself understood, in His battle with Madhu and Kaitabha, whether Śakti is subordinate to Viṣṇu or Viṣṇu is subordinate to Śakti, and made others also understand it. In short, O Vaiṣṇaval the very notion which you possess of the “dual” existence of Śakti and possessor of Śakti, or of māyā and the wielder of māyā, is erroneous. In reality

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1 Mahāpralaya.  
2 Māyā Tattva.
the aspect of Viṣṇu is but an aspect assumed by Her who is Māyā or Śakti.

Again, some communities, proud of their Vaishnavism, are nowadays heard to say that Bhagavati is a great Vaishnava. "To serve as if it were one's own self" (to serve God as one would serve oneself) is the conclusion (idea) of the Vaishnava Sāstra. We have therefore nothing to say to the Vaishnava who holds that Bhagavati is a great Vaishnava, because this notion merely bespeaks his own nature. There is, moreover, this delightful consequence, that while the Mother is considered a Vaishnava the Father is a spiritual brother.1 Blessed be thou, O Vaishnava! Bravo to thy conclusion! Living in the society of men, you alone have realized the beauty of this relationship. If you have such a strong desire to call Mahādeva your spiritual brother in order to create a precedent (which they follow) for your own community, then why not treat everyone equally, from the Mother of Brähmā, Viṣṇu and Mahēśvara to the mother of the smallest insect? Let the Śākta and the Vaishnava unite their voices in singing: "Jīva is Śiva! Śiva is Jīva!" Then, why Mahādeva alone? All Devas, Adhīdevas,2 Upadevas,3 Dānavas,4 Mānavas,5 and all the creatures in the Brahmāṇḍa will appear to be nothing but the children of Jagaddhātrī,6 who brings forth endless millions of worlds.7

There will then exist no other relationship but that of the spirit, so that the three worlds will then be full of spiritual brothers only. Can you tell me, O Vaishnava! when, by the blessings of Vaishnavas and the grace of Viṣṇu, the day will come on which you will realize Śakti, not as Viṣṇumāyā, but as Viṣṇu? Śakti is called Vaishnavi, not because she is possessed by Viṣṇu, but because she is progenitrix of Viṣṇu. Gangā8 is called Bhāgirathī because she was worshipped and brought down by Bhāgiratha. The reason for Her being called after the name of Bhāgiratha is not that She, whom even Brähmā and other Devas are rarely able to worship, is under the protection of Bhāgiratha, but that, urged by the tender desire "to be called the mother of Bhāgiratha," and in order to immortalize in the three worlds the immense glory of Bhāgiratha, that crest-gem of devotees, the Mother of the universe, dweller on the head of Śaṅkara, and dispeller of the sorrows of samsāra, has proclaimed to the three worlds, out of love for Her devotees, the greatness of devotion shown to Her, by the adoption of the name of Bhāgirathī.

1 That is, Śiva the Father must be a Vaishnava if the Devi be Vaishnawi; and as Vaishnava he is a spiritual brother—that is, one of the same sect.
2 Ruling Devas.
3 Subordinate Devas.
4 Demonic spirits.
5 Men.
6 Devī as supporter of the universe.
7 Brahmāṇḍas.
8 The River Ganges.
Similarly, in spite of Her being the progenitrix of Brahmā and other Devas, and Mother of the universe, She has proclaimed Her śaktis of creation, preservation, and destruction by adopting the names of Brahmapī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Maheśvarī. She was born as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara and was, again, Herself their Mother. If you call Her dependent, She is dependent on Herself alone. If you call Her patroness, She patronizes none but Herself. There is, therefore, no possibility of Her being injured by anything which may be said about Her. What, however, we can do is to march along the path to hell. So I say, O Śādhaka, beware! save yourself from all these sinful notions.

Another of the names of the Mother is Brahmamāyī. This, too, gives to the detractors an opportunity to object that She who is Brahman can never be Brahmamāyi. If She is Brahmapī why, then, is She called Brahmamāyī? She might very well be called Brahman. In reply to this objection we shall not, after recitation of the whole of Rāmāyaṇa, proceed to give an account of Siū.¹ It is no wonder that man, whose nature it is to err, will be deluded by Her māya, which sometimes deludes even Brahmā and other Devas ardently devoted to Her. Śādhakas who are inquirers after spiritual knowledge² should, however, know that just as beads are made of gold,³ images are made of earth,⁴ Gangā⁵ is made of water,⁶ and the sun is made of light and heat,⁷ so the substance of the Mother of the world is Brahman.⁸ The word Brahmamāyī has been formed by adding the suffix mayat to the word Brahman in the sense of “Own form”⁹.

What is Her “own form” that is Brahman; or what is Brahman’s “own form” that is She. Even while embodied, Brahman She is, in reality, above all guṇas, and so She is called Brahmamāyī. Her hands, feet, and other limbs, her raiments, ornaments, and conveyances, the members of Her family, etc., are all Brahman’s “own form,” and so She is Brahmamāyī. The meaning of the term Brahmamāyī is not “One who pervades Brahman,”¹⁰ but “One who is Brahman”¹¹. Brahman pervades the universe, but the Ārya Śāstra makes no mention of anything which can pervade Brahman.

From all that we have so far said on the subject of śakti-tattva, Śādhakas have surely come to understand that the śakti to whom ill-disposed Śāktas and Vaiṣṇavas refer is not the same Śakti as forms the subject of the Tantra Śāstra.

¹ That is to say, to repeat which is a useless task.
² Liit: “inquirers of tattva.”
³ Svarṇamāyī.
⁴ Mrṇmayī.
⁵ The River Ganges.
⁶ Jalamāyī.
⁷ Tejomāyī.
⁸ Brahmanamāyī.
⁹ Svarūpā.
¹⁰ Brahmarūpīṇī.
¹¹ Brahmarūpīṇī.
PRINCIPLES OF TANTRA

Rādhā, Laksāni, Sitā, Rukmīni, Sāvitri, Sarasvatī, Gangā, Gaurī, Gaṅgā,1 Śūrya, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Indra, Candra, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Deva, Dānava,2 Gandharva, Kinnara, Yakṣa,3 Rakṣa,4 man, beast, bird, insect, and the endless universe which is full of all such moving and motionless things is Śakti in substance. Again, Rādhā, Laksāni, Sitā, Satī, and other manifestations of Brahmān, are but the Kaivalya play5 of Mahāśakti. In the quotation which we have already made in connection with the destruction of thousand-headed Rāvana, Sādhakas have obtained a notion of Stātattva.6

Here we shall make a few quotations to illustrate the manner in which the Śāstra supports7 the contention of the Vaiṣṇavas that Rādhikā is "Śrīkṛṣṇa's handmaid," and their practice of worshipping Rādhikā with articles of food first offered to Śrīkṛṣṇa. From this play of the waves of śastrīk authority, Sādhakas will form a conception of the vast expanse and grave solemnity of the sea of the nectar of Rādhātattva.8

In the Devī Bhāgavata8 Śrī Nārāyaṇa says to Nārada: "In the region of Goloka10 Rādhikā was first of all worshipped by Kṛṣṇa, the Paramātmā, within the Rāsamaṇḍala" on the full-moon day in the month of Kārttik. Next, under the command of Bhagavān, She was worshipped by the company of herdswomen and cowherds, their boys and girls, the cows, and Surabhi, the queen of the race of cows. Since Her worship by the inhabitants of Goloka, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Mahēśvara, and other Devas, and the Munis inhabiting the city of immortals ever worship and adore Her with devotion, with flowers and incense. On earth She was first worshipped by Suyajīta in the sacred field of Bhāratavarṣa, under the direction of Bhagavān Mahādeva. Subsequently, under the command of Śrīkṛṣṇa, the Paramātmā, the inhabitants of the three worlds began to worship Her."

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1 Rādhā, beloved of Kṛṣṇa; the Devī Laksāni; wife of Rāma; wife of Kṛṣṇa; wife of Brahmā; the Devī Sarasvatī; the River Ganges (considered as Devī); the elephant-headed Devā, son of Śiva.
2 The sun; Śiva; Viṣṇu; Lord of the Devas; the moon as a Deva; the Lord of air; the Lord of waters; Deva; and demonic spirit.
3 Devayonīs of those names (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
4 Demonic beings.
5 That is, the play of unity in diversity. Rādhā, Laksāni, Sitā, and Satī are Mahāśakti, and so one with Her.
6 The subject of Sitā, wife of Rāma.
7 That is, does not support.
8 The subject of Rādhā.
9 Chap. ix.
10 Kṛṣṇa’s heaven (see Viṣṇu Purāṇa, I. iii).
11 The enclosure within which the rāsa-līlā was performed.
In the second Rātra\(^1\) of the Nāradapañcarātra it is said: "Just as Śrīkṛṣṇa, who is Brahman in reality, is above Prakṛti and free from attachment,\(^6\) so Rādhikā, who is also Brahman in reality, is above Prakṛti and free from attachment. Just as, for the sake of work to be done, He at times assumes forms with attributes, so Mahāprakṛti Rādhikā also, for the same purpose, at times assumes the form of gross Prakṛti. In gross form that subtle Prakṛti lives, by the force of yoga, in the life,\(^9\) the tongue, the intellect, and the mind of Śrīkṛṣṇa, the Parameśvara. Nārada! at times She seems to appear in, and disappear from, the world formed of māyā; but in reality She neither takes birth, nor is dependent on the action of any other being or person. Like Bhagavān Hari, Bhagavatī Rādhikā also is eternal and truth in substance. O Muni! the Mahāśakti who presides over the life of Bhagavān Śrīkṛṣṇa appears as Rādhā, and She who presides over His tongue is Sarasvatī Herself. She who presides over His intellect is Durgā, the destroyer of evil, who has now incarnated Herself as the daughter of Himālaya, the Mountain-king, the destroyer of the enemies of the Devas, who, by appearing in the form of the mass of energy\(^4\) of all the Devas, crushed the race of Daityas,\(^8\) and gave back to the Devas the sovereignty of the kingdom of heaven; She it is who holds the three worlds, who appears as hunger, thirst, mercy, sleep, contentment, nourishment, forgiveness, shame, and error, who rules over all Jīvas, and who, in particular, presides as Sāvitrī over the hearts of Brāhmaṇas. It was from the left side of Rādhikā that Mahālakṣmī appeared, She who is the presiding Devatā over the wealth\(^5\) of Iśvara. From a part of that Mahālakṣmī appeared the sea-born\(^7\) Kamalā, who arose from out of the sea of milk what time it was churned. It is She who is the earthly Lakṣmī on earth, and the spouse of Nārāyaṇa who lies upon the sea of milk. The heavenly Lakṣmī also, who presides over the dwellings of Indra and other Devas, appeared from a part of Devī Mahālakṣmī who Herself is the spouse of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. Sāvitrī, who dwells in the Brahma-loka, is the wife of Brahmā. At the command of Bhagavān, Sarasvatī had already divided Herself into two parts. The first part remained as Sarasvatī and the second became Bhāratī.\(^8\) Both were accomplished yoginis by dint of yoga. Of them, Bhāratī is the wife of Brahmā, and Sarasvatī is the spouse of Viṣṇu. Parameśvarī Rādhikā, the mistress of the play of Rāsa,\(^9\) is the presiding Devatā, over the Rāsa-circle, and

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\(^1\) Chap. ii.  
\(^2\) Nirlipta.  
\(^3\) Prāṇa, the vital principle.  
\(^4\) Tejas.  
\(^5\) Titans.  
\(^6\) Aitvarya, that which constitutes Iśvara-hood (see post).  
\(^7\) Sindhubālā, who came out of the sea.  
\(^8\) Sāvitrī.  
\(^9\) See post.
that eternal Brahmasanātani incarnated Herself in full in the region of Brndāvana. Within the Rāsa-circle She was the principal actress of the play of Rāsa, making use of the occasion of the love-play to show Her love to devotees. Bhagavati ate betel chewed by Bhagavān, and Bhagavān ate betel chewed by Bhagavati (in order to show their love for devotees, or to show that both of them were, in fact, the same). In reality both of them have the same body. (In outward vision they appear to possess different bodies, to enhance the sweetness of their play, but in reality no such difference exists.) The difference between them is like the difference between milk and its whiteness, that is to say, just as the substance milk is an aggregate of such constituent qualities as whiteness, liquidity, sweetness, and so forth, so the substance Brahman is an aggregate of existence, consciousness, bliss, and the like. Just as the state of milk cannot be determined if we omit any of its qualities, such as whiteness, liquidity, sweetness, and so forth, so Brahmahood cannot be determined if we omit any of its qualities, such as sakti, possessor of sakti, sakti vibhūti, and the like. Just as substantially no difference exists between the constituent parts of a thing, although, according to the method of linguistic exposition, differences are imagined to exist between them, and different names are assigned to them, so actually no difference exists between Rādhitā and Kṛṣṇa, although they are different in the aspects they assume in play. Brahman is both Rādhitā and Kṛṣṇa. She who is Rādhitā is also Kṛṣṇa, and He who is Kṛṣṇa is also Rādhitā. Those who distinguish between Rādhitā and Kṛṣṇa, who constitute one non-differentiable, non-dualistic supreme Being, will not escape the torments of hell so long as the sun and moon will endure. The heinous bodies of those who make a distinction between them, and, failing to understand the play of Brahman, speak ill of Rādhitā, the supreme Prakṛti, will be boiled in the Kumbhipāka hell so long as Brahmā lives."

Again, in the sixth Chapter it is said: "First utter the name of Rādhitā and next that of Kṛṣṇa or Mādhava. Whoever reads in the opposite way surely commits a sin equal to that of murdering a Brahmaṇa. Rādhitā is the Mother and Śrīkṛṣṇa is the Father of the universe. Although both are the same in substance, yet in the incarnation They take in play, and, according to human custom, the Mother is the object of a hundred times greater glory, adoration, and worship than the father."

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1 The town Brndāvana, in the united Provinces.
2 Manifestation of Sakti (see past).
3 Tattva.
4 Mādhava is one of the names of Kṛṣṇa as destroyer of the demon Madhu.
5 The mother’s name is always placed first.
6 Laukika.
7 See past. The child should regard its mother and father as two visible incarnate Deities (Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. viii, verse 25).
"It is in order to maintain this glory that Śāstra has enjoined men to take the name of Rādhikā first and that of Śrīkṛṣṇa next. It is natural to expect that because the mother is the wife of the father her position will be less glorious than his, according to men’s notions; but here custom is inspired by dharma,¹ and is, consequently, approved by the Śāstra. Not only the custom of men, but even the Śāstra itself says: ‘In glory the mother surpasses the father a thousand times.’ The reason, also, for this has been stated in the Śāstra. It says that: ‘The mother is an object of greater glory than the father because she holds the child in her womb and nourishes it.’ He is the Guru of the world by whom the world is educated and initiated. Prakṛti tests this education and initiation of the world—that is to say, the Guru can teach only what the Jivas² (nature) can accept. Prakṛti, therefore, has the charge of testing the passion or dispassion for education.

"This Prakṛti, the examiner of the world, however, has also to receive education and initiation from mother Mahāprakṛti.³ For ten months and ten days before its appearance in the world of men the child’s Prakṛti is initiated in the mantra which is contained in the mother’s body, food, senses, and mind, and educated therein. It has already been shown that in the proportion of seed and blood the quantity of blood, which is the mother’s portion, is the greater. For this reason the mother’s contribution to the Jiva’s body is larger than the father’s. At the very outset this gives to the mother superiority over the father. Next comes the pregnancy for ten months and ten days. During this period the record of the Jiva’s destiny lies engraved on the foundations of the mother’s body. The child’s body is built and developed according to her thoughts, her doings, and the humours⁴ and blood flowing in her body.

"After this, again, for five years the child drinks the mother’s milk. Taking all these matters together, it appears that the child’s indebtedness to the mother permeates his veins, arteries, bones, marrow, vital airs, body, senses, mind, and, indeed, every molecule and atom from the tip of his toe to the top of his head. His indebtedness to his father is only in respect of the act of procreation. This is the law of nature. The child’s indebtedness to his father for acts done subsequent to procreation, such as performances of the ten samskāras,⁵ education, maintenance, and so forth, is not such as must naturally appertain to the father, for in his absence these acts may be done by any other guardian. For this reason it does not matter very much to the child if the father dies after

¹ A religious spirit.
² Prakṛti.
³ The greater Prakṛti.
⁴ Rāsa.
⁵ Sacraments (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
prorogation; but if the mother dies after conception, not even the united power of the three worlds can supply her place.

"Under the weight of this great and solemn glory the Šastras ordaining household duties have, with heads bowed down, said: 'The mother is a thousand times more glorious and more worshipful than the father.' Such being the decision of even such Šastras as deal principally with domestic duties, it need hardly be said that in the spiritual\(^1\) vision of the Tantra Šāstra, which deals principally with sādhana dharma,\(^3\) there is in this no difference between the worldly mother and the spiritual Mother (or Śaktī). In the chapter on Śaktillā\(^3\) we shall try, as far as it will be in our power, to show how the principle\(^4\) (of the superiority) of human motherhood is applicable to Rādhā, the embodiment of the unattached\(^5\) Brahman, and what the Tantra Šāstra says on the subject. Here we desist, for to do so would be to digress. For the present, the very notion under which Sādhakas know Her as Mother will enable them to understand this much, that the name of Rādhā should be taken first and then that of Kṛṣṇa, and that a reversal of this order is faulty worship in their sādhanas for truth.\(^1\)

"Those who speak ill of Rādhikā either through perversity of intellect caused by unavoidable fate, or through blindness due to ill-feeling towards Vāmācāra,\(^4\) or through ignorance or sin, do not know that Rādhikā is an aspect of Hari's own self, and that an enemy of Rādhā is also an enemy of Hari. In the next world the place of such a man will be in a cauldron of boiling oil in the midst of the Kumbhīpāka hell for the life-time of a hundred Brahmās, and in this world the extinction of his progeny and his own total ruin is inevitable."

"(So long as that detractor of śakti shall not die), he will fall (from his own dharma\(^6\) through unrighteousness),\(^7\) and be deprived of the power to arise on account of malice against Śakti; he will be prostrate on earth and suffer from endless disease and perils at every step. In the Brahmakṣetra,\(^8\) the Puṣkara tīrtha, this (truth) about Rādhā was told by Hari to Brahmā, and subsequently I heard it from Brahmā. Sādhus (who are themselves pure and purify others) constantly worship the lotus-feet of Rādhā, who purifies the three worlds. Bhagavān Śrīkṛṣṇa Himself ever offers arghya\(^8\) with devotion at those worshipful lotus-feet. Besides

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\(^1\) Tattva
\(^2\) Rules as to ritual practice, worship, etc.
\(^3\) The play of Śakti.
\(^4\) Nirākāra. The supreme inactive Brahman, unaffected by, and unattached to, the Brahmāṇḍa (universe).
\(^5\) Vāmācāra is one of the Tāntrik Ācāras (see Introduction to Tantra Šāstra).
\(^6\) Svadharma.
\(^7\) Adharma.
\(^8\) At Puṣkara, in Ajmer, where there is a temple to Brahmā.
\(^9\) An offering of grains of paddy and blades of dūrvā grass to a person honoured and respected, or to an image.
this, (during the play he enjoyed) in the woods and groves of Brundāvana, Bhagavān (possessed of a form sweet with love) painted with devotion (by soft touches of his own finger) the tips of the toes of the lotus-feet of Her (who was all full of love and Brahman incarnate) with the cool and brilliant paint of alakta.”

In the Rādhā Tantra it has been said: “In the great mantra consisting of Rādhikā's thousand names, Śrīkṛṣṇa is the Rāsi, the great Devī who crushed Mahiṣaja is the presiding Devatā and Gāyatrī is the metre. The application of this mantra is for siddhi in Mahāvidyā.”

The Rāsi of a mantra is he who was the first to be initiated and attain siddhi in it. There is nothing to say to those who are worshippers of the yugala form and with a knowledge of monistic truth do not discriminate between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. But even from the dualistic standpoint sādhakas should now understand how Rādhikā stands in relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Again, in the Nārada Pañcarātra it has been said: “Of the great mantra consisting of one thousand names of Rādhikā, by whose grace Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Sovereign Master of the region of Goloka, and has attained the position of supreme Lord of the great mantra, Nārada is the Rāsi, and (owing to its being a different mantra) Rādhikā, who is supreme over the supreme, is the Devatā. Its application is for the fulfilment of the fourfold aim.”

Rādhikā is the handmaid, initiation in whose mantra, and education and accomplishment in whose Tantra, made Bhagavān to become Bhagavān. To worship Her, even the Lord of the universe descended on earth from Goloka and became Her servant. In the hope of kissing Her graceful feet the head of Cintāmaṇi—the thought of whose feet gratifies the world of moving and unmoving things, who is the crest-gem of the four-headed Deva—touched the dust. If, then, you call Her who is such an one Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s handmaid, then whom would you call Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s Īśvarī? I would not of my own accord, say all this. I am obliged to do

1 Red lac paint, with which the soles of the feet of Hindu women are painted.
2 The successful attainment of knowledge of Devī Mahāvidyā.
3 And who reveals it.
4 The form in which Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are combined.
5 That is, even if they make a distinction between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, sādhakas should understand from the above the relation of the one to the other.
6 Chap. v, 5th Rātra.
7 Ādīśvara.
8 From the preceding.
9 Dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
10 One of the names of Kṛṣṇa.
11 Brahmā.
12 Feminine of Īśvara, or Lord.
so in reply to your words. It is for this reason that there is so much discussion about honour and dishonour. My Kṛṣṇa has neither a handmaid nor an Ṣvārī; but when your Kṛṣṇa has necessity for a handmaid, why should he not have necessity for an Ṣvārī as well? The moment you step within the bounds of dualistic knowledge He, in spite of His being Ṣvāra, will have, by your grace, to suffer inevitably as well the state of a servant as that of a master. Or, if in your language, the person served is called handmaid and the person serving is called master, then we have nothing to object to this servitude and lordship. However that may be, O you whose knowledge is of a dualistic kind, take note that it is the nineteenth century of the Kali yuga, and apparently the custom of the age is to call mothers and aunts handmaids!

However that be, it requires now to be seen what we gain or lose, whether or not there exists a relation of master and servant between Bhagavān and Bhagavatī. If it exists, a worshipper has no right to discuss it, nor is there the necessity to do so. If Rādhikā is to be worshipped merely on the ground of Her being Bhagavān’s handmaid, and if, in that worship, Her satisfaction is to be sought, then surely it is necessary to ascertain and arrive at a final conclusion as to whether She is really Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s handmaid or not. But, then, who will judge the matter? If you say that we shall be the judges, and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa themselves will supply the evidence, then, too, it will be extremely difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion. For in the play of love which they enjoyed during their stay at Vṛja, when Rādhikā said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “You are my all,” Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Rādhikā, “I am unable to call You ‘You’. To call You ‘my own’ is not much.”  

1 Putting aside even what Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, which is more than what Rādhikā said, if the two are considered to be of equal positions, then, also, one of them cannot be a servant or handmaid of the other. Now, how can the matter be judged on the evidence of such witnesses? If, therefore, you want to judge the matter by a consideration of acts instead of words, then it is not for you and me to judge and arrive at a final conclusion on the matter. In this effort to appease the anger of Rādhikā, Bhagavān Himself finally decided the question at the feet of Rādhikā.

But if you say that you will call Rādhikā Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s handmaid, and worship Her with food first offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in reliance only on the sentiment expressed by the words, “You are my all,” spoken by Rādhikā to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a temporary moment of service—a ripple, as it were, in

1 The meaning of this is: “You and I are the same,” so that the relationship of the speakers is not fully expressed by the expression “You are my all”.

2 For Kṛṣṇa did not discriminate between Him and Her.

3 Māna—of wife with husband in love matters.
the midst of waves of play in the sea of love—then even Rādhikā cannot be called inferior to Kṛṣṇa. If you can worship Rādhikā with food first offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then I, too, can, in reliance upon the incident in which he appeases Rādhikā’s anger, represent him as hankering after the leavings of Rādhikā’s food and driven off with weeping. The service I speak of is as much one of sentiment as the one you speak of. As your words are sweet, but your acts are deceitful, so I am obliged to make my acts and words similar. In this state of things it is impossible for us even to come together, much less to arrive at any decision.

In sorrow have poets said: “If two persons be both candid, then the love that grows between them remains for ever candid and unshaken. If one of them be candid and another crooked, then love between them endures for a few days only—that is to say, so long as the crookedness of the crooked person does not show itself. And if both of them be crooked, there can be no love between them, much less a permanent love.” O you who speak of distinctions, this crookedness of yours and mine precludes the possibility that love may grow between us. Think but once that They who are referred to in this discussion on the subject of love are both very crooked, with three bends in their bodies, and yet unite to form one person. The devotee has therefore said: “The moon will perish, the sun will perish, the Brahmāṇḍa formed by the spread of the three guṇas will perish, in the great dissolution, but it is the firm conviction of the Harivamśa community that the constant play of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa at Brndāvana will never come to an end.”

So, I say, O Śādhaka, see the threefold play of creation, preservation, and destruction in the thrice-bent and fair bodies of the Father and the Mother of the universe, and forget all distinctions. Call, for once, the Father Mother and the Mother Father, and making the Father and the Mother one, take them to the Sahasrāra. There, in the heart of that full-bloomed and thousand-petalled lotus, shining with the refulgence of the sun and moon, in that seat of the undifferentiated kaivalya-play of Him who is full of light and Her who is full of light, stand with folded hands, and with a disconsolate heart weep, and say: “I know not who you are? Be you Father or Mother or another, tell me whose I am?”

1 Kutila.
2 Trībhanga: a favourite representation of the body with Indian artists is that with three curves, formed by the inclined neck, trunk, and legs.
3 Bhagavān and Bhāgavatī are here called Kutila and trībhanga because of the inscrutability of Their ways.
4 Vaiṣṇava. Harivamśa, or “family of Hari,” is the name of a Paurāṇik work which gives the history of the family of Hari or Kṛṣṇa.
5 The thousand-petalled lotus in the head, above the six cakras (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
6 Abhinna.
7 Kaivalya is mokṣa.
Brother Sādhaka, be you a worshipper of the Father or a worshipper of the Mother, you cannot have a better opportunity for putting both the Father and the Mother to shame than at that time when they become one.

When the Father and the Mother will lower their faces in shame at making themselves known as Father or Mother, know, O Sādhaka, that on that day you will be victorious in this discussion. Whoever has once seen the place of the soft and sweet smile of shame in their silent faces, lowered in shame at the question of the son, for him all doubt as to who is the Father and who is the Mother, or who is great and who is small, has been for ever dispelled. O ye who are intimately associated with the principles of Tantra! O Sādhakas, who form the most beloved wealth of the Mother! if for any of you such a day has ever come or may come in future, then on this or that day kindly remember for once, at least, this poor and destitute son of the Mother who is full of mercy for the poor.

What can I do, O brother? The truth which has to be attained by sādhanā cannot be explained in words. Once call out to Her who is truth itself, and of whom we now speak, and opening the portals of your heart, say: "O Mother, be Thou Rādhā adored by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or Rādhikā adoring Hīm, Thou knoweth Thy own play. O playful Mother, appear once in Thine own real form in the solitary grove of this heart, and in the company of Thy companions stand with three-fold bend, yet making your one with the body of Śyāma. O charmer of the mind of the charmer of love, illumine but once the forest of my heart with the refulgence of Thy world-enchanting beauty, so that I may see Thee with Thy own light, just as one worships the Ganges with Ganges' water.

O beloved of Śyāma, stand forth once with a dark body, so that, O Gaurī all idea of difference between a fair and a dark body may be dispelled from my mind. O Mother, Thou Thyself dost rouse and allay Thine own anger, Thou Thyself dost clasp Thine own feet as Rāi (Rādhikā), Thou Thyself dost inflame Thine own anger, and as Śyāma Thou Thyself dost appease it. Thou art all full of play, and art Brahmā, and so this anger becomes Thee. But, O Mother, we are erring Jīvas, blinded by an intense intoxication. We can be angry, but cannot appease it.

1 The shame (lajā) is caused by their having manifested themselves in the distinctive aspects of Father and Mother.
2 Literally, "wealth bound in the skirt of the dress of the Mother."
3 Tattvamayi.
4 Lilāmayi.
5 Śyāma is a name of Kṛṣṇa, meaning of dark colour.
6 Madanā.
7 The beloved of Śyāma is Rādhā, who is fair-coloured. The word "Gaurī" means "one who is fair". It is also the name of the wife of Śiva, who is in reality the same as Rādhā. The author here prays Rādhā to assume a dark body—that is to say, a body of the colour of Kṛṣṇa—to that his mind may be disabused of all ideas of difference between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.
8 Māna (see ante).
9 Brahmāmayi.
10 Mada.
Being Jivas full of mâyā, we cannot, therefore, understand the meaning of the (appeasing) of the anger of Her who is Brahman.

O Mother, for him who has understood its meaning, both honour and dishonour have for ever disappeared. O Dispeller of the fear of existence, Gladdener of the hearts of devotees, eternally pure Devī; O Mother, Thou art Śakti incarnate, the granter of śakti and liberation. Of Thy mercy grant unto us the śakti to understand the truth concerning ThyselF, so that we may leave this samsāra never to return thereto, after having offered all honour and dishonour at those lotus-feet, so desired of devotees.

O you who speak of distinctions, do not widen the path whereby you go to your downfall by imagining distinctions between Śakti and the possessor of śakti. If you offer to Rādhikā food first offered to Śri Kṛṣṇa, She will not be insulted thereby; for in Her eyes the person of Kṛṣṇa is but a manifestation of Herself in play. But, for yourself, should this insulting idea arise in your mind, there is no escape from hell. Even He in the pride of whose glory you entertain these insulting notions concerning Rādhikā—even He has, in intense devotion to Her who is ever kind to devotees, said, in the Nirvāṇa Tantra:

"Those who make japa of the names of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, placing the name of Kṛṣṇa after that of Rādhā, to him do I undoubtedly grant the lot that is mine. Those who, instructed by gurus in the path of bhāva or of mantra, worship me in this manner—that is to say, those who, knowing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to be inseparable in reality and yet, in order to proclaim the triumph of the love of Her who is all full of love, make japa of the great mantra of the two names, placing the name of Kṛṣṇa after that of Rādhā—they are ever as powerful as Myself.

"That woman, who worships me, a male, in the faith that I am inseparable from Thee, also of a truth acquires power equal to Thine own. Hear, O Rādhikā! To those who (firmly believing that you and I are inseparable) worship the yugala aspect with or without pious devotion, to them I grant the state which is mine, owing to Thy love for me.” That is to say, such is the unthinkable power of the yugala aspect, that, whether one has full devotion or not, it pours an abundant shower of love on one’s heart, were it even the adamantine heart of a great sinner, and makes the tree of Parabrahmataattva, which is love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, blossom, flower, and bear fruit thereon.

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1 Māyāmaya.  
2 Māna (see ante).  
3 Apamāna.  
4 Mūrti.  
5 Sentiment, emotion, love, devotion.  
6 Premamātī.  
7 In which both Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā are combined.  
8 Literally, “heretic” (pāṣaṇḍa).  
9 The tree which symbolizes the Parabrahman.
"O you discriminating Vaiṣṇava! How dare you extend your authority over Viṣṇu, after whose name you are called a Vaiṣṇava, and who is your authority in everything? Being the servant of Viṣṇu’s servant’s servant, what makes you so proud that you insult the Devatā whom Viṣṇu adores? You would not admit the superiority of any over the Devatā you worship. Very well. But ought you, on that account, to divide one thing into two parts, and attribute lordship to one and servitude to another? Why should you call Rādhā Kṛṣṇa’s handmaid instead of Kṛṣṇa’s own self? And even should you do so in the spirit of play, why do you not also call Kṛṣṇa Rādhā’s servant, just as you call Rādhā Kṛṣṇa’s handmaid? Or do you think that Kṛṣṇa’s lordship cannot be maintained without calling Rādhā His handmaid? Is this your idea of Kṛṣṇa’s Brahmahood? He who is the Lord will always be so, whether Rādhā becomes His handmaid or not. O brother, you proceed to establish Kṛṣṇa’s lordship on Rādha’s servitude; you proceed to worship the adored Devatā of Kṛṣṇa with food first offered to Him. But you do not even once desire to understand why you are in such a miserable plight in spite of your worship of Kṛṣṇa? Why are you not saved in spite of the presence of the Lord, the Saviour of the three worlds? To strike with a weapon the left limb of Him whose right limb you worship! Ah, we know not whether, in consequence of such worship, Bhagavān will gratify you by appearing before you, or greet you with His Sudarśana. Friend of the poor! Merciful Deva! Thou alone art the Saviour of the three worlds, Thou art ever the reliever of burdens of the earth.

"Lord, save the community of Śādhakas from these false beliefs. Or, O Lord, it is miserliness shown by your self of your own accord. It is because Thou, O Kṛṣṇa, art unwilling to make the being of Rādha in which Thou hast sunk and lost Thyself the property of all, that Thou, O crest-gem of schemers, hast turned the wheel of the intelligence of Jivas. So I say, O discriminating Vaiṣṇava, if your understanding of the subject is of a dualistic character, then understand this also, that it is doubtful whether even after a hundred crores of births, you will be able to worship Her whose worshipper Kṛṣṇa Himself is."

Amongst those who, by throwing all these thorns upon the spiritual path, consider themselves to be learned, there are some who are even heard to say that sakti can exist only by the support of the possessor of sakti, and therefore ask what is the necessity of worshipping the thing supported instead of the supporter?

Śādhakas have already been given ample evidence to show the nature of this relation of the supporter and the supported, between the possessor:
of śakti and Śakti. What new answer can we now give to the above question? If, however, the matter must be judged from the point of view of the supporter and the supported, then, leaving aside considerations of śakti-tattva, we see that Brahmā is supported by a swan,¹ Viṣṇu is supported by Garuḍa, Mahādeva is supported by a bull, and the Devī is supported by a lion. Should we, then, for this reason ignore Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and Maheśvarī, and worship the swan, Garuḍa, the bull, and the lion, in the belief that as supporters they are the more important of the two? The relation between the possessor of śakti and Śakti is the same as that which exists between the carrier and the person carried. This is the only fit reply to a fit question.

In reality, there are no such two things as Śakti and possessor of śakti. There is no evidence of, nor is there any necessity for, the existence of the two things. Male, female, and neuter, all are Śakti. Body, senses, mind, and Ātmā, all are manifestations of śakti. Citsakti as Ātmā is, like the solar orb, the condensed and massive form of śakti; while body, senses, mind, and other things are, like sun’s rays spreading on all sides, but fluid parts oft hat great massive śakti. Although the sun is in reality energy in substance, yet for common understanding such expressions as “the sun is possessed of energy” and “the sun’s energy” are used. Similarly, although Ātmā is Śakti itself in substance, yet in order that Jīva may the better understand, Śāstra has used such expressions as “Ātmā is possessed of śakti” and “Ātmā’s śakti”. This is the only difference between Śakti and the possessor of śakti. In a spiritual sense, nothing exists as possessor of śakti besides Śakti.

Even the Puruṣa-form,⁶ which you and I, according to our language and understanding, know as the possessor of śakti, is but another or changed form of Prakṛti. Other evidence is unnecessary. Paramesvarā himself, the sole and best Puruṣa in the world,⁸ who presides or dwells in all Puruṣas, has said in the Nirvāṇa Tantra:

“Just as trees grow on the earth and again disappear in it; just as bubbles are formed in water and again disappear in water; just as lightning is formed in clouds and again disappears in them; so at the time of creation Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and other Devas are born of the body of that beginningless and eternal Kālikā, and at the time of dissolution they again disappear in Her. O Devī, for this reason, so long as Jīva does not know the supreme truth⁹ in regard to Her who plays with Mahākāla,¹⁰ his desire for liberation can only give rise to ridicule. From a part only of Kālikā,
the primordial Śakti, arises Brahmā, from a part only arises Janārdana, and from a part only arises Sambhū. O fair-eyed Devī, just as rivers and lakes are unable to traverse a vast sea—that is to say, however strong their currents may be, they all lose their individual existence entering into the vast womb of the sea—so Brahmā and other Devas lose their separate existence on entering into the untraversable and infinite being of Mahākāli. Compared with the vast sea of the being of Kāli, the existence of Brahmā and other Devas is nothing but such little water as is contained in the hollow made by a cow’s hoof. Just as it is impossible for a hollow made by a cow’s hoof to form a notion of the unfathomable depth of a sea, so it is impossible for Brahmā and other Devas to have a knowledge of the nature of Kāli. (For Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara are the presiding Devas of the three periods of creation, preservation, and dissolution; but who can master with his intellect the nature of that Kāli with whose playful glance even Mahākāla, to whom the three periods of time are but three twinkles of His three eyes, appears at one moment and disappears at another?) Neither Brahmā, nor Viṣṇu, nor Maheśvara knows Her fully.”

“They, too, are born at the beginning of creation as Lords of creation, preservation, and destruction, and again disappear in Her at the time of dissolution. For this reason Her Puruṣa appearances can lead only to svarga and other regions. There is none other but Herself who can grant nirvāṇa liberation. The south is the region where Yama, who awards punishment to sinners, presides. Even if a great sinner, trembling with fear of death, utters but once the name of Kāli while passing towards that south, the holder of the rod of punishment becomes frightened by the (tremendous force of the Brahmāṇḍa piercing) name of Brahmaṇ, and flees to all the quarters (forsaking his own place of rule, the southern region). The inhabitants of the three worlds, therefore, sing Her name as ‘Dākṣiṇā Kāli’ (the Dispeller of the fear of the south). Or She is called Dākṣiṇā Kāli, because She is dākṣiṇā or skilful in creating and destroying even Mahākāla, the Purusa, who is above guṇas.”

Vikṛti alone appears and disappears, while Prakṛti is eternally unchanging. Bhagavān, therefore, has again said: “It is only when Prakṛti attains the state of Vikṛti that She sees the three worlds (fashioned by Herself); and again when Vikṛti attains the state of Prakṛti, She does

1 Tattva.  
2 Mūrti.  
3 Loka. Only the Brahmanayi can give liberation (Muktī).  
4 Yama-daśaḍadhara.  
5 Kāli.  
6 Southern. The south is the region of death.  
7 Skilful.  
8 The true nature, as compared with its changing transformations or corruptions” (vikṛti).
not see anything (for, She then exists in the form of Kaivalya")—that is to say, when Vikṛti in the form of the dualistic Brahmanḍa disappears in the womb of Prakṛti, that monistic Prakṛti alone exists in whose womb the Brahmanḍa is contained, and, consequently, nothing remains to be seen but Herself. In another place the Śāstra has clearly said: "Puruṣa is but a Vikṛti of Prakṛti."

In the Śāktamālā Candrikā it is said: "Brahmā is Śakti, Siva is Śakti, Viṣṇu also is Śakti, and Vāsava is Śakti. Śakti is at the root of all the many other Devas. Without Śakti none is able to preserve his individual existence. O Thou who possesseth a high mind, know, therefore, that Śakti is the greatest of all."

In the Brahmanḍa Tantra it is said: "Amongst Vaiṣṇavas some meditate upon that great Śakti as Kṛṣṇa, two-armed and beautiful with a dark complexion, and others as the husband of Lakṣmī, four-armed and tranquil. She whom some Śaivas see as five-headed, naked as space, and holding the trident; and others as four-headed, one-headed, and so on, according to different forms of meditation—that great Devī Prakṛti inhabits the region of Brahma-tejas. Great yogis, by single-minded practice of the yoga of devotion, see that Prakṛti alone behind all things. Just as one single sun is reflected in thousands and thousands of forms in mirrors, so one single Prakṛti is reflected in infinite forms in Her own māyā. Just as in spite of the existence of different upādhis, by which space is known according as it is space in a pot, space in a room, space reflected in water, extensive space, and so on, there is in reality no difference in space; so in spite of the existence of infinite different forms, there is in reality no difference in Her who is infinity itself. That one sole Mahāvidyā fills the universe. The names only are different."

The Kūrma Purāṇa says: "The truth, which is the conclusion of all Brahmanḍins in the Vedas and Vedāntas, is that which yogis see as one all-pervading, subtle, attributeless, motionless, and fixed. That is the supreme state of Mahādevī. What yogis see as endless, unwasting, sole, pure Parabrahman, that is the supreme state of Mahādevī. That eternal existence, higher than the highest, universal, beneficent and faultless, which is in the womb of Prakṛti, that is the highest state of Mahādevī.

1 The state of liberation from all phenomenal existence.
2 Evolved form (vide ante).
3 Śyāma.
4 Indra.
5 Manḍaia.
6 Śaiva.
7 Bhakti.
8 Apparent limiting conditions.
9 Ākāśa.
10 Ghaṭākāśa.
11 Grihākāśa.
12 Jalākāśa.
13 Mahākāśa.
14 Rūpa.
15 Viśvamayi.
16 Those who speak of and worship the Brahman.
17 Tattva.
That which is white, spotless, pure, attributeless and non-dualistic, that which is only a matter for realization by the Ātmā, that is the highest state of Mahādevī."

The Devī's words in the same Purāṇa are: "The supreme aspect of Mine the substance of which is consciousness,1 sole,2 and pure; the immortal state which is free from all upādhis,8 and eternal, that is only attainable by knowledge alone. Those who see the Ātmā as knowledge,4 undoubtedly enter into Me."

In the Devī Āgama it is said: "That Mahāmāyā, who in reality is consciousness and Parabrahman, has assumed various forms out of favour to devotes."

The Yogini Tantra says: "He who exists pervading the viśva (universe) as Deva Viśveśvāra is Himsel Viśveśvarī, the universe-pervading Devī."

"Whatever sākṣī anything possesses, that is Devī Viśveśvarī, and all those things are Deva Viśveśvāra. She into the hollows of whose every hair millions of Brahmanas constantly disappear; She it is who grants the desires of Sādhakas by the assumption of various forms in play (for such is Her kindness)."

In the Navaratneśvara it is said: "That Devī who is absolute existence, absolute consciousness, and absolute bliss, should be thought of as a female, or as a male, or as pure Brahman. In reality, however, She is neither male nor female, nor neuter—(that is to say, she is not bound to any particular form)."

"Still, just as a kalpalātā ⁸ is called by a feminine name, so She, too, is called by a feminine name Śakti—that is to say, one obtains from a kalpalatā anything which he desires, be it the fruit of a creeper (lātā) or that of a tree, and this reveals a divine śakti beyond that of a lātā (creeper) or of a tree. Still, just as a kalpalatā is a lātā (creeper) in form, so She assumes a female form,² in spite of Her being all forms and above all forms." Just as the form of a lātā (creeper) is the real form of a kalpalatā, in spite of its bearing fruits of trees, so the form of Śakti is Her real form in spite of all male appearances,⁸ such as Devas, Dānavas, and so on, which are Her forms ⁸ only. Whether in dualistic or in non-dualistic play, in the form of Brahman or in the form of Jīva, the female is sākṣī, and the male is sākta. Sākṣī is the person worshipped, and Puruṣa is the person worshipping. This is the last step of śādhanā, the highest state of spiritual realization.¹⁰

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1 Cimnaya.
2 Apparent limitations, vide ante.
3 Desire-fulfilling creeper.
4 Mürti.
5 Kevala.
6 Jāana.
7 Śārūpadesāñi.
8 Daiva.
9 Rūpa.
10 Prāpti.
Although male and female are both Her aspects, yet Her śakti is naturally revealed more in the female than in the male form, and this is the cause of the distinction of worshipper and the worshipped; and it is on account of this greater manifestation that females are called "śakti". From this one must not suppose that śakti is less present in such appearances as Śiva, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Ganeśa, and so on. For although these appearances are actually male, they are not bound to the male form. They are merely formed in the play of Her who is consciousness in manifesting consciousness. If a Sādhaka who is a worshipper of the form of Kṛṣṇa desires to see Him as Kāli, then Bhagavān, the fulfiller of the desires of devotees, is bound to appear before him in that form.

Rādhikā Herself has, by pretending to be afraid of Ayāna, given evidence of this perfect Śakti of Bhagavān. It is with reference to this force of perfect Śakti in the female form that Mahēśvarī Herself has said, in the Durgāgītā of the Munḍamālā Tantra: "It is I who am Rādhikā in Goloṅka, Kamalā in Vaikuṇṭha, and Sāvitri and Sarasvatī, the presiding Devī of speech in Brahmaloka. It is I who am Pārvatī in Kailāsa, Jānakī in Mithilā, Rukmini in Dvārkā, and Draupadi in Hastināpura. I am Sandhyā and Gāyatrī, the Mother of Vedas, the objects of adoration to all the twice-born people. Among Yogas I am Puṣā, among flowers I am black Aparājitā, among leaves I am the bael-leaf, among pīthas I am the Yonipītha. I am Mahāvidyā formed of Hari and Hara, and I am also the worshipped of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. O Lord, O Śaṅkara, it is only by my special favour that Jivas can know me (what more need I say, O my husband!); wherever there is Śakti (a female) there I am. O Mahādeva, know for certain that this is the manner in which I am best contemplated. Whoever forsakes this path of Śakti and proceeds along another path in search of Me throws away the jewel which is in the palm of his hand, and runs after a heap of ashes."
This is the command of Śāstra. If, after this, any of you wish to solve the matter by a thorough understanding in the light of science or philosophy, in that case also it must be admitted that there is no Śakti or possessor of Śakti other than the Śakti of Ātmā, by which body, senses, mind, and life are guided. If everything is performed by Śakti, then why wait for a possessor of Śakti? If you ask by whose support this Śakti exists, then do you yourself tell me by whose support the possessor of Śakti exists. If the Brahmaśakti who supports the Brahmāṇḍa has to wait for another’s support, then this Brahmāṇḍa must go to perdition. Who is the container of the contained Śakti? By whose energy does fire burn? By whose speed does wind blow? Such questions do not bespeak a natural state of the mind. However that may be, it is because Puruṣa is enabled by the support of Śakti to display Himself that Śāstra has designated him as Śaktimāṇ (the possessor of Śakti). The Brahmāṇḍa play of Brahmanayi manifests the same principles. For this reason, in the creation, preservation, and destruction of the dualistic material world, the Puruṣa aspects of Śakti are Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, and Her Prakṛti aspects are Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavi, and Maheśvari. In the Gāyatrī mantra also it is these two Puruṣas and Prakṛti aspects which have to be worshipped at the commencement in prāṇāyāma. Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara are the Puruṣas, and at the end, in the Gāyatrī dhyāna, Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavi, and Maheśvari are the Prakṛtis. The Gāyatrī is merely a Sūtra (aphorism), and the Sandhyā-prayers are its vṛtti (exposition) or Bhāṣya (commentary). In the Gāyatrī mantra five forms of Brahman’s self have been specified—namely, pervader of the universe, creator of the world, object of worship, playful Deva, and instigator of Jiva’s intelligence. Of these five, the epithet “pervader of the universe” denotes the Self-aspect, and comes first. Next follows the introduction of the dualistic world. The world cannot be created in the attributeless state, and without fully bringing into play the three guṇas. By whom will He be worshipped if no worshipper exists? Play is impossible if no desire
exists. Lastly, why should He direct Jiva’s intelligence if He has not
taken upon Himself the lordship of the Brahmāṇḍa? Intelligent Brahmāṇḍas
will now understand from the Gāyatrī mantra itself whether the Devatā,
who forms its subject,1 is attributeless Brahman or with attribute. Brahman,
whom the Gāyatrī seeks to establish, is neither attributeless nor with
attribute—that is to say, It is both attributeless and with attribute. A
Sādhaka, when he has attained siddhi in the sādhana of Brahman with
attribute will, in natural course, lose himself in the attributeless Self.2
He need not before this time shut his eyes and see darkness for three ages.3
By Brahman with attribute you and I may understand a small Brahman.
But in the eyes of the Sāstra, Brahman is neither small nor great, as you
think.

As an aquatic animal must pass through the rivers if it wishes to
journey to the sea, so a Jiva must pass through the dualistic world if he
wishes to make his way to the Brahman. Śāstra has, therefore, said
that to reach mahānirvāṇa, which is His attributeless aspect, one must
proceed by the aid of the support of His forms 4 with attributes. By the
term “attributeless” one is not to understand that Brahman has no
attribute,5 but that, although with attributes,6 He is not attached 7 to
them. The Sea is not waterless. But as, notwithstanding its fullness of
water, it is the Lord or presiding Devatā over waters, so Brahman, with
attribute or attributeless, is, notwithstanding such attributes, Lord or
presiding Devatā over attributes. Every attribute bears eternal evidence
of the infinite number of attributes of Her in Whom are all attributes.8

To say, therefore, that She is attributeless is only to show one’s ignor-
ance. The manifestations of Śakti in the forms 9 of Devas, Dānavas, and men,
signify nothing but the spread 10 of attributes belonging to Her who holds
the three gunās. Attachment, inclination, permanence, peace, self-control,
patience, error, enjoyment, liberation, devotion, and the like are all nothing
but Śakti. Thanks, then, to the tongue of him who says that She is
unconscious, She in whose substance hearing, thinking, going, seeing, and
other acts of consciousness exist. Whether a person who asks if he has
got a tongue has really got it or not, will be understood by others if not by
himself. But he, too, ought to understand this much, that if he has not
got a tongue, with whose help, then, does he ask: “Have I got a tongue?”

Similarly, an advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious,11 ought
at least to ask himself under whose influence earthly Jivas become
conscious? If Śakti be not really consciousness, by whose grace do I possess

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1 Pratipāda.
2 Svarūpa.
3 That is, he has not got to wait, but the result follows immediately.
4 Mūrti.
5 Guṇa.
6 Guṇamaya.
7 Lipta.
8 Guṇamayī.
9 Mūrti.
10 Vistāra.
11 Jāda.
the power of asking whether Śakti is conscious or unconscious? I know
not what severe punishment for terrible crimes committed in previous
births it is which smites a man so senseless as to cause him to make so
delirious a statement as that “Śakti is unconscious.” He is saying that
of a Śakti the beams of the moon of whose consciousness are powerfully
manifested in every vein, every artery, and in every atom of a Jīva’s body.
Śāstra has said: “O Devi, without a knowledge of Śakti nirvāṇa cannot
be attained.” Do you think, O Jīva! that you will gain the knowledge of
Śaktitattva which leads directly to nirvāṇa liberation, merely by virtue of
your being a great polemist, and without the possession of a wealth of
sādhana stored by in many previous births?

Are you to possess the wealth which is worshipped by Brahmā and
other Devas—the treasure which lies eternally hidden in the storehouse of
Sadānanda’s heart? Hari, Hari, Hari! You and I want to obtain Her by
the force of intelligence, but we fail to realize that we have not the power
to understand anything beyond what She, who is the intelligence of even
intelligence, has, with proper judgment, given us the competence to under-
stand. Not to speak of anyone else, even Śaṅkarācārya himself, O
Śādhaka, played at this sport.

When Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya, upholder of the māyā doctrine,
preacher of the Vedānta philosophy, and crest-gem of philosophers, arrived
at Kāśi after having proved himself a conqueror in every quarter; when
followers of other systems of philosophy, wounded all over by the powerful
arrows of his arguments, had been dispersed and scattered, he, by some
play of the Mother of the world which we know not of, commenced, to
the immense joy of the Śaiva community, to hurl relentless thunderbolts
on the heart of the Śākta community. For he proceeded to establish that
“nothing exists as Śakti” besides Śiva. Śāktas thus sorely oppressed by
him, though defeated outwardly by arguments, were undefeated in inner
reasoning. They were, however, intensely grieved to see such scepticism
proclaimed against the Devatā whom they worshipped. Who but She
who dwells in all hearts can realize the intensity of such grief in the hearts
of Śādhakas? Śaṅkarācārya, however, could not understand this even
then; for his ideas did not go beyond the notion that “Kāśi is Śiva.” It was even then unknown to him that there was also a Mistress
of Kāśi. The throne of Her who is Śakti in reality, was therefore moved
to appease the pangs of the hearts of Śādhakas, and to lift the curtain of
error which had fallen upon Śaṅkarācārya, the incarnation of all
devotion. 

1 Nāstikavāda.  
2 Adhuna.  
3 Kāśi.  
4 The city of Benares.  
5 Bhaktāvatāra.
One day, therefore, Śaṅkarācārya, after an untiring discussion lasting till midday, lay with a wearied body on the Manikarnikā ghāt, enjoying in his mind his triumph in having disproved the Śakti doctrine. He then saw a girl of serene appearance slowly approaching the ghāt, carrying a small pitcher on her lap. Śaṅkarācārya was lying with his head towards the south and feet towards the north, in such a way as to completely block the path. On coming near him, the girl very meekly said: “Bhagavān, please raise your feet so that I may fill my pitcher with water and go away.” Śaṅkarācārya said: “Mother, you may step over me. There will be no blame in your doing so.” The girl replied: “How can that be? You are a Brāhmaṇa. How can I step over you?” Śaṅkarācārya, proud of his knowledge, said: “Mother, you are an ignorant female, and in that a mere girl. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣattriya, Vaiśya, Śūdra, female, male—all such differences merely arise from our ignorance. In the eyes of the wise everything is, in a spiritual sense, in substance, Brahmān. You may pass over me, and will commit no sin thereby.” The girl looked greatly grieved, and said: “Lord, you yourself have said that I am an ignorant female, and have no competence for such spiritual knowledge. I can by no means step over a Brāhmaṇa. Be good enough to raise your feet so that I may pass.” Śaṅkarācārya was displeased, and said: “Mother, I have repeatedly told you what to do, and yet you will not hear me? My body is extremely tired, and, moreover, suddenly I feel, I know not why, as if I had not the sakti (strength) even to raise my feet.” The girl, who appeared to be somewhat frightened, said: “Lord, pardon me. Had I but known that you had not the sakti to do so, I would never have asked you to raise your feet. I am one who is not fit to understand your spiritual knowledge, and have, in consequence, disturbed you repeatedly through my great fear at having to step over a Brāhmaṇa. Had you, instead of speaking of spiritual knowledge, told me, at the beginning, plainly that ‘you had not the sakti to move,’ I would myself have raised your feet and gone down to the water. However that may be, if you will now let me, I shall myself raise your feet.” Śaṅkarācārya was greatly abashed at these words of the girl, and said: “You may do what you like.” The girl then raised his feet with her own hands and put them aside, and then went down to the water, filled the pitcher, and ascended the steps. Śaṅkarācārya, who was lying prostrate with fatigue, called to the girl, and said: “Mother, I have been long thirsty, give me a little water.” The girl smiled, and asked: “Why? You are lying on the water-side. How is it, then, that you suffer from thirst?” Śaṅkarācārya replied: “How many times more need I tell

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1 Śaktivāda.  
2 Ajñāna.  
3 Steps leading down to the river.  
4 Tattva-jñāna.
you that I have not the sakti to rise?" The girl then rolled her eye,¹ and making the banks of the Ganges resound with Her solemn voice, said:

"Śaṅkara, is it not you who ignore Śakti?" Wounded by the echo of that heart-penetrating solemn sound, Śaṅkarācārya, who had been like a sleeping child startled by lightning, shut his eyes for a moment; and then, as he fearfully opened them, he saw that in the angry eyes of the girl waves of unbearable light, such as might proceed from hundreds of suns and moons, were playing. Instantly, as he cried "Mother!" and with outstretched arms rushed to clasp Her feet, the play of that playful Devi closed. The great light of Her who is Light itself,² which had shown itself in the form of a girl, disappeared. None but a kindred sufferer can understand the darkness into which Śaṅkarācārya sank upon the disappearance of that light. The summit of pride of Brahmacānā ³ to which he had risen was shattered into pieces by a single glance of the daughter of the King of Mountains,⁴ as the summit of a mountain is shattered by a thunderbolt. Then, like a blind man who has fallen, like a child which has lost its mother, he wept loudly, and crying, "O my Mother, where have you gone?" ran with breathless speed towards the temple of Annapūrṇā. Now the mother's son belongs to the Mother, and goes to the Mother's temple crying, "Mother!" Although there was nothing strange in this, yet the sight of such an unprecedented change in Śaṅkarācārya, the sceptic about Śakti, charmed the Śaktas with the greatness of the Mother. The temple-yard was filled with their cry: "Victory to the Mother of the world." Surrounded on all sides by the assembly of Śaktā devotees, Śaṅkarācārya came to the door of the temple of the Rājarājeśvari ⁵ of the three worlds, the Queen ⁶ of the Lord ⁷ of Kāśī, and, trembling with fear at having committed so grave an offence, placed his head on the shrine of the feet touched by the heads of Suras and Asuras, of Ādyā Śakti, the Mother of the world. Then, weeping, he said: "O Mother, Śiva is able to maintain His Lordship only if He is united with Śakti; otherwise (if He is separated from Śakti) He is unable not merely to maintain His Lordship, but even (to maintain His own existence) to move His eyes. Explained in another way: According to Tantra, Śakti is denoted by the letter 'i'.⁸ Śiva is Śiva so long only as He is joined with Śakti—that is, with 'i'. The instant He is separated from Śakti—that is, from 'i'—He ceases to be Śiva, and becomes a motionless Śava [corpse]. Thou art, therefore [Ādyā Śakti] an object of worship to even Hari, Hara, ¹ In surprise and resentment.
² Jyotirmayī. ³ Knowledge of Brahman.
⁴ The Devī, who had thus appeared to the philosopher.
⁵ Queen of Queens. ⁶ Adhīśvari. ⁷ Isvara.
⁸ Called Vāṁkṣi or Vāmanendra (left eye), also Rāti.
Viriṇci, and others who are themselves worshipped by the world. O
Mother, how am I, who have done no act of religious merit, able to bow
my head to, or hymn the feet [the lotus-feet, difficult of attainment by
the three worlds, at which Brahmā and other Devas lay their heads]—
that is to say, unless Thou thyself reveal it, who has the power to know the
Sakti-tattva, which is in reality Thyself? Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara,
who know but a part only of Thy greatness, have sought shelter at Thy
feet. That tattva is not revealed to any who have not a store of religious
merits acquired by Śādhaṇa in many a previous birth. It is not within
the power of Jīvas to know the nature of Tārā, who is beyond the reach
of mind and speech. It is therefore that a Jīva fails to know Thee, O
Mother, even though he lies on Thy lap. O Mother, such is my state
to-day. Out of fear of the offence I have committed, I have not the
courage either to make hymn or to bow to Thee."

In this manner Śaṅkaracārya made hymn to the Mother of the
world by one hundred and three verses, in which he described Her appear-
ance, qualities, and greatness. In the conclusion he said: "To make
hymn to Thee with words uttered by Thy grace is like the waving of
lights before the sun in his worship, or the preparation of Arghya for
the moon with the particles of water secreted by a moon-gem, or the
offering of libations of its own water to the sea."

Thus gratified, Śaṅkaracārya made provision so that none among
the descendants of his disciples might ever be deprived of the wealth of
the Śādhaṇa of Śakti, or fall from Tāntrik initiation, notwithstanding
that they were Sannyāsins in the Vādik cult. For this reason we see
the Yantra of Śri established wherever there are Mathas, temples, and
the like, found amongst such Daṇḍis as are followers of Śaṅkaracārya.
This fact people daily see even at the present time, except that it is in
some places openly displayed, and in some places kept secret as Śādhaṇakas,
who know the secret, are fully aware.

However that may be, we have something to say about the spiritual
error of Bhagavān Śaṅkaracārya, an incarnation of Śaṅkara, in the
incident described above. Bhagavān Śaṅkaracārya was an incarnation
of Śiva, who is Śakti Herself. It is extremely astonishing that He who
has in His original form laid His breast under the feet of Mahāśakti, and

1 Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahmā.
2 That is, the tattva of Tārā, one of the Mahāvidyās (see Introduction to
Tāntra Śāstra).
3 Ārati, or the waving of lights in worship before an image.
4 An offering made to show respect to a person on meeting him, or to a
Deva.
5 Chandrakānta ārāṇi.
6 The Devī.
7 Monastic establishments.
8 A class of high Sannyāsins.
sunk in Brahma-bliss by resigning Himself to the Brahma-form of Brahmamayi, should, in His incarnate form, commit such an error in respect of Śakti-tattva. We are therefore led to think that it was in order to shatter the pride of knowledge, consisting of eternal ignorance, which filled the followers of the Vedāntik system of philosophy, who were advocates of the Māyā doctrine,1 deluded by the Māyā of Mahāmāyā, that he first ignored the existence of Her who is perfect and eternal Brahman, and then proclaimed the greatness of the Mother of the world by holding, through Her grace, the ever-triumphant banner of the Tantra Sāstra in his own hand. Otherwise, it is not to be believed that the author of the hymn of which we have quoted the beginning and the end, and which bespeaks a deep and impressive knowledge of the entire Tantra Sāstra, was a disbeliever in Śakti, or did not know or worship Her.

Gaura Candra,² the full-moon of the Sea of Gaura,³ descending upon Navadvīpa,⁴ also belonged to a branch of Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya's followers. His Guru who initiated him in asceticism,⁵ was Śvāmi Keśava Bhārata, a disciple in the line of the disciples of the Śaṅkara community. Intelligent Sādhakas will, therefore, easily understand in what system Gaura Candra was initiated, and according to which he was accustomed to worship. Still, we shall try to deal with this subject in its proper place, so far as it will lie in our power.

Sādhaka, whom shall I recognize as a greater philosopher than Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya, who played his part in the above-mentioned sport? Where is the advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious,⁶ who is himself thereby lowered to the state of some unconscious thing, whose words I shall respect? If Śaṅkarācārya, an incarnation of Him who possesses all Śaktis, lost the power (śakti) of raising his feet because he said, “There is no Śakti,” who are you and I that we should raise our heads to say, “There is no Śakti”?⁷

He is very deeply mistaken who thinks that he can understand the Śakti-tattva by means of philosophical arguments, discussions, and reasonings. If She were a treasure to be acquired by arguments, discussions, and reasonings, for whose sake, then, are sādhana and bhajana?⁸ required? Śaṅkarācārya did not know Her by means of philosophy (darsana). He knew Her in consequence of seeing Her (darsana).⁹ He was not a blind philosopher, like the pandits we meet nowadays. His spiritual

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1 The Māyāvāda, which speaks of Māyā as Avidyā only, and not (ignoring the true nature of Śakti) as both Vidyā and Avidyā.
2 The Vaiṣṇavite Saint Caitanya.
3 The Vaiṣṇavite Saint Caitanya.
4 The town of Nadia, where Caitanya was born.
5 Śannyāsa.
6 Jaḍa.
7 Worship.
8 A play on the word “darsana.”
eye was painted and made brilliant by the collyrium paint of the light of Her who is ever stainless. The Mother of the world showed Herself to him, and that sight (darśana) made him (one who sees or) a philosopher (dārśanik). But we unfortunate Jivas of the Kali age are becoming blind in the name of philosophy (darśana). This is our ill-fortune.

Is he not the greatest of sceptics who finds it in him to say that Śakti "does not exist"—the Śakti whose existence has given to Bhagavān the name of "possessor of all Śaktis"? What can be a greater folly than that you, O Jiva, should proceed to discuss the existence or non-existence of the Śakti, whose greatness is preached by Bhagavān; the Śakti whose greatness is such that Bhagavān Himself has, in order that it may be proclaimed, ordained that the name of Śakti should be uttered first, and then that of the possessor of Śakti, declaring that he who shall fail to utter the names as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, Umā-Mahiśāvara, Gaurī-Śaṅkara, and Śītā-Rāma is guilty of a sin as great as that of murdering a Brāhmaṇa. In the uncrossable ocean of Her existence a Brahmāṇḍa-cauldron is less even than a bubble of water.

Is it the Mother's fault or the son's ill-fortune that living in that bubble and even sinking in that ocean, you and I do not see Her; that sitting in the Mother's lap, nourished by the Mother's milk, and tended by the soft fingers of the Mother's hand, the son, born blind, does not see Her? Who does not take birth in his Mother's womb? But for that reason everyone does not have the good fortune of seeing his mother. The graceful and resplendent beauty of the three eyes of the three-eyed Devī are reflected in the mirror of the eye of him only whose eye of knowledge has been opened by Her mercy, and has been smeared by his guru's kindness with the collyrium paint of love. Śaṅkarācārya has said: "What power has Jiva to see that beauty of Thine, which is visible only to Parama-Siva?"

So I say, O brother Śādhaka, do not forget the Mother's authority and power because you have not yourself got the power to see Her. And you, community of false devotees, who see a difference between Śakti and possessor of Śakti, who are partial on the Father's side and inimical

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1 Añjana used to give brilliance to the eyes.
2 Nirañjana.
3 A play on the word darśana. Philosophy is so called, as it is supposed to give sight; but is here the cause of blindness.
4 Literally, the great-grandfather of sceptics.
5 That is, the names of the Śaktis are placed first, and those of the Devas second.
6 The universe, which is shaped like a cauldron, is but as a bubble in the illimitless ocean of Her being.
7 Including the central eye of wisdom.
to the Mother's side, to you, too, I say, whichever form a Jiva may worship, be it the form of a male or that of a female, the door of liberation is free to him.

He who worships the Father has not to wait to worship the Mother before he can secure liberation; but know it for certain that not even the Father's father has the power to liberate him who worships the Father in a spirit of antagonism to the Mother. Śumbha, Nīśumbha, Jambha, Mahiṣāsura, and many others, worshipped the Father in this spirit. But I know not how vast is the mercy of Her who is full of mercy. Enmity cannot touch Her in the least, so that the Devi with dishevelled hair, whom immortals worship, liberated them from the bonds of existence even when in war with them. Nevertheless, by placing Himself in the form of a corpse under the Mother's feet, the Father showed to the Daityas that the garland of pearls of liberation lies ever set and ever stored under the feet of the Devi with dishevelled hair. To put on that garland one must place one's heart under those feet and lose one's self. It is with the view of this truth that thoughtful devotees of subtle insight have said: “Everyone says ‘Father, Father! ’ no one says ‘Mother!’ But in the Father court the final decision is that which is the Mother’s command.”

So I say: “O you who discriminate between the Father and the Mother, human birth is difficult of attainment. Open, then, the door of your heart while there is yet time, and with tears in your eyes say for once.

“A bad son may sometimes be born
But a bad mother never.”

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1 Daityas or demonic beings so named (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra and Anvāt).

2 Tattva.

3 Durbar or court held by Rājas etc.

4 Kuputro jayeta kvachedapi kumātā nabhavati. This is a quotation from Śaṅkarācārya’s hymn “Devaparādhbhasamāpana stotra,” translated in A. and E. Avalon’s “Hymns to the Goddess.”