TANTRA TATTVA

PART II
PREFACE

This second part of Tantratattva, the translation of which is primarily the work of Sj. Jñanendralal Majumdar, is the last. In the Preface to the First Part, I spoke of the preparation of a third section, dealing with the philosophical bases of Tantra. I greatly, however, regret to announce the unexpected death of Pandit Shiva Chandra about the middle of this year. This particular project therefore unfortunately falls to the ground, and the work is limited to the dimensions in which it was first issued some twenty-two years ago. The philosophical aspect of the Tantra will, however, be found touched upon in the Introduction from the pen of Sj. Barada Kanta Majumdar which follows, and I have myself further set out my own views on this part of the subject in my forthcoming work “The Six Centres and the Kundalini Power.”¹ The work here translated is, as already stated, that of an Indian mind unaffected by Western thought. On the other hand, a knowledge of the latter gives a special value to the Introduction which precedes it. Apart from its intrinsic merits, it has such value as being the record of the views of an English-educated Hindu, who finds in the conclusions of recent Western science a corroboration of his ancient Eastern beliefs. Its author is now an old man, to whom the Tantra has been the subject of study for many years. He yet modestly says (see Past): “I have attempted to give the reader the result of a general survey of the philosophy upon which Tantrik Sadhana, or self-culture, is based. But in so recondite and unfamiliar a subject, when the correctness of every individual interpretation may be called in question, the reader is requested to go himself to the source, and there, with faith and devotion, and under the guidance of a Guru, drink of its waters.”

So far as I have examined the matter, I find myself to be in general agreement with his statements as to what constitutes the teaching of the Tantra on the matters dealt with. This agreement does not, however, necessarily extend to every statement or to all matters of detail. Some of these are open to discussion, as he admits. I should, for instance, myself dispense with the “magnetic current” to which the Introduction refers with reference to the worship of images, and would deal with the matter as one of purely transformed consciousness in the worshipper himself.

Some things also are from the limited character of the Introduction unsaid.

As the reader will see for himself, Sj. B. K. Majumdar treats his subject from a religious standpoint. There are, in fact, two lines of work in the Tantra—namely, religion and magic. It is with the former that the author of this book and of the Introduction which follows deals. There are to be found described in the Tantra practices which have nothing to do with religion in its proper sense, and are indeed opposed to it. Such are deemed "obstacles" by all those who are desirous of liberation. Thus what is called Nāyikā Sādhana, or the invocation of female spirits, is alleged in the Tāntric works to have the effect there described. But nevertheless the same Scriptures assert that these and other practices exist "for delusion." So the Śāktānanda Tarangini says: "Avidyā binds the Sādhaka with Karma, and destroys knowledge. Therefore it is that Vidyā should be worshipped, but Avidyā never." But why, it may be then asked, are such practices to be found in the Tantra at all, if it be admitted that they destroy and delude? This is a characteristically modern question. A complete answer to it would, however, on account of its length, be out of place. It is sufficient here to say that the Tantras are an encyclopedia of all the sciences on all the planes, though the worker on the higher path is also taught not to venture below. A statement in a work on "Toxicology" that such and such substances will, if compounded, produce a deadly poison is a description of a simple fact, and not an invitation to compass thereby the death of a neighbour who stands in our way. A correct recipe may have been given, but he who so employs it is likely to incur the extreme punishment. In the same way there are spiritual executions. I raise the question to distinguish that aspect of the Tantra of which the author of the Introduction and myself speak from practices with which we are not here concerned.

The Introduction also limits itself to a short review of the contents of the Tantra in the sense above described. Notwithstanding the present fashion in English-educated India, Sj. B. K. Majumdar has not essayed historical speculation. Whilst every form of knowledge has its use, the Indian mind rightly apprizes as of the highest value the world of ideas, deeming the question of their "historical" origins and development to be, as it in fact is, of much inferior importance. To the Western, and in particular the English Sanskritist the position, is in general reversed. For, from the point of view he not uncommonly adopts, Indian civilization has little, if any, intrinsic value of its own; the bulk of its content—religious, philosophical, scientific, and artistic—being demoted where it was not in its inception altogether absurd. In such a case, the only issue of importance is the question: When, where, and whence did these various "errors" and "absurdities" arise, and how were they developed and propagated?
Yet they are not altogether niggardly of compensation even to such an inquirer, for material which is itself without value may yet be so put together as to make very good history. I do not myself share these views, since I find that many Indian concepts conform to the results of the most recent scientific and psychological research and metaphysical speculation, not to speak of other matters which demand, and in fact obtain, a different kind of verification. The historical aspect of the question is not, however, to be neglected, and I therefore avail myself of this opportunity of adding some observations to those I have already made in the first volume, and which have been suggested to me by criticisms received since its publication.

When it is asked what is the doctrine of the Śāstra of which this work treats, it is necessary to clearly understand what is meant by “the Tantra”. It is sometimes held that “the Tantra” is something altogether different from and wholly unconnected with ordinary prevalent “Hinduism,” to use a convenient, though in itself vague, term. According to this view, the doctrines and practice of “the Tantra” are really foreign to ordinary Indian thought. Another and less extreme view agrees with the last mentioned in so far as it holds that there is in “the Tantra” a nucleus of doctrine and practice which is specially “Tāntrik” in the sense that it is different from general Indian doctrine and practice and the particular teachings and practices of all others of its various sects. It is then suggested that around this nucleus has accumulated a body of doctrine and practice which the Tantra shares in common with other Śāstras. In this view the supposed “original Tantra” has borrowed doctrine and practice both from general Hinduism and its particular division of worshippers, and has incorporated them into a composite system which is then called “Tāntrik”.

The result, on this view, is that the Tantra is an amalgam consisting of a hypothetical nucleus, foreign in its character to Hinduism proper, enveloped by a number of other doctrines and practices borrowed by it from the latter. Those who hold by this theory of an original nucleus have not yet told us what it precisely is, or when it arose, nor whence it came, nor, indeed, where we may look for it. This theory may or may not be correct, but before we can be called upon to accept it, it must be established by evidence. Until then our hesitation to do so seems warranted by the fact that doctrines and practices which have been alleged to be specifically “Tāntrik” have their counterparts in the Vaidik ācāra (way or practice). Thus the use of flesh, and wine,1 which are supposed to be peculiar to one form of the Tāntrik ritual, was common in the Vaidik

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1 The term is here and elsewhere used by me in a general sense for intoxicating beverages. In India wine is also made of other substances than the grape—e.g., honey, rice, molasses, etc.
age. The Mahābhārata, Harivamsa, Kālikā, Mārkaṇḍeya, and Kūrma Purāṇas also refer to the consumption of wine, meat, and flesh. As regards "the fifth," even if we exclude Upaniṣads and other Śāstras which are alleged by some to be of sectarian authority only, we find a ritual use of that Tattva, though doubtless in different form, in the Mahāvratā of the Aitareya Āranyaka and in the Vāmadevyam Vrata of the Sāma Veda. In this connection reference may be made to the Brahma vaivarta Purāṇa. Magic, again, with which the Tantra has been particularly charged, forms a large part of the Atharva Veda.

Then, as to the worship of Śakti or Devī, reference is made to Her in the Veda, such as the Sarasvatisūkta, in the Yajur Veda the Lakṣmī Sūkta, and in the tenth Maṇḍala of the Rg Veda the Devī Sūkta;¹ and we have in the Upaniṣads² the story of Umā appearing in a blaze of light to Indra and the other Devas, to prove to them that it was not by their śakti that they lived and moved, but that all which was done was so done by virtue of that Mahāśakti. Touching this subject, nothing more is taught by the Tantra, though one portion of it has doubtless greatly elaborated, both on its theoretical and practical side, the magnificent doctrine of Śakti, or the Power or Energy of the Brahman whereby the Universe originates. Though this notion of Śakti is of great importance in the Tantra, it is by no means the peculiar appanage of that Scripture, but is, like other concepts, shared by it with other Indian Śāstras, commencing, as above mentioned, with the Mūlaśāstra—that is, the Vedas and Upaniṣads. It is, however, of special importance in Tantra, because one of its schools has developed, presented, and emphasized the doctrine, and has moulded its scheme of sādhanā and worship in such a way as to be the practical expression of its form of theoretical exposition. Thus, on the one hand, we have in what are called for convenience the Śaktta Tantras, a philosophical doctrine of Śakti fully developed on the one side (Jñānakānda), and devotion to and worship of the World-Mother on the other (Upāsana-kānda). As the notion of Śakti is accepted by other classes of Indian worshippers,² the promulgation of this cult has historically done much to weld together the different Indian sects through the recognition of a bond of common unity which the acceptance of the doctrine of Śakti implies. To this the Śaktisangama Tantra,² refers when it says: "For the purpose

¹ See Introduction to Part I.
² In varying ways—thus some worship Śaktimāṇ, "He who is the possessor of Śakti" in varying Deva forms; others worship Śakti Herself—philosophically there is no difference, as the possessor of Śakti and Śakti are one and the same.
of creation various religions have been promulgated, such as those of the Śāktas (worshippers of Śakti), Śaivas (worshippers of Śiva), Vaiṣṇavas (worshippers of Viṣṇu), Gaṇapatyas (worshippers of Gaṇeśa), Sauras (sun worshippers), and Buddhists, and many others. These sects often blame one another, and yet a harmony may be found. Explanation has been given of these doctrines in order to bring about this unity. In order to attain this all should worship the Devi Kālikā, the Saviour (Tārīṇī). I have promulgated the Śākta cult in order to demonstrate the unity of the fourteen branches of knowledge.¹ The Goddess Bhavatārīṇi is the Deity presiding over the four Vedas, and the Goddess Kālikā is the Deity presiding over the Atharva Veda. Though different sects find fault with one another, a harmony may be established between the seemingly contrary doctrines. In order to bring about this desired harmony all sects should worship Kālikā, the Saviour of the world. Rites, according to the Atharva Veda, cannot be performed without Kāli or Tārā.² She is called Kālikā in Kerala (Malabar), Tripura in Kashmir, and Tārā in Gauḍa (Bengal). She is the Kālottara or chief Divinity of Kālottarayāṇa.³

"It appears," says the author of the work last cited, "that from the above passages of the Śaktisangama Tantra the Śākta or Tantrika cult was promulgated in order to effect harmony among the various jarring sects. The result was that all the sects began to worship the female Energies of their own respective Deities.⁴ Some accepted a few Śaktis, others accepted many.

"This is perhaps the reason," he adds, "of the great fellow-feeling between the Hindu and the Buddhist Śāktas, as well as of the rites of the one being found in the Tantras of the other, and vice versa, for, according to Dr. Kern,⁵ the development of Tantrism is a feature that Buddhism and Hinduism in their later phases have in common."

So far I have referred only to what are called the Śākta Tantras, or those Tantras which predominantly deal with the worship of Śakti or Devī, the great Mother of the Universe. Thus, in the Śaiva Tantras, or rather in the Śaiva (as distinct from Śākta) worship, governed by the

¹ That is, as the verse says, Purāṇa, Nyāya, Mimāṃsā, Sāṃkhya, Patañjala, Vedānta, Dharmaśāstra, Āṅga, Chhaṇḍa, Astronomy, and the four Vedas.
² Vinā kāling vinā tārāṃ nātharvvaṇo vidhi kvachit. See last note.
³ One of the Buddhist sects.
⁴ Thus establishing a common worship of Śakti, whatever be the form the latter might assume in the different sects.
⁶ In all Tāntrik cults Śakti is worshipped; for where Śiva or Viṣṇu is the Iṣṭadevatā, Śakti is necessarily is associated with Them.
PRINCIPLES OF TANTRA

Ågama, the use of wine and animal-food is forbidden 1—on the other hand, matters which appear in the Šâkta Tantras occur elsewhere. The particular Yoga called Śaṭcakrâbheda, or matters dealt with by it, are to be found referred to in some of the Upaniṣads and Purāṇas, and in the works on Haṭhayoga, such as Śivasamhitā, Gheranḍasamhitā, and Haṭhayogaprādīpikā. It has indeed been suggested that the Tāntriks borrowed this Yoga from “Nathism”. There are some who think that they have given both fact and explanation when they have invented a name. But what proof is there that the Hathayogis were not Tāntriks, or that the latter did not also include as part of its doctrine Haṭhayoga. And if the two were different from one another, which borrowed from the other and what is the proof of it? The matter is of subordinate interest. It is more important to know whether this Tāntrik Yoga is confined to and is the invention of the Tāntrik and Haṭhayogī, or whether it has its roots in common Indian tradition. The Tantra is called the Mantrasāstra, but Mantras are not confined to the Tantra. It deals with the theory of sound (Śabda), but so did the Mimāṃsakas. It mentions the twenty-five Tattvas, but these are drawn from the Sāmkhya. There are Tāntrik works which are Vedāntik in their general trend and aim. If there be one subject which appears to distinguish the Tantras it is portions of its ritual, such as the Yantras, Mudrīs, Bijas, Bhūtaśuddhi, and so forth. Indeed, it is more by these than anything else that the “Tāntrik” character of a work is established, and yet we find portions of this ritual in the Purāṇas. Further there appear to have been varieties of traditions or schools in the Śāstras which are gathered together under the collective name of Ågama, which after the Upaniṣadic age regulated the temple and domestic rituals. Which (or is it all of these) constituted the alleged Tāntrik “nucleus”? There are thus the Tantras of the three Krāntas. 3 There are also what are called the Five Aṃnāya, 4 not to mention the Śaiva, Šâkta, and Vaiṣṇava divisions of Tāntrik worshippers. Though the fact is not generally known certain Tantras are alleged to have authority in different ages and places. Thus certain existent Tantras, such as the Kālivilāsa, are alleged not to be in force in the present Kalpa, but to represent a prior tradition. 4 So this Kālivilāsa and other Tantras are

1. In some forms of worship substitutes are prescribed (see Introduction to my “Tantra of the Great Liberation.”) This practice of substitution has, I am informed, been extended even to such Upakriya as Śavāsana, where the corpse is made of Kusa grass.


3. Uttarāmnāya, Dakṣināmnāya, Pūrvāmnāya, Paścimāmnāya, Urddhva-mān

4. In the 28th Paṭala of this Tantra, Kāli is represented as saying to Kṛṣṇa:

“After this day of Brahmā you will become the beloved of Rādhā, who will be born of my body” and the 35th Paṭala refers to Kṛṣṇa, Nanda, Rādhā of
said to have been operative in Aśva Krānta in the Kālakalpa. Of such the Mahāviśvasāra Tantra says that Tantras which belong to other Kalpas exist for the delusion of unbelievers (Pāśandas). The burden of proof is on those who put forward a theory or hypothesis in these matters. Present historical knowledge is not enough to answer the various questions here raised. I prefer myself to proceed as far as possible upon the sure ground of fact and not upon historical surmises, for which there is at present at least no sufficient evidence, and which are not infrequently prompted by a dislike of the Śāstṛa, and therefore by a desire to disassociate it altogether from the common current of Indian tradition. In any case doctrine and practice are of greater importance than the question of historical origins. But those who are interested in this form of research should first study and endeavour to understand the living Tantra with the aid of those who profess it, and then accumulate the fact upon which alone any historical hypothesis of value can rest.

Whatever theories may be advanced as to the existence and origin of some elements in the Tantra peculiar to itself, there is no doubt that as it now stands it embodies a large number of others which are to be found in other Śāstras, both religious and philosophical, though some of these are expressed by this Scripture according to its own peculiar terminology and form of exposition. But if we deal with the facts as they are known to exist now and have existed for unknown centuries past, we find that the Tantra embodies and is interwoven with the general fabric of "Hinduism," of which it is an integral and closely associated part. Professor de la Vallée Poussin was then, it seems to me, right when, in answer to one of his English critics, he said of the Tantras: "Je constate qu'ils sont inhérents à toutes les formes religieuses de l'Inde."¹

In a similar manner a critic of a previous work of mine² incompetently complained that in a general account I there gave of some portions of Tântrik doctrine I had dealt with beliefs and practices to be found in other Śāstras and systems of philosophy, a procedure which he charged was calculated to mislead others into the belief that they formed part of Tântrik

the third (present) Kalpa. It is noteworthy that in the 10th Pațala wine is forbidden in the Kalayuga; and Pațala 4 directs all to follow the Ācāra of the Paśu.

¹ From a letter to Professor Rhys Davids, dated November 29, 1896, published in J. R. A. S., January, 1899. He adds: "Il est douloureux; mais avouez que je n'y peux rien. Déclarer inutile l'étude des Tantras sous pretextes qu'ils sont modernes c'est vraiment abuser d'une première seule et mal définie."

² Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. I should like here to state that the Introduction which I wrote for that work does not in any way profess to be an historical criticism. It was a simple and very abbreviated statement of some generally accepted notions and practices prevalent in the Tantra as it exists to-day.
teaching. A want of knowledge was here displayed. Why, he queried, had I dealt with the Sāmkhya, thereby "creating for the thousand and first time the false impression that the Tantra was concerned with it." This criticism, which is a display of ignorance, might equally well be directed against the work here translated, which not only cites the Tantra, but also the Purāṇas, Darśanas, Smṛti, and Vedas.

The answer is the simple one that I dealt with some of the notions of the Sāmkhya because they are expressly incorporated in the Tantras and Tāntrik works with which I was conversant. I may refer my reader by way of example to the first chapter of the celebrated Prapāñcasāra Tantra, and to the well-known and authoritative treatise, Śarada Tilaka. From what source other than the Sāmkhya did the former derive its notions of Puruṣa, Prakṛti, Buddhī, Ahaṅkāra, and the other Tattvas, the Guṇas, and so forth? And of a passage in the second, the great Tāntrik Commentator Rāghava Bhatta expressly says: "Here the Sāmkhya doctrine is exposed." From what source again but the Vedānta does the Tantra derive those doctrines which reconcile the Sāmkhyan dualism in the unity of the Brahman? The Tantra, in fact, could not claim to be an authoritative Indian Śāstra if it did not recognize commonly accepted Indian doctrines.

According to orthodox teaching, all Śāstras, just as truth itself, constitute a unity. Otherwise the Tantra would be a mere sectarian Scripture out of all relation with common Indian beliefs, and essentially foreign to them. But a Scripture which is not in essential agreement with other Śāstras is itself no Śāstra at all. The Śāstra, therefore, generally accepts and incorporates such common beliefs, though it may present them in its own peculiar way and terminology, and though it seeks practically to realize them by its own peculiar methods. It is in fact the latter which is the chief characteristic of this Śāstra. The sphere of Indian religion has three departments, respectively known as Karma-kāṇḍa (or formal ritual in its Vaidik sense), Upāsana kāṇḍa (or psychological worship), and Jñāna kāṇḍa (or esoteric knowledge). It is the second which is the peculiar subject of Tantra. Thus, again, it is said that ritual in its widest sense, as including both Karma and Upāsanā, is threefold—that is, Vaidik, Tāntrik, and Mixed (Mīra), or Paurānik. But each of these, according to Indian teaching, has in common certain philosophic and religious doctrinal bases. When I speak of "the Tantra," I refer to what passes under that name to-day so far as it is known to me, and not some hypothetical doctrine of past time of which at present we know with certainty nothing. In a review, however, of the first volume of this work an Indian

1 Published as the third volume of my "Tantrik Texts".

2 Similarly, in the letter of Professor de la Vallée Poussin, from which I have already cited, he says: "M. R. appelle Bouddhisme la
writer, in the Prabuddha Bhārata ¹ made the following remarks on what he believes to be the origin of the Tantra. His speculations, whether correct or not, are of such interest that I quote them in full. He writes:

"Hitherto all theories about the origin and the importance of the Tantras have been more or less prejudiced by a wrong bias against Tāntrikism which some of its own later sinister developments were calculated to create. This bias has made almost every such theory read either like a condemnation or an apology. All investigation being thus disqualified, the true history of Tāntrikism has not yet been written; and we find cultured people mostly inclined either to the view that Tāntrikism originally branched off from the Buddhistic Mahāyāna or Vajrayāna as a cult of some corrupted and self-deluded monastics or to the view that it was the inevitable dowry which some barbarous non-Āryan races brought along with them into the fold of Hinduism. According to both these views, however, the form which this Tāntrikism—either a Buddhistic development or a barbarous importation—has subsequently assumed in the literature of Hinduism is its improved edition as issuing from the crucibles of Vedic or Vedāntic transformation. But this theory of the curious co-mingling of the Vedās and Vedānta with Buddhistic corruption or with non-Āryan barbarity is perfectly inadequate to explain the all-pervading influence which the Tantras exert on our present-day religious life. Here it is not any hesitating compromise that we have got before us to explain, but a bold organic synthesis, a legitimate restatement of the Vedic culture for the solution of new problems and new difficulties which signalized the dawn of a new age.

"In tracing the evolution of Hinduism, modern historians take a blind leap from Vedic ritualism direct to Buddhism, as if to conclude that all those newly formed communities with which India had been swarming all over since the close of the fateful era of the Kurukṣetra war, and to which was denied the right of Vedic sacrifices, the monopoly of the higher threefold castes of pure orthodox descent, were going on all the time without any religious ministrations. These Āryanized communities, we must remember, were actually swamping the Vedic orthodoxy, which was already gradually dwindling down to a helpless minority in all its scattered centres of influence, and was just awaiting the final blow to be dealt by the rise of Buddhism. Thus the growth of these new communities and their occupation of the whole land constituted a mighty event that had

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¹A journal published at the Māyāvatī Āśrama, founded by the late Svāmi Vivekānanda in the Himalayas (Issue of July, 1914).
been silently taking place in India on the outskirts of the daily shrinking orthodoxy of Vedic ritualism, long before Buddhism appeared on the field, and this momentous event our modern historians fail to take due notice of, either, it may be, because of a curious blindness of self-complacency or because of the dazzle which the sudden triumph of Buddhism and the overwhelming mass of historical evidences left by it create before their eyes. The traditional Kali Yuga dates from the rise of these communities, and the Vedic religious culture of the preceding Yuga underwent a wonderful transformation along with the wonderful attempt it made to Aryanize these rising communities.

"History, as hitherto understood and read, speaks of the Brāhmīns of the pre-Buddhist age—their growing alienation from the Jñāna-kāṇḍa or the Upaniṣadic wisdom, their impotence to save the orthodox Vedic communities from the encroachments of the non-Vedic hordes and races, their ever-deepening religious formalism and social exclusiveness. But this history is silent on the marvellous feats which the Upaniṣadic sects of anchorites were silently performing on the outskirts of the strictly Vedic community, with the object of Aryanizing the new India that was rising over the ashes of the Kurukṣetra conflagration. This new India was not strictly Vedic, like the India of the bygone ages, for it could not claim the religious ministrations of the orthodox Vedic Brāhmīns, and could not therefore perform Yajñas like the latter. The question, therefore, is as to how this new India became gradually Aryanized, for Aryanization is essentially a spiritual process, consisting in absorbing new communities of men into the fold of the Vedic religion. The Vedic ritualism that prevailed in those days was powerless, we have seen, to do anything for these new communities springing up all over the country. Therefore we are obliged to turn to the only other factor in Vedic religion besides the Karma-kāṇḍa for an explanation of those changes which the Vedic religion wrought in the rising communities in order to Aryanize them. The Upaniṣads represent the Jñāna-kāṇḍa of the Vedic religion, and if we study all of them, we find that not only the earliest ritualism of Yajñas was philosophized upon in the earlier Upaniṣads, but the foundation for a new, and no less elaborate, ritualism was fully laid in many of the later Upaniṣads. For example, we study in these Upaniṣads how the philosophy of Pañca-upāsanā (fivefold worship—viz., the worship of Śiva, Devī, Sun, Ganeśa, and Viṣṇu) was developed out of the mystery of the Praṇava ("Om"). This philosophy cannot be dismissed as a post-Buddhist interpolation, seeing that some features of the same philosophy can be clearly traced even in the Brāhmaṇas—e.g., the discourse about the conception of Śiva.

"Here, therefore, in some of the later Upaniṣads we find recorded the attempts of the pre-Buddhist recluses of the forest to elaborate a post-Vedic ritualism out of the doctrine of the Praṇava and the Vedic
theory of Yogic practices. Here in these Upaniṣads we find how the Biṅga-mantras and the Śaṭcakra of the Tantras were being originally developed, for on the Prāṇava or Udgītha had been founded a special learning and a school of philosophy from the very earliest ages, and some of the 'spinal' centres of Yogic meditation had been dwelt upon in the earliest Upaniṣads and corresponding Brāhmaṇas. The Upakaraṇas of Tāntrik worship—namely, such material adjuncts as grass, leaves, water and so on—were most apparently adopted from Vedic worship along with their appropriate incantations. So even from the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads stands out in clear relief a system of spiritual discipline—which we would unhesitatingly classify as Tāntrik—having as its core the Pañca-upāsanā, and around it a fair round of rituals and rites consisting of Biṅga-mantras and Vedic incantations, proper meditative processes and proper manipulation of sacred adjuncts of worship adopted from the Vedic rites. This may be regarded as the earliest configuration which Tāntrikism had on the eve of those silent but mighty social upheavals through which the Āryanization of vast and increasing multitudes of new races proceeded in pre-Buddhistic India, and which had their culmination in the eventful centuries of the Buddhistic coup de grâce.

"Now, this pre-Buddhistic Tāntrikism, perhaps then recognized as the Vedic Pañca-upāsanā, could not have contributed at all to the creation of a new India, had it remained confined completely within the limits of monastic sects. But, like Jainism, this Pañca-upāsanā went forth all over the country to bring ultra-Vedic communities under its spiritual mini- 

Even if we inquire carefully into the social conditions obtaining in the strictly Vedic ages, we find that there was always an extended wing of the Āryanized society where the purely Vedic Karmakāṇḍa could not be promulgated, but where the moulding influence of Vedic ideas worked through the development of suitable spiritual activities. It is always to the Jāνakāṇḍa and the monastic votaries thereof that the Vedic religion owed its wonderful expansiveness and its progressive self-adaptability, and every religious development within the Vedic fold, but outside the ritualism of Homa sacrifices, is traceable to the spiritual wisdom of the all-renouncing forest recluses. This 'forest' wisdom was most forcibly brought into requisition when, after the Kurukṣetra, a new age was dawning with the onrush and upheaval of non-Āryan and semi-Āryan races all over India—an echo of which may be found in that story of the Mahābhārata, where Arjuna fails to use his Gāṇḍiva to save his protégés from the robbery of the non-Āryan hordes.

"The greatest problem of the pre-Buddhistic ages was the Āryaniza-

But for
those religious movements, such as those of the Bhagavatas, Śāktas, Sauras, Śaivas, Gāṇapatyas, and Jains, that tackled this problem of Āryanization must successfully, all that the Vedic orthodoxy stood for in the real sense would have gradually perished without trace. These movements, specially the five cults of Vedic worship, took up many of the non-Āryan races, and cast their life in the mould of the Vedic spiritual ideal, minimizing in this way the gulf that existed between them and the Vedic orthodoxy, and thereby rendering possible their gradual amalgamation. And where this task remained unfulfilled owing to the mould proving too narrow still to fit into the sort of life which some non-Āryan races or communities lived, there it remained for Buddhism to solve the problem of Āryanization in due time. But, still, we must remember that by the time Buddhism made its appearance, the pre-Buddhistic phase of Tāntrik worship had already established itself in India so widely and so firmly that, instead of dislodging it by its impetuous onset—all the force of which, by the by, was mainly spent on the tottering orthodoxy of Vedic ritualism—Buddhism was itself swallowed up within three or four centuries by this Tāntric worship, and then wonderfully transformed and ejected on the arena as the Mahāyāna.

"The latest configuration of Tāntrikism dates from this, its wonderful absorption and assimilation of Buddhism, and from this important fact it derives some important features of its later development. The prophecy of Gautama Buddha on the eve of investing his aunt with Abhisampada or Sampāsa was fulfilled too literally when the proximity and free intercourse between the two orders of monks and nuns created in Buddhist history that odious problem of their religious life which they had to solve by introducing some mysterious rites, the philosophy of which, however, can be traced in the Vedas. No wonder if the current of such developments grew deeper and dirtier in time; only it is alleviating that there were cross-currents of constant correction flowing from Vedic sources. Neither is it possible to deny that the Buddhistic phase of Tāntrikism absorbed into the fold of Hinduism non-Āryan conceptions and rites of worship far more promiscuously than its pre-Buddhistic phase; but history proves that the digestive and secretive processes, as it were, have ever since been working, tardily sometimes, but successfully always, and the Tantras, as the marvellous restatement of the Vedās and the Vedānta, have at last appeared in the boldest relief through that miraculous embodiment of the synthetic spirituality of the whole race which we have to recognize to-day by the name of Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahamsa."

The writer adds that a "vindication of the Tantras redounds directly to the benefit of Hinduism as a whole," for, in his opinion, "Tāntrikism in its real sense is nothing but the Vedic religion struggling with wonderful success to reassert itself amidst all those new problems of religious life and discipline which later historical events and developments thrust upon it."
Of equal interest with the above is the following extract from another review by the well-known Bengali litterateur Sj. Panchkori Bandyopādhyāya in the Calcutta journal Sāhitya.¹ This article, from which I omit passages personal to myself or touching the book there criticized, deals with the history of the Tantra in quite recent times in Bengal. Sj. Panchkori Bandyopādhyāya writes:

"At one time the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra had some popularity in Bengal. It was printed and published under the editorship of Pandit Ananda-candra Vedāntavāgīśa, and issued from the Ādi-Brahma-Samāj Press. Rājā Rām Mohan Roy himself was a follower of the Tantras, married after the Śaiva form, and used to practise the Tāntrik worship. His spiritual preceptor, Svāmī Hariharānanda, was well known to be a saint who had attained to perfection (siddha-puruṣa). He endeavoured to establish the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra as the Scripture of the Brahma-Samāj. The formula and the forms of the Brahma Church are borrowed from the initiation into Brahman worship (Brahma-dīkṣā) in this Tantra.

"The later Brāhmos, somewhat losing themselves in their spirit of imitation of Christian rituals, were led to abandon the path shown to them by Rājā Rām Mohan; but yet even now many among them recite the Hymn to the Brahman which occurs in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. In the first era of the excessive dissemination of English culture and training, Bengal resounded with opprobrious criticisms of the Tantras. No one among the educated in Bengal could praise them. Even those who called themselves Hindus were unable outwardly to support the Tāntrik doctrines. But even then there were very great Tāntrik Sādhakas and men learned in the Tantras, with whose help the principles of the Tantras might have been explained to the public. But the educated Bengali of the age was bewitched by the Christian culture, and no one cared to inquire what did or did not exist in their paternal heritage; the more especially that any who attempted to study the Tantras ran the risk of exposing themselves to contumely from the educated community. Mahārāja Sir Jatindra Mohan Tagore, of sacred name, alone published two or three works, with the help of the venerable Pandit Jagannath Tarkālankār. The Hara-tattva-dīdhiti associated with the name of his father is even now acknowledged to be a marvellously glorious production of the genius of the Pandits of Bengal. The venerable (vṛddha) Pandit Jagannath also published a commentary on the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. Even at that epoch such study of the Tantras was confined to a certain section of the educated in Bengal. Mahārāja Sir Jatindra Mohan alone endeavoured to understand and appreciate men like Bāmā Khepā (mad Bāmā), the Naked Father (Nyāmī Bābā) of Kaḍḍa and Svāmī Sadānanda. The educated

¹ Srāban 1320 (July, August, 1913), translated from the Bengali.
community of Bengal had only neglect and contempt for Sādhakas like Bishe Pāglā (the mad Bishe), and Binu, the Candālā woman. Bengal is even now governed by the Tantra; even now the Hindus of Bengal receive Tāntrik initiation. But the glory and the honour which the Tantra had and received in the time of Mahārājas Krṣṇa Candra and Śivacandra no longer exist. This is the reason why the Tāntrik Sādhakas of Bengal are not so well known at present...

"The special virtue of the Tantra lies in its mode of Sādhana. It is neither mere worship (Upāsanā) nor prayer. It is not lamenting or contrition or repentance before the Deity. It is the Sādhana which is the union of Puruṣa and Prakṛti; the Sādhana which joins the male principle and the mother element within the body, and strives to make the attributed attributeless. That which is in me and that for which I am (this consciousness is ever present in me) is spread like butter in milk, throughout the created world of moving and unmoving things, through the gross and the subtle, the conscious and unconscious—through all. It is the object of Tāntrik Sādhana to merge that self-principle (Svarāt) into the Universal (Virāt). This Sādhana is to be performed through the awakening of the forces within the body. A man is Śiddha in this Sādhana when he is able to awaken Kunḍalinī and pierce the six Cakras. This is not mere 'philosophy'—a mere attempt to ponder upon husks of words—but something which is to be done in a thoroughly practical manner. The Tantras say: 'Begin practising under the guidance of a good Guru; if you do not obtain favourable results immediately, you can freely give it up.' No other religion dares to give so bold a challenge. We believe that the Sādhana of the Moslems, and the 'esoteric religion' or secret Sādhana (and rituals) of the Christians of the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches, is based on this groundwork of the Tantras.

"Wherever there is Sādhana we believe that there is the system of the Tantra. While treating of the Tantras some time back in the Sāhitya, I hinted at this conclusion, and I cannot say that the author Arthur Avalon has not noticed it too. For he has expressed his surprise at the similarity which exists between the Roman Catholic and the Tāntrik mode of Sādhana. The Tantra has made the Yoga system of Patañjali easily practicable, and has combined with it the Tāntrik rituals and the ceremonial observances (Karmakāṇḍa); that is the reason why the Tāntrik system of Sādhana has been adopted by all the religious sects of India. If this theory of the antiquarians—that the Tantra was brought into India from Chaldea or Śākadvipa—be correct, then it may also be inferred that the Tantra passed from Chaldea to Europe. The Tantra is to be found in all the strata of Buddhism; the Tāntrik Sādhana is manifest in Confucianism; and Šintoism is but another name of the Tāntrik cult. Many historians acknowledge that the worship of Śakti, or Tāntrik Sādhana,
which was prevalent in Egypt from ancient times, spread into Phoenicia and Greece. Consequently we may suppose that the influence of the Tantras was felt in primitive Christianity.

"The Tantra contains nothing like idolatry, or 'worship of the doll,' which we, taking the cue from the Christian missionaries, nowadays call it. . . . The Tantra repeatedly says that one is to adore the Deity by becoming a Deity (Devatā) himself. The Iṣṭa-devatā is the very self of Ātman, and not separate from It; He is the receptacle of all, yet He is not contained in anything, for He is the great witness, the eternal Puruṣa. The true Tāntrik worship is the worship in and by the mind. The less subtle form of Tāntrik worship is that of the Yantra. Form is born of the Yantra. The form is made manifest by Japa, and awakened by Mantra Śakti. Tens of millions of beautiful forms of the Mother bloom forth in the heavens of the heart of the Siddha puruṣa. Devotees or aspirants of lower order of competency (nimna-adhikārī), under the directions of the Guru, adore the great Māyā by making manifest (to themselves) one of Her various forms which can be only seen by Dhyāna (meditation). That is not mere worship of the idol; if it were so, the image would not be thrown into the water; no one in that case would be so irreverent as to sink the earthen image of the Goddess in the water. The Primordial Śakti is to be awakened by Bhāva, by Dhyāna, by Japa, and by the piercing of the six Cakras. She is all-will. No one can say when and how She shows Herself, and to what Sādhaka. We only know that She is, and there are Her names and forms. Wonderfully transcending is Her form—far beyond the reach of word or thought. This has made the Bengali Bhakta (devotee) sing this plaintive song:

'Hard indeed is it to approach the sea of forms, and to bathe in it.

Ah me! this my coming is perhaps in vain.'

"The Tantra deals with another special subject—Mantra Śakti. . . . The Tantras say that the soul in the body is the very self of the letters—of the Dhvani (sound). The Mother, the embodiment of the fifty letters (Vṛṇa), is present in the various letters in the different Cakras. Like the melody which issues when the chords of a lute are struck, the Mother who moves in the six Cakras, and who is the very self of the letters, awakens with a burst of harmony when the chords of the letters (Vṛṇas) are struck in their order. Then Siddhi becomes as easy of attainment to the Sādhaka as the keeping of an Amalaka fruit in one's hand when She is roused. That is why the great Sādhaka Rāmaprasāda awakened the Mother by the invocation—'Arise, O Mother' (Jāgrṭhi, janānī). That is the reason why the Bhakta sang:

'How long wilt thou sleep in the Mūlādhāra, O Mother Kula-kundalinī?'
"The Bodhana (awakening) ceremony in the Durga Pūja is nothing but the awakening of the Śakti of the Mother, the mere rousing of the consciousness of the Kundalini. This awakening is performed by Mantra Śakti. The Mantra is nothing but the harmonious sound of the lute of the body. When the symphony is perfect, She who embodies the Worlds (Jaganmayi) rouses Herself. When She is awake, it does not take long before the union of Śiva and Śakti takes place. Do Japa once; do Japa according to rule, looking up to the Guru, and the effects of Japa of which we hear in the Tantra will prove to be true at every step. Then you will understand that the Tantra is not mere trickery, or a false weaving out of words. What is wanted is the good Guru—Mantra capable of granting Siddhi, and application (Śādhana). . . .

"The Tantra accepts the doctrine of rebirth. It does not, however, acknowledge it as a mere matter of argument or reasoning, but like a geographical map, it makes clear the unending chain of existences of the Śādha. The Tantra has two divisions—the Dharma of Society (Samājā), and that Dharma of Spiritual Culture (Śādhanā). According to the regulation of Samājā-Dharma, it acknowledges birth and caste. But in Śādhanā Dharma there is no caste distinction, no Brāhmaṇa or Śūdra, no man or woman; distinctions between high and low follow success in Śādhanā and Siddhi. We only find the question of fitness or worthiness (Adhikāra-tattva) in the Tantra. This fitness (Adhikāra) is discovered with reference to the Samskāras (tendencies) of past existences; that is why the Gāndāla Pūranānanda is a Brāhmaṇa, and Kṛpāsiddha the Śādhaka is equal to Sarvānanda; that is why Rāmaprasāda of the Vaidya caste is fit to be honoured even by Brāhmaṇas. The Tantra is to be studied with the aid of the teachings of the Guru, for its language is technical, and its exposition impossible with a mere grammatical knowledge of roots and inflections. The Tantra is only a system of Śakti-Śādhanā. There are rules in it whereby we may draw Śakti from all created things. There is nothing to be accepted or rejected in it. Whatever is helpful for Śādhanā is acceptable. This Śādhanā is decided according to the fitness of the particular person (Adhikāri-anusāre). He must follow that for which he is fit or worthy. Śakti pervades all, and embraces all beings and all things—the inanimate and the moving, beasts and birds, men and women. The unfolding of the powers (Śakti) enclosed within the body of the animal (Jīva) as well as the man is brought about only with the help of the tendencies within the body. The mode of Śādhanā is ascertained with regard to these tendencies. The very meaning of Śādhanā is unfolding, rousing up or awakening of power (Śakti). Thus the Śākta obtains power from all actions in the world. The Śādhanā of the Tantra is not to be measured by the little measuring-yard of the well-being or ill-being of your community or mine.
“‘Let you understand, and I understand, O my mind!
Whether anyone else understands it or not.’

The Tantra has no notion of some separate far-seeing God. It
preaches no such doctrine in it as that God the Creator rules the Universe
from heaven. In the eye of the Tantra the body of the Sādhaka is the
Universe, the autokratos (Ātma-sāktī) within the body is the desired
(Iṣṭa), and the ‘to be sought for’ (Sādhya) Deity (Devatā) of the Sādhaka.
The unfolding of this self-power is to be brought about by self-realization
(Ātma-dārśana), which is to be achieved through Sādhanā. Whoever
realizes his self attains to liberation (Mukti)... The principles of the
Tantra must be lectured on to the Bengali afresh. If the Mahānirvāṇa
Tantra as now translated is spread abroad, if the Bengali is once more
desirous to hear, that attempt might well be undertaken.

“Our land of Bengal used to be ruled by Tāntrik works such as the
Śāradātilaka, Śākūnandatarangini, Prāṇatōsini, Tantrasāra, etc. Then
the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra did not have so great an influence. It seems to
us that considering the form into which, as a result of English education
and culture, the mind and intellect of the Bengali has been shaped, the
Mahānirvāṇa is a proper Tantra for the time. Rājā Rām Mohan Roy
endeavoured to encourage regard for the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra because
he understood this. If the English translation of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra
is well received by the thoughtful public in Bengal, the study of the original
Sanskrit work may gradually come into vogue. This much hope we may
entertain. In fact, the English-educated Bengali community is without
religion (Dharma) or action (Karma), and is devoid of the sense of
nationality (Dharma), and caste. The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra alone is fit
for the country and the race at the present time... An auspicious oppor-
tunity for the English-knowing public to understand the Tantra has arrived.
It is a counsel of the Tantra itself that if you desire to renounce anything,
renounce it only after a thorough acquaintance with it; if you desire to
embrace anything new, accept it only after a searching inquiry. The
Tantra embodies the old religion (Dharma) of Bengal. Even if it is to be
cast away for good, that ought only to be done after it has been fully
known... Will not the Bengali receive with welcome such a full offering
(Arghya) made from a foreign land?”

Whether (as the writer of this article and of the Introduction which
follows contend) the doctrines and ritual of orthodox Hinduism are suitable
for the India of to-day is a matter for its people to decide. I have cited
this highly interesting appeal to stand on ancient ways because, to use the
language of a friend of mine, and student of the Buddhist Tantra, it is
“pleine de détails intéressants et révèle d’une façon très claire l’état
d’esprit des Bengalis—je crois que l’on pourrait même dire des Hindous
en général—et leur opinion intime touchant le Tantrisme.”
Even if this statement be held to go too far, it has certainly a very wide application, and it is for this very reason that, in a study of the Indian religions, the Tantra is of such importance.

KONARAK,

December 31, 1914.                      Arthur Avalon
INTRODUCTION

VAIDIK AND TANTRIK SYSTEMS OF SPIRITUAL CULTURE
COMPARED

As the Vedas are the Word of Brahmā, so are the Tantras the Word of Śiva. Both are the Breath of the Supreme. It is not to be supposed that the Hindus look upon the Vedas or the Tantras in the same light as the Christians, Jews, and Muhammadans regard the Revelation on Mount Sinai, or the Koran. The Hindus have never said that the Godhead, having assumed a human form, descended and revealed: Divine knowledge in human language to His chosen; nor do they hold that God or one of His Angels wrote out the Divine Revelation, and then handed it over to His Rasool. The meaning of Hindu Revelation is different from that which is generally assumed. The Breath of the Supreme is pure Divine Ideation, from which is evolved the universe. Sitting on His Cosmic lotus-throne, alone in the primeval darkness of immense space, Hiranyakasipu, the infant Brahmā, the progenitor of the manifested universe, knew not yet what He was nor what He had to do. Long years of meditation at length revealed to Him the Divine Law, which is Divine knowledge (Jñāna), thus enabling Him to evolve the universe. From Brahmā to the hosts of illuminated Rśis all are Seers or revealers of the arcane (immutable knowledge), which, like respiration, comes forth from the Brahman who is the Supreme at the dawn of evolution, and, like inspiration, is withdrawn into Its fathomless Unknowable depths on the eve of dissolution.

This eternal, immutable Jñāna (knowledge) is the Word of Brahmā or Śiva which is revealed to humanity in its language by the illumined and, therefore, unerring Seers, the Rśis. The Word is the Sound, the Spiritual Sound, which is the Vehicle of the manifested Divinity, the Saguna Brahman, and hence it is that the infallible, immutable Gnosis, the Vedas, is given the same name as that which is given to the Divinity Himself—namely, Śabda-Brahman (the Sound-Brahman, or Immense Sound).

Such being Divine Revelation, the Tantra is to the human spirit what science is to its intellect. The evolution of the human intellect, and the consequent mastery of man over phenomenal nature, depend upon the pursuit of scientific method, which reveals to man the secrets of objective nature, and thereby renders her subservient to his purposes. Similarly,
the Tantras have a science, a methodology, by the pursuit of which the human spirit can enter into the secret background of objective nature, free itself from the trammels of the senses and of their objects, and soar above them until, by gradual evolution, it raises itself into that plane of consciousness which is unalloyed bliss. At length the embodied spirit (Jīva), after its long and tedious journey in eight millions of bodies from the mineral to the animal, and many thousands of births and re-births in the human vehicle, returns to That whence there is no journeying back again.

It may here be asked, "Why are there the Tantras when the Vedas exist to point out to man his several paths to Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa, the fourfold aspirations of humanity?" No such question arose for the thousands of years during which the Tāntrik method of spiritual culture was, as it is still, being followed by the Hindus, be they Śāktas, Śāivas, Vaishnavas, Sauras or Gūnapatyas. The five classes of Hindu worshippers must be initiated according to the Tāntrik method, which has been directed to be followed even in the Vaishnavik scripture Śrīmad Bhāgavata (see Skandha XI, chap. xxvii). All the Bija Mantras, excepting the Praṇava (ॐ), are Tāntrik, and the greater part of the methodology is either Tāntrik or mixed—that is, Tāntrik mixed with Vaidik, pure Vaidik methods having long been, and rightly so, abandoned. Under these circumstances, the question, thus mooted, savours somewhat of scepticism and unbelief in the Hindu Dharma; at any rate, it does not lie in the mouth of a Hindu to put such a question. Be that as it may, since the question arises in these degenerate days, it is but meet that it should be answered.

The influence of time upon the constitution of man is a factor which must always be borne in mind in all considerations affecting his spiritual progress. The Hindu Śāstras hold that the ever-recurring four ages (yugas) exert a mighty influence not only upon the human race, but upon everything in the universe. Men in the first or Satya

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2 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.

[Dharma is the performance of meritorious acts for the enjoyment of happiness in Heaven.

Artha is the acquisition of wealth and of whatever renders life happy here below.

Kāma is desire and its fulfilment.

Mokṣa is liberation or emancipation from birth and death. — B.K.M.]

3 The five divisions of Hindu worshippers, worshipping as their Īṣṭadevata, Śakti, Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Sun and Gaṇeśa.

4 [Root-Mantras. A particular Bija Mantra is a particular sound-expression of a particular form of the Deity, so that a Bija Mantra is not a combination of letters, but is the Divinity Itself. — B.K.M.]

4 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
Yuga had a very long life on earth; their average height was that of a giant; they were capable of undergoing very great physical and mental strain. They were truthful, honest, kind, compassionate, unavaricious, pure-hearted, and contented. Mendacity, theft, greed, lust, anger, vanity, jealousy, oppressiveness, and other faults were almost unknown to them. They were a race of sturdy, pure-minded humanity, for whom the method of spiritual culture was that promulgated in the Vedas. They had their passions under their control, which enabled them not only to undergo long Brahmacarya ¹ and Tapas ² in their youth, but to pass cheerfully through the most rigid ordeals incumbent upon a Vaidik neophyte. Their extraordinary physical and moral stamina enabled them to practise Dhāraṇā (concentration), Dhyāna (meditation), and Samādhi (union with the Brahman) for a great length of time. Their longevity favoured their protracted spiritual exercises according to the Vedas; and their indomitable will, unyielding fortitude, and strong physique permitted the performance of Yajñās ³ extending continuously over a period of twelve years or more.

It was for the guidance of men of such a constitution that the Vaidik method of spiritual self-culture existed. Men of the next Yuga (Tretā) naturally deteriorated, but were still giants compared with the pigmies of the Kali (or last and present) yuga. For them the pursuit of Vaidik methodology, though comparatively arduous, was yet still practicable. Then came the Dvāpara Yuga, when longevity declined by nine-tenths and stature by a half. Men began to fall considerably from the moral and spiritual eminence of the former two Yugas. Lust, avarice, jealousy, greed, and all other expressions of the lower human nature appeared prominently on the scene, to degrade man from his high physical and moral throne. It was then that Dharma ⁴ appreciably declined owing to man's incapacity to pursue and practise Vaidik methods. The great Rṣis, who are ever solicitous of the weal of the human race, perceiving this inevitable decline, dived deep into the perennial ocean of eternal verities, which is the Vedas, and drew from out of them the Smṛtis ⁵ as the methodology which to them seemed to be adapted to the altered circumstances of the times. The Vedas fell into the shade, and in course of time there existed very few who could really unravel their mysteries. The Purāṇas were devised partly to preserve Vaidik teaching in the form of legends and myths, and partly to present a popular exposition of the cardinal

¹ Control of the sexual propensities and over whatever ministers to them.
² Austerities. Endurance of the pairs of opposites, such as heat and cold, light and darkness, happiness and misery, pleasure and pain, etc.
³ Sacrifices, etc. See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
⁴ Religion, Morality. See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
⁵ See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
truths of the Sanātana Dharma (Vaidik cult) to humanity such as it then was.

It must not be thought that the method of self-culture prescribed for humanity of the Satya Yuga was irksome and arduous to them. It was, on the contrary, exactly such as to suit the people of those times in view of their longevity, and of their physical and moral strength. But to the short-lived, debilitated, and morally debased men of the Kali Yuga the Vaidik methodology is a mountain-load which they have not the capacity to bear. What is deemed irksome to us was but natural to them. Let us imagine the fate of some weak Indian, were the dumb-bells with which Ram Murti, the modern Hercules, exercises, placed in his hands, and he were bidden to strengthen his muscles with them! Such an Indian must have instruments suited to his physique for his physical culture. Even so is the case with spiritual culture. How can people whose average age is about thirty or forty years devote two-thirds or more of it to Vaidik study and Vaidik practice of Karmakāṇḍa,² maintaining strict celibacy and undergoing great privations? They have neither the physical nor the moral strength necessary for it. And, even if it be supposed that they could do it in some fashion or other, how can they find the time sufficient to carry on the arduous duties of a Vaidik householder, then go to the jungles to prepare themselves for jñāna (knowledge), and finally, when ripe in divine wisdom, to assume the Sannyāsī’s bowl?² This, indeed, is the Vaidik scheme of life. It was suited to men of that fortunate time. As it is now impracticable by the average man, it has naturally fallen into disuse. Methods of self-culture based on the immutable Vaidik truths are, from time to time, either devised by Rṣis, such as the innumerable Vaidik Śākhās,³ most of which are now defunct, or are promulgated by Avatāras,⁴ or revealed by the Godhead in view of the times in which men live. The Vedas stand paramount for each one and all of them. A method, therefore, which is essentially at variance with the Vaidik cardinal truths must be rejected as a man-made scheme, unworthy of acceptance.

Towards the eve of the third yuga (age) moral and spiritual degeneration overtook mankind, and it was then that the Divine Mother and the Divine Father revealed those Tantras which were suited to the constitution of the degenerate race of the men of the Kali Yuga.

The Divine Mother, the ambrosial milk of whose breast ever flows for the succour of Her children, thus addressed Her Lord:

¹ Sacrifices and other rites and ceremonies prescribed in the Vedas.
² The mendicant ascetic of the fourth or last Vaidik Āśrama. See Introduction to Tāntric Sāstra.
³ Branches or recensions of the Vedas.
⁴ Descents of the Brahman: when on to the physical plane called “incarnations”.

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SPIRITUAL CULTURE—VAIDIK AND TANTRIK

"Under cyclic influence men will naturally become evil-minded and will be addicted to sinful acts. O saviour of the humble! O Lord! graciously tell me the means by which men may acquire long life, health, strength, vigour, and manliness; by which they may become learned and sound-minded; by which they may get effortless welfare; by which they may become endowed with great strength and intrepidity; by which they may become pure-minded, benevolent, obedient to parents, faithful to their wives, averse to others' wives, lovers of God and of Guru, supporters of sons and relatives; by which men may become knowers of Brahman, learned in Brahmavidya (the transcendental science), and thinkers on Brahman. I pray Thee to tell me the means by which their welfare both here and hereafter may be secured."

The result of this prayer is the statement by Śiva of the Tāntrik methods of self-culture and of the rules of conduct to be pursued by Śādhakas (aspirants).

Here I may state parenthetically that esoteric Tantrism is as ancient as the Vedas.

\[
\text{Śuddha} \text{कश्यं} \text{प्रते} \text{तेज} \text{हितिवृत्त} \text{तुषा} \text{सोम:} \text{हृत} \text{भद्रो} \text{मदयो}.
\]
\[
\text{शुक्ल:} \text{देव} \text{देहः} \text{शिफुति} \text{रसेनां} \text{यज्ञादाय} \text{वेदहि.}
\]

Śukla Tejurveda, Chap. xix

"Oh, Deva Soma! being strengthened and invigorated by Surā (wine), by thy pure spirit, please the Devas; give juicy food to the sacrificer and vigour to Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas."
"Worshipping the sun before drinking madira (wine)."

"By which women have been made enjoyable by men, and by which water has been transformed into wine (for the enjoyment of men)," etc.

"Like Indra in the case of (his wife) Śacī, Rāmacandra made Siṭā drink purified honey-made wine. Servants brought for Rāmacandra meat and sweet fruits."

"Arjuna and Śrī Kṛṣṇa drinking wine made from honey and being sweet-scented and garlanded, wearing splendid cloths and ornaments, sat on a golden throne studded with various jewels. I saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa's feet on Arjuna's lap, and Arjuna's feet on Draupadī and Satyabhāmā's lap."

It is only old wine in new jars which is presented by Śiva and Bhagavatī to men of the Kali Yuga. An exoteric aspect, however, suitable for the generality of folk was added to the already extant esoteric path, which only a few are competent to pursue.

It may be contended that Iśvara Himself, having incarnated towards the end of the Dvāpara Yuga for the salvation of mankind, there was no need for the Tantras. But, in the first place, it must be understood that Iśvara, Hari, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Ādyāsaktī, and Mahādeva are one and the same Supreme, only the vehicle in which the Supreme manifests itself being different. The Tantras had already been revealed before the incarnation
of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The worship of the Divinity as Mother, which is the principal characteristic of the Tantras, had prevailed long before the advent of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Vraja Gopīs worshipped Kātyāyani that they might gain Kanāi as their husband. Rukmini, having paid homage to the Divine Mother, prayed: "O Kātyāyani! O Mahamāya! O Mahāyogini! O Lady Paramount of all the Lords! O Devi! give me the son of Nanda-Gopa as my consort; I bow to Thee" (Śrīmad Bhāgavata, Sk. X). Besides this, I have already drawn attention to the fact that the Śrīmad Bhāgavata prescribes the Tāntrik form of worship, and that all the Paurāṇik worships abound in Tāntrik Mantras. To the mass Śrī Kṛṣṇa taught Karma Yoga by Himself, performing various Yajñas,¹ to the cultured classes He gave the transcendental philosophy of the Vedas, which is also the rock upon which the Tantras are built; and to those who, having emancipated themselves from the thraldom of the world and its conventions, to the God-loving Gopīs, He imparted the highest mystery of Divine communion, which is likewise the highest mystery of Tāntrik worship. Śrī Kṛṣṇa perpetuated the Tāntrik methods of worship and yoga. He did not set up a new method, nor did He revive the obsolete Vaidik system.

Mankind in the Kali Yuga have, by the efflux of cyclic time, dwindled into pigmies, both physically and spiritually, though, by the law of evolution, their intellectual capacity has increased. But it is not through intellect alone that Spirit can march on in its career of spiritual progress. A man, however great in intellectual accomplishments, may yet be a child so far as his spiritual nature is concerned. To cultivate the spirit, it is necessary to withdraw to a considerable extent his mind from the senses and the brain, which are the instruments of intellectual culture. The Kali Yuga dwarf finds himself a prey to the glamour of phenomena and the allurements of the senses. Not having spiritual insight, he takes the unreal for the real, the evanescent for the eternal, bondage for freedom, and identifying himself with the body and the lower mind, makes of himself, in spite of his intellectual acumen, in spite even of his Upaniṣadik, Vedaṅgik, and philosophic lore, a being who, so far as spirituality is concerned, is not far above the animal kingdom. Not having the strength nor the longevity to pursue the arduous Vaidik spiritual training, man would find himself in a very precarious state, and the Divine Scheme of spiritual evolution would be frustrated, had not provision suitable to the times, been made for his salvation. The Divine Mother, Ādyāsakti, in her unbounded compassion for her children and in concert with the Divine Father, Mahādeva, therefore, revealed the Āgamas and the Nigamas² for the salvation of humanity. These Āgamas and Nigamas are known as Tantra.

¹ Sacrifices, etc. See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
² As to the technical meaning of these terms, see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
There may be souls, few and far between, who having, after ages of self-culture, been born in the present Kali Yuga with a goodly stock of spiritual training, are fitted to continue their evolution according to the Vaidik methods. But the vast vessel of humanity as a mass would be rudderless to pass safely through the ocean of the world were it not for the Tantra which is revealed towards the dawn of every Kali Yuga. The Tāntrik methodology of spiritual self-culture has been followed and practised these thousands of years, and the country, from end to end, is permeated with it. But it is to be deplored that, owing to English education, which has given a great impetus to intellectual culture, and has brought philosophy within the reach of all, the aspirations of many who are spiritually-minded far exceed their spiritual capacity. Aspiring thus to what they do not deserve, they become, oftener than not, disappointed and dejected.

The great merit of the Tantra is its all-comprehensiveness. Humanity, in each of its phases and conditions, has been provided with a system of culture suited to the nature and capacity of each individual. The milk of compassion of Jagadambā, the Divine Mother, flows perpetually and equally to every one of Her children, that they may drink of it and, acquiring thereby spiritual strength, may return to Her loving lap. She does not exact from Her weak and short-lived children of the Kali Yuga long and trying Brahmacarya and austerity to show them the way to Her Lotus Feet. Enervating is the influence of the Kali Yuga, but, in inverse ratio, high is the potency of the medicament She has prescribed for Her children. The low and the high, all are equally taken care of, and, for all, the path has been made smooth and straight.

The doctrine of the Tantras, whilst recognizing Sāmkhya-Patañjala, is Vedāntik Advaitavāda. It reconciles duality (Dvaita) with unity (Advaita), the haven into which the wandering ego will at last find its eternal rest after it has worked out its Karma. The Advaita philosophy and the method of self-culture founded upon it, have their origin in the Vedas. It has, in modern times, been expounded by Śrīmad Śaṅkarācārya; at any rate, its interpretation by Śaṅkarācārya has obtained firm hold in many men’s minds, and is regarded by them as infallible. There is another interpretation of Advaitism by Rāmānuja, which has also a large following in many parts of India. Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja are human expounders of the Vaidik law, and both are great souls of the Kali Yuga, but not Rṣis. Śaṅkara’s transcendental philosophy advocates knowledge (jñāna); Rāmānuja’s Vedāntism champions devotion (bhakti) as the means to salvation. But both agree in having a pessimistic standpoint. The world, they maintain, has nothing in it which may help a man’s

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1 See ante.
spiritual progress. It is darkness, misery, and the arch-enemy, which, by heavy chains, binds down man. The aspirant to spiritual culture must shun it as he would the python who might strangle him. All the faculties of the brain-mind have to be brought into requisition to combat the world, both subjective and objective, and thus to free the aspirant from the coils of the enemy. By elaborate processes of discrimination (viveka) the world must be negatived; and renunciation of everything appertaining to it crowns the efforts of the aspirant to knowledge (jnāna). Even if the world were really what it is dismally painted to be, how many among all its millions can fight such a battle and emerge as the conqueror? Such a system of spiritual culture is bound to fail, and to render religion an impossibility for the mass of the people. They, no doubt, have been provided with an elementary system of religion, but the root-idea is there, and fighting nature out is the watchword everywhere. This impotent militant spirit has wrought havoc in the Hindu mind, and rendered it a slave to the very world which it has been taught to vanquish. There have, certainly, been great souls who, after a culture extending over many births and rebirths, have at last succeeded in attaining the spiritual heights. But such souls are but few among many millions. “Sarvam khalvidam Brahma” (Verily all this is Brahman) is the saying of the Veda and Vedānta. The neophyte who had been taught to hate the world as Kākabiṣṭhā (excrement of the crow), at length, and after ages of Sādhana, finds it to be nothing but Brahman. The Kākabiṣṭhā then reveals itself to him in all the glory of Divine effulgence.

The Tantras prescribe a very different method of self-culture. Here the Great God (Mahā Deva) Himself is the expounder of the Law—that is, the Divine knowledge—which He revealed at the dawn of creation in His aspect as Brahman.

“The ball of sorrow,” “the vale of tears,” “the hall of torments,” and other such names by which schools of transcendental philosophy disparage the world, have no place in the Tantra. The Tantra is the Breath of Divinity, and the world is evolved from that Breath. The Divine Mother (call Her Father or Father-Mother as you choose) is in every molecule, in every atom, in all things which constitute the world. In fact, She is the causeless Cause of whatever is; She is the manifested Brahman. The world is the playground (Lilākṣetra) of the All-blissful Ānandamayī. The world is neither an illusion nor a non-reality; nor is it under the government of the Ruler of Hell, whose autocratic tyranny drives sensible men first to raise the standard of revolt, and then, when they find no King great enough to drive the tyrant off, sends them in a stampede to the unknown and unknowable kingdom of an Abstraction, which is absolute existence, absolute knowledge, and absolute bliss. But, to their misfortune and discomfiture, they come to realize that the ramparts
and battlements and fortifications of the kingdom of the supposed Arch devil are impregnable; that, as far as their imagination can extend, his empire also extends; and that their own selves—that is, their minds and whatever constitutes their individual selves—is of the same material as that with which the alleged nefarious world is constituted. Having learnt this sad truth at last; many Śādhakas of other schools fall precipitately from the height of their hopes and aspirations. Discomfited, dejected, and crest-fallen, they can neither seek the supreme object of life (Paramārtha) nor reconcile themselves to the world, in which they have to live not only during their present lives but in many lives yet to come. This dismal philosophy is not merely the heirloom of Śādhakas. It has been almost indelibly impressed upon the consciousness of the ordinary run of men, with the result that the Hindus are in general pessimists and fatalists in high degree.

The Tāntrik Śādhaka, by his method of worship, is led from the outset to feel, and then by higher processes of self-culture to realize, the All-blissful Mother in the universe—nay, to regard the universe as the Mother Herself. Every man and every woman is to him the Mother Herself; every living object is to him an object of obeisance. His thought and conduct are made to flow in that all-loving and all-reverencing channel. Training his mind thus, the Śādhaka, far from finding the world to be a vale of tears, of sorrow, and of suffering, views it as the very Kashmir of subjective and objective beauty. Every man and woman—nay, all living things—are glowing with Divinity. This state of mind not only quenches the thirst of his lower nature, but spiritualizes its animal tendencies; not only does it buoy him up with fresh energy to pursue the Path, but he attains liberation (Mukti), eating the sweet fruit of the world, of which the Śādhakas of other schools are deprived. On the other hand, the man of the world who professes Tāntrism has every faith in the reality of the world. To him it is not an illusion nor an evil, and therefore he exerts his utmost to make it the happy lap of the Mother, which it really is.

The Tāntrik Path, as I have already said, is smooth and straight. It is fitted to the constitution of the Kali Yuga man. The method of Tāntrik self-culture has the supreme merit of accomplishing within a short time what other methods can hardly accomplish within a life. This is testified to by numberless adepts, ancient and modern. And it is for this that Paurāniks have largely drawn upon it. It is also said that Śaṅkaraśāstra’s Yoga system owes much to Tāntrism. The Mahāyāna Buddhistic system is saturated with it. Nāgārjuna, the great Buddhistic Arhat, who flourished about seven hundred years ago, was a great Tāntrik yogī and alchemist, whose Bauddha-Tāntrik works are the authority of Northern Buddhism.

The Tantra is non-sectarian. It provides methods of self-culture to all schools of Śādhakas, be they Śāktas, Śaivas, Sauras, Gānapatyas, or
Vaishnavas, and holds that the Sadhana of the Divine, as the All-blissful Mother, is the easiest and straightest Path.

The Tantra is the only Divine Revelation which throws open the gates of arcane nature to those who have the courage to peer into it. Man, in his onward Path, must dive deep into nature's heart to discover what he, and the universe of which he is a component part, is. The method of spiritual self-culture leads him, step by step, to an acquaintance with nature's supersensuous beings, high and low, and teaches him how to utilize the services of the high, and to ward off the evil influences of the low. This knowledge is of essential importance to the sojourner on the Path; for the evil spirits throw every manner of obstacles to impede his march and encompass his ruin; whereas the good spirits would gladly help him on if he but knew how to obtain their help. Woe to the aspirer who, having made the acquaintance of the lower spirits, abandons his true end and aim and utilizes their service for unlawful worldly purposes. Such are the black magicians whose lot is miserable both here and hereafter.

Self-culture, according to the Tantrik method, develops the Will and endows the Sadhaka with some lower powers (Siddhis) within a comparatively short time. Those who are charmed with those powers and are tempted to use them are like to share the same fate with the black magicians. The end and aim of high Tantrik Sadhana is the realization of the Advaita Tattva—the attainment of Kaivalya Mukti; and it is to this end that the true Sadhaka consecrates not only his present life, but a succession of lives extending over many ages. By intense Sadhana he has first to free himself from the chain of Karma, which fastens him down to the three Lokas, Bhū, Bhūvah, and Svah. When past this triad of the Karmik chain, his onward progress continues until he can "pierce through" the Spiritual Sun (the manifested Brahman), and merge himself with the Supreme. There must, indeed, be very few, even throughout countless periods of time, who have attained this liberation (Mukti) upon earth. But Sadhakas who devotedly and perseveringly pursue the path become Devas, Lords of Manvantaras, Lokapālas (planetary Lords), and Dikpālas (Lords of space), and the like, and rise higher and higher until their work is ended. There are others who, refusing liberation, come down from time to time as Saviours of mankind.

The investigations of the Tantrik into the inner temple of nature reveal to him many secrets both of an objective and subjective nature,

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1 Union with the Brahman.
2 Practise. See Introduction to Tantra Sāstra.
3 See Introduction to Tantra Sāstra.
4 The three worlds—Earth, the atmospheric and celestial planes.
5 A period of time. See Introduction to Tantra Sāstra.
including those of the human mechanism. It is thus that he is a theurgist and thaumaturgist, alchemist, herbalist, metallurgist, physician, astrologer, and astronomer. The Tāntrik’s alchemy crossed the ocean and reached Europe; his chemistry discovered ages ago many truths, some of which have dawned upon European scientists within but recent times. He was the first in the world to use mercury, snake poison, and the metals as medicine. His system of medicine has superseded that of the Āyurveda. His science of Breath is still a mystery to the Europeans. Last, though not the least, there is what may be called his science of psycho-physical culture, which renders the physical body obedient to the will, and thus by certain postures not only enables him to ward off and cure diseases, but to control the mind. The Tantra, in fine, is from its very nature an Encyclopaedic science. It is practical, and has no concern with wordy warfare. It lights the torch and shows the way, step by step, until the sojourner comes to the end of his journey, realizing the universe in the Brahman and the Brahman in the universe. So has it been said:

अन्यान्यशास्त्रेः विदोषमार्गे न तेषु किंचिदकु दशसम्मिति ।
विविधितरुपानित्वत्वादः पदे पदे भलमयाकर्षितः ॥

“All other Śāstras are merely entertaining; they can show nothing on earth. But the medical science, astrology, and Tantra prove themselves at every step.”

ŚAKTI

In the Sanskrit language the word Śakti is feminine. It must not, therefore, be supposed that that which is denoted by it is feminine. There is no word in the English language which conveys the exact meaning of the word Śakti as it is used in the Hindu Spiritual Science. It is neither force nor energy of physical science. The word Power may be used to designate it.

Power or Śakti is the root of all existence. It is from Śakti that universes are evolved; it is by Śakti that they are sustained; and it is into Śakti that they are finally resolved. It is the same as Parabrahman. Parabrahman is Existence (Sat), Consciousness (Cit), and Bliss (Ānanda). By Śakti is denoted exactly these three aspects in the One without a second. Cit is the Power, and the two other aspects go along with it; for without consciousness there would be neither existence nor happiness. Śakti, then, is essentially absolute Satcitānanda.

Within, so to say, the womb of Śakti, is Māyā or Prakṛti, the matrix of the universe which, during cosmic inaction or Mahāpralaya is potential and latent, even as fire is latent within wood. Māyā or Prakṛti is not a
non-reality, nor a state of equilibrium of certain things; nor is it a something-nothing, something little (yatkiñcit), an idea (bhava). It is as immutable and permanent as the triple aspects already mentioned. It enfolds, to use chemical phraseology, a triad of Guna or Real, which, mutating and combining, make up the appearance of the ever-changing world, and which, in Mahāpralaya, are withdrawn within the bosom from whence they emerged. Māyā or Prakṛti it must be understood, is ever in association with Cit, be it in Mahāpralaya or in evolution; for there is only One without a second, and Prakṛti must be an inseparable part or power of It. Parabrahman thus has a quadruple aspect, and is symbolized in the Tantra by a grain of gram (Canaka). As a grain of gram is a bi-valvular unity,¹ enveloped by an outer skin, so is Śakti a Unity having the characteristic of a duality when viewed through the veil of Prakṛti. This duality is neither Jīva nor Ātmā, nor matter and spirit, but a polarity. From the fathomless womb of Parabrahman or Śakti is evolved the universe, and into that womb it is withdrawn when the hour for final dissolution strikes. Śakti is, therefore, both centrifugal and centripetal Power. It is male-female, and therefore expressed by the word Brahman, in the neuter gender.

The notion seems to prevail that what the Tāntriks posit by Śakti is dead matter, Prakṛti. Nothing can be farther from this unwarrantable conclusion. Śakti, as that which is potential, is much more expressive than Brahman considered as something neutral. Prakṛti, the matrix of the universe of names and forms, is the veil through which alone it is possible to approach the Sat-cit-ānanda Brahman by the human consciousness. It is the destiny of human consciousness, which is relative, to merge itself into the one true Consciousness, which is absolute, and thus to fulfil the end and aim of life. The Tantra, therefore, along with all other spiritual sciences, worships the Absolute through that in which It is manifested.

The expression “Veil of Prakṛti” is, however, not an appropriate one. It is borrowed from the Theosophical literature. Cit or Śakti is self-manifesting. But immutable, undifferentiated Prakṛti is the only ground in which it can manifest itself so as to be cognizable to the self, be it of man or of Devatā. Prakṛti, therefore, is not a “Veil,” but, on the other hand, is Śakti itself in Evolution. When the first hour strikes for the commencement of the cosmic play (Jagat Līlā), Prakṛti becomes the Conscious Śakti, the Unmanifested Manifest, the First Cause, the Supreme Power, the Sun of all suns, from which universes are to evolve. It is the Kāraṇa Deha (causal body) of Cit-śakti. It is impersonal, all-pervading, immutable, and Cit itself. It is the God of all Gods; the

¹ A grain of gram contains within one enfolding sheath two halves.
object of the highest form of human worship—nay, the object of the worship of all the Gods, including Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Mahēśvara. It is symbolized in the Tantra by a Bindu or dot (.), and expressed in human language by the word "Cinghana" \(^1\) (चिन्हन).

Bindu or Śakti is neither male nor female, but partakes of the characteristics of both. In its Advaita, or non-dual nature, is a dual characteristic, a polarity, as I have already said, which may be expressed by the terms "positive" and "negative," and which is denominated in the Tantra by Śiva and Śakti; pum (male), and stri (female); Sun and Moon; the male principle being Śiva, and the female principle being Śakti or Mahākāli, Mahākāla (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) is as much Śakti as Mahākāli, the one being the female, and the other the male aspect of the selīśamū Śakti.

The Tantra is, therefore, all-comprehensive and non-sectarian. It enjoins the worship of Śakti—that without which nothing can live and move and have its being. The worship of Viṣṇu is as much a part of it as is the worship of Kāli, although the worship of the latter is held to be comparatively easy, and more suited to the present race of men for reasons which I shall have occasion to state later.

It must not be thought that, although Prakṛti becomes conscious Śakti in manifestation, it is in any of its forms the ultimate object of worship. Worship, however, implies a duality. And although essentially the worshipper and the worshipped are the same—and it is the realization of this Unity which is the end and aim of worship—yet Śakti in manifestation cannot but be the object of worship so long as the Ego has its individuality, which is made of the stuff of Prakṛti. It is, therefore, that in spiritual culture the Tantra postulates two Śaktis: Vācaka Śakti is manifested Cit in Prakṛti, and Vācya Śakti is Cit itself, which is the goal to be attained. It is by the realization of Vācaka Śakti that the Vācya Śakti can be attained. The Vācya Śakti is formless, and cannot, therefore, be the object of any form of Upāsanā (worship) or yoga practice.

The manifested Śakti is the Power which is the object of adoration, prayer, and praise. So long as the human Soul remains such, it cannot go beyond. But when the Soul—that is, the causal body or Kāraṇa Šarīra—is cast off, the duality for ever disappears, and the self is merged into that which is Śakti in itself.

By whatever name it may be, whether Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Kāli, Durgā, Gaṇapati, or Śūrya, It is the manifested Śakti, the Saguna Brahman. But there are certain sects of worshippers who assign an inferior position to Śakti, and regard it as a female power only, subordinate to the God they worship. That the God they worship is Śakti as well is ignored by them. In this they take an anthropomorphic view of the Supreme, who according

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\(^1\) That is, a thickened mass of cit or consciousness.
to them, is male (Śaktimān), and Śakti (his Consort) is his inferior, like some conceptions of an Oriental wife. The Tantra repudiates this view, and regards both Śaktimān and Śakti as the male and female aspects of the one Śakti. Where would be Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa without Śakti (Power)? Bereft of Śakti, the Vehicle, designated as Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu, and all other Vehicles from the highest God to the lowest atom, would be but a dead inert mass. It is Śakti which is life, intelligence, and consciousness. No state of existence can be superior to it. Both these aspects of Śakti are inseparable, and the one is not inferior to the other, any more than the negative pole of electricity can be considered to be subordinate to the positive. Hence it is that all the Gods are associated with Goddesses; hence it is that Rāma has his Sitā, Kṛṣṇa has his Rādhā, and Mahākāla is accompanied by Mahākāli.

It is Śakti (Power) which creates, Śakti which sustains, and Śakti which withdraws into Her fathomless womb innumerable worlds in infinite space. Indeed, She is space itself, and every being therein.

Physical science is acquainted with one of Her physical powers, and that by its abnormal manifestations only; for the nature of electric force is unknown to the scientist. Science used to distinguish force and matter as two different things; but the trend of scientific thought seems to have undergone in this respect a revolution. The theory is now put forward that matter is a modification of force. Spiritual science holds exactly a similar view, but on a very broad line of thought, and maintains that from Śakti (Power) everything emanates, first in the spiritual, then in the celestial, and then in the terrestrial Kosmogenesis.

It is peculiar to the Universal Mother that, unlike human and animal mothers, She devours and then disgorges Her offspring. Seated in the lotus forest, which floats in the water of space, She is perpetually devouring and disgorging the Elephant (the Kosmos). When She disgorges and nourishes She is the most beautiful of the beautiful; Her beauty enchants even the Gods; She is then Bhuvanēśvarī and Bhuvanamohini. It is the descent of Spirit into matter. When She devours Her offspring with Her thousand mighty jaws, She is Mahākāli; Her transcendental beauty is realizable only by the wise and the devotee. Westerners and Hindus demoralized by Western civilization have the profanation to call this Her aspect as ugly and terrible. Yes, She is terrible to the earth-bound soul. But to the pilgrim on the path of return—the path of Nivruttī—the Majesty of Her beauty and the message of peace and comfort in Her right hand are ineffable. It was this stupendous Majesty which the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa (who is the same as Kāli) exhibited to His dear disciple Arjuna, when the latter entreated Him to appear before him in His godly form. Arjuna had entreated Him thus: “O Yogi, how should I contemplate Thee so as to know Thee? O Bhagavān! in what object should I contemplate Thee?”
The Lord then enumerated some of His Vibhūtis (distinguishing qualities) which yet could not satisfy the disciple; for they were too abstract for contemplation and devotion. The Bhakta (devotee) must have something tangible to fix his mind upon. Therefore he exhorted the best of Puruṣas to show him his Divine Rūpa (Form). Endowing him with spiritual vision, the Lord showed him the Rūpa with which he had to commune. Śaṅkarācārya, in his commentary, describes this Rūpa as endowed with Knowledge (jñāna), Godly Qualities (aśvarya), Śakti, Strength, Virility (vīrya), and Effulgence (tejas). O Śādhhaka of the Vaiṣṇava school! is this Rūpa ugly and hideous? O devotee! do not be deceived by the glamour of earthly beauty; feast your spiritual eye with the Majesty of Divine grandeur and beauty.

She is Māyā, because Māyā is a part of Her nature; She is Avidyā because She binds; She is Mahāmāyā because She dominates Māyā; She is Vidyā because She holds the torch which illumines the Path of return, She is Mahāvidyā because She is the Mother in whose sweet and soothing bosom the wayworn pilgrim finds his eternal rest.

The Divine Mother is thus the cause both of bondage as well as of liberation. She is in all things, and all things are in Her. She is consciousness; She is intelligence; She is sleep; She is wakefulness; She is hunger; She is thirst; She is shadow; She is substance; She is power; She is impotence; She is mercy; She is compassion; She is bashfulness; She is peace; She is esteem: She is beauty; She is ugliness; She is prosperity; She is adversity; She is memory: She is truth; She is falsehood; She is good; She is evil; She is avarice; She is contentment; She is mother; She is error; She is rectitude; She is illusion: She is reality; She is the power of the senses: She is ignorance; She is knowledge; She is the mysterious dispenser of a double force, from one of which surges forth the universe, and the other it is which withdraws it; She is the tide and ebb, the inspiration and respiration, the diastole and systole of the universe. Both centrifugal and centripetal forces are in Her. The Human Ego has the privilege to choose either of these spiritual forces to work out its destiny: by the one it is thrown into the eddy of Pravṛtti (desire), to be whirled round and round until the great dissolution (Mahāpralaya); the other girts it up with that power and energy which will enable it to strike through the eddy and reach the serene centre of the Mother's bosom.

The three aspects of Śakti, which constitute the Trinity of the Hindus, are Volition (icchāsakti), Administration (kṛyāsakti), and Cognition (jñānasakti). These are the three Powers which direct the evolution, the sustentation, and the involution of the Universe. The Nirvāṇa Tantra says: "In the region of Truth, the Formless and Resplendent Pervader of the universe, casting off the covering of Māyā, became divided into two. The idea of creation arises from the division of Śiva and Śakti, O Pārvatī!"
First of all was born the son named Brahmā. Said Kālikā: Hear me, O Son! O Hero! take care to marry. Hearing this, Brahmā then said: There is no Mother other than Thee; O beautiful One, give me a Śakti (wife). Hearing this, the Mother of the universe, from Her own body, gave him a charming wife, who is the second Mahāvidyā, the great Power named Śāvitrī. Associate thyself with Her, and publish the Veda (Divine Knowledge), and become the Creator of the universe with ease. The second son born was Viṣṇu vehicled by Sattva guṇa. Said Kālikā: Hear me, O Son! O Hero! take care to marry. Said Viṣṇu: Thy sight renders man passionless. O Mother, O Consort of Śiva! How can I marry unless Thou givest me a fair maiden for wife? The Mother, from Her own body, gave him a wife. O Goddess! She is the Vaiśnavī Mahāvidyā, Śrīvidyā. With her help Viṣṇu sustains the universe. The third son begotten was the great Yogi Sadāśiva. Seeing him Mahākāli beamed with joy. O Son, great Yogi! give heed to what I say. Who is there a male like thee, and who is there a female like me? Therefore, O Śiva! forthwith marry me. Sadāśiva said: O Mother! Thou hast verily said the truth; there is none who charms like Thee. There is no Puruṣa like myself. But I cannot marry Thee in Thy present body. If Thou art kind to me, change Thy body. Instantaneously Mahākāli gave him Bhuvanesvarī."

The Kubjika Tantra says: "Brahmāṇī creates, surely not Brahmā, therefore Brahmā is but a Preta," 1 and so on with regard to Viṣṇu and Śiva. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva are quite powerless to discharge their respective functions without Śakti or Power.

The Devībhāgavata (Skandha III. Cha. vi) relates that Brahmā having asked Ādyāsakti as to whether She was male or female, the Divine Mother thus explained Herself:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{स्त्रियानि न भेदस्ति सर्वेऽविद्म शुभ्रा} & \quad \text{।} \\
\text{वैस्तैपर्वा सहस्त्रह्मिको संसारम् ते } & \text{भेद मतित्वभाद्} \quad \text{॥} \\
\text{विकृत: स हु संसारायुक्तेऽनां संस्कार:} & \text{॥} \\
\text{यथा दीपमापयेवोगमान संज्ञयेऽद्विषा} & \text{।} \\
\text{चाहन्याद्वादमयो वा मतिविनयं सत्तम्यो:} & \text{॥}
\end{align*}
\]

1 Literally a disembodied spirit before the performance of the obsequial rites. Here used in the sense of an inert corpse, for He can do nothing without the vivifying influence of Śakti.
That Male (Puruṣa) and Myself are ever the same. There is no
difference between Him and Me. The Puruṣa is what I am; I am what
the Puruṣa is. Difference arises only from ignorance. He who is intel-
gent and is free from the bondage of the world can know our subtle
difference; there is no doubt about this. The one without a second,
perennial Brahman becomes dual at the time of creation. As a single
lamp becomes dual by difference of Upādhi (condition), as a single face
becomes dual in the form of an image in a mirror, as a single body appears
in dual form with its shadow, even so our images are many owing to the
difference of minds (which are made up of Māyā). O Aja (unborn),
for the purpose of creation the difference arises at the time of creation.
It is only the difference between the seen and the unseen. At the time
of final dissolution I am neither male nor female nor neuter. The
difference (male and female) is imagined only at the time of creation."

To form a concept of the Godhead one worships, the idea of Śakti or
Power is for the devotee a surer guide than the nebulous idea of Ātmā
(spirit). It is very hard for those who have no faith in Śakti to trace the
"one without a second" through the physical to the spiritual plane of
existence, there being no appreciable link to chain the planes together.
But a worshipper of Śakti need contend with no such difficulty. In all
the planes of existence he finds the one power all-pervading. It is therefore
laid down in the Tantras:

शक्तिज्ञान विना देविवा युक्तिः हास्याय कस्पते।

"O Devi! without a knowledge of Śakti, Mukti (liberation) is mere
mockery." ¹

THE SOUNDELSS SOUND

The second bell of cosmic evolution tolls. A flutter, a vibration
thrills the triple Guṇas in the womb of Śakti. Rajas, the active guṇa,
after its long Pralayik slumber,² receives an impulse towards awaking.
Immediately as its eyes open a bifurcation takes place in Śakti, resulting
in what all religions designate the Verbum, the Śabdabrahman—the

¹ That is, without such knowledge liberation cannot be attained.
² That is, slumber during dissolution (pralaya).
immense, all-pervasive, all-comprehensive, unbroken, undifferentiated Sound Spiritual. One aspect of Śabdabrahman is Nāda, and another aspect is Bindu. As Nāda She is the Mother, and as Bindu He is the Father, of the universe. They are an inseparable twain, ever in association in cosmic evolution. Śabdabrahman is the God, the Lord, the Mother, the Word, the object of worship of all sentient beings.

The first manifestation of Śakti in the Spiritual plane is "Sound," which is undifferentiated intelligent Ākāśa, the Cidākāśa of philosophy, the Saguṇa Brahman of religion.

This Sound, the causeless cause of manifold universes, must not be confused with the sound with which we are familiar, and which we have been taught to regard as the result of vibrations in molecules of matter. It is not the Kāryākāśa or atomic Ākāśa of philosophy, which is integrated and limited and evolved from Tāmasik Ahaṅkāra. Nor is it a quality of such Ākāśa. It is Cit Śakti vehicled by undifferentiated Prakṛti—the manifested Godhead, uncreate, unborn, and eternal. Śabdabrahman is consciousness and intelligence, both cosmic and individual. It is the dual Śakti in unity, inseparably associated, though functioning in different ways.

Duality in unity is the root principle of the Tantra. This duality may, for want of a better expression, be called a "polarity". The Vaiṣṇavas have adopted this idea in their Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, Hari and Lākṣmi. The Hindu Śāstras hold that the universe has been evolved from the One—"without a second"—Cause, and that that Cause is both immanent and transcendent. The microcosm is in miniature what the macrocosm is. Evolution proceeds from the subtle to the gross. We find in the great physical force a duality of poles, which when brought in mutual contact produces a magnetic current. In the realms of atoms and molecules the same force has the aspects of attraction and repulsion which make the existence of material objects possible. In living mechanisms the heart and the lungs are worked by a dual force which draws in and throws off blood and air, which render organized life possible. The fluid space of the earth is dominated by a similar dual force, which rhythmically causes both ebb and tide. We thus find that what little we know of force on the physical plane gives countenance to the theory of duality in unity.

But the most extraordinary fact is the duality of all organized structures. Take, for instance, the structure of man. It is a duplex

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1 "Ether," the quality of which is sound, but, as hereafter explained, not the ether of the elements (mahābhūta).

2 Literally, "ether consciousness," which is explained, post.

3 Ahaṅkāra or egoity is threefold, according as one or other of the guṇas of Prakṛti predominate in it. Tāmasika Ahaṅkāra is therefore that form of this tattva in which the inert Tamas guṇa predominates.
structure. "Man is not formed," to quote the learned author of "The Mechanism of Man," "as one whole, but of two distinct halves joined together. He has two sets of bones, muscles and nerves, and two brains. True there is but one liver, stomach, and intestine. This at first sight seems to be in conflict with the theory. But further examination shows the internal structure to be substantially the same as the external frame, the only difference being that the position is reversed, and instead of the point of junction being side by side, as with the framework of bone and its appendant muscles, it is, from the necessity of its position within the body and the requirement of but one heart, one liver, etc., only a junction of two halves before and behind. Tracing these internal parts from their point of union with the external frame at the neck, it will be seen at once that one-half of the whole springs from one side of the body, and the other half from the other side, and that they unite at a central line throughout, precisely as the two halves of the external frame are united. . . . Looking beyond the human body, it will be seen that all organized beings are built after the same fashion. It will be found, on close inspection, that all other animals are so made. So likewise are all vegetables. Every leaf is duplex; so is every part of a flower. All organized beings are, in truth, formed of two halves joined together at a central line. Nothing organized is structured as one whole." 1

This duality in unity in all organized structures is, as is pointed out by the learned author above quoted, due to the fact that two parents are required for the production of every organized being, and that each parent contributes a germ, by the junction of which the duplex structure is formed. The human mind, also, has a dual nature—it is swayed as much by sentiments as by reason. Taking all these facts into consideration, it will not be wrong to infer that the Cause from which these effects are produced is a dual unity. The Tantra, however, postulates this as a fact, and builds up its Science upon it.

The Nāda aspect of Śabdabrahman is Kula-kūndalinī. Kula means the female organ of generation (yoni). In the Bhagavadgītā (xiv. 3), Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as the male power, says:

मम योजनंहृद्यांतत्सिन्न गर्भं दशामयं ।
संभवं सवैःसहानां को मथि भास्त ॥

"My womb is the great Eternal; in that I place the seed; thence cometh the birth of all beings, O Bhārata.

According to the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, Kula means Jīva, Prakṛti, Dik, Kāla, and the five mahābhūtas (sensibles) taken together. Now, all

these taken together constitute the intelligent and material cause of the universe, which is the same as Yoni. As Kuṇḍala means the Coil (of the serpent), Kulakūṇḍalini means the Spiritual Power (the cosmic Mother) who Creates the universe of names and forms and coils up round it. She is Cit or consciousness vehicled by Prakṛti. She is Sound, because the first manifestation of Prakṛti is sound, which is withal Jñāna (knowledge) and Light Spiritual. She is the One Breath, One Life. She is universal Consciousness, all-pervading, not limited by time and space. She clothes herself with Prakṛti when the hour for creation arrives. Essentially She is not different from the male aspect of Śabdabrahman, as both the aspects are indissolubly associated. She is the Parāprakṛti or Supreme Power of Brahman. From Her is sprung the universe, from Mahat to the atom, and the universe is under Her control. She is Ādyā—the First Cause; She is all knowledge; and Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva have their being in Her. She knows the universe, but none know Her. She is the embodiment of all Power; She is subtle; She is gross; She is manifested; She is unmanifested; She is formless, and yet with form.

From the Sound Spiritual proceed two lines of Evolution. The first line is by Saḍṛśa pariṇāma—that is, the resolution of like to like—and consists of three female Powers and their male Counterparts in the following order:


(f) (m)


(f) (m)

Vāmā—Viṣṇu—Sun—Sattva—Power of Causation (action).

(f) (m)

These three male and female Powers are the first triplification of the One Śabdabrahman, possessing within itself the three Powers of Volition, Causation, and Cognition; the three gunas, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas; and Its duplex Constitution. This line of creation is called Sound Creation (Śabdāsṛṣti).

The second line of evolution is called Form-creation (Arthaśṛṣṭi). It is subdivided into two. The first subdivision embraces the Lords, and the second the Tattvas.¹ These are the Lords of our universe, having Paraśiva as their Overlord. There are seven cosmic centres (Lokas) of Power, over each one of which each of these Lords presides in association with an aspect of Kulakūṇḍalini as His guiding Power. The centres and the Lords are thus stated:

¹ The Tattva also called Buddhī.

² Buddhī and other derivatives of Prakṛti.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loka</th>
<th>Male Power</th>
<th>Female Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satyam</td>
<td>Paraśiva or Mahāviṣṇu</td>
<td>Ādyāśakti Mahākāli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapah</td>
<td>Śāmbhū</td>
<td>Siddhakāli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janah</td>
<td>Śadāśiva (called</td>
<td>Mahāgaurī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ardhanārīśvara)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahah</td>
<td>Iśā</td>
<td>Bhuvanesvarī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svah</td>
<td>Rudra</td>
<td>Bhadrakāli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhuvah</td>
<td>Viśṇu</td>
<td>Rādāśī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhūḥ</td>
<td>Brahmā</td>
<td>Śāvitrī</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These seven centres are also seven planes of consciousness. Philosophy generalizes these seven planes of consciousness into three—viz., Jāgrat (waking), Śvapna (dreaming), and Suṣupti (slumbering, or dreamless sleep). The cosmic Virāt-body is waking, Hiraṇyagarbha-body is dreaming, and the Iśvara-body is slumbering consciousness. The Virāt-body is evolved from the last three centres, the Hiraṇyagarbha-body from the three centres above it, and the Iśvara-body from the highest centre. The consciousness of Viśṇu is higher than that of Brahmā, the consciousness of Rudra is higher than that of Viśṇu, and the consciousness of Iśvara is higher than that of the three; and so on until we come to Paraśiva or Mahāviṣṇu, whose consciousness is the highest form of relative consciousness.

The second subdivision begins with Mahat Tattva, and ends in the five Bhūtas, which, being familiar to every student of Hindu philosophy, need not be detailed here.

Kulakūṇḍalini is the vital Power of the universe. Her vehicle is the Hamsa of philosophy and religion. By Hamsa is to be understood the vital force, dual in its character, borne upon which She creates the universe.

In the human body Kulakūṇḍalini is said to reside in the root-centre (Mulādhāra cakra) of force evolution inside a coiling nerve (Nādi). She coils round Śvayambhu the male aspect of Šabdabrahman, and covers his mouth with Her hood. Though sound is perpetually emanating from Her body, She is said to be slumbering. What Her slumber in the human body means is explained later on. I shall now deal with the sound emanating from Her body, and its nature and function.

Hamsa is the name given to the root-sound emanating from the Prāṇik Vehicle of the Divine Mother. From Hamsa emanate forms, and from forms evolve universes, and all that appertains to them. This Prāṇik Vehicle is a duality of male and female principles, the function of the male principle being to throw out and that of the female principle to draw in, or, in other words, they are centrifugal and centripetal respectively. In the human body and in the body of every living being the Prāṇik principle or Vital Power expresses itself in expiration and inspiration, and represents the sum total of a man’s life on this earth in his present birth.
From the involuntary expiration of breath in the human body arises an inaudible sound, called Ajapā Mantra, which every man recites unawares. Cosmically this Ajapā is the centrifugal and centripetal energy, the attraction and repulsion of forces, observed everywhere; spiritually these two mighty aspects of the same Śakti are Pravr̥tti and Nivr̥tti, and so it is said:

śa viva āra kṣentr̥ttanā śa nātāni
sambharanāttanā śaiva lākeśīri tābh [²]

"That Lady paramount of all the Lords as the great Vidyā is the cause of liberation; and as (Avidyā) She too is the cause of bondage.”
—Gaṇḍi.

The Vital Power is called Nāda, Jiva, Prāṇa, Ghoṣa, and by other names. The Vital Sheath of the Divine Serpent undergoes differentiations. From the first differentiation arise the Seeds of the universe. When the second differentiation takes place, the root-sound Hamsa, Sound and Form, and all other dualities, come into being. In its triple state the three Guṇas, three Vedas, three articulate sounds (Varṇas), three nerves (Nādis), and other triads, are projected. In its quadruple form four Varṇas (sounds) and the quarternaries are evolved. In this wise various Sounds and Forms are produced, until in the fiftieth differentiation the fifty articulate Sounds, called Varṇas, or letters of the alphabet, are manifested in the Divine Vehicle of the cosmic Mother. It is therefore said that the Divine Mother sings the symphony of the universe, the beginning of which is creation, and the conclusion is dissolution (Mahāpralaya).

In the human mechanism the Mulādhāra Čakra is, as already said, the seat of Mother Kuṇḍalini, where She with the fifty Varṇas as the strings of Her Divine harp forever chants Her Celestial Song. Blessed be the Soul who has listened to this Divine Nāda, and thereby liberated itself from the trammels of Māyā.

The fifty Varṇas are fifty sounds of the Sanskrit language, or rather of the primitive language of which Sanskrit is the modification. These articulate sounds have been represented in different languages by different symbols; and, according to the divergent conformations of the vocal organs of different races inhabiting different zones of the earth, they are pronounced differently. For instance, the first sound of the vowels is symbolized by ə in Sanskrit, a in English, a in Greek, ʾ in Arabic, and so on. It is pronounced au in Sanskrit and derived languages in India, a in English, Alpha in Greek, Aliph in Arabic, and so on.

These sounds are very subtle things, effulgent and chromatic. They are living energies, which human thought prompts to expression through the vocal organ. When the seat of Sound—that is, the vehicle of Mother Kuṇḍalini—is penetrated by the active principle (Rajas) of Prakṛti the
sound is called dhvani. Dhvani penetrated by the inert principle (Tamas) is called Nāda. Nāda becomes Nibodhika by a further impression of Tamas and by successive impressions of the same quality it passes through successive stages of Ardhanārdvī and Bindu, until at last, it translates itself in the Mūlādhāra Cakra into what is known as the Para state of sound.

When the sound reaches the Śvadhiṣṭāna Cakra, it is called Paśyanti. It is then propelled to the heart-cakra, where it makes a more distinct vibration, which is audible to the Yogi during his first stage of concentration, when his mind for the time being is withdrawn within itself. This is called the Madhyama state of sound. It is what is known as Nāda Anāhata Śabda of Mother Kuṇḍalini. It is stated in Sarada Tilaka, a Tantrik work of high authority, that the first sound heard by a Yogi is like the humming of bees; the next sound he hears is like that of air passing through a hollow bamboo; then is heard a bell-like sound; and so on. When a Yogi becomes accustomed to the hearing of sound, his inner consciousness wakens and he begins to acquire knowledge, which dispels the dark illusion of the world. From the heart-lotus the sound is propelled upwards, and, coming into contact with the eight organs of speech, it issues from the mouth and becomes audible.

The fifty primary sounds which constitute the vehicle of Mother Kuṇḍalini are called Varṇas, because they are coloured. They are of various colours: some red, some white, some blue; some are the colour of melted gold, and others of coral, and some are like electric light or other colours and hues. They are called Akṣaras because, forming as they do the body of the universal Mother, they are imperishable. They are called Mātrkā, because from them the whole universe of forms, visible and invisible, terrestrial and celestial, has sprung into being.

That molecular vibrations or sounds with which we are familiar produce forms on sandy or some such surface over which sound-vibrations can act without friction, is known to scientific musicians. A particular tune produces a particular form. A tune being a compound of primary sounds, it stands to reason that primary sounds have forms as well. If each of the seven tones of the gamut did not possess a form of its own, it would be quite impossible for a tune, which is a compound of primary tones, to express itself in a form. It has been found by experiment that each tune has a peculiar figure or form of its own. It may therefore safely be said that each musical form or figure is the molecular expression of a tune, which is a compound of primary sounds. If this state of things is found to be the order of nature in the world of molecules, it is but reasonable to suppose that the same law should prevail at the primordial source, whence worlds are evolved. The Tantra says that the Kosmos is evolved out of the fifty Mātrkā sounds. The meaning of this, in the light of the above experiment, is plain enough. The Mātrkā sounds, in the processes
of evolution, undergo various permutations, thereby giving rise to subtle figures, which form the ground-work upon which, with the accumulation of atoms and molecules, bodies of diverse density and shape are formed. The gross human figure of bones, muscles, and flesh has for its groundwork a network of fine nerves. Behind this nerve-structure is the subtle body, or Sūkṣma Šarīra. Farther in there is the Kāraṇa Šarīra or causal body, the fifty-stringed lute (Viṇā) of Kuṇḍalinī Herself, upon which She plays the Divine Song of the universe until its dissolution (Mahāpralaya).

When in the course of evolution rational man appeared, it was necessary to impart to him knowledge for the perpetuation of the human race as well as for his liberation. It was to this end that the Self-existent Manu came down and gave him language. And what is that Language? It is not an arbitrary invention of words to signify objects. The Divine Manu, knowing the sound-forms of objects, gave man those forms and taught him the relation between those forms and the objects they connote. These sound-forms are words, and the objects they connote are the meanings of those words. The sound-forms or subtle bodies of universal objects being imperishable, words are imperishable. Gross bodies are evanescent, but the subtle body or Sūkṣma Šarīra persists till final dissolution of the universe, and the Kāraṇa Šarīra, or causal body, is said to be eternal. The language which Manu taught was the primeval language of root-words, remnants of which are to be found in the Vaidik Mantras, Sanskrit is derived directly from it. The innumerable languages of the world are its corruptions, or rather adaptations, in consonance with man’s environments in different parts of the earth, and the consequent divergent configurations of his vocal organs. In every language there are root-words which are identical. There could, in fact, be no language without such root words as their basis. True it is that man has invented arbitrary words, and given them conventional meanings, but they are mere accretions to the original language. One may hear of words being coined (often-times from the primitive root-words), but who has ever heard of language being invented? If none have so heard, then scoffing at what the Tantras reveal as the origin of language is unjustified. It may, in any case, be accepted as a workable theory which will help materially—nay, powerfully—in aspiration for spiritual development. This aspect of the question I shall touch on later when dealing with Mantra.

The Bhagavadgītā is regarded universally as the highest embodiment of spiritual truths. In it (chap. viii, verse 19) we find:

\begin{quote}
 ओषिवेवकायरः जग व्याहरत् मायुक्तरः।
 व: प्रमाति त्वकर् देहे स माति पस्यां गऽतियः।
\end{quote}
"'Om!' the one-syllabled Eternal (Brahman), reciting, thinking upon Me, he who goeth forth, abandoning the body, he goeth on the highest path."

If words be human inventions, and meanings conventional, then would it not be foolish to believe that a conventional word like अ (Om) should possess such mighty power as to liberate a man from his cumulative Kārmic causation, and to carry him there whence there is no return?

The Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad opens thus:

ोमिस्तद्भवनि तत्तत्त्वज्ञानं भुतं महर्भविष्णुदिति सर्वगौरिकर एव, ।
महामुनि विष्णुस्तं तत्त्त्वोक्तकर एव ।

"One is Īsvara. The universe is its meaning. Present, past, and future are all one. That which is beyond the triple time is also अ (Om)."

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavata we read:

"Sound Brahman and the Supreme Brahman are both my immutable body."

From these and innumerable other passages in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Darśanas,¹ and Purāṇas, the discerning will learn that the Tantra only explains what the Veda asserts.

The teaching of Jesus Christ, as embodied in the Gospel of St. John strengthens our position, and proves the unity of truth in all revelations. The Gospel says: "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was God, and the Word was with God." The "Word" is the Logos of the Greeks and Kabalists, and the Śabdabrahman of the Hindus. When the Kosmos is evolved, the Supreme Sacchidānanda,² becomes Śabdabrahman, the Word; and Śabdabrahman, or Īsvara, being uncreate, unborn, and immutable, is ever with the Supreme. Hence in the Gita we read: भागवो हि प्रतिष्ठां "I am the image of God."

यद्यथा न निर्वक्ते तद्यथा परम पवन ।

"That is my Supreme abode, whence there is no coming back."

If Īsvara be vehicled by Sound, then the inevitable conclusion is that the Kosmos is evolved out of Sound.

That there was one root-language is also borne out by the Biblical myth of the confusion of tongues. Philology has considerably cleared the ground, and the day may not be very far distant when Science will astonish

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¹ Systems of philosophy.
² Existence, consciousness, and bliss—or the Brahman.
the world by its discovery of the one common root-language of the human race.

MANTRA

If one were to make a Mantrik survey of India, one would be astonished to find that the Hindu life is saturated with Mantra. Be he a peasant or a prince, his whole life is regulated by Mantra. Various are the purposes for which Mantras are invoked, and their enumeration here will help towards the elucidation of the subject under consideration. Mantras are invoked for: (1) Secondary mukti (liberation). (2) Worship of the manifested God. (3) Worship of Devatās. (4) Communication with Devatās. (5) Acquisition of super-human powers. (6) Feeding Pitṛs and Devatās. (7) Communication with Ghosts and Upadevatās.² (8) Warding off evil influences. (9) Exorcizing Devils. (10) Cure of diseases. (11) Preparing curative water. (12) Doing injury to plants, animals, and men. (13) Eliminating poison from the animal body. (14) Influencing others' thoughts and actions. (15) Bringing men, beasts, Upadevas¹ and Ghosts under control. (16) Purification of the human body by ceremonies called Samskāras, and many other purposes, which need not be mentioned here. From the mother's womb to the funeral pyre a Hindu literally lives and dies in Mantra.

What, then, in this mighty force which is believed to wield such a great influence upon a nation reputed to be both spiritually great and intellectually acute? From the hoary antiquity of Vaidik Mantras down to modern times, great and varied are the changes which have taken place in the Hindu's philosophical thoughts and religious ideas, but Mantra stands with its head erect and limbs sturdy as the undying witness of God's grace to His Hindu sons. The question, I fear, has not been seriously asked by the English-educated Hindu. The Hindu of the old school takes it as an heirloom from his ancestors without ever trying to understand what it really is and how it can be utilized. He recites it parrot-like, and thinks he has done his duty. It is this indifference on the one hand, and apathy on the other, which has rendered the Hinduism of the present day almost a dead religion.

The above enumeration of uses for which Mantras are invoked will have shown that they are of various classes, and that they possess subtle powers of action on the spiritual, mental, and physical planes of existence. They are not words and sentences, neither are they syllables, although they are expressed by written character in words and sentences. There are various Mantras in the vernacular of India, used for non-spiritual

¹ Lesser spirits.
purposes. In the Bengali language, especially in the form in which it is used in Assam, there are numbers of Mantras which are apparently quite meaningless; many of the words used therein are no words at all, for they convey no meaning. Words and sentences which have no meanings to convey to the understanding are no part of a language. If you believe that they are efficacious, you must admit that they are sound-powers acting on different planes of consciousness.

The efficacy of Mantras is not a matter of opinion, a mere theory which needs cogent arguments to bring it home to men’s minds. It is a fact in the arcana of nature revealed by God, testified to by the unimpeachable evidence of selfless, disinterested Rṣis of hoary antiquity, and corroborated by hosts of Sādhakas of all ages. There are numberless Sādhakas still living who have had direct proof of the efficacy of Mantras. Each one of us can, if we will, obtain such direct proof ourselves. The Tantra which is known as the Mantra-sāstra is an exact science, and does not shrink from the severest test which may be applied to it. Use a Mantra under the directions of a competent Guru, and you will acquire direct evidence of its efficaciousness. Our hereditary professional Gurus initiate us with sacred Bijamantra and Gāyatri, and teach us Mantras for the worshipping of our Iṣṭadevatā. We go on, as we have been taught, from the day of our initiation to the end of our life, but it may be that no result is perceived. If we ask our Guru how this is so, he will reproach us with impatience and want of devotion. Placed in this predicament we lose our faith in Mantras, and become indifferent to them. But we do not pause to reflect whether it be the fault of the Mantra, or of the instructor from whom we had the misfortune to receive it, or of ourselves. It is quite an error to suppose that if Mantra be a sound power, it must yield the result sought for as soon as it is pronounced. Now, electricity is a physical force which has been imprisoned, so to say, in various sorts of mechanical contrivances in order to produce various results. There are books which describe these contrivances and prescribe their uses. Can anyone, by mere reading of the books, handle these machineries and produce the desired results? If such be the case in dealing with physical forces, how much more is practical instruction necessary for the handling of spiritual and psychical forces.

For the moment I leave out all other Mantras in order to confine my attention to such alone as are known as Bija Mantras. They are the

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1 In a general sense worshippers. See as to Sādhana, or practice, Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.

2 Seed-Mantras. See ante.

3 The celebrated Vaidik Mantra of that name. See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra. “Gāyatri.”

4 The chosen Deity of the particular worshipper.
powers which carry us safe through the world’s entanglements towards that haven of peace and bliss for which the human mind naturally, though unconsciously, yearns, though in ignorance of the path it diverges into different treacherous ways, lured by the tempting light of Kāma desire.

From what has been said regarding Vārṇas, it will have been seen that Vārṇas are living, conscious sound-powers. From Vārṇas are evolved secondary sound-powers, called Mantras. It has also been related how Śabdabrahman becomes a septenary of male and female Powers for the purposes of creation. Innumerable other Powers are evolved from them, who constitute the hierarchy of Devatās. The Powers, higher or lower, are spiritual entities, possessing body and mind, though the body of the higher Gods, such as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, is to the human consciousness as unfathomable as the human body and mind is to a cell inhabiting the human body. The embodied higher Devatās are Lords of Mercy. They also manifest themselves from time to time in the Deva Loka (the region of Devas), and on earth for the good of Devas and of humanity. They create their Avatāra-body when they find it necessary to manifest themselves. The bodies of Devatās are sound-powers. In the fourth chapter of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra it is said:

उपालकान्त कर्याश्रं भेषेस्ते जलामापे ।
वनानां विनाशाय भस्ते नानाविभासनः ॥
चाकुर्वंजलं देवदुर्गा भुजभोजनमेव तथा ।
तन्मेव विश्वाये नानाविभासस्यार्कः ॥
तत्तुष्यन्ति नवन्त्र वनमन्वादविधायनः ।
कष्टिं सर्वेऽक्षेपः . . . . .

(कुर्यंक्ष्मसं, ४-१६-१८)

“For the benefit of worshippers, for the good of the universe, and for the destruction of Dānavas,1 Thou assumest various bodies. Thou art four-handed, two-handed, six-handed, and eight-handed. For the safety of the universe Thou bearest divers weapons. In the Tantras are revealed Yantras, Mantras, and other methods of self-culture, according to those bodies.”

Again, in the fifth chapter of the same Tantra it is stated:

तव क्रमवधन्नां नानापालिनिष्ठीनि श ।
नानाप्राप्तात्त्वाध्यानि वर्षितं केवल शक्यते ॥

1 Demons.
"Thy manifestations are infinite, having diverse colours and forms. Different are the methods which must be diligently followed in order to realize them. None can describe them all. A little of Thy favour has enabled me to describe, according to My power, the methods of their worship and attainment in the Tantras."

"Thy Mantras are infinite, by crores and arbuds\(^1\). . . . Because thou art the Ādyā Prakṛti, therefore all the Mantras mentioned in the Tantras are Thy Mantras."

From the above it will appear that Mantras are the bodies of the Devatās. They are not gross (sthūla) bodies, but subtle vehicles through which they manifest themselves. In the Yāmalatantra this is more explicitly stated:

\[ \text{देवताणां सर्वानि त्रियुक्तानि श्रतेऽकुमारे।} \]

"Verify the body of the Devatā arises from Bija."

The Śāktānandatarāṅgini, a Tantrik work of great reputation by the renowned Brahmānanda Giri, explains the word वर्ण (vāṇa) to mean वर्ण (vāṇa). And आष (āṣ) means sound-power, as already explained.

If one reads between the lines, divesting his mind of the Illusion Theory of Śrīmat Saṅkarācārya, he may find a corroboration of the principle above laid down in the following couplet from the fourth chapter of the Bhagavadgītā:

\[ \text{अजस्रि सण्यवात्स्क जूतानामीवोपदेपि सन्।} \]

\[ \text{प्रकृति स्वाभिषेक सन्ध्यायालमस्य।} \]

"Unborn, immutable, Lord of all beings though I am, entering my Prakṛti, I am born by my own Māyā."

Here the Lord Īśvara, and not Parabrahman, explains to his disciple Arjuna how He incarnates—that is, appears in human body. His birth

\(^1\) An arbud is ten crores, and a crore is ten millions.
is not like the birth of men; it is divyam (Divine) (vide Sloka, ix, chap. iv). The sūkṣma śārīra (subtle body) of man, after having spent its subjective Karma, is impelled, by its own inexorable destiny, to take birth on earth through an earthly father and mother, who supply the materials for the building up of the physical body. The Lord has no such Sūkṣma Śārīra which may serve as the instrument by which a Sthūla body functions; for it must be borne in mind that without Praṇa (the vital principle) an Antahkaraṇa (the mind and the sensorium) a physical body cannot for a moment live. The Lord enters his Prakṛti, or rather brings it into requisition to form a Sūkṣma Śārīra for Himself. Now, what is the Prakṛti of Iśvara but Mūla Prakṛti in action? Is it not for exactly that reason that Iśvara is called Śabdabrahman? It is therefore spiritual sound by which Iśvara (that is Śabdabrahman) forms his subtle body of life, and sensorium. Herein lies the Divine character of Iśvara’s appearances (Avatāra). It is therefore called Divine (divyam). The subsequent process of acquiring a gross body is described in the above verse to be Ātmamāyāyā (by My own Māyā). Now, if Māyā and Prakṛti be one and the same, the verse becomes meaningless. Māyā or Avidyā is that phase of Prakṛti in which evolution from spirit to matter takes place, as distinguished from Mahāmāyā or Vidyā, which is the agent for the involution of matter to spirit. The Lord, to appear in flesh and blood, had therefore first to build his Sound-body, and then to issue from the Mother’s womb in the ordinary way. It is this Sound-body of the Lord which is the Mantra of the Vaiṣṇavas worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Mantra is not merely an important, but an essential, element of self-culture in Kṛṣṇa Yoga. The realization of Ātmā, the One True Self, is not possible so long as the mind functions in the brain and identifies itself with the sensations, perceptions, and concepts furnished by the phenomenal world. By Samādhi (communion) alone the true self can be realized. Kṛṣṇa Yoga prepares the mind for Samādhi. In Patañjali’s Darśana (Yoga Philosophy) Kṛṣṇa Yoga is thus defined:

तप:स्वाध्यायेवक्षणपुष्पिणामिनि भिष्मदः: |

This aphorism is explained by Vedavyāsa in his Commentary thus:

नात्रविवेच्यो येष: सिद्धाति, अनादिक्षमेष्वरस्वास्त्र: चित्त: प्रतिविषाणम्

बालवाक चायुक्तिरानवनें तथ: समेवस्मापनति हि तस्स उपासन्न, तथ: विचन

ममादनक्षामानमन्यनमेत्वत्स्मिति स्मये। स्वाध्याय: प्रभादिविविविधाया अत: परशुक्तिरम्

चायुक्तिः वा। ईश्वरपिविविधायान्तः सविभक्तिरा परम्परावेयम्, तद्वस्तरमानसे वा।

A free translation of the aphorism and its Bhāṣya is given below:
Discipline (of body, speech, and mind), repetition of Mantras, or study of Mokṣa Śāstras (scriptures teaching liberation), and worship of God, constitute Kṛyā Yoga."

"Yoga is not attainable by persons who have not brought their body, speech, and mind under discipline. The mind being coloured with the accumulated Samskāras or impressions of Karma without beginning and with desires resulting in misery, its Rājasik and Tāmasik functions cannot be minimized without Tapas. Mind-cleansing Tapasyā should be so practised that it may not injure the body. The word Svādhiṣṭāna means repeating (japa) of Prāṇava (ॐ—Om) and other Mantras, or the study of such Śāstras as inculcate Mokṣa (liberation). Īśvara-prapidhāna means the dedication of all works to the greatest Guru Īśvara (The Lord), or doing unselfish works."

Japa7 of mantra is thus an important factor in arriving at that stage of the mind which, in Yoga Śāstra, is called Samprajñātā Samādhi—that is, conscious communion. When man reaches that plane of consciousness, his accumulated Karma, and his earth-bound desire which is the cause of Karma, vanish never to return again. He realizes the all-blissful Divinity, and becomes Divinity itself. Divine worship is ordained as a preliminary step for this consummation; for it is by Bhakti and Prema (Faith and Love) to God that our congenital tenacious attachment to worldly things can be replaced, and the thirst for happiness of the ever-restless mind quenched. The daily worship which the Hindus perform consists of Sandhyā and Puja,8 in both of which Mantra is a necessity; for the Mantra is not only potent in withdrawing the mind from its external functions, but it makes worship possible. From Mantra the worshipper gains the form of the object of his worship upon which he must practise his concentration and devotion, and when the worshipper has made some advance he will recognize the Mantra itself to be his Iṣṭadevatā. Last, though not the least, is the power of Mantra to awaken the latent powers of the mind. The last chapter of Patañjali’s Darśana opens thus:

जन्मोपजितसत्त्वसमाकिष्ठा सिद्धि: ।

"Uncommon power of the mind is attained by birth, drugs, Mantra, Tapas, and Samādhi."

The practice of Mantra according to the Tāntrik method develops without fail the latent faculties of the mind, with the help of which the

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1 Devotion, austerity, etc. See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra, and also for the meaning of the gunas, rajas, tāmas, sattva.

2 "Recitation" or "repetition" are the nearest English equivalents for this term, which is more fully explained in Introduction to Tantra Śāstra, sub. voc. "Japa".

3 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
Sādhaka must climb step after step until the final rung of the ladder is reached.

The object to be attained, or rather the one Immutable True Existence to be realized, according to the Tāntrik philosophy, is Parabrahman. But the instrument—the mind—with which man has to realize is Prakṛtik—that is, evolved out of the three gunas of Prakṛti. The gunas, being dissimilar in nature to Sat, Cit, and Ānanda, cannot be the instrument which can directly seize the Absolute, just as one cannot catch air by iron tongs. Hence it is that the Son of God is the Mediator of the Christians, and Śadbabrahman or Saguna Īśvara is the object of worship of the Hindus. The Mantra, I mean Bija Mantra is Śadbabrahman. The Mantra power of Śakti has two aspects—Vācaka and Vācyā, which are explained in the text.

The Vācaka Śakti of a Mantra is the vital, intelligent, and conscious entity through which the unconditioned evolves, or through which Nirguṇa (attributeless) Brahman must be realized. Vācaka Śakti in its female aspect is Kuṇḍalini, and its male aspect Parasiva or Mahāviṣṇu. Vācyā Śakti is that which is sought to be realized through the Vācaka Śakti. It is Nirguṇa Brahman. The Mantra, by its innate power, reveals the Vācaka Śakti to the human mind which, being thus freed from the chain of causation, is translated into the Vācaka Śakti itself. The realization of the Vācyā Śakti is the last leap forward into that region of the Absolute whence no traveller ever returns either as Īśvara or Deva or Mānava (man). The Tāntrik Sādhaka is therefore warned against that ignorance which takes Mantras to be mere words or letters of the alphabet:

गुरूं मानुषुद्धि च मने चाहररामनायः
प्रतिमायां शिशुवाणु ज्वर्णो नरसं क्रेत्

"Perdition is the lot of him who thinks that Guru is a mere man, that Mantras are mere letters of the alphabet, and that Pratimā (the Image) of the Deity, is mere stone."

The word Mantra is thus explained in the Pingalā Tantra, quoted in Śāradātilaka:

मन्त्रं विश्वविश्वान भाष्यं संसारभवनवतुः
यत: क्रीती दसस्त्रो मन्त्र हतुच्छत सुपे

"That from which the true knowledge of the universe and freedom from the bondage of the world is attained is called Mantra."

1 Existence, consciousness, and bliss, the nature of the Brahman.
2 The Lord with attributes, as contrasted with the attributeless supreme—the Parabrahman.
3 See ante.
The "true knowledge" of the universe, according to Tantra, is the realization of the identity of Brahmān and Brahmanḍa. This, too, is the Vaidik conception, as it is expressed in the aphorism: स्वग च मिहाय श्राप ("Verily all this is Brahmān"). I have elsewhere quoted from the Bhagavadgītā a passage in which it is said that the Mantra ओ (Om) is capable of freeing the Jīva, or embodied spirit, from the bondage of births and deaths. How mighty is the power of Mantra! It is Sound-spiritual, it is Divinity itself. Blessed is the man who, having heard the sweet, soul-soothing, ineffable Madhyama sound in the lotus of the heart, plunges deep into the ocean of Suṣumnā,1 to rise at the feet of Kulakundalini singing Her song of the universe in Her Para melody.2 Of all the methods for hearing the Sound-spiritual taught in different schools of Yoga, the Mantra Yoga is the best, straightest, and easiest, because Mantra itself, being Sound-power, has greater aptitude than anything else to reach the bodily Sound-centres.

**INITIATION (Dikṣā), GURU (TEACHER) AND ŚIṢYA (DISCIPLE)**

According to the Ayurvedik system of medicine, four factors are essential for successful treatment of a disease. They are called Khuddak Catusthaya. They are physician, medicine, nurse, and patient. The physician must be capable of making a correct diagnosis of his patient's ailment, the medicine should be appropriate and powerful, the nurse must be dutiful, and the patient careful of his health and possessed of faith in his physician. A successful treatment of the disease of the soul, called Bhavaroga, or earthly sufferings, is, similarly, dependent upon four essential factors. The patient is the man who, convinced of the existence of the disease which has overtaken him, is anxious to be cured; Bhakti, or devotion, is his nurse; he is the Guru, or teacher, who can properly diagnose the particular form of the patient's illness, and impart to him the proper medicament—I mean Mantra—which has the potency to heal.

The disease of the soul needs much more physicking than the disease of the body, of which the patient is fully cognizant, and which is of comparatively shorter duration and can be diagnosed by objective means. But the disease of the soul is a chronic ailment of many births and rebirths. The lot of such a patient is spiritually dismal, no doubt, but the glamour of Māyā transports him to a fool's paradise, where lust, avarice,

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1 The channel of energy (nāḍī) of that name situate in the spinal axis. See Arthur Avalon's "Serpent Power".
2 In the Mūlādhāra (vide ibid.).
SIRIPDUL CULTURE—VAIDIK AND TANTRIK

greed, power, and ambition feed him with dainty dishes, and lull him to
forgetfulness of the disease which is eating into his very vitals. Fortunate
is the man who, knowing his real condition, is to be found at the lotus-feet
of his Guru.

Knowledge of the human ego's real condition arises first mediately
from a proper study of the Šastra, and then directly by self-illumination.
But the study of the Šastras as a mere intellectual exercise is fraught with
mischief. In the Kulārṇava Tantra the Lord has a significant admonition
on this subject, which translated, runs thus:

"Fools led by the bondage of their animal nature fall into the deep
well of the six systems of philosophy, and are unable to know what the
Paramārtha (supreme good) is. Perverse logicians, owing to their
ignorance of the real meaning of the Vedas, roam here and there, scorched
by the fire of scepticism. They do not know that within the surging
waves of time they are under the mighty jaws of death. The man who
knows the Vedas, Āgamas, and Purāṇas, but who is yet ignorant of
the Paramārtha, and gives instructions, simply caws like a crow.
Unmindful of the Paratattva (the Supreme), he is ever thinking of
what is knowledge and what is knowable, and is immersed in study
day and night. The words of such are flowing and rhetorical, but
at heart they are anxious, sorry, and ill at ease. Men take great
pains to prove the Paratattva to be what it is not. They explain
the gist of the Šastra to be what it is not. They explain supersen-
suous matters without themselves realizing them. Some, led by vanity,
study the Vedas without a Guru's help; but a knower of the real sense
of the Vedas is hard to find. As a spoon does not know the taste of the
food cooked with it, as the head carries a load of flowers, but the nose
enjoys its fragrance, so they study the Veda Śastra, but, being ignorant
of the Paramārtha (which is known only to Śādhakas), quarrel among
themselves. As a milkman, forgetting the goat in his arms, sees it in its
image in a well, even so are men, who are unconscious of the Paratattva
that is in them, deluded by the Šastras. As the darkness of a house can
never be dispelled by uttering the word "lamp," even so is the word-
meaning of Śastra impotent to dispel the māyik darkness of the Ego.
The study of Šāstra by people not possessed of Prajñā—that is, the inner
light—is as though a blind man opened his eyes to see. The Šastra gives
Divine knowledge (Tattvājñāna) to those who have Prajñā."

Abhavesātvaḥ dhiśā "The object of Śastra is to impart such knowledge
as cannot be gained through the senses." It therefore stands to reason
that the real meaning of Śastra cannot be acquired merely through the
brain. The door to supersensuous knowledge must be unlocked, and the
sleeping Kula-Kuṇḍalini awakened. This is done by Dikṣā or initiation.
Dikṣā is thus explained in the Tantras:
The above verses, rendered freely into English, read thus:

"Those who commune with the Divinity call it Dikṣā because it imparts Divine knowledge and cuts worldly bonds" (Yogini Tantra).

"He who has not been initiated cannot acquire Divine knowledge, and cannot gain a desirable state after death. Hence it is that one should, by all means, get himself initiated by a Guru" (Rudra Yāmala).

"Those who, without being initiated, perform Japa, Puja, etc., derive no benefit, even as seeds sown on stone, do not germinate" (Rudra Yāmala).
“As iron is transmuted into gold when it is penetrated by Rasendra (great fluid), even so is the individual Ego converted into the Divinity by Dīkṣā. His Karma being burnt by the fire of Dīkṣā, he becomes freed from the bondage of Karma, and thus the fetters of Karma being removed, the Jiva becomes Siva” (Kulārṇava Tantra, quoted in the Commentary on Kalpaśūtra).

“No amount of Upāsanā (worship), without Dīkṣā, can give Divine knowledge: so one should, by all means get himself initiated for the purpose of rendering the Mantra efficacious” (Kulārṇava Tantra).

“One cannot derive any benefit by repeating a Mantra, learnt from books; on the other hand, injury is incurred at every step” (quoted by Rāghava Bhatta).

“Having acquired the Mantra from the Guru, it should be cultivated in the disciple’s consciousness. Religious exercises for liberation are for fruition dependent entirely upon the Guru.”

From what has been stated regarding the Sound-Spiritual, Mantra and Kula-Kuṇḍalini, it will have been seen that Mantra is a living spiritual sound-Power emanating from the vehicle of the Divine Serpent. The human Ego, born on the earth as the consequence of his actions in previous lives, must work out such Karmas as are germinating, and will also germinate Karmas for its weal or woe. He is placed here below in direct communication with the objective world through its five agents of knowledge and five agents of action. The knowledge acquired through the five senses is phenomenal: it is not true knowledge; it is knowledge as it seems, not knowledge as it is. It is the knowledge of actors as they appear on the stage, and not of the individuals who are dressed as actors in the green room. The green room of nature is hidden from the view of the senses. But it is in the green room that nature must be seen by the Ego in order that it may free itself from the glamour of māyā which has rendered it an earth-bound spirit. Unless one recognizes the reality, there is no escape from its semblance. But the physical brain is not the place where, nor are the senses the avenue through which, the one Reality, the All-blissful Sat-cit-ānanda enthroned in the effulgence of the spiritual world is to be seen. The human body is a duality not only in the objective plane, but in the subjective plane as well. The mind receives objective knowledge through the brain by means of the senses and the sensory nerves. It can receive subjective knowledge through the spinal column by means of senses which have to be developed. But the passage through which the green room of the human body must be entered is barred by the hood of the Slumbering Serpent Kula-Kuṇḍalini. To wake Her up, to implore Her Divine grace that we may be shown the Real (which is no other than She), and that the unreal may be dispelled, is the work of the living Mantra-Power for the earnest Ego.
Electricity is ubiquitous. It is in every atom, in every molecule, and in every thing made up of atoms and molecules. My pen is made up of atoms and molecules. Why does it not, then, announce to me the existence of electricity in it? Why does it not fan me in this grilling heat and give brilliant light to my failing vision, although that is my earnest wish? The reason is that electricity, by processes known to experts, must be roused into action, and manipulated in different ways to yield different results. Mantra Šakti, similarly, is ubiquitous; it is in every form of existence. Indeed, from Sound-power the universe is built. It has countless forms which pervade the universe. It is the Guru, the Māntrik Scientist, who alone knows how to manipulate it and to employ it in producing the desired result—that is to say, in awakening the Slumbering Divine Serpent in man.

The mere communication of an atomic sound from one’s mouth to another’s ear cannot be expected to produce such a result. The Guru has himself to vitalize and energize the Mantra in his own inner consciousness, and then to communicate the living spiritual force to the consciousness of his disciple (Śiśya). If there be reason to believe in transference of thought from a hypnotiser to his subject—and hypnotism has now been recognized as a science—there is no ground for disbelieving the transference of a power even subtler than a thought (which is a power as well) from a Guru to his disciple. When such an event happens in the life of a person, his whole mental system undergoes a revolution; he receives a second birth, and it is for this that an initiated man is a Dvija (twice-born). The Veda withheld the privileges of a Dvija from the fourth caste (Śūdra), but the Tantra throws the portals of initiation wide open to every man or woman, whoever he or she may be. The Gāndāla 1 and all others are all the children of the Divine Mother, the milk of whose eternal breast is sucked by every living being.

Dikṣā, thus, is not a conventional usage, a toll paid to the Divine ferryman for carrying the sojourner across the ocean of the world (Bhavasindhu). Spiritual India has, unfortunately, come to this pass, and it is the Tantra which can alone save it, as it has saved it in the Kali Yuga of every Kalpa.

Śabdabrahmamayi, the Divine Mother, must be reached. A deep, surging sea divides the sojourning Ego from Her. It is the Black Sea of objective knowledge, the Vaitarani of Hindu mythology. Mantra is the bark to carry it thither. The Guru must help the Ego in each of its steps forward into the region of the unknown. Indeed, without the Guru’s help the disciple cannot move one such step. The disciple must also work hard, under the instructions of the Guru, to keep up the energy of the Mantra.

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1 One of the lowest castes.
And when Mantra is assimilated in the inner consciousness of the disciple, he is said to have become Siddha (accomplished) in it. He can then use it at his will, and, awakening Kula-Kuṇḍalinī, plunge with Her into the Lotus-garden, where alone the nature of the Ātmā and Anātmā¹ can be realized. The human body, according to the Tantra, is a microcosm, which contains in miniature all that is contained in the Kosmos. It has the seven Lokas, worlds or regions located in it, and the Sādhaka, who, with the help of his Bij Mantra, has known them and their over-Lords has left the mother’s womb never to come back again. It may here be noted by way of parenthesis that the seven Lokas are not states of existence, but worlds made up of different modifications of matter, and peopled by beings on different planes of consciousness.

Such being Dīkṣā, imagine what the Guru is!

गुरूः तुष्टि विनयत्स्यो रूपमिलेचा: ।
गुरूः तुष्टि विनय गुण्यो रूप्य च सुन्दरी ॥
अतो गुरुपरदेसानि! संसारार्जनलक्षणे ।
कर्णां पति च हर्षें च गुरुक्षेऽदापकः ॥

गुरुप्रत्यामः ।

“If the Guru is pleased, Śiva is pleased; if he is displeased, Śiva is displeased. If the Guru is pleased, Śivānī² is pleased; if the Guru is displeased, Śivānī is displeased. Hence, O Maheśānī!³ the Guru is the Lord, the sustainer and the annihilator. It is he who can give Mokṣa” (Guru Tantra).

But the human Guru is not the real Guru. The real Guru is in the Thousand-petalled Lotus. The human Guru bears the same relation to the Divine Guru that Vācaka Śakti of a Mantra bears to the Vācyā Śakti. The Yogini Tantra thus explains Guruship:

ओ देवेयाच ।
गुर: को वा महेशान कस्मे कस्माम ।
लोकेन्द्रियक पत्यं गुरस्वप्तम प्रकीर्तित: ॥
भूत्तेश्वर उपच ।
आदिनाथो महादेवी महापापो हि य: सर्व: ।
गुरु: स एव देवेशी सर्वायमेव नानाः ॥

¹ Not ātmā.
² The Devi as consort of Śiva.
³ 27
"Śrī Devī said: 'Merciful Mahēśvara! tell me who is Guru. You have told me that the Guru is greater than Thou art.' Śrī Iśvara said: 'He who is the first Lord and is called Mahākāla is the Guru, O Devi! in all Mantras. None else is the Guru. He is verily the Guru of the Śāivas, Śāktas, Vaiṣṇavas, Gāṇapatyas, Moon-worshippers, Mahāśaivas, and Sauras.¹ He and none else is the promulgator of Mantra. At the time of imparting Mantra, O Daughter of mountain, He manifests Himself in him who imparts Mantra. Hence, O Devi! verily there is no Guruship in man. The human Mantra-giver meditates upon the same Guru in the Head-Lotus as Him upon whom the disciple must there meditate. Therefore, O Mahēśvari! there is only one Guru. Because He manifests himself in the human Guru, therefore the greatness of the human Guru is published in all the Śāstras."

The Yāmala Tantra says:

"There is only one Guru, who undoubtedly is Myself; Thou, too, O Devi! and Mantra, too, is Guru. Therefore Guru, Devatā, and Mantra,

¹ Vide ante.
² The Devī as Pārvati, daughter of the mountain King Himāvat.
are the same. He is always to be contemplated in the Thousand-petalled Lotus, sometimes in the Heart-Lotus, and sometimes as existing before the eyes—that is, in human form."

In initiating and instructing a disciple, the human Guru undertakes a vicarious duty, the magnitude of which he should fully realize. He must fill himself with the Divine Presence, that his Sisya may be born to the spiritual life. He must also, impart to his disciple that sure knowledge which will lead him without error on the onward path of Sādhanā. Henceforward the life of the disciple becomes a part of the Guru's life. The Guru becomes responsible for the sins of his disciple.

We are apt to complain of the rarity of the Gurus, but we do not pause to consider the paucity of Sisyas (disciples). Gaṇapati, the elephant-headed Devatā, by the grace of His Divine mother, had the consolation to believe that He was the best of singers. We, too, by the grace of Avidyā, have an overweening confidence in our intellectual attainments, thinking that we are perfectly qualified to receive the highest spiritual instructions.

The Gautamiya Tantra says:

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\text{स्मिर्य: कुमीन्द्र: युध्याक्रम पुरुषार्थंपराण:} \\
\text{अविदेश: कुशल: पितुशाहिते सत्:} \\
\text{यमंविर्हस्तर्का च गुरुसम्भवे सत्:} \\
\text{कता शाश्वार्थत्वं जो द्वदेही त्वासय:} \\
\text{हितेशि माधिनां नित्यं परक्षार्थसम्बन्धित्} \\
\text{बालन:कायकृषिमिग्नुस्मृयथे सत्:} \\
\text{अतिलक्षणसामाय नित्यानुभावतपि:} \\
\text{जितेन्द्रियो जितात्म्यो जितमनो जितमत्तर:} \\
\]

"The Sisya (disciple) should be of good parentage, pure-minded, bent upon realizing the fourfold aspirations; he should be learned in the Vedas, diligent, devoted to the welfare of parents; he should know Dharma and practise it; he should serve the Guru; he should be acquainted with the true meaning of the Sāstras; he should possess a strong physique and a strong mind. He should always do good to living objects; he should do only such deeds as are good for the after-life. He should serve the Guru by speech, thought, body, and money. He should avoid works of which the result is transitory, and be diligent in working for enduring results. He should be one who has conquered passions, indolence, illusory knowledge (Moha), and anger."

1 That is, Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa. See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
From the above it will appear that to be a real Śiṣya mere intellectual attainment is not sufficient. While he should be conversant with the Śāstras (scriptures) to enable him to understand what he is, what his destiny is, what relation he bears to the universe and to the Lord of the universe, he should have purified his mind from the thousand and one worldly pursuits which detract rather than bring peace to it. He should diligently do what the Śāstras enjoin, and scrupulously avoid un-Śāstrik actions. He should have a living faith in his religion, and an earnest, irrepressible longing for spiritual advancement. Lust, anger, and their train should not be his masters. His profession should be in strict accordance with Śāstrik morality. He should consciously do nothing that hurts or injures a fellow-being, and the milk of his kindness should ever flow to relieve suffering humanity. These and many other qualifications are required of the aspirant to the great path. It is also stated that a candidate must remain under the personal observation of a Guru for a whole year before he can hope to be initiated. Deluded by Avidyā, however, we do not pause to reflect whether the field in which the seed is to be sown is worthy of it. Sometimes, in our impatience (which is a state of mind quite unfitted for spiritual culture), we fly to sannyāsīs (ascetics), and, getting ourselves initiated by them, hasten homeward, hardly knowing that thereby we transgress a positive injunction of the Śāstra, and place ourselves in difficulties. It is laid down in the Tantras:

माताग्नि च नित्रं भोति च वन्नास्तिनम्।

वर्णविधि च विज्ञानेन्द्रो दीर्घानितिभवास्ते।

अन्येन तद्वैशेषेन कर्माणां भवेद्यक्ष।||

वामकलनम्।

बत्तेबासा विकुर्वैं कीक्ष च वन्नासितः।

विभिकाष्ठिनों दीक्षा च सा क्ष्याण्याबिनी।||

गणेविवासितिभवास्ते।

आश्री देशाभायी च गुह्यें विधिभरते।

विभिकाष्ठिनों।

पुजवीर्क्ष संप्रो गुह्याराग्मसमातः।

मत्यालक्ष।

आश्री व्यासनीभ्य मन्त्रमहिष्ठाम।

ललितमर्मं।
In the initiation one should exclude the maternal grandfather, father, a Sannyāsi, and Vānaprastha, otherwise, there being contrariety in the respective positions of Guru and Śiṣya, the Śiṣya is sure to meet death.

Initiation by a Yati, by one’s father, by a Vānaprastha, or by a Sannyāsi is not favourable to the welfare of a Śiṣya.

One should receive Dīkṣā from a householder residing in the same locality with the Śiṣya.

The Tantra enjoins initiation from a Guru who has wife and children.

The Guru should be a householder, meditative and well versed in Tāntrik knowledge and in Mantra.

The reason why a man who has freed himself of the illusory world and stands outside of it is ill-qualified to show the light, step by step, to a disciple whirling in the eddies of the world is plain enough. A Sannyāsi is one who has given up Karma, his mind having been purified. He is an Advaitī, whose only avocation is the realization of the One without a second. But a householder is a man in, even if he be not of, the world. He is practically a Dvaitī, though intellectually he may not be so. His distracted mind must be soothed by worship, prayer, and hymn, and by other acts of devotion (Bhakti) to his Iṣṭadevatā. A Sannyāsi, on the other hand, is a Jñāni (one possessed of true knowledge) who, having crossed the threshold of Bhakti (devotion), looks down upon it as an illusion, an unreality. The mental attitudes of a householder and of a Sannyāsi are poles asunder. It is, therefore inevitable that, in spite of his best endeavours, a Sannyāsi’s teachings must contain much that is unassimilable by a householder, who, by his strenuous efforts to practise such instructions, must succumb bodily and mentally.

A householder Guru, on the other hand, is much on the same plane of consciousness with his disciple. Though in the small rowing-boat of Bhakti (devotion), he has oared manfully towards the ship of his destination, and neared it. His Bhakti is suffused with the Divine halo of Jñāna (knowledge). He is the fittest person to lead a world-ridden disciple by the hand, instructing him in every point, and teaching him by personal example:

स्मावाते शिष्यमाचरि स्मापत्यांि

चतुर्वाकम्

1 One who has gone to the forest according to the rule of the third Āśrama.
2 Ascetic.
3 A spiritual monist, not a mere philosophical monist, but one who himself in various degrees experientially realizes the truth of that doctrine.
4 Dualist.
5 See post.
“Himself practises and puts disciples in practice” (Rudra Yāmala).
Those who are real aspirants need not encumber their progress by adhering to the ancestral Guru. If they have already been initiated by him, they may leave him and find out a higher one.
The Kāmākhya Tantra says:

लेखां श्रवणे सत्य ज्ञान गुरूदेव हि।
ज्ञानमोक्षसाधार्थि तस्मादानं परस्यस्म॥
अतो यो ज्ञानं न वर्जने न क्षेष्ठे श्रवणुः।
अथायामुखी निरस्त्रं हि सदा संस्कारं धिने॥
ज्ञानं ज्ञातं सार्थमातं स सुः। द्विष्ठ एव हि।
अथायामुखस्य कृष्णलिङ्गशरणं ज्ञातं भजेत॥
मनुष्याः यथा शुभः। दुःखातुः दुःखान्ताः भजेत।
ज्ञानविज्ञानम् शरणं गुरूरुपेत्यं भजेत॥
कामाक्ष्योत्तमः॥

“A Guru exists to impart Jñānas (different forms of knowledge). Jñāna leads one to Mokṣa (liberation). Hence Jñāna is the supreme good. Therefore the Guru who is incapable of imparting Jñāna should be abandoned, as one who is desirous of food abandons the person who has no food to give. One in whom Jñāna shines is Guru; he is Śiva. Abandoning the ignorant, one should take the shelter of the wise. As a bee roams from flower to flower in quest of honey, even so should a Śīya, in quest of Jñāna, go from one Guru to another.”

If the ancestral Guru be really ignorant, there is nothing in the Tantra Śāstra to compel one to seek initiation from him. But I feel the necessity of a word in favour of this much-abused man. I fear the Hindu Society is much more to blame than the ancestral Guru for this state of things. There was a happy time when every Hindu deemed it his duty not only to be initiated, but to practise worship with devotion and piety. Many amongst the higher classes lived a life which was rather religious than a purely social one. It was, therefore, incumbent upon the Guru so to qualify himself as to render himself a being higher than those around him. But the Hindu mind having considerably receded from such an ideal of life, initiation and worship are disregarded. There being very little demand for real initiation and instruction in true worship, the supply of duly qualified Gurus has naturally fallen off. That the Guru-class still exists is due, to a large extent, to our love for the husk with which we want to fill the social granary. The Gurus, moreover, are now ill-fed by the Śīya community, which accounts for many Guru families
giving up the profession. It is the paramount duty of the Hindus of the present generation to reform the Guru community, which can, I think, be easily effected by fostering the growth of a sincere and earnest desire to learn and to practise among ourselves.

There is one aspect of initiation which I have left untouched for want of information—I mean its astrological aspect. It is said that the nativity of a candidate and the particular Mantra in which he should be initiated are correlated. As I am not an astrologer, I am not competent to speak as to this. Those who profess to be astrologers are really empirics, and, having no scientific knowledge of astrology, cannot explain this correlation. But opinions are divided amongst Tāntrikas on this point, and so it need not trouble us.

THE OCTAGON OF SELF-CULTURE

In the previous sections I have attempted to give the reader the result of a general survey of the philosophy upon which Tāntrik Sādhana, or Self-culture, is based. But in so recondite and unfamiliar a subject, where the correctness of every individual interpretation may be called in question, the reader is requested to go himself to the source, and there, with faith and devotion, and under the guidance of a Guru, drink of its waters.

I shall now address myself to the subject of the supreme importance of Tāntrik Sādhana, which, as already observed, is the easiest and the straightest path to follow for men of the Kali Yuga.¹ I should not be understood to preach Sākta Dharma² to one and all. The Tāntrik method of spiritual culture is not, as I have already said, sectarian. The Tantra provides paths of culture for all the five classes of Upāsakas (worshippers) in Hinduism, and an advanced Tāntrik Guru is as capable of illuminating the path of a Vaiṣṇava as that of a Śākta.

The path of Dharma is twofold: the path of desire (pravṛtti) and the path of cessation of desire (nivṛtti). These two paths are in conformity with the two great Powers which are perpetually at work in the universe. One of the Powers is called Māyā and the other Mahāmāyā. They are the two phases of the one immutable Śakti. Māyā weaves the woof and the warp of Evolution from Spirit to matter; Mahāmāyā frees the Ego from its Karmik garb, and leads it on to its destination. To sail downstream is easy enough. It needs no toil, no struggle. The current is favourable; hoist the sail of your Desires on the mast of your untrained

¹ The present, the last, and worst of the ages.
² The way or religion of those who worship Śakti.
Will, and sail pleasantly along. But your pleasure is short-lived; there is sorrow in all of it. Like Sisyphus, you roll your stone up the mountain-top only to come down again. And as the desires, even of the most intellectually cultured, know no bounds, the Ego is drowned more and more in the quagmire of matter, forgetting its own self, and foregoing the privileges of a human Ego which after millions of journeyings, it has had the good fortune to acquire. The soft heart of the Divine Mother cannot bear to see Her children thus lost. She steps in and proclaims Pravṛtti Dharma, which her ordinary children must follow, so that in the long-run Pravṛtti may lead to Nivṛtti. This Dharma is work prescribed in the Śāstras to be performed with Bhakti or devotion to God for accomplishing definite results. Pravṛtti being bridled by Dharma, unrestrained licence of desires is prevented, and the sojourner on the Pravṛtti path begins to learn Bhakti or devotion. The fulfilment of his desires, however worldly, depends upon the favour of God whom he invokes from the depths of his heart. He performs the rites and ceremonies prescribed for the particular object he has in view with austerities and penances which are required; and thus, though the mainspring of his action be selfish, he unconsciously develops his higher instincts and nobler nature. From hankering after sensuous pleasure in the shape of money, power, fame, popularity, progeny, and so forth, he gradually lifts his eyes upwards and longs for power in the unseen world. He devotes his mind and soul to its acquisition. And when he is fortunate enough to obtain but a morsel of it, he at once realizes the nothingness of worldly desires. He forthwith parts with them as a serpent parts with its dead skin. The worshipper on the path of desire now lives in the supersensuous world; his worldly hankerings have ceased at any rate to a considerable extent, and he has made more progress towards the path of Nivṛtti than one whose desires are not restrained by Dharma, and who depends solely upon his own resources to combat Pravṛtti.

To combat Pravṛtti! How sweetly sounds the phrase! To do works for others! How much sweeter still! Let us not deceive ourselves, as we are apt to do. The octopus-like grasp of our cumulated Karma, extending over millions of births and rebirths, is so firm that it is impossible to free ourselves from it unless we begin in Pravṛtti Dharma and end in Nivṛtti. Is it possible for anyone to jump from the bottomless abyss of desires to the celestial height of Nivṛtti by a single leap? There must be intermediate rounds on the ladder, for nature does not work by leaps and bounds; sequences of cause and effects pervade it. Not even the Lokapālas, Dikpālas,1 and Lords higher still are free from desires, though they, by spiritualizing many of such desires, have risen higher and higher on the

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1 Lord of the Regions and Quarters.
upward path of progress. How can one be selfless unless he has dedicated his self to the Lord of all selves? And how can one dedicate his self to the Lord of all selves by one single bound? As householders (Ghês) we are chained to the world by a thousand and one knots. Our family, our lust, our greed, our avarice, our ambition, all bind us down. We are overwhelmed with desires even unto death. Where, then, is our altruism? If there were a scalpel to open the mind, or an X-ray apparatus to display it, it would doubtless be found that altruism is, in many a case, traceable to love of fame, love of popular applause, love of power, and other little self-loves. It is intense love of God alone which can make a person selfless in action. It is very unfortunate that in the name of altruistic work many English-educated Hindus have given up Pravṛtti Dharma, the inestimable boon which the wise, holy Ṛsis have given us for our salvation.

In the Bhagavadgîtā, the Lord (I adopt Mrs. Besant’s translation) says:

चुक्तिकस्व भक्ति मां जना: अल्पनैनुस्तु निष्ठरुप्नेः।
कर्मां ज्ञानार्थस्तु तत्वज्ञानस्व भवेन्नीपियम्॥
तत्र ज्ञानी नित्यायुक्त एकस्माके विदिशथिते ।
पियो हि ज्ञानिनोपस्थायम् स च मया मयापि:॥
उवाच: सर्व एतिमां ज्ञानी वनस्पते भवेन्नीपियम्॥
अस्थित: स हि युक्त्याम् मायेवचार्यमां गतिम्॥
वहुं जननामानं ज्ञानवान मां प्रस्थापिते।
वायुदेव: सर्वमिति स महाला झुकः॥

“Fourfold in division are the righteous ones who worship Me, O Arjuna: the suffering, the seeker for knowledge, the self-interested, and the wise. Of these the wise, constantly harmonized, worshipping the One, is the best; I am supremely dear to the wise, and he is dear to Me. Noble are all these; but I hold the wise as verily Myself; he, self-united, is fixed on Me, the highest goal. At the close of many births the man full of wisdom cometh unto Me. ‘Vāsudeva is all,’ saith he, the Mahātmā, very difficult to find.”

Of the four kinds of worshippers mentioned by Bhagavān, the ārtha and the arthaṭhiti (the suffering and self-interested) are Sakāma Upāsakas,\(^1\)

\(^1\) Worshippers for reward, and with the view to benefits to be gained such as the worshipper whose action is determined by the hope of gaining the pleasures of heaven or avoiding the pains of hell; as contrasted with the Nākāma Sādhaka who acts for God’s good sake only, and not because such action will produce benefits for him.
who are on the path of desire. All the worshippers are called “sukṛtinah” (righteous)—that is, even those who are on the path of desire, have germs of good work in them, otherwise worship would not have formed a part of their work. “Udārāh sarva eva te”—that is, all of them are noble, dear to God, because the Godward mind, even if selfish, attains an amount of mental purification and contentment which is impossible for others to acquire. The last couplet means that a true Jñānī—an advaitist is a product of many, many births, and that such a Mahātmā is very rare. It will thus be seen that Prāvṛtti Dharma has a place in self-culture; however low compared with the highest, that place may be. It is for those who cannot dissociate their minds from worldly desires. And I need hardly say that the bulk of humanity is of that temperament. If there be a blessed few amongst us who have governed their desires effectually, who are rather in than of the world, Prāvṛtti Dharma, like dry leaves of trees, will fall from off them; but they are not, therefore, justified in giving up the Śāstraic Dharma-Karma. The Lord Himself has exhorted them to perform religious works prescribed in the Śāstra selflessly for the instruction of the mass of men. Like a patient who accepts his physician’s diagnosis but rejects his prescription, it would be the height of folly to accept Hindu philosophy and to reject its practice.

The Tāntrik system of culture on the path of desire is remarkable for its aptitude in producing desired results. This is known to Hindus of all denominations. But it is not a mere hankering after worldly benefits. On the contrary, the Sakāma Sādhaka longs more for a glimpse into the arcana of nature than for mundane comforts, and his longing is soon crowned with success. And having acquired a personal proof positive of supersensuous things, the vanity of sensuous desires forces itself upon him in a manner that mere Śravaṇa (study) and Manana (contemplation) can hardly approach. This, it must be conceded, is a long leap forward. To withdraw the mind from worldly attractions and repulsions many births and rebirths have to be spent in study, contemplation, and discrimination. The Tāntrik, on the much-despised path of desire, however, transfers his consciousness from mundane attractions and repulsions to a higher plane of existence within one life and even a much shorter period. Although it cannot give him Muktī (liberation)—and Muktī is not a bunch of grapes to be had by the mere stretching of the hand upwards to the trellis on which they hang—it can make him a Lokapāla, a Dīkpāla, a Manvantarādhipati, or the like.

1 See ante.
2 Great soul.
3 Lords of the regions and quarters.
4 Lord of the period called Manvantara.
It must not be supposed that the Sakāma Tāntrik worships Devatās as the Divinity. He no doubt pays homage to Devatās as higher beings; but the object of his worship is the Divine Mother, who is the same as Mahāviṣṇu, the manifested God, and the methods of his worship are very much the same as those of the worshipper on the Nivṛtti path. What is stated in the Gītā as to the consequences of worshipping Devatās, Pītris, and Bhūtas has no application to a Tāntrik, the ladder of whose spiritual culture begins with the path of desire as the lowest round, and ends at that of which none knows—that is, Kaivalya Mukti, or complete liberation.

So long as a man is a Gṛhī (householder), so long is his path the path of Pravṛtti. If he thinks that he has outgrown it, but at the same time earns money, enjoys the world, forms attachments and repulsions, seeks name, fame, and popular applause, discharges the functions of a father of his household and of a member of the community in which he lives, he deceives himself. The path pointed out to him by the Tāntrik is the best that he can have as an individual, as the father of a family, and as a member of society. The Tāntrik culture is an all-round growth. It makes the body sturdy and strong, and proof to heat, cold, and rains; it wards off diseases from within, and resists diseases from without; it makes one hardy, painstaking, and patient. His will being regularly trained, he is resolute and intrepid. All these qualities of body and mind render him as much a useful member of society as a humble supplicant for the dust of the Mother’s feet. As for altruism, people thus trained are taught from the very beginning to do good to others. परोपकारशक्तिनां साप्ताः किंचिद् कतः | “Kali is the slave of those pious men, the rule of whose life is to do good to others,” says the Tantra.

Now let us pass to the study of the path of cessation, called the path of Nivṛtti. Those whose minds have become sāttvik by the reduction of their rūjasik desires through practice on the path of desire, and those fortunate few whose past lives have prepared them for it, are the fit Adhikāris on the Nivṛtti path. The Hindu Śāstras, whether Vaidik or Tāntrik, regard Adhikāra or personal competency as the most important factor in determining the mode of culture to be prescribed for a candidate. The Guru must test the mental calibre, moral proclivity, and physical aptitude of his would-be disciple (śīya), and must point out to him that path for which he is the most suited.

1 The writer here refers to the higher Intelligence intermediate between Īśvara and man. Devatā is used also in another sense. Thus, the Divine Mother in Her various leading forms is called Devatā.

2 Persons competent for a thing. The whole of Hinduism rests on the theory of competency, or adhikāravāda.
Sadhas on the path of cessation of desire are divided into two classes—viz., those who are yet bound by the ties and conventionalities of the world, and those who have got rid of, or are resolved to get rid of, them. Their methods of culture are different. The ties and conventions are called Pāsa—that is, fetters. They are eight in number, as the Kularṇava Tantra says:

श्रष श्रधा मय शोके जगुप्सा च यप पञ्चमी ||
कुले श्रीं तथा जातिप्रेय पाषाय: प्रकृतितम् ||
कुलार्वस्तल्लम् ||

"Aversion, shame, fear, grief, disgust, family, custom, and caste; these are declared as fetters."

I need hardly point out that there is hardly one among a million who can say that he is free from these fetters. And there are but few who struggle to sail clear of them. My task is to study the Śādhanas of Adhikāris of the former class. This Śādhana may be roughly, though not exhaustively, classed under four heads: 1. Sandhyā, or obligatory daily service. 2. Upāsanā, or worship. 3. Śaṭcakrabhedā. 4. Mudrā Śādhanā. The first two of these will form the subject of this section.

In Patañjali's Yoga Sāstra eight methods are laid down as modes of self-culture for realizing the True Self. They are: 1. Constant practice, and Vairāgya or that state of mind which is proof against worldly attractions and repulsions. 2. Worship of the manifested God. 3. Prāṇāyāma, or regulation of breath. 4. Concentration of mind on any one of the objects of the senses.† 5. Concentration in the heart-lotus. 6. Concentration with a mind free from desires.‡ 7. Concentration on the particular image of the Godhead worshipped by the Śādaka, as it appears in the dream-state, and on the Śāttvik nature of the mind in dreamless sleep. 8. Meditation on any object of liking.

Excepting Nos. 4 and 6, which are particular modes of concentration practised by Tāntriks in Śaṭcakrabhedā§ and secret worship,¶ the Tāntrik Upāsanā includes all these and much more. I shall first take up the last, about which much misconception seems to prevail. The original text is:

कष्यामितद्वानादि ||

"And by meditation on any object of liking” (the being copulative and not alternative).

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† Viṣayavatī vā pravrṣṭirūpannā sthitīnībandhāni. (Patañjala, 1-35).
‡ Vitarāga viṣayādvā cīttam (ib. 1-37).
§ As in Dhyāna on the gandha tattva in the Mūlādhāra, etc.
¶ Rahaṣṭya pūjā; a special mode of worship undertaken with the object of freeing the mind from desires.
Vyāsa’s commentary on the above aphorism is:

बदेवाहिर्मत तदेव यापेत, तत्तथास्तिकेण समस्यावि स्थितिः सुभ्यते!

“Whatever may be the object of one’s liking, let him meditate upon that. If the mind settles upon that particular object, it may settle also elsewhere.”

This aphorism does not give unbridled licence to practise concentration upon any object at random. There are people who have very pronounced predilections for particular objects which they are unable to ignore. It is for these people that the above wholesome advice is given. An anecdote may here be related in illustration of this. Once upon a time there lived a very pious King, who was earnest upon giving a religious training to his son. He repaired to a famous Yogi for whom he entertained great respect. After the usual exchange of greetings the King said: “Mahātmā! If you please, I should like to have my son initiated by your Holiness.” “Very well, my son,” replied the Yogi, “send him hither.” The King, very much gratified, prostrated himself before the holy man, and sped homeward. The day after the royal scion appeared before the Yogi, and paid his obeisance. “God bless you, child; Live here, and make yourself comfortable,” said the Yogi to him.

The royal youth, however, found not much in the Yogi’s Āśrama (hermitage) to comfort him, but the wild scene, the beautiful rivulet, the ravine, and the birds’ song made captive his heart. For three or four days he was found to enjoy Nature, but in the midst of his enjoyment he was observed suddenly to sigh and become pensive meditative. One day the Yogi asked him: “Child, what ails you?” “Sir,” replied the Prince, “I have a beautiful young elephant at home, which I love with all my heart. Its absence pains me.” “Very well I shall send for it,” said the holy man. The day after the young elephant was brought. The Prince’s joy knew no bounds; he began to caress it, kiss it. The Yogi said “Child, the first lesson I give you is to forget everything else and to concentrate your mind upon this young elephant.” “I obey,” said the Prince. A year after the Yogi inquired: “Well, how far have you progressed?” The Prince said: “I have not yet been successful.” The Yogi encouraged him to persevere. Two years rolled on. One day the Prince appeared before the Yogi, and said: “Holy Father, my mind is completely lost in the image of the young elephant. I see it everywhere. There is nothing else in the world to captivate my mind.” “Sarvamangalāḥ! bless you, my child, you have quickly won the battle. Come now and be initiated in the Mantra of your Iśtadevāḥ.” So saying, the holy one put the Prince on the path.

\[1\] The all-auspicious Goddess.
\[2\] See post.
The reader will thus find that the choice of the object of concentration does not depend upon individual caprice. If the mind be so weak that it cannot readily part with its predilections, it is by a regulated exercise of those predilections that the ever-roving mind is settled. It is but a temporary arrangement for rare cases. To reduce the mind to a focus is a task of great magnitude, perhaps of a whole life. Nothing should be allowed to be identified with the mind except a Divine image—that is, a form in which Divinity incarnates, and for this plain reason that what a man thinks upon that he becomes. If one concentrates upon a glass ball, a glass ball shall he become. Says Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa:


In the Tānktrik Mantra the worshipper finds an image of the Incarnation of the Divinity, not a dead image, a shadow, but an image which, by Sādhanā, can be conjured up into the Divinity itself, the spiritual power inherent in the Mantra fortifying the will-power of the Sādhaka to produce this result. From the very outset a Sādhaka is enjoined to fill his mind with the thought that he and the Divinity are one and the same. The realization of सूर्य (I am He) is the aim and end of his worship.

The Tānktrik Sandhyā is an obligatory service, which must be performed thrice a day—at dawn, at noon, and at sunset. It opens with a Mantra, which reminds the worshipper that his individual self is really no other than the one Self, manifested in the universe as the male and the female Power. The Mātrkā Śaktis are then brought into requisition to render his body and mind active with their soul-inspiring energy. The worshipper pays homage to the Devas, Rṣis, Piṭras, to his Guru, and to humanity. With a libation of water he declares: मनुष्यां स्वस्तिश्च—that is “I gratify mankind.”

As the Divine Mother is in everything and everything is in Her, service to every living being, whether human or not, is a part of his religion.

Meditation, concentration, Prānāyāma, and Japa are the principal features of Sandhyā. The object of Prānāyāma is to bring the involuntary act of breathing under control, and suspend its action at the will of the Sādhaka. The constituents of the subtle body are the vital air, the sensorium and the mind. The latter is intimately connected with breath. The breath serves as an instrument to introduce the mind to the world without. If one can regulate the breath, he can control the otherwise uncontrollable mind. The more one learns this art, the more is his will-power developed, the more is he enabled to concentrate his mind upon a particular object, and the more do his passions cease. As breath is the


1 Gods, seers, and forefathers.
measure of life, and not days, years, and months, the Śādhaka's span of life is prolonged, and his body is rendered immune to diseases. Life is a resultant of the kinetic karmic forces of a man in his previous birth. The karmic forces, either potential or kinetic, become a part of the mental sheath of the reincarnating Ego along with its sensorium and vital power, which latter is manifested in the body as breath. Breath is the nexus which joins the body with the mind. Control it, and you control the dalliance of the mind with the external world through the body. Prāṇāyāma is, therefore, an indispensable aid to meditation, concentration, and the development of will-power.

In his commentary on verse 7, chap. ii, of the Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad, Saṅkarācārya quotes from Śruti:

माणाणारेणिकृत्वा यस्मात् पद्यति तत्तथा।
तस्मात: पं किंचित् माणाणारदिति कर्ति:॥

"'The soul being purified by Prāṇāyāma realizes Parabrahman, hence there is nothing higher than Prāṇāyāma,' thus says Śruti."

He then says:

"First, Yajñas and other works should be performed, then Prāṇāyāma, etc.; then Communion, then knowledge of Vedāntic teaching, and then liberation."

Then, in his commentary on verse 8 of the same chapter, he says: "Because the man, the impurities of whose mind have been cleansed by Prāṇāyāma is able to concentrate his mind on Brahman, therefore Prāṇāyāma is introduced (in this Upaniṣad). At first the nerves should be purified, and after that one becomes fit to practise Prāṇāyāma."

The Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad says (chap. ii, verse 9):

माणात्रं भ्रमीकाले संस्कृतेऽ श्रीणे माणे नालिक्षेप्येष्वरीत।
दुर्दश्यकुमित वाहमेघ विद्यान् सों भारेताभ्यायोऽ॥

"A wise man should skillfully regulate his breath. When the Prāṇa becomes feeble it should be let off through the nostrils in small quantities. When one thus becomes gradually accustomed to holding the breath, the mind, like a chariot drawn by unruly horses—that is, senses—becomes fixed and fitted for Brahma-Jēāna” (knowledge of the Brahman).

In Chapter XIV, Skandha XI, of Śrimad Bhāgavata, in answer to Uddhava's question as to how one who desires mukti (liberation) should contemplate Him, Bhagavān says: "Sitting at ease upon an Āsana (seat), neither high nor low, with the body erect, keeping the palms of
the hands one upon another upon the lap, one should fix his eyes upon the tip of his nose; then, governing all the senses, the path of breath should be cleansed by Pūraka (drawing in the breath), Kumbhaka (holding it) and Recaka (giving it out). Having by Prāṇāyāma drawn the senses from their respective objects, practice should also be made by degrees in an opposite direction. The sound ओ (Om) in the heart, which is like a continuous bell-sound, should be drawn upwards by Prāṇāyāma, and then Bindu should be placed upon it. In this wise Prāṇāyāma, with ओ (Om), should be practised ten times in each of the three Sandhīyās. By doing this the breath is conquered within a month.”

It will thus be seen that the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas, and the Tantras with one voice proclaim the supreme importance of Prāṇāyāma in self-culture. It is, however, the Tantra which has preserved the knowledge of the mode of practice of this noble art, and it is the Tāntriks who can teach it. Saṅkarācārya, in his commentary above quoted, mentions नादिग्रंथि, or purification of the Nādis,¹ as a condition precedent to practising Prāṇāyāma. I believe the Tāntriks are the only Gurus who know how to do it. Prāṇāyāma is essential in Sandhyā, Upāsanā, and Śaṭcakra Sādhanā. But it must be learnt very cautiously and with the help of a Guru. As it has to be learnt by degrees it forms an essential part of daily service.

Sandhyā is mental exercise. The image of the Divine Mother, which is potential in the worshipper’s Iṣṭa-Mantra² and described in what is generally known as Dhyāna (Contemplation), must be done in the mind. The mental image thus arising should be identified with the all-pervading Divine Mother, and concentration practised upon it.

Dhyāna (meditation) is of two kinds, Sūkṣma and Sthūla—that is, supersensuous and sensuous,

स्थूलसन्निवेदन भावं हि द्वितिनं भवेद्।
स्वाम मनानं देह स्थूलं विश्वचिन्तनम्।।
कर्माशेतस्यायं रूपं यत् स्थूलविष्णुम्।।
स्वाम से महते रूपं परं शानमं स्तुतम्।।
स्वाम से महते रूपं परं शानमं स्तुतम्।।
स्थूलविख्यानं महेश्वरी शुला भोज्यमायात्।।

¹ “Nerves.” See Arthur Avalon’s “Serpent Power,” and Introduction to Tantra Sāstra.
² The particular Mantra which the particular Sādhaka receives at initiation.
The Yāmala says:

"Dhyāna is of two kinds, Sthūla (gross) and Sūkṣma (subtle). Sūkṣma, or supersensuous, is Thy sound-body (मन्त्रयम् तेजस्); Sthūla is meditation on Thy image, which is made up of hands, feet, etc. Thy Sūkṣmarūpa (subtle form) is the Jāānamaya (conscious) body of Prakṛti. O Maheśvarī! The supersensuous seldom arises in the mind; therefore one should concentrate his mind on the Sthūla form and attain Mokṣa (liberation)."

The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says:

"Dhyāna is of two kinds, Sarūpa (having visible image) and Arūpa (not having visible image). Thy Arūpa Dhyāna is beyond the cognizance of speech and mind; it is unmanifested, all-pervading, incapable of being pointed out as ‘this’ or ‘that’. Yogī alone can cognize it by long Samādhi (ecstasy). I relate to you Sthūla Dhyāna, so that Sādhakas being hopeful of Sūkṣma Dhyāna may practise it by fixing the mind upon it for the attainment of the object of their desire."

In the Dawn-Sandhyā the Divine Mother must be contemplated in the root-lotus as the Creative Power, symbolized by a maiden having a string of beads in Her right hand and a jar filled with water in Her left, riding on a white swan. The white swan is the Hamsa of philosophy, the vital Power which must needs be Her vehicle for the purpose of creation, for without the vital power creation is impossible. The string of beads symbolizes Japa—that is, meditation on the creation of the previous Kalpa and production of similar sound-forms, which are the substratum of all things sensuous and supersensuous. The jar of water is the “cause-water” (कारणचावर) of philosophy, the protoplasm out of which all bodies are formed.

In the Noon-Sandhyā She rides on the King of Birds, Garuḍa, in the heart-lotus, holding in Her four hands conch, discus, mace, and lotus, and wearing a garland of flowers on Her breast. Garuḍa is light (which is life as well), the conch is sound, the discus is Avidyā or that Power by which creation comes; the mace is the symbol of authority, and the lotus is the universe. She is now the Vaiṣṇavī Śakti, who maintains and
nourishes the universe. The garland of flowers symbolizes the countless beings whom She nourishes. The explanations of the symbols given in this and the preceding and succeeding paragraphs are my own. The Srimad-Bhāgavata explains the garland as meaning Māya, the mace as denoting the vital Power, the conch as meaning water, the discus as symbolizing light, and the lotus as symbolizing Ananta, or space.

In the Evening-Sandhyā She rides the Great Bull (महाबुजः) in the white lotus holding a trident in Her right hand and a noose (पाण्ड) in the left. When the day of Brahmā—that is, a Kalpa—comes to a close the bifurcated male and female Powers again meet in equilibrium. This is symbolized by the trident. The noose is Avidyā, which She has withdrawn into Her own hand to repose there until the darkness of Brahmā’s night is dispelled.

As Creator Her vehicle is Rājasik, as Preserver it is Sāttvik, and as Withdrawer of the universe it is Triguṇa Māya, the Tāmasik Guṇa predominating. The creative energy is volition (इच्छासाधि:) the preservative energy is action (क्रियासाधि:), and the destructive energy is cognition (ज्ञानसाधि). These three phases of the all-pervading Śakti must be contemplated on day by day in order that the Śudhaka may realize what the object of his worship is in manifestation.

The image of the Iṣṭadevatā must first be formed in the mind by Dhyāna. Then the Bija mantra should be repeated, keeping the image in view and withdrawing the mind from all other thoughts. This is called Japa.

कस्य बलं च मनस्य उष्णा वा च देशत ।
बिनतिबिलातः क्षति चरारे मनसा ज्ञातेऽव ॥

भूतयुक्तस्वम ॥

तत्रात्मात्मात्मात्मात्मात्मत्सिद्धं सरवावः

तत्त्राधारानुसारवं कुजेन्मवं जस्य तिथि ॥

कुमार्गवतन्त्र ॥

The Bhūtaśuddhi Tantra says:

“Meditating on the form of the Devatā denoted by the Mantra, Japa should be made in the mind.”

The Kularṇava Tantra says:

“A mantra should be repeated with faith, devotion, attention, submission, and perception of the Divine image in the mind.”

Japa is of three kinds: Vācika (by audible words), Upāngā (lips and tongue moving, but inaudible to the person making Japa), and Mānasika

1 Māya of the three guṇas.
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(mental; lips and tongue not moving). Japa has the supreme virtue of gradually withdrawing the mind from other thoughts and impressions, and fixing it on the Divine image. When concentration by this means is perfected, the consciousness of the Śādhaka is transferred to the Mantra-devata. This is called Mantra-caitanya (awakening of Mantra) and the Śādhaka is said to have become Mantra-siddha (Mantra-perfect).

It will thus be seen that Sandhyā is of the highest efficacy in spiritual culture, and it is on this account that it is obligatory on every Hindu of whatever division of worshippers to be. I have already quoted from the Śrimad Bhāgavata, which is the scripture of the Vaiṣṇavas, to show the importance of Prāṇāyāma and Sandhyā. Other quotations from the same Sāstra follow:

“One who is desirous of cutting the bondage of I-am-ness of the Jīvātmā should worship Keśava according to the Tāntrik method, which contains in it the Vaidik method as well”.

The man who in this wise worships Ṣiva in Agni, Sūrya, water, etc., or in one’s own heart, as the Ātmā, according to the Tāntrik Karmayoga, soon attains Mukti (liberation).”

Skandha XI, chap. iii

“O Uddhava! visiting My image and other symbol, visiting My Bhakta (devotee), . . . Dikṣā, according to the Vedas and the Tantras . . . these are the signs of Bhakti (devotion) to Me.”

Skandha XI, chap. xi

“My worship is of three kinds: Vaidik, Tāntrik, and mixed. Whichever of these three be to one’s liking, let him worship Me by that.”

Skandha XI, chap. xxvii

“Śaunaka said: O Sītā, you are devoted to Bhagavān, you know all the doctrines of Tantra and many other things. I now ask you a question. Nārāyāna, the husband of Śrī, is only Cidghana (massive consciousness), but Tāntrik Upāsakas (worshipper), at the time of worship, attribute limbs, and these and other parts, such as Garuḍa, etc., weapons such as Sudarśana, and ornaments such as Kaustubha, to Him. Tell me what things (Tattvas) are symbolized by them. I am desirous of knowing Kṛṣṇa yoga.¹ Therefore, relate to me that skill in Kṛṣṇa (action) by which men attain Mukti (liberation). Sītā said: Saluting my Guru-deva, I relate to you the Vībhūtis ² of Viṣṇu as stated in the Veda and the Tantra by Brahmā and other Ācāryas (teachers).”

Skandha XII, chap. xi

These and other like statements should induce my Vaiṣṇava brothers, who are too often apt to assail the Tantra, to abstain from the terrible sin of a patricide.

¹ Yoga through action.
² Powers and manifestations.
Upāsanā is the worship of the Vācyā Saktī through the Vācaka Saktī of a Sādhaka's Iṣṭamantra. If the Iṣṭamantra denotes an Avatāra in male body, the worship is regulated in conformity with it; and if the Iṣṭamantra denotes a female Avatāra the method of worship is of a different type. But the main principles of worship are identical. The Iṣṭamantra, or Bija Mantra, as previously stated, denotes two Powers, the Vācaka and the Vācyā Saktī. By realizing the Vācaka Saktī, the abstract, unconditioned Paramātmā, which is the Vācyā Saktī of a Mantra, must be realized, the ultimate goal of all Sādhana being the realization of the One True Self. The Vācaka Saktī is the Manifested God Saṅguṇa Iśvara, the Saktī of the Tāntrik philosophy. We have seen how the one Saktī is bifurcated into male and female Saktis for the purposes of evolution, thus giving expression to Sabdabrahman. We have also seen how our solar system is presided over by seven Lords in its seven planes, each of these Lords being an aspect of Sabdabrahman. In Upāsanā (worship) the Virāṭa Sarīra—that is, the physical body of Sabdabrahman—is the vehicle through which worship is offered. It is the Virāṭa Sarīra, which is the ground of all Avatārās. The Sahasraśirṣa Puruṣa (thousand-headed Puruṣa) of the Vedas is the Virāṭ Puruṣa of philosophy. The five Mahābhūtas (elements), the ten senses, the five vital airs, Manas (sensorium), Buddhi (intuition), Ahaṅkāra (ego), and Citta (mind) constitute the Sarīra or body of Sabdabrahman, the plane of whose consciousness is called Jāgrata, or waking. Worship begins from this state of Divine consciousness until it reaches the dreaming state, or Svapna. Beyond the dreaming state is Susupti, or slumbering consciousness of Sabdabrahman, where worship ends. It must be remembered that the self-same Sacchidānanda is worshipped in different vehicles, even as the selfsame gold is worn as a ring, a chain, a bracelet, and the like.

It will thus be seen that Kāli and Viṣṇu are essentially the same, only the vehicles and their characteristic qualities differing. The Tāntrik's predilection for the Divinity in its female form, as the Mother of the Universe, arises in part from the fact that the mother's heart being softer than that of the father, she is more readily moved in favour of the son than the father. Some no doubt would regard this as a very pronounced instance of anthropomorphism. But in truth it cannot be denied that as the human mother is a spark of the Divine Mother, the qualities of head and heart of the former are but an infinitesimally small expression of similar qualities in the latter. From the bodies of the Divine Father and the Divine Mother proceed all evolutions of body and mind. The human

1 See post.
2 Manifestation called “incarnation” when it takes place on the physical plane.
father and the human mother, and all fathers and mothers in the universe, are Amsā-Śaktis—that is, individual powers emanating from the Divine Parents, who do not, like the Christian and the Mohammedan God, personally create bodies and souls. The characteristic predominance of emotional qualities in human mothers is an index that it must be so in the Divine Mother; the experience of Sādhakas proves this, and is conceded in the scriptures of Vaiṣṇavas as well.

There is yet a weightier consideration than the above which has won the Tāntrik over to the lotus-feet of Mother Kāli. The paternal and maternal Śaktis, the positive and negative poles, the centrifugal and centripetal forces, are perpetually in harmonious association to evolve and nourish the universe. The Paternal Śakti is ever fecundating, and the Maternal Śakti ever holding the child in her womb and nourishing it. This is the law of Pravṛttī (desire) in the universe. When the Divine Mother refuses fecundation and, dominating the Divine Father, asserts Her Will, then is She Mahāvidyā, then is She Nirāmaya-padonmukhī (facing the state of freedom from sufferings). The milk of Her perennial breast then nourishes the aspirant, and gives him strength to march along the path of Nivṛtti (cessation). It is then that She, the Vāmā, the left-hand consort,1 usurps the right-hand place, and, slaying the demon-propensities of Her beloved sons, gives them hope and courage with Her right hand. The Fecundating Father, the source of Pravṛttī, falls prostrate under Her feet to avert the destruction of His world. Such is Mahāvidyā, the Divine Mother, the Lady Paramount of the Path of Nivṛtti (path of cessation), whom the Tāntrik worships.

Upāsanā, or worship, is of two kinds, internal and external.

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{परमम्} & \text{ न्यासिन्यं भान्तररं प्रकमन्येदासुधरं तथा } \\
\text{केन्द्रांतिता} & \\
\text{अन्तर्ग्रं तत्त्वते मोक्षे समस्तिक्षरोद्रोहस्त्र केताम्} & \\
\text{अथवा मानसेत्यश्रे: प्रस्तेनापि पुज्येत् } & \\
\text{गैरभीमेरस्नात्} & \\
\end{align*} \]

"Upāsanā (worship) of the initiated is of two kinds—internal and external. Internal worship is ordained for Sannyāsins, and both internal and external for others."

Tantra Samhitā

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1 The position of the wife is on the left hand.
"Antaryāga, or internal worship, gives Mukti (liberation) even to a living Śādhaka. Only Mummukṣus or Munis (sages) bent upon Mukti are entitled to it. The Śādhakas, who are incapable of Antaryāga, should perform it like external Pūjā (worship) with mental offerings."

Gautamiya Tantra

Antaryāga is based entirely upon a direct knowledge of the Power-centres or Cakras in the human body. The Śādhaka, having awakened Kula-Kuṇḍalinī in the root-chakra, takes Her up, with the help of the vital air, from centre to centre, until the thousand-petalled centre in the crown of the head is reached; there the male and female Powers are brought together in blissful union. The Śādhaka having enjoyed this temporary bliss, which vitalizes his body and mind, transfers his consciousness to the heart-centre, in the ethereal space of which he forms the mental image of the Divine Mother as it is expressed in his Bija-mantra. When the image has been thus formed, the mind is concentrated upon it with firm faith and devotion. When the image is portrayed upon the canvas of the mind with all the details of limbs and organs, as if it were a painting, the Śādhaka offers his sacrifices:

पात्तें चरणमेविभावनिनाश्चिद्येत् ॥
तेनात्मोनि सलाहीयमिच्छसी ॥
आकाशत्तलं कसरं गम्ये हु गम्यतज्जमस ॥
विचं प्रक्षयेत् पूर्वं दृष्टं माणानं प्रक्षयेत् ॥
तेजस्त्तलं च दीपवं छेत्रं च मुद्युपाबिष्ट ॥
अनहतायि वातं बाधुते च चामरस ॥
तुष्टिरिक्तस्वाती चाश्वलं नग्नस्तचाः ॥
पुष्यं नानाविंचं दशायास्मो मायसिः ॥
वामायास्मिन्नारसरम्मनं तथा ॥
क्षोभलवस्मेक अध्याभोक्तेऽतथा ॥
वामालस्वामेव च दशपुरं प्रकृतिस्तव ॥
अहिंसा परं पुष्यं पुष्यमिदमिदमाहस्य ॥
वामामाश्रामणं पञ्चपुरं तत: परस ॥
हरि पञ्चदाने अन्नावरणोऽन्नावरणे: पञ्चनेत ॥

"Give the heart-lotus as the seat; give the nectar flowing from the thousand-petalled lotus for the washing of the feet: dedicate the mind.
(Manas) as Arghya (offering). For washing the face and for bathing give the same nectar. Give ether (Ākāśa) as clothing; the principle of smell for odour; the mind (Citta) for flower; the vital airs (Prāṇas) as incense; the principle of light (Tejas) as the lamp; the ocean of nectar for food; the sound called Anāhata (inaudible sound in the heart-lotus) as the bell (ghaṇṭā); the principle of air as fan and fly whisk (Cāmara); the actions of the senses, as well as the restlessness of the mind, as dancing. For the realization of divine thought give diverse flowers: freedom from delusion, egotism, attachment, spiritual insensibility, pride, arrogance, enmity, perturbation, envy, and greed—freedom from all these are called the ten flowers. The supreme flower of Ahimsā (non-injury of any living thing), the flower of subjugation of the senses and the flowers of pity, forgiveness, and knowledge—these are the five flowers. With these fifteen flowers formed of sentiments (bhāvas) should a worship be performed."

After offering this mental sacrifice to his Iṣṭadevatā standing before his mental eye in the heart-lotus, the Śādhaka makes mental japa:

माण्डल ब्रह्मणी गोपी कुण्डलाक्षणिता

"The rosary is said to be formed of Varṇas, or sound-powers, strung together by the thread Kuṇḍallī."

The fifty severed heads of men which make up the necklace of Mother Kāli must be replaced mentally by the fifty sound Powers (Varṇas), strung together by Kulakuṇḍallini as thread, and the Bija Mantra is repeated with the help of this rosary. He then performs mental Homa.

The Nityā Tantra says:

श्रीमानकोर्तवों कर्तं श्रुतं सवैःसुद्धारि ।
वयस विज्ञानशार्यं कर्तं हरात सवैःसुविज्ञवेत।
आसेति चतुरं तु विचित्रसं वोषविचित्र ।
आस्मात्मार्थाम परमाशानत्मा पसेवऽविचित्र ।
चतुर्मिर्यमेश्वरभक्ति कुण्डलाचतुराक्षर ।
अवर्गमां शैलसं कुण्डलमो विभिन्नसंवेद ।
जानन्द्येश्वरो शुरुतं निरुपालसमथा ।
श्रीनामित तत्र देवशिशो योजयेत् कुण्डलरः ।
शाब्दार्थं भासुकार्थं संक्विदात्रं ततो हुलतः ॥
अपराढानेह ने देवी निद्रायतं गह जाप्ते ॥
पुष्पं पारं विकस्यं च तथ्यं श्रीरक्षन्ते ।
कुण्डलं च इत्येवायनं हर्षमेलाति पार्यति ॥
"O All-beautiful One! I tell you the ritual of Jñāna-homa (homa of knowledge), give ear unto me. By knowing it one becomes Sadāśiva, the Creator and Destroyer. The quadrangular Vedi (altar) is made of Ātmā (individual soul), Antarātmā (the manifested God), Paramātmā (the Divine Mother), and Jñānātmā (the Absolute). The Ardhāmātrā (Kuṇḍalini) should be considered the Yoni of the Homa-pit; the Mekhalā of the Vedi (altar), that is to say, the line which encircles it as if by a waist-chain, should be thought of as consisting of Ananda (bliss); and the other three lines on the Vedi should be taken as its three Balis, that is to say, beauty-lines on the abdomen. The Kula-bhairava—that is the Yogi—should kindle in it the fire of knowledge (Jñāna); then the forms of the Mātrikā-sounds should be sacrificed in the fire of Jñāna, by which the sounds become Soundless Brahman. O the Adored of Vīraś! Merits, demerits, desires, doubts, action, inaction and Prakṛti should be sacrificed by the mental spoon. Thus one becomes full of Jñāna, and Parabrahman Itself."

From the above description of subjective Upāsanā, it will have been seen that only such highly developed Yogīs and devotees are capable of it as have attained Samprajñāta Samādhi, or Temporary Communion, in which the knower and the known are distinguished. It is the last stage of Upāsanā, a thin veil only separating the individual Ātmā from the universal Ātmā. Such Yogīs are the product of ages of culture.

Sādhakas, whose mental image is not so well defined and who cannot make it steady for any length of time, must form an objective image, exactly in the likeness of the subjective image, and worship their Iṣṭadevatā in it. They must, however perform mental Upāsanā first as best as they can, and then vitalize and energize the external image. By establishing a magnetic current between himself and the image before him, the mentally vitalized image is communicated to it. The external image is no longer a mere doll; it is the Iṣṭadevatā Herself. Between the Sādhaka's faith and will, on the one side, and his Mantra-power, on the other, a change, so to say, takes place in the inanimate image. It is Mantra-śakti which is alone capable of performing this wonderful change and of rendering worship in images possible.

The Kulārṇava Tantra says:

ग्यां सर्वक्रियायां सञ्चेतं सन्तुज्जातं यष्ठा।
तष्ठा सङ्करणं देवं प्रतियाःधिः राजते॥
"As milk, which is produced in every limb of the cow, flows out through the udders, so the all-pervading Devatā manifests Herself in external images, etc. By the similitude of the external image to the mantrik image, by the speciality of the Pūjā, and by the faith of the Śādhaka, the Devatā manifests himself."

Prānapratīṣṭhā (enlivening) thus accomplished, the Śādhaka worships the Divine Mother, rapt in devotion and love. He has now no great difficulty in concentrating his mind upon the visible Īṣṭadevatā. He makes meditation (Dhyāna) and recitation (Japa) before this living image as long as he is capable of it. He offers flowers, incense, sweet-scents, the choicest eatables, valuable cloths and ornaments to his beloved Mother, who accepts them all. Thus, practising day by day, his restless mind begins gradually to compose itself, finding better and purer happiness in the Lotus Feet of the Divine Mother than in all that the world can offer him. Thus, learning to taste of celestial happiness, true Vairāgya (dispassion) towards worldly happiness engrosses his mind. A man might spend a dozen lives in discrimination as to what is permanent and what is not so, yet Vairāgya would be as far off from him as the mirage in a sandy desert; for, according to Vedānta Nitya-anitya-vicāra, or discrimination between what is permanent and what is transient, does not unfold itself in a mind which has not been purified by worship (Upāsanā). To try to be indifferent to worldly happiness without Upāsanā is to put the cart before the horse.

The more the mind composes itself by external worship, the more abiding becomes the mental image. When, by this means, the state of Samādhi, or ecstasy, is reached, the external image is no longer required.

After finishing his worship, the Śādhaka, by a process known as Samhāramudrā, withdraws the vitality communicated to the image, which then becomes a mere material image, fit to be thrown away.

External Upāsanā is not mere prayer and praise and offering of food and drink. The Bhakta’s (devotee’s) mind cannot rest satisfied without singing the praise of his beloved Mother; the more he sings Her praise, the more his mind is elevated towards Her. The Mantra-power helps him to make his offerings acceptable. In the Gītā the Lord says that he accepts flowers, leaves, etc., offered to Him with Bhakti (devotion). But how are such offerings to be communicated to Him unless the offerer and
the image through which He is worshipped are en rapport? The Tantra here steps in and solves the question. Prayer, praise, and offerings apart, the most important features of Upāsanā are: (1) Bhūtaśuddhi (purification of the elements constituting the subtle body). (2) Nyāsa (the placing of the Mātrkā sounds and Bija Mantras on different parts of the body). (3) Prāṇāyāma, or breath control. (4) Meditation (Dhyāna). (5) Mental worship. (6) Japa, or recitation of Mantra. The first is accomplished either by Yoga process or by means of a particular Mantra. The object of this is to purify the mind of its good and evil tendencies which have rendered the Ego a body-bound, selfish, small thing. The worshipper, in doing this purificatory rite, must think that, for the time being, his Kārmik body has been purified, that he (the true self—that is, Ātmā) now wears the mantle of Kulakupḍalini (the body of the Sound Spiritual), and that, therefore, he is no other than the object of worship himself. Being Deva himself, he worships Deva, thus realizing the Vaidik saying:

अपासने अश्वविन्येशायी अश्वगंधुतम् ||
अश्मे तेन गत्तवेः अश्वकर्मेश्बरभिः ||
भक्तयोगा ||

"Brahman the oblation, Brahman the clarified butter, are offered in Brahman the fire by Brahman; unto Brahman verily shall he who in his action meditates wholly upon Brahman."

The object of the second rite (Nyāsa) is to render the body spiritualized by the sound and Mantra Powers.

The rest (3, 4, 5, and 6) have been dealt with in their proper places.

It is by spiritualizing the body and the mind, and by devoutly thinking himself to be a part of the Unity, that a Sādhaka must perform his worship, which is, in fact, more subjective than objective. Without these essentials, Upāsanā would be like royalty without territory. To withdraw the mind from external attractions and repulsions and to consecrate it to the Divine Mother, Prāṇāyāma, Dhyāna, and Japa are essential.

Upāsanā has many subsidiary elements in it, upon which it is not necessary here to dwell, as they are not likely to interest the general reader; they are, however, all-important, and should not be eliminated by an earnest Sādhaka from his Sādhana.

Hindu society has been so constituted by the Rṣis of Vaidik antiquity that it is not enough that every member of it is a good citizen. One should not only be a good citizen, but a good individual; and not only a good individual, but a God-loving individual withal. Such is the end and aim of Varpāśrama Dharma (caste-system of Hinduism).
Caste is not only a civil rule, but a religious ordinance as well. Society was so framed that it worked automatically to supply the material and spiritual wants of its members. Hindu society being thus constituted, every member of it is bound to be initiated, either according to his own choice, or according to the form of religion of his ancestors. The Hindus are generally either Vaiṣṇavas or Śāktas. The mode of Upāsanā, briefly sketched above, is too high for the average Śākta Hindu, who must practise Sandhyā and Upāsana with devotion and faith, so that in the long run he may be prepared for the path.

Spiritual self-culture, is pre-eminently Sāttvik. The passions, propensities, attachments, aversions and all those creations of Rajas and Tamas which chain man down to earth and to things earthly, must be gradually but effectually washed off and the mind rendered perfectly Sāttvik. The Upāsanā, above described, is Sāttvik in all its forms. Those, therefore, who, though governed by the laws of their caste (Varna) and stage of life (Āśrama), which is called Varṇāśrama Dharma, yet infringe them, and under cover of religious practice unlawfully eat, drink, and sexually enjoy for the gratification of their senses, are condemned by Śiva in the passage which the author of the Śāktānanda Tāraṅgini quotes from the Āgamasamhitā on the subject of false Tantras (Asadāgama):

कलें भावेण देवेशि राजसत्तामसाभ्य ।
निपिण्ड्राचरण: सन्तो मेहत्यन्त्यचारानु वहून।।
आवामयां घिरितं रत्न हुरां चैव हुरेष्वरि ।
कर्मचिन्तितं भर्मपविचारार्य्यति ये ।
भूमेतिष्कावासार्यम्यं भवति व्रजार्क्ष: ॥

"O Devī! in the Kali Yuga most of the Rājasik and Tāmasik people, having adopted prohibited practices, delude many others. O Suresvarī! those who, regardless of Varṇāśrama Dharma, offer us flesh, blood, and wine, are (various forms of) evil spirits."  

I believe, however, that more than half of Hindu India is Śākta, and I can safely assert that 90 per cent of them are free from reproach in respect of the violation of true Śāstric principles and practice.

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1 The outcome of the Sattva gūpa (See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
2 See as to these gūpas, ibid.
3 See as to this passage the remarks in the Introduction by Arthur Avalon to Part I of this book.
In the above quotation from the Mundakopanishad it is said:

"This subtle Paramātmā can only be known by the mind, within the body, where the five vital airs reside. The minds of all are pervaded by the vital airs. The Paramātmā manifests Himself in the mind when it is purified."

The Ego must clothe itself with eight millions of bodies, from the stone to the animal, before it can be fit to assume the human form. There is, however, no knowing how many births and re-births in each class of bodies it must undergo before it can adapt itself to the next higher body. Ages untold and births unnumbered at last usher the journeying Ego into the human body—the most perfect of all bodies cognizable by the senses. The Ego itself is but a body, a Śūkṣma Šārīra—that is, a subtle body, consisting of the vital airs, the sensorium, and the mind. This bundle of very fine "matter," unlike its gross sheath, which decomposes and decays at short intervals, persists from the creation to the final dissolution of the universe. It has a causal body (Kāraṇa Šārīra) within itself, which is composed of a homogeneous finer "matter." The experiences of countless births and re-births are stored up in the subtle body, and very fine impressions of those experiences are stamped upon the causal body. The one immutable Ātmā, pervading and containing all existences, is made a captive, as it were, in each subtle body, from which circumstance it acquires its Egoity. The unconditioned Ātmā being thus conditioned, the pleasures and the pains, the happiness and the misery of the body are attributed to it; this is the work of Nature's great housewife called Avidyā (ignorance). When, however, the Ego acquires the human body, which is the most perfect of Śhūla Šārīras—that is, gross bodies—it is blessed with the opportunity of making a pilgrimage to its primeval source, and (dissolving the compact subtle body) of uniting Ātmā with Ātmā. It needs ages of self-culture to accomplish this Paramārtha (supreme object); but a beginning must be made by every human being.

Avidyā, the most expert and cunning housewife, has ten thousand arts and wiles to captivate her children. Like Rassellas, they must not be allowed to peep beyond the lofty ramparts of the happy valley. She has provided every creature comfort for her children. People, charmed by her unceasing attentions, quite forget their real Mother, Vidyā (knowledge), and hug the other with all the devotion of dutiful children.
To save humanity from their pseudo-mother, Divinity from time to time incarnates and sends His chosen sons to teach them. It is by this means that man acquires the knowledge of his real state, and learns that he has a true Mother, who alone can save him from the glamour of Avidyā.

In this golden land of Divine Ṛṣis, the land whence Divine knowledge radiated to all other lands, the path to Vidyā was made an art and divided into different progressive grades. The curriculum consists of Varṇāśrama Dharma¹ (for full particulars of which the reader is referred to my Bengali book on the subject), external and internal worship, and Yoga. Varṇāśrama Dharma is the ground whereon the first battle must be fought with Avidyā. It is the place where the Ego must put chains around the neck of Avidyā so that she may not lead people wheresoever she may choose. It is here that man gets the first glimpse of his real Mother Vidyā. External worship further girds up the Ego to cope with Avidyā. By these two means the Ego gradually learns to feel that it has a real Father and Mother; to find out, to worship, to love, and to know whom is the end and aim of its being. When the conviction of its necessity grows irresistible, the Ego determines to make the pilgrimage. But where is the grand trunk road over which it must wend its way.

From the text of the Muṇḍakopaniṣad, which opens this section, it will be seen that the Divinity has to be sought within the body of the Śādhaka. Although the Divine Essence is immanent in everything in the Kosmos, the body of the Śādhaka, which is a part of the Kosmos, is the place where he can best find it, for the mind, which has to make the search, and the apparatus, with which the search has to be made, are located in the body; besides, the body is a Microcosm, containing within it the seven centres of Power and the seven presiding Lords mentioned in the second section. The seven centres are seven planes of evolution, and over each plane there is a presiding Deity, who directs and controls its work.

The Universe, according to Tantra, consists of a single Mahābrāhma- māṇḍa, or grand universe, and numberless Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍas, or great universes. From the seven planes of the grand universe are evolved innumerable great worlds each one of which is also divided into seven planes. Each planet, each satellite, each star, and every living entity in each world is itself a world in miniature, and has within it the seven centres of Power and the seven presiding Deities.

The Nirvāṇa Tantra says:

"महाब्राह्मण्डमये तु कृष्णाण्डमेव च ।
तन्मये जन्तो देवी तन्मये शुक्लानि च ॥"

¹ Vide ante.
“O Devi! within the Mahābrahmāṇḍa is Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍa; within it are beings and regions.”

“महाब्रह्माण्डके वचत प्रकारे परमेश्वरि |
तदत् सर्व हि देवेशिनि ब्रह्माण्डमयेन: ||”

“O Parameshvarī! O Devesī! all varieties of beings and things which are in the Mahābrahmāṇḍa are also within the Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍa.”

“महाब्रह्माण्डात्र जायन्ते व्यं व्यं स्वाभोजने |”

“O beautiful-eyed one! hundreds of thousands of Brahmāṇḍas (universes) are evolved within it (Mahābrahmāṇḍa).”

A vivid description of Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍa is given in the same Tantra. But as it is very long, I am reluctantly compelled to resist the temptation to quote it. I shall, however, place before the reader its salient points. The Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍa, or Macrocosm, has its Meru or vertebral column extending longitudinally from top to bottom. At the top is situated Satya Loka, and at the bottom Avīci. Between Satya Loka and Avīci lie the other six Lokas (worlds or regions) and the other six nether regions, altogether making up fourteen Bhūvanas or regions. Within the Meru reside the Gods—that is, the Powers which preside over the fourteen Bhūvanas. The centres of Power within the Meru are:

1. Ādhāra ¹ Cakra, which is also called Brahma-Padma (Brahma-lotus). It is just above the seven nether regions. The element earth is within its anther. The seat of Kāma (desire) is there. Within the seat of Kāma is the male Deity, Svayambhū Linga, and the female Deity, Kulakunḍalinī. The Creator Brahmā resides in the element earth. His female Consort is called Sāvitrī. This is the causal Bhūrloka. Here resides the Spiritual Sun.

2. Bhima Padma, or lotus, or Śvāḍhiṣṭhāna Cakra. The element water is within its anther. Viṣṇu resides here with His consort. It is the causal Bhūvarloka in which the heaven of Viṣṇu, called Vaikuṇṭha, is situated. On the right of Vaikuṇṭha is Goloka, where Viṣṇu assumes the form of a two-handed being with a flute in his hand. Here he is associated with the female Power Rādhikā.

3. Manipūra Padma. The element fire is within its anther. Rudra resides here with his consort Bhadra Kāli. This is the causal Svarloka.

4. Anāhata Padma. The element air is within its anther. Īśvara resides here with his consort Bhuvaneśvarī. Īśvara is the overlord of the three previous Lokas and their Lokapālas—viz., Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva. This is the causal Mahāloka.

¹ Or Mūlādhāra, as to which and the following cakras, or centres see A. Avalon’s “Serpent Power”.
5. Viśuddha Padma. The element ether, or Ākāśa, is in its anther. The presiding Deity is half-male and half-female, called Ardhanārīśvara, or Mahāgaurī, and Sadhāśīva, whose Vāhana (carrier) is an animal, which is half-bull and half-lion. This is the causal Jana Loka.

6. Ājñā, or Jāna Padma. There is no element, but the universal Manas (sensorium) is the seed here. The Deities are Paraśiva and his consort Siddha Kāli. This the causal Tapa Loka. Here resides the Spiritual Moon.

7. Sahasrāra Padma. This is the region of the First cause, the cause of the six previous causes; it is duality in unity described in the second section. This is the Satya Loka.

These are the seven Lokas, or regions, of the Brhat Brahmana.

The reader will note that they are within the Meru. We have heard of a Meru of the earth, a mountain situated just where there is a depression on the orange-shaped planet of ours. This mountain is said to be a hollow, vertical column of stone, which externally holds the earth fast, and internally contains the centres in which the Devas—that is, the presiding septenary Gods—reside. This idea of Meru must be magnified and transferred to the Meru of the Brhat Brahmana with a view to form a notion of what is meant by it.

It must be noted that the Kosmic Kuṇḍalini is vehicled by Triguṇā Prakṛti in Satya Loka, where She is called Mahā Kuṇḍali, and by the eight primary divisions, [earth, water, fire, air, ether, manas (sensorium), Buddhi (mind), and Ahaṅkāra (I-am-ness)], of Prakṛti in Bhūrloka, where She is called Kulakunḍali. The highest and the lowest of the centres of Power are both guarded by Kuṇḍalini in Her two aspects. As in the Mūlādhāra, so in the Sahasrāra Padma She covers the cleft in the male Power with her hood. She coils up round the Universe with Her tail within Her mouth, having the inverted triangles within Her coils. The Theosophical Society has adopted this symbol from the Tantras. The triangles, as the Tāntrik symbol of the male and the female Divinity, being well known, it is not necessary to quote Tantra to prove it; but as it is not generally known that the serpent lying with its tail within its mouth is a Tāntrik symbol, I quote the following from the Śiva Samhita:

“पद्ममेयोगर्नित्यतयातः |
तत्र कन्दे समास्ततत्रास्ति कृप्तिसदा सदा ||
स्वतंत्र तत्तत्त्व नाटी: सार्षिकुर्तिकल्पितं |
हस्ते निवेषय लोक हजुराणिवर्षोऽर्थित ॥”

शिखसहित ॥

That is, Prakṛti composed of the three guṇas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.
“Between the anus and the generative organ is the Yoni, having its mouth downwards. There is what is called the root. Kuṇḍalī is always there. Encircling all the nerves with her body of three and a half coils (and) with her tail in her mouth, She lies within the cavity of the Sūlamā nerve.”

As the Macrocosm has in it centres of Power, so has the Microcosm. The Nirvāṇa Tantra says:

"अर्जुस्या पवित्र्यां तु वर्तन्ते मान्यादय: ||
ते संवे देविः अर्जुस्यास्तनम्ये सुवन्नाति च ||
पातालस्वर्ग तत् तीव्र स्वर्गस्वरूप: ॥
एवं केवल सवेद्ये सुवन्नार मुदेते ॥
प्रतिदेवं देवस्तानि अर्जुस्य नाम संबंध: ॥"

निर्विवेकंतः ।

“Within the Brahma Padma, the earth, are men and other beings. O Devi! they are all worlds, and within them are the regions. Within them are the seven nether regions and the seven heavens. In this manner in all bodies, within the lotuses, are the fourteen regions. O Lady Paramount! verily every body is a Brahmāṇḍa (world).”

The human body is called by the Hindus Bhogāyatam—that is, a mansion wherein the reincarnating Ego is born to reap the fruits of its Prārābhdha or Kinetic Karma; but it is also called Brahma-pura, the city of Brahman. Under the Hindu’s law of evolution it must be so; for evolution, as I have already pointed out in the previous section is a double parallel motion, one tending downwards and the other tending upwards. Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti, that is the outgoing and return movements are conspicuous everywhere in nature. For the purpose of reaping the fruits of Karma the embodied Ego must come in contact with the outside world, its subjective enjoyments and sufferings having come to an end in heaven and hell. The objective world is the arena where it must battle with the results of its own previous Karma, and generate new Karma in accordance with the Pravṛtti law of nature. To this end it is furnished with a system of nerves, which presides over, controls, and regulates the functions of the other systems—viz., the circulatory system, the respiratory system, the digestive system, the excretory system, the muscular system, and the skeletal system. These nerves are classified into three main groups: (1) Efferent nerves. (2) Afferent nerves. (3) Inter-central nerves.

“Efferent or centrifugal nerves are those which conduct impulses from the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) to other parts of the body.” “Afferent or centripetal nerves are those which conduct
impulses in the reverse direction—viz., from all parts of the body to the central nervous system.” “Inter-central nerves are those which connect nerve-centres together; they connect different parts of the brain and of the cord to one another.”

The Bhogāyatana aspect of the human body is dealt with in the science of Biology, and its Brahmāpurā aspect in the science of Yoga.

The earth, as a Microcosm, has its Meru, a stony vertical column extending from its northern point of depression to the southern point. It is within the bowels of the earth that the Meru is situated, and the septenary Gods, presiding over the earth, are located inside the Meru. What are known as the north and the south pole are only circumpolar regions of the earth. The human body is a Microcosm as well. Its Meru is the vertebral column of bones extending from the depression, called Brāhma-randhra (the hollow of Brahma, where the two halves of the body, like the two hemispheres of the earth, meet) to the anus. This bony column is filled with white and grey matter, wherein are nerves and nerve cells.

• The principal Yoga nerves are fourteen in number, of which three are prominent—viz., Iḍā, Piṅgalā, and Suṣumnā. Like all other nerves, their root lies in the Yoni—that is, the region between the anus and the generative organ. This region is called the Mūlādhāra Padma. The Suṣumnā nerve is within the cerebro-spinal axis, and extends from the Mūlādhāra Padma to the Sahasrāra Padma, which is in the crown of the head. It is called the Jñāna nerve, the nerve of pure psychosis. The Iḍā and the Piṅgalā nerves are in the periphery of the spinal cord, and starting from the Yoni (the Iḍā from the root of the left testes, and the Piṅgalā from that of the right testes), wind up spirally, meeting the Suṣumnā nerve at five points—viz., the Yoni, the root of the generative organ, the navel, the heart, and the throat. From the throat Piṅgalā makes a circuit of the root of the nose between the two eyebrows and enters the right nostril; the Iḍā, making a similar circuit, enters the left nostril. In this wise an island-like centre is formed at the root of the nose. The five points of contact of the Iḍā and the Piṅgalā nerves with the Suṣumnā nerve are five Padmas, or lotuses, or Cakras, or centres, and the island-like place is another centre, thus making six centres from the Yoni to the root of the nose. Above the sixth centre and below the thousand-petalled lotus are two Padmas, which are described in connection with the sixth. With these two and the thousand-petalled lotus the Padmas, or lotuses, are nine in number. All of them are located within or above the cerebro-spinal axis, which is called the Meru of the human body.

The cause of a thing is called its Prakṛti, and that which arises out of Prakṛti is called Vikṛti. The three principles of Mūlāprakṛti (original

1 "Handbook of Physiology," Chap. XV, by W. D. Halliburton, M.D., F.R.G.S.
"material" cause of the universe)—viz., Sattva (spirit-manifestation), Rajas (activity), and Tamas (inertia) are the primary cause of the universe. From these three are evolved eight derivative or secondary causes, which are:

(1) Mahat, which is also called Buddha, or intelligence, intuition;
(2) Ahankāra, the sense of separateness, individuality; (3) Manas, the mind in its ordinary sense, including the sensorium, the perceptive, ratiocinative, imaginative, volitional, emotional, and other faculties; (4) Äkāśa (ether);
(5) Vāyu (air); (6) Tejas (fire); (7) Apas (water); and (8) Kṣiti (earth).

What is called Parāprakṛti in the Bhagavadgītā is Čit Power, which has been discussed in the first section. When worlds are evolved, Mūlaprakṛti and Parāprakṛti are united kinetically, and the result is the formation of seven, or rather nine, planes of conscious Powers, corresponding to the one primary cause and the eight secondary causes of the universe. In the human body, which is a miniature universe, these planes or centres of conscious power are:

(1) Sahasrāra Padma. (2) Nāda Padma. (3) Bindu Padma.
(4) Āja, two-petalled Padma. (5) Viśuddha, sixteen-petalled Padma.
(6) Anāhata, twelve-petalled Padma. (7) Maṇipūra, ten-petalled Padma,
(8) Sūḍhiṣṭhāna, six-petalled Padma. (9) Mūlādhāra, four-petalled Padma.

It may here be noted that the conscious Intelligences from the second plane downwards are sound-powers, emanating from the first cause, the Mahāsūrya (the Grand Sun) of the worlds, whose hallowed mansion is the Sahasrāra Padma, as also that from the fourth to the ninth, the Padmas are petalled by fifty primary sound-powers (see second section). These primary sound-powers are distributed in the Padmas in accordance with esoteric principles of combination of sounds.

Enough has been said in the first section regarding the bifurcation of Sakti into male and female, and there is no necessity to recapitulate it here. Sufficient be it to say that all the conscious powers in the nine Padmas are male and female.

Before entering into a general description of these Padmas, it is to be observed that the nomenclature of the Gods and the Goddesses is according to the religious ideas of the great Sādhakas, who have revealed this most esoteric knowledge for the Supreme good of suffering humanity. The Padmas and their presiding Gods are facts in nature, which a Sādhaka has the privilege to see and to call by whatever names he chooses. Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians, Parsecs, Buddhists, nay, agnostics, if they choose, can enter this Yoga path without committing themselves to any particular form of religion. One’s own religion, whatever it be, will, if practised through this esoteric path, lead the soul with scientific precision on to its destination.
With a view to put the subject in a clear light before the reader, I shall first divide the nine Padmas into three groups. The first three Padmas constitute the first group, the region of cognition, in which the three cognitive Powers (Jñāna Śaktis) are located. It may be called the region of pure Ideation in which the universe exists potentially. The second three Padmas constitute the second group, the region of action, in which the three active Powers are located. It may be called the region of mind, in which the universe assumes a form more definite, having the vital power, the sensorium, and the mind as its constituents. The third group of Padmas are presided over by the Powers of volition, action, and cognition, in subordination to the former group, who create, sustain, and destroy the fully manifested universe.

At the top of and above the cerebro-spinal axis is the Sahasrāra, and at the bottom the Mūlādhāra Padma. Kūḍālāni is at both these points. The Sahasrāra is the Mahāsūrya, the Grand Sun, both kosmically and individually, within whose effulgence Ādyāsakti Mahākāli and Paraśiva are inseparably united. This Power is the First Cause, the Vācaka Śakti of Śāṅkara's worship. The First Cause is Saguṇa Brahman, or Brahman with attributes, and contains within it the three Guṇas, the three Powers, and the nine planes in the same manner as a lotus-seed holds within itself the future lotus-tree. In the Mūlādhāra Padma lies the duplicate Sun, which is the effulgence of Kūdakūṭaśāsthi and Savyabhū Śiva. Brahmā, the creator of names and forms, is there with his consort Śāvitrī. The creative desire or Will, called Kāma, is there also. As there is a hollow on the top of the highest Padma, so there is a cleft on the head of Savyabhū Śiva, which is closed up by Mother Kūdakūṭalini, who, coiling round all the nerves at their root and encircling the Śiva, breathes forth the rhythmic vital Power through Īdā and Piṅgalā. Like one who sleeps, all Her other functions are apparently at rest; hence She is said to be sleeping. The creative Brahma with his consort Śāvitrī is the conscious Power of earth.

Earth is evolved from water. The preservative Viṣṇu with his consort Rādhā is the conscious Power of water. The centre within which they are located is Śvādhiṣṭhāna Padma.

Water is evolved from fire. The destructive Śiva or Rudra with his consort Bhadrakāli is the conscious Power of fire. Their centre is Maniṣṭhū Padma.

These three Padmas are the three Lokas, Bhū, Bhuvah, and Svah respectively. The re-incarnating Ego takes its recurring births and re-births in these three Lokas.

Higher above, in the heart-lotus, is the region of air, in which are located Īśvara and Īśvarī, the immediate cause of the three lower regions and their presiding Deities. This is called Anāhata Padma. If the Ego
can escape the eddy of birth and rebirth, and merge its consciousness in Ishvara, it attains what is called Salokya Mukti. This region is called Maharloka. The heart-lotus has behind it another lotus, in which lies the seat of the Jivatma, the reincarnating Ego. To bring this truth home to the mind of the Sadhaka, the Upanishad says:

"त्योथित: पिन्नले स्वाभाविकाशाचन्-अविचारविहि ||

"Two friendly birds live together on the same tree, of whom one eats the sweet fruits, and the other, without eating, only sees."

Higher up is Visuddha Padma, in the region of the throat. Here is the region of ether, in which are located Sadasiva and Mahagauri. This is the Janaloka.

Between the eyebrows, at the root of the nose, is the region of mind, where Sambhu or Mahakala and Siddhakali reside. This is called Ajna Padma. This region is the subjective Varanasi 1 (Kasi) of Visvesvara, between the Gang and Jamuna—that is, Id and Pingal nerves. Within the anther of this Padma is the spiritual moon.

The second and third Padmas are, in fact, the higher Powers of the fourth—that is, the Ajna Padma. Their Vehicles are Mahatattva and Ahaakaratattva, which are luminous like the Sun. The second, third, and fourth Padmas are Tapas Loka, while the Sahasrara is the Satya Loka of the microcosmic human body.

The knowledge of these centres of Power in the human body is as old as the Vedas themselves. The great Rsis of the Vaidik wisdom-religion (Jnanadharma) learnt it from their Gurus, and it was passed on until we reach Manu, who, having received it by inspiration from the Most High, instructed humanity in the knowledge of Yoga, of which the doctrine of the centres of Power in the human body is an essential part. The wisdom-religion enunciated in the Upanishads is based upon Yoga, which one must practise if he be solicitous of Brahma-Jana (knowledge of Brahman, or spiritual knowledge). A mere study of the Upanishads does not impart that wisdom. The Upanishads contain frequent references to some of the centres of Power on which the attention is particularly directed to be fixed. Rsi Patanjali's Philosophy of Yoga and Vedavyasa's Commentary thereon mention these centres as the places in the human body where concentration, meditation, and communion should be practised. Rsi Yajnavalkya of Upanishadik fame has a treatise on the method of Yoga in which he instructs his wife Gargi as to how Yoga should be practised within these centres.

1 Benares.
It will thus be seen that the centres of Power in the human body are not an innovation of the Tāntriks. They have their root in the Kosmic Law of evolution, and were revealed to mankind for their salvation. But man, ever prone to drink of the lethean water of desire, had, in the great efflux of time, forgotten the inestimable boon of Yoga conferred on him and, therefore, towards the middle of the third cycle—that is, Dvāpara Yuga—his condition as a religious being had greatly deteriorated. In view of this state of things, and having regard to the approach of the Kali Yuga (age), with its darkening influences, the Lord of Yoga, Mahādeva, made a fresh revelation of Yoga with a method at once comprehensive and suited to the times. In the method thus revealed the centres of Power in the human body have been perspicuously dealt with, and culture through them definitely laid down. Thus has Yoga been saved; and even now there are numbers who have kept the Divine science alive by following the method of the Lord of Yoga. The description of this Yoga is to be found in the Tantras, and the Tāntriks are the masters of its practice.

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to make a few observations on Yoga, about which much misconception seems to prevail amongst a certain section of the English-educated Hindu community. The Hindus have only one system of Yoga, which has come down to them from the time of the Vedas. It is called Aṣṭānga, or eight-limbed Yoga. Mahaṛṣi Patañjali’s "Yoga Aphorisms" constitute the philosophy of this Yoga. Although the methods of Yoga-practice are in the keeping of Gurus, books on such methods are not wanting. From Mahaṛṣi Yājñavalkya and Mahaṛṣi Dattātreya to Yogi Gorakṣanātha of modern times many have left treatises on the subject, and there is the Śiva Santāna attributed to Śiva himself. The eight-limbed Yoga, for the purpose of practice, is divided under five heads:

(1) Mantra Yoga. (2) Laya Yoga. (3) Haṭha Yoga. (4) Rāja Yoga. (5) Rājādhirāja Yoga.

I have dwelt upon Mantra Yoga in the previous section. Laya Yoga is a Yoga the nature of which is described in the Gheraṇḍa Samhitā and similar works. Haṭha Yoga includes what is commonly known as Prāṇāyāma, the object of which is to produce in one's own body voluntary suppression of breath. In the previous section I have quoted Upaniṣad and Purāṇa to prove its vital importance in Yoga. The following quotations will show that Veda, Tantra, Smṛti, and Purāṇa are unanimous in holding that Prāṇāyāma is an absolute necessity in Yoga. Manu says:

"द्वान् प्राणमाण्यां धातुलिन्हि वषय महः ||
वर्षीद्रिश्यन्ति द्वान्ते बृष्ण: भावस्य निमित्तात्॥

मनुः ||
"As baser things mixed with gold and other metals are removed by burning those metals, so the propensities of the senses are removed by Prāṇāyāma."

Ṛṣi Patañjali says:

"तत: कृत्तिः प्रकाशावरणम्।"

"From that (viz., by practising Prāṇāyāma) the veil which hides pure knowledge is removed."

Now, it must be distinctly understood that as Prāṇāyāma is Haṭha Yoga, the elimination of the latter from Yoga-practice would be as beneficial to the practiser as the removal of his brain would be to a thinker. Yoga has two divisions, one outer and the other inner. The outer division comprises Yama (control), Niyama (regulation), Āsana (posture), Prāṇāyāma (breath-exercise), and Pratyāhāra (withdrawal), and the inner division comprises Dhāraṇa (concentration), Dhyāna (meditation), and Samādhi (communion). Prāṇāyāma, without which Pratyāhāra or withdrawal of the senses from their objects is impossible, stands at the gate leading from the outer to the inner division. It cannot be avoided if one seriously wishes to practise Yoga. It may here be observed that there is no royal road to Yoga, which is, in fact, nothing less than the complete reversal of the natural order of things in its aspirer. Round after round, from Yama (control) upwards, the aspirer must ascend, fortifying his body and mind with energy and vitality enough to enable him to cope with the nature he has built within himself during myriads of births. The chronic diseases of the body and the mind must first be grappled with by means of Yama (control) and Niyama (regulation), which include among other things continence and worship. When the mind is full of faith and devotion, and the body is buoyant, due to the conservation of virile energy, it is then that the aspirer must perfect his postures (āsanas), which help him materially in regulating his breath.

Purification of nerves (dealt with in the fifth section) is the next step to be taken. The nerves, in their natural state, are covered with impurities, which must be removed before commencing Prāṇāyāma. To accomplish this there are available two alternative processes. The first is by inspiration (Pūraka), retention (Kumbhaka), and expiration (Recaka) of breath upon a regulated scale and with the repetition of certain Bija Mantras. The second is altogether physical, and is known by the name of Saṅkarma (six practices) ¹—that is, Dhauti (washing), Vasti (contraction and expansion of the anus), Neti (cleansing of nostrils and throat by thread), Lauḍiki (pendulum-like motion of the stomach), Trāṭaka (gazing at an object without winking until the tears trickle), and

¹ See as to them Introduction to Tantra Śūtra.
Kapālabhāti (inspiration and expiration of air, etc.). The second alternative method is not mentioned in the Śiva Samhitā. It need not be practised by a real aspirant who has no physical infirmity or disease to obstruct his Sādhanā. One of these—viz., Trāṭaka—however, is practised by those who are very loud in their denunciation of Haṭha Yoga. In consideration of the physical and mental temperament of his Śīya, the Guru must decide which of the six modes of physical culture should be given him along with the first method, which is absolutely necessary. It generally happens that almost all the six modes are dispensed with.

Here I must warn the reader that mere physical culture, such as Āsana, Śaṭkarma, and Prāṇāyāma, are of little avail unless they are accompanied with other practices of Sādhanā. We daily meet pseudo-sannyāsīs and athletes who exhibit for a few pice their skill in such physical feats, and even levitation. They may accompany spiritual self-culture, but by themselves they are nothing.

Having purified his nerves, the Sādhaka must practise Prāṇāyāma, the object of which is to suspend breathing for a considerable time without feeling the least uneasiness in respect of this reversal of the ordinary respiratory law of Nature. This is called Kumbhaka; and when that is attained, it is then that real Yoga begins. For those who are physically or otherwise unfit to practise Kumbhaka by the inspiration (Pūraka) and expiration (Recāka) method, other methods are laid down in the Yoga Śāstra.

To awaken Kulakunḍalinī is the first grand work achieved through long practised Kumbhaka. In the Mūlādhāra Cakra Her vital sheath sends out, through the Iḍā and Piṅgalā nerves, an incessant centrifugal and centripetal energy, which draws in and drives out the atmospheric air. It is said that the range of the vital energy thus sent out extends to nine inches without the nostrils. This output of the vital energy has, by voluntary effort by means of Kumbhaka to be withdrawn. When Kumbhaka is of sufficiently long duration, the vital energy, being no longer able to act and re-act upon atmospheric air, rebounds upon the vital sheath itself, thus producing an abnormal action, not only upon the vital sheath, but on the space in the vicinity occupied by potential fire. When those two Nature’s finer forces, allied together, impinge upon the vital sheath, the mind, ever sensitive to abnormal actions of the body, forthwith repairs to the spot, and makes its first acquaintance with its real Mother, Kulakunḍalinī. Kulakunḍalinī is thus aroused from Her apparent slumber, and the Ego finds itself at the lotus-feet of its long-lost Mother. The glamour of its stepmother, Avidyā, for the time being vanishes, and the Ego—the reincarnating Jīva of millions of births and sufferings—implores the arms of its ever-gracious loving Mother.

But the accomplishment of this end by the ordinary process of Prāṇāyāma is very arduous and tardy. The Yoga Śāstra, therefore,
provides certain psycho-physical processes, called Mudrās, which operate as stimuli to Kumbhaka.

The Śiva Samhitā says:

"श्वसा गुरुप्रसादः सदा जागरितः कुण्डली ।
तदा सर्वाः पत्थरि बिधने प्रमथयोपि च ॥
तस्माद स्वप्नम्बित्वं भोजयितवतीर्थीः ।
भारतमुहुः श्वसा स्वाम्यासं समानरेत ॥"

सिकावटिता ।

"When, by the grace of the Guru, the slumbering Kuṇḍali wakes up, it is then that the lotuses are penetrated, and the knots (of karma) untied. Hence, to awaken the Īśvari, sleeping on the cleft of Brahman, practise Mudrā by all means."

Being thus awakened, Kuṇḍalini enters the great road to liberation (Muktī)—that is, the Śuṣumṇa nerve—and penetrating the centres one by one, ascends to the Sahasrāra, and there coming in blissful communion with the Lord of Lords, again descends down through the same passage to the Mūlādhāra Cakra. Nectar is said to flow from such communion. The Śādhaka drinks it and becomes supremely happy. This is the wine called Kulāmṛta, which a Śādhaka of the spiritual plane drinks. There are three planes of Śādhanā, corresponding to the three planes of consciousness in which the manifested Divinity is realizable—viz., the Adhibhautik (subtle physical) plane, the Adhidaivik (psychic) plane, the Adhyātmik (spiritual) plane. In reference to the latter the Tantra says:

"पीतला पीतला पुन: पीतला पीतला प्तति नूतने ।
उत्थान च पुनः पीतला नरके न विद्यते ॥"

"Drinking, drinking, again drinking, drinking fall down upon earth; and getting up and again drinking there is no re-birth."

During the first stage of Śaṭcakra Śādhanā, the Śādhaka cannot suppress his breath for a sufficiently long time at a stretch to enable him to practise concentration and meditation in each centre of Power. He cannot, therefore, detain Kuṇḍalini within Śuṣumṇa longer than his power of Kumbhaka permits. He must consequently, come down upon earth—that is, the Mūlādhāra Cakra—which is the centre of the element, earth, after having drunk the heavenly ambrosia. The Śādhaka must practise this again and again, and by constant practice the cause of re-birth—that is, vāsanā (desire)—is removed.
When Kumbhakā has, by practice, become of sufficient duration, the Sādhaka must concentrate his mind upon each of the centres, beginning from Mūlādhāra. Mother Kūṇḍalinī leads him. She unites Herself with the Lord of each of the centres, and the Sādhaka must meditate on the united male and female Deity as his Iṣṭadevatā, that is, the object of his worship. When meditation on each of the centres is thus perfected, the Sādhaka becomes master of the element which dominates it. In this wise, the five elements dominating the five centres, from Mūlādhāra to Viśuddha, being conquered, the Sādhaka is emancipated from the bondage of the objective world. Wealth, power, prestige, carnal passion, and all their train, have no power over him, he having become the master, and no longer the slave, of the elements. His mind and body gain immensely by the acquisition of such mastery. By meditation on and communion with the presiding Deities of the centres, his consciousness becomes identified with their consciousness. Thus the effect gradually merges into the cause, as the Sādhaka rises from the lower to the higher Divine Lotuses.

The sixth lotus from the lowest—that is, the Ājñā Cakra—is reached. It is called Ājñā Cakra because therein is the Lord of mind, whose Ājñā or fiat creates and uncreates the elements and their Lords. Meditation on and communion with the Lord of this centre (which comprises the Nāda and the Bindu centres) renders the Sādhaka master of Manas, Ahaṅkāra, and Buddhi. He is no longer the creature of duality that he was. Worship of forms is passed, and true knowledge is revealed to him. He learns to distinguish between Ātmā and non-Ātmā. Prakṛti, with her multifold divisions and subdivisions, being cognized, Ātmā is realized. Mother Kūṇḍalinī now reveals Herself to Her dear son in Her pure Prakṛtik garb, and leads him on to the Lord of Lords, Cause of Causes, the Saguna Īśvara, where the Sādhaka finds Her and the Lord in undistinguished association and becomes the Lord Himself. This is called Rāja Yoga.

The Sādhaka, who, having now discovered the Vācaka Śakti of his worship, and having himself become the Vācaka Śakti, wishes to become the Vācyā Śakti (the real object of his search), casts off the last remains of his Sūkṣma Sarīra (subtle body), or, rather, Kāraṇa Sarīra (causal body) and piercing the Spiritual Sun, drops, as it were, into the ocean of Cit—the real Śakti, the one true, blissful existence, the bourn whence no traveller ever returns. This is accomplished by what is called Rājādhirāja Yoga.

In the Taittirīyopaniṣad self-culture through what are called Sheaths (Kośas) is indicated but not detailed. Bhṛgu, the son of Varuṇa, is said to have accomplished it by Tapas. Śaṅkarācārya explains Tapas here to mean concentration of the mind and the senses. Concentration, meditation, and communion are the higher practices of Rāja Yoga, and
as nothing within the body can be cognized without concentration, it is clear that Bhṛgu practised Rāja Yoga for the acquisition of Brahmagñāna (spiritual knowledge). The Sheaths are five in number—viz.:


According to my view, these Kośas are mentioned to indicate the causes from which they arise, for Yoga is practised in the lotuses or centres of Power through the Suṣumnā nerve. There is no difference of opinion on this point. That Brahmagñāna cannot be acquired without Yoga, and that Rāja Yoga is the most potent means to acquire it, is conceded by the Commentators and indicated in the Upaniṣads themselves. Even in the Tātātirīyopanishad the lotuses are broadly hinted at thus:

"स य एवेनत्तेज्जीव आकाशा: | तस्मिनं पुल्लो मनोमयः | असहृतो हिरण्यक: | अत्तरेण तत्केकः। य एव तत् इत्सहकर्मलकेते। सेतुरयोनि:। कवलाति केशान्ति। विनिति।"  

"Within the heart (lotus) is an ethereal space, in which the immortal, resplendent Lord of mind resides. The path of Brahman lies within the hanging breast-shaped thing (cranium) at the crest of the head where the hairs divide."

The centres of Power are the causes from which the five Sheaths arise. Bhṛgu, by practising Yoga in those centres, gradually discovered the Sheaths. His first discovery was the Annamaya Kośa, which arises from the elements—earth, water, and fire. Earth and water produce food, which is assimilated by fire and converted into the substance which forms the body it nourishes. Earth, water, and fire, being the presiding elements in Mūlādhāra, Svādhiṣṭhāna, and Maṇipūra centres respectively, they became the objects of Bhṛgu’s concentration in the first place; because, by awakening Kulakūṇḍalini the Śādha first meets Mūlādhāra, then Svādhiṣṭhāna, and then Maṇipūra.

The Prāṇamaya Kośa arises from Anāhata and Viśuddha centres, in which vital air and Ākāśa respectively preside.

The Manomaya Kośa is evolved from the Ājñā centre, which is the centre of mind.

From the Bindu and Nāda Cakras arises the Vijñānamaya Kośa. And undifferentiated Prakṛti in the Sahasrāra is Ānandamaya Kośa.

It will thus be seen that by mentioning the Kośas the Upaniṣads do not lay down a system of culture different from that through the centres-
of power in accordance with the Rājyoga system. In fact, there are only two systems of self-culture mentioned in the Hindu Śāstras—viz., Bhakti Yoga (Path of Faith and Love) and Jñāna Yoga (Path of the Eight-limbed Yoga). As the Upaniṣads are the science of Jñāna (knowledge), it is plain that Bhakti Yoga is not meant to be the instrument of culture for cognizing the Kośas. I have touched upon the Kośas to impress upon the minds of the public which reads the Upaniṣads the fact that in self-culture the path of knowledge is but one, and that that path is the Eight-limbed Yoga.

I will conclude with a few observations on self-culture by Faith and Love (Bhakti Yoga) and self-culture by knowledge (Jñāna Yoga). The path, which begins with the suppression of breath (Kumbhaka) and ends in the realization of the unconditioned, immutable Brahman, is no doubt the high road to perfect knowledge; but it is a long, tedious, and trying journey, which very few are physically and mentally capable of accomplishing. Many aspirants, indeed break down, and many succumb. One who is desirous of following this path should undertake it early in youth if he be physically and morally strong enough to pass through the rigid ordeals to which a neophyte is subjected by the Gurus who follow the Vaidik method of Yoga-training. I have heard it said by a venerable personage, who is reputed to be an eminent Yogi and a great Sanskrit scholar, that successful Yoga-culture is not possible unless pursued according to the Tāntrik method, which renders the otherwise bleak prospect cheerful to the neophyte, and buoys him up with strength and courage commensurate with the arduous task he has undertaken. Very few, indeed, are there who are physically and morally fit for, and who have the opportunity to devote their life almost entirely to, the pursuit of Jñāna Yoga. Besides, the Hindu scriptures insist upon the culture of the Path of Faith and Love as the initial stage through which an aspirant must pass before he is fit to undertake the Path of Knowledge.

Of the Eight-limbed Yoga, Niyama (Regulation) is the second limb, in which Isvārapraṇidhāna—that is, worship of God—is the most prominent feature. It will, therefore, be seen that to eliminate the first and second limbs and begin with the third is a violation of the scheme of self-culture laid down in the Śāstras, the effect of which cannot but be disaster.

When the fiery path of Jñāna Yoga, dwelt upon in this section, is fit for but a few, the milky way of Bhakti Yoga, which is the subject of the previous one, is open to all—to the young and the old, the weak and the strong, and to the man of business who has not much time to spare for the systematic pursuit of Jñāna Yoga. Bhakti Yoga carries the aspirant slowly but surely through the eddy of the world to that bourn where serene peace and calm predominate. It yields almost the same result as-
does the other system of culture. The first and foremost achievement of a Sādhaka is the awakening of Kulakundalini. Unless and until that is done, the roving mind, identified with the objective world, cannot be drawn in, and concentration and meditation successfully practised. It is by concentration and meditation that the blessed state of Samādhi (communion) is reached, and the Ego is freed from the trammels of the objective world. The important work of awakening the Divine Serpent is as much within the reach of the Tāntrik Bhakti Yogi as it is of the Jñāna-Yogi. Japa and worship according to the Tāntrik method and other means as taught by the Tāntrik Guru, will infallibly awaken Kulakundalini.

The following aphorism from Patañjali’s “Yoga Darśana Sādhana-pāda,” S. 45, will convince the reader that worship of God leads to Samādhi:

"समाधिसिद्धिरीवरपरपरिवज्ञात।"

"By worshipping God Samādhi is attained."

High Tāntrik Sādhakas unite both the Yogas in their self-culture, and obtain most happy results within a comparatively shorter time, without undergoing those privations and hardships which are the inseparable companions of the Sādhakas of the other school.

Spiritual self-culture, like the culture of the mind, must be begun from the beginning. As with the cultivation of the mind, so is it with the unfoldment of the spirit; the rudimentary stages of knowledge cannot be leaped over and the highest wisdom at once attained. External worship leads to internal worship; internal worship purifies the mind; purity of mind induces concentration and meditation; when meditation is ripe communion (Samādhi) ensues and the Sādhaka attains, at last, the Highest Bliss.

Tāntrik Bhakti Yoga has another phase. It leads the intrepid Sādhaka, within but a short period, into the arcana of Nature, and brings him even face to face with the Vācaka Sakti of his worship. But as these are secret things, I cannot speak of them here.

THE SCIENCE OF TĀNTRIK SPIRITUAL CULTURE

Tāntrik Spiritual Culture (Sādhana) connotes three terms—viz., the subject, the object, and the means. The subject is the aspirer, the disciple who employs certain special means for the achievement of certain definite results, and who is called the Sādhaka. The object is that which is sought to be attained, and is called the Sādhya. Thirdly, the means are the various methods of culture laid down in the Tantras, which are
only to be employed by a disciple under the direction of a competent Guru.

Sādhakas are of three classes. The ordinary householder, who has a family to support, and who is bound by social and other ties, belongs to the lowest class. Higher Sādhakas, though householders, are free from many of the passions, prejudices, and desires for the enjoyment of earthly blessings which form the principal mainspring of action of the lowest class. The highest class of Sādhakas comprises god-like men, who have no fixed habitation, or family, or other ties which chain, who have no social duties to discharge, no conventionalities to conform to, no desires to satisfy, and nothing which is of this earth to seek. A Sādhaka of the lowest class is practically a dualist, for his own self is not in harmonious association with the Supreme Self of all the universes. His actions, therefore, flow from his desire for self-gratification. His devotion to the Supreme or his acquisition of occult Yoga powers is motivated by the enjoyment of blessings suited to his taste. A Sādhaka of the next higher class believes his self to be in esse the same as the Supreme Self; thus, fixing his faith on the Advaita (non-dual) Brahman, he endeavours to view the universe as one unbroken chain of appearances, which, though apparently divided, are but inseparable parts of one homogeneous whole. His actions, therefore, are in accordance with his faith. Passions, prejudices, distinctions, conventionalities, and all those hosts of feelings, emotions, and motives which crystallize themselves into attachment (Rāga) and repulsion (Dveṣa) have consequently no place in his broadened mind. Though living in the world, he is not of it. He is called, in the Tantra, a Gṛhāvadhūta. Persistent conduct in conformity with these ideas leads him to that stage of blessed consumption where he is more a god than a man; the egotism of his gross and subtle bodies vanishes, he realizes the Eternal Blissful Mother, and finds Her in every being and in every thing. He is called a Kulāvadhūta, and belongs to the highest class of Sādhakas.

The Sādhyā, or the object sought to be attained, varies from the Highest Advaita Brahman to the lowest beings of the spirit-world, according to the capacity and proclivity of the Sādhaka. Unseen beings, intermediate between man and the manifested Brahman, good, bad, and malignant, swarm in the universe in every direction. They are either nature-born, or disembodied human egos. The Science of Tantra not only recognizes their existence, but describes and classifies them, and provides means by which communication may be had with them, and by which they may be controlled or avoided. Whilst the higher among these unseen Powers bestow upon a Sādhaka prosperity, progeny, health, fame, power, learning, and the like, and grant to him whatever he prays for his welfare, the lower and the lowest of the Powers only satisfy his base and carnal longings. He who cultivates acquaintance with such.
intermediate beings can never hope to attain liberation from the sorrows and pains of the world. Even Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva are perishable; allegiance even to Them is not beyond the grip of Māyā. The fate of such worshippers is thus summarized in the Bhagavadgītā:

"Those who worship the Devas go to the Devas; to the Piṭras (ancestors) go the Piṭr-worshippers; to the Bhūtas (spirits) go those who sacrifice to Bhūtas; but My worshippers come unto Me."—Chap. ix, verse 25.

The Kulārṇava Tantra thus admonishes unwise men:

ब्रह्मणा विष्णु महेशा न तत्तताः: ।
नाध्येवा नृपावति तस्मादैव: समाधिः ॥

"Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa, and other Devatās, being within the category of 'matter' (Bhūta), are hastening towards destruction. Hence do what is right."

What is right (Śreya) is distinguished from what is dear (Preyā) in that the thing dear, though honey for the time being, is venom in the long run; whereas what is right is unsavoury in the beginning, but is ambrosia in the end. The Tantra Śāstra holds that the right conduct of man is to identify himself with what is unperishable and perennial Bliss, and to forego all objects of desire, however sweet they may be, as so many binding chains added to the already numerous heavy bonds which bind the Kārmic body.

The Tantras, like the Vedas, while laying down the Upāsanā worship of hosts of Devas and Devīs for unwise men, who cannot overcome their cherished Vāsanā (desires) for present and but short-lived future happiness proclaims the Upāsanā of the "One-without-a-second" Brahman, and explains in detail how that supreme good may be attained.

The manifested aspect of Brahman is the object of worship. The Kaṭhopaniṣad describes the Manifested Brahman thus:

उ: पूर्वः तपसो आलम्बनः पूर्वमस्मायत् ।
एवं प्रविष्टिः तिष्ठति यो गृहोत्मिचायपुष्टिः ।
एवं तत् ।
यो पाणेन संतप्तिः भलिकायांत्य: ।
एवं प्रविष्टिः तिष्ठति यो गृहोत्मिचायपुष्टिः ।
एवं तत् ।

"He, who was, by meditation, the first-born before the creation of the five elements, who resides in the hollow of the hearts of beings, and is in all causes and effects. He who perceives Him in this manner perceives the Absolute in Him."
SPIRITUAL CULTURE—VAIDIK AND TĀNTRIK

"She, who was born as Prāga (the 'One Life'), in whom are all Devatās, who is Aditi (eater of the five elements), who resides in the hollow of the heart, is in all causes and effects. He who perceives in this manner perceives the Absolute Brahman in Her."—Kāthicopaniṣad, Chap. iv, verses 6 and 7.

The Śvetāsvataraopaniṣad opens with the query, What is the cause of the universe and all that is contained in it? The answer to this question is given in the following verse:

ने अन्येनानुगता अपक्षण्यू देवाशक्ति स्वगुणितनानाः

"Immersed in concentration and meditation they found the Power (Śakti) which is the cause of the universe to be lying hidden by Her own Guṇas" (Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas).—Chap. i, verse 3.

Reading between the lines, the truth is patent that the manifested Brahman is Śakti, and that Śakti, though one and indivisible, has dual action in cosmogenesis, and is therefore expressed in terms masculine and feminine, to explain, however indirectly, the idea of Divine causation in human language. The manifested Brahman being essentially the same as the unmanifested Absolute Brahman, Śakti, when unmanifested is Cit (pure consciousness), and when manifested, is Cit with Māyā or Prakṛti, which is the material cause of the Universe, and which is the "own attribute or guṇa" (स्वगुण) of Śakti.

The Tāntrika View of Śakti is exactly the same, as has been explained already in an earlier portion of this essay. In Sarvasāmāryāyamedhā Stotra of Dakṣiṇākāli the following very clear statement is to be found:

महानवस्थानं च बाहातीता प्राको
कौशल्यम् सत्कर्त्ता देवी गुल्लक्ष्मि पक्षवेदन ॥
गुल्लक्ष्मिनां तु गोहान्याया तथा गदा ।
इत्याशक्तिः सा जाता तथा काले विनिर्भितः ॥

(The word गुणा in the above is thus explained in Brahmāyāmala: देवीसत्तिरं गुणा भवदेहाविनिर्पित। "This Chhāyā is Devī-Śakti emerged from the body of Brahman.")

The above four lines may be thus rendered:

"The ineffable Superior Power is supremely attributeless (that is, Absolute). This Devī (Power), being playful, imagined forms in Śūnya."

1 The phrase देवाशक्ति means देवाशक्ति इत्यवर्णम: अभविनिता वाक्यम्। commentary of Saṅkarāchārya.

2 "The soundless Sat-cit-ānanda Brahman is called Śūnya." (Yogasvarodaya).
(that is, in the Absolute). In the initial work of creation, when She saw Chhāyā, then She became the Power of Volition, and by Her Mahākāla was created.”

Duality in unity is the characteristic of the Tāntrik doctrine, and all its methods of worship are based upon this truth. The Kulārṇava says:

श्रृवत्ते के निदिश्चत्ते त्रैतिशचत्ते चारे ।
मम तत्त्वे विदाग्नो हृदल्प्रिगतिः।

“Some wish (me to be) Advaita (non-dual), and others wish (me to be) Dvaita (dual). He who knows me in essence is free from both Dvaita and Advaita.”

The Sādhaka who realizes Duality in the “one-without-a-second” Brahman liberates himself from the bondage of Māyā. He is a true knower of Brahman; he is a true Kaula.

शहं तु सच्छलान्यं निःशच्चवाष्ठिततः ।
कर्मं तु ब्रह्मस्वकेः स्मावकुर्व भाष चोच्चते ।
कुलकृतस्तत्तवं कुलीन: स च कुलवते।

“Kula is the Power of Brahman; Akūla is called Brahman; he who knows Ātmā to be essentially Kūla and Akūla is called Kulīna.”—Kulārṇava Tantra.

As in Kosmic creation Śakti becomes Nāda and Bindu—Śakti and Śiva—so does Śakti become male and female in individual creation, the male principle existing in the smallest degree in the female, and the female principle existing in the smallest degree in the male. These two great principles, which are ever in association in every act of creation, sustentation, and dissolution, are never divorced from each other, but are ever inseparably connected, though the predominance of the one or the other in objects present the spectacle of apparent separation.

It is Śakti alone which can save a Sādhaka from the quagmire of the senses and their objects and lead him on to the blessed abode of Brahmananda (Brahman as Bliss). The individuality of a person is but the resultant of his feeling and emotions, ideas and thoughts in relation to the objective world, which he has experienced in thousands of births and rebirths, and which bind him down to the world and its objects. The dissolution of his physical body translates him into a region of temporary subjective happiness or misery, but as sure as the sun rises from the east, he must again pass into the mother’s womb, there suffer untold misery; and thence issuing into the world, must there for a brief span of time be tossed to and fro by his own Karmas. This play is enacted for ever and ever,
and there is no escape therefrom unless he can extricate himself from the

grip of Avidyā (nescience), the charming syren of worldly bondage, and
take refuge at the holy feet of vidyā (knowledge). Vidyā alone can make
a Sādhaka the master of himself, and the conqueror of the elements, the
senses, and the mind.

या विद्या शा महामया सा तु सेवा सदा बुधेः।

वेदवादायुपाते लोकं तमः श्रव्यान्ति॥

“Vidyā is Mahāmāyā, She should be served by the wise; he who
worships Avidyā enters the region of darkness.”—Śaktānanda Taraṅgini.

How Śaktī became Śabdabrahaman has been previously described.
Śaktī, when manifested, is Prāṇa, the one intelligent, all powerful, creative
vital principle:

आलं ए भाणो जायते। यतैशा पुल्ले च्छायापरिमितवताते, मनः
कुलेनायात्मिनि।

“From the Ātmā this Prāṇa is born. As shadow is to the body, so is
Prāṇa associated with Ātmā; it comes to this body by the action of the
mind.”—Praśnopusād, verse 32.

Hiranyagarbha or Prāṇa is called the ‘First-born’ in the Upaniṣads.
We have seen that Hiranyagarbha and Aditi are one and the same, and
that Aditi is what the Tantra called Śaktī. We have also seen that Śaktī
as Kulakundalini is the Mother of Universes, whose Breath is life. The
fifty Mātrikā sounds, which form Her body, are Prāṇīk principles, from
which universes are evolved, by which they are sustained, and into which
they are disintegrated. “Sound” and Prāṇa are univocal terms:

नादः प्राणं न जीवं च गोष्टेक्वादि कथ्यते।

“(Sound) is called Nāda, Prāṇa, Jīva, Ghoṣa, etc.”—Prapañcasaśra,
4th Paṭala.

In Rudrayāmala, quoted by the author of Prāṇatōṣiṇi Kulakundalini,
is called बाणुपुरुष मूलाभंजितस्ताम—“of aerial form, located in the Mūlā-
dhāra Cakra.”

The knowledge of Śaktī as Prāṇa is of vital importance in spiritual
self-culture. The Praśnopusād thus summarizes the result of such
knowledge:

1 Karma which works is Samskāra, and the latter manifests as the mind.
Therefore Samskāra as mind produces life. With the destruction of mind
(manās) there is liberation.
"He who knows in detail the birth, the arrival (in human body), the place (in the body), the pervasiveness, the external (as sun, etc.) and the internal (as eyes, etc.) manifestations of Prāṇa becomes immortal."—Verse 41.

The Upaniṣad lays down the Śātra or principle, which the Tantra works out and develops into a methodology, by the faithful observance of which a Śādхaka can not only approach the "The One Life," the Sadabrahman, the All blissful Mother, but, freeing himself from the Kārmik sheath which made him dissimilar to the Mother, become Her Very Blessed Self.

It is only Yoga culture, described under the heading "The pilgrimage of the human ego," which enables a Śādхaka to know in detail "the birth, the arrival, the place," and the like of Prāṇa.

The relation of the manifested Brahman or Śakti to the universe in its three planes of existence and its extra-kosmic aspect must be thoroughly grasped by a Śādхaka of the two higher classes. For, without such knowledge Śādхana is impossible, and its ultimate result, the realization of Brahman, unattainable. The following is quoted from the Māṇḍāk-yopaniṣad as a key to the acquisition of such knowledge:

"The syllable 'Om' is all that is the universe, and is Brahman; it is the Ātmā, and is Brahman. Brahman (as Para and Apara) consists of
four parts. (Not that Brahma has really four parts, but to explain its all-pervasiveness parts are imagined.)

"The first part is the *Wakeful State*, cognizer of the objective world, seven-limbed¹, nineteen-mouthed², gross-eater (called Vaiśvānara).

"The second part is the *Dreaming State*, cognizer of the subjective world, seven-limbed, nineteen-mouthed, eater of desires (called Taijasa³).

"That is, the *State of Sound Sleep*, where no desire is felt, no dream is seen, which is the undistinguishable cause and effect, in which the mentalities of the two previous states are undistinguishably blended together (as different objects in pitch dark nights), which is blissful (unaffected by the senses, their objects, and the mind), the eater of bliss and cognizer of the wakeful and dreaming states through the mind. This, the third part, is called Prājña.⁴

"He, Prājña, is the Lord of all, is allwise, is the regulator of all beings, is the birthplace (yoni) of all, is the creator and destroyer of all beings.⁴

"Not the cognizer of the objective world, not the cognizer of the subjective world, not the cognizer of both, not one in whom all states of mind are inseparably blended together, neither cognizer nor non-cognizer; unseen, not an object of action, imperceptible, undefinable, unthinkable, ineffable, cognizable only by the knowledge that the One Ātmā pervades all the three previous states; in which the three previous Māyik states are not—that is, the undifferentiable, peaceful, all-blissful Advaita the fourth—He is Ātmā, He is the fit object of knowledge.”

The human mind being the result of accumulated Karma, good, bad, and indifferent, of untold ages, its natural alliance with the objective world has rendered it rather a product of such alliance than an entity possessing intrinsic capacity for cognizing the Supreme. As it is, the formation of a true concept of the Godhead is a difficult task, which depends much more upon the purification of mind, by religious works, penances, devotion, and the like, than upon the power of the intellect, however cultured the latter may be. Such being the case,

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¹ Seven limbs: Heaven is his head, the sun is his eyes, air is his Prāna, the Ākāśa is the trunk of his body, water is the hinder part of his body, the earth is his foot, and fire is his mouth.

² Nineteen mouths—viz., ten Senses, five Prānas, Manas, Buddhhi, Ahamkāra, Čitta. Because he cognizes, feels and eats the gross objects by means of these nineteen mouths or doors, therefore he is called “gross-eater”.

³ Taijasa is beyond the cognizance of senses. He feeds upon mental states only.

⁴ These three states of Divine Consciousness are symbolized by the three letters of ओऽम् (Om); ओ being the first state, and is called Rgveda; ओ the second state, is called Yajurveda; and ओ the third state, is called Śāmaveda.
it is but natural that Sādhakas should oftener than not form a partial idea of the Supreme. The Sādhaka’s idea of the Supreme regulates the results of his Sādhana. The Praśnopaniṣad thus sets forth the matter:

स ब्रह्मसमस्तनिद्धेः, स तेनैव सब्दितसत्त्वा वाचानिद्धेष्यते
तथवेत सनुपश्चेष्यते, स तत्त्वसंपर्क अस्तृत्वा संवधो सत्त्वानुक्षेत || ३ ॥

मा सुष्थितो विश्वातिद्विं दश्यातिद्विं
स सौम्यान्त्र भिक्षुसमस्तसमस्तमुनुष्ठानम् पुनः करतेऽ || ४ ॥

न: पुनः त्रिभुवनमेवेन्द्राधिरेष्यते
उव भिक्षुसमस्तसमस्तसुपरिषममुनुष्ठानम् व एव है साम्यान्त्र विनिहृत: स साम्यान्त्रे विनिहृत: स
सौम्यान्त्र विनिहृत: महान अतः परालं पुर्वितं पुरुषोऽन्ते || ५ ॥

“If he (the Sādhaka) meditates on Brahman as consisting of one part only (the first part, as cognizer of the objective world), then by such meditation, acquiring knowledge, forthwith does he come to the earth (after death); the first part as Rgveda transmits him to the human species, where, by penance, continence, and faith, he enjoys glory.”

“If he meditates on Brahman as consisting of the second part (cognizer of the subjective world), he attains the subjective world. He (after death) is carried by Yajurveda to the Soma Loka (Moon). There enjoying glory, he comes back amongst men.”

“He who meditates on the Great Lord as one whole, consisting of all the three parts, attains to the effulgent sun. As a snake gets rid of its skins so is he freed from his impurities, and is raised to the Brahma-Loka1 by Sāmaveda. He realizes by meditation the Paramātmā, which is within the body of every being, and which is greater than the aggregate of Jīva, (individuals).”

The Tāntrik systems of self-culture are constructed in strict accordance with the three aspects of the Divine Mother, so that no Sādhaka’s work and toil may go amiss. They raise him step by step from the most external belfry to the innermost Tabernacle of Mother Mahākāli, never forcibly weaning him from his habits, but transforming those habits into fragrant flowers and grateful offerings.

1 Called also Satyaloka, the highest region of the manifested Supreme.

2 The manifested Supreme is the soul of all Jivas. He is the Antarātmā of all beings within the form of Liṅga Deha. The apparently separated Jivas are heaped together, as it were, in him without distinction, hence he is called “aggregate of Jivas” (जीववन). While in the Brahma-loka-state, the Sādhaka is blessed with the vision of the Absolute, and of union with It as water unites with water (B. K. M.).
SPIRITUAL CULTURE—VAIDIK AND TANTRIK

The importance of possession of a thorough knowledge of Śakti is thus stated in Niruttara Tantra:

बहुनां कन्यान्तः शक्तिः सत्ययः।
शक्तिः निन्दा देवी निर्वाणं आयते॥

"After many births the knowledge of Śakti is acquired. O Devi! without the knowledge of Śakti, Nirvāṇa is unattainable."

The knowledge of Śakti is dependent upon self-culture for its attainment, for mere intellectual knowledge gained by study cannot raise a man to the state of Divinity. Even intellectual unerring knowledge of the transcendental science is not attainable without devotion to God and Guru.

The mind must be thoroughly trained in spirituality, and brought in harmony with supersensuous truths before one can hope to be able to understand the true import of that with which the transcendental science deals.

बस देवे प्रामाणिकया देवे तथा गुरौ।
तत्तैते कश्चित्ता देवी: प्रकरणान्ते कहत्वन:॥

अतार्थात:वृजेश्वरित्॥

"The meaning of these truths of which I have spoken is revealed to the high-souled man, who has supreme and equal devotion to Devatā and Guru."

The path of desire and the path of non-desire or cessation are the two paths, either of which a Śādhaka must choose for himself. As man is a bundle of desires and propensities, the regulation of such desires and propensities on lines which may eventually free him from those bondages of woe is the end and aim of all method, either Vaidik or Tāntrik. As the four Vedas are replete with hymns and prayers to God or the Gods, for the attainment of objects of desire, so also the Tantras are full of methods for the attainment of the same end. By following those methods, desires and propensities are circumscribed, passions curbed, and animal nature transformed into Divine nature. It is in the lot of but a few to pursue the path of cessation from the outset. The vast majority of men must be looked after, in order that they may not only save themselves, from being mere brutes, but may become good fathers, mothers, sons, brothers, neighbours, citizens—healthy, robust, and God-loving. The Tantra proclaims that its votaries shall become all these, irrespective of caste, colour, and creed.

Whether one be on the path of desire or on the path of cessation, Karma Yoga, Jīvāna Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga are indispensable to him. By
continually practising works prescribed by the Tantras one's mental and physical impurities are expurgated, the mind becomes pure and transparent, so as to be susceptible of the presence of the Divine light within; the body is no longer the habitual store of Rājasik and Tāmasik cells which incite the senses to ignoble works. By Jñānayoga knowledge of Divinity is gained, and by Bhakti Yoga, Jīva and Śiva are united, and the supreme good attained; for, according to Tāntrik Monism, not even a scintilla of difference is admitted to exist between Jīva and Śiva essentially.

One of the characteristic works prescribed in the Tantras is what is called Prayoga (deputation). Ordinarily, what man achieves is the result of his own exertions aided by the exertions of others, or of labour and skill purchased. But human exertions, labour, and skill often fail to produce a desired result. In the Hindu mind belief in the help of supersensuous beings is as ancient as the Vedas. Indeed, the Vedas are replete with sacrifices to Devas for attaining desired objects. The Tāntrik System, called "Deputation," is less arduous and less expensive, and can be given effect to within a short time. When at critical moments human efforts and skill give way, man in every country naturally raises his eyes upwards, imploring Divine help and mercy. Divine help and mercy, though in fact attainable, are yet very difficult to attain, for the degree of spiritual culture requisite for such a purpose is the attainment of but very few. The Tantra provides, however, comparatively easy means by which Devatās may be communicated with and their help obtained. This branch of Tāntrik knowledge is no part of a man's self-culture, it being merely an art, more useful than spiritually efficacious.

Whether in the path of desire or in the path of cessation, the worship of one Brahman is the burden of the Tantra, and the object of that worship is the liberation of the individual soul from eternally recurring misery, uniting Ātmā with Ātmā, by the dissolution of the Kārmik body. To achieve that end, concentration, meditation, and communion are essential. But an object is necessary upon which to concentrate the mind. The universal or all-pervading form of Brahman functioning in undivided, homogeneous effulgence, through the waking, dreaming, and slumbering state of being, is scarcely such an object as the mind can grasp. Pratikas are therefore used as its substitute. The Avatāra forms, Yantras, and human forms in special Pūjās, are the best forms. Images are fashioned after Avatāra forms. When by dint of Sādhana Divine effulgence is cognized in a Pratika, then is it that the Sādhaka's vision opens to see the universal Form. The incarnation forms of the Divine Mother, called

1 Pratikas are substitutes of Brahman in Upāsanā. Such substitutes are an aspect of Brahman, or a part of it, and are worshipped as if it were Brahman itself (B.K.M.).

2 These forms are Nitya—that is, everlasting (B.K.M.).
the Ten Mahāvidyās, are the Upāsya Devatā (the worshipful God) of the Sākta Tantriks. Sādhakas, according to their predilections, heredity, or mental conditions, worship one or other of them, believing the particular Form to be Brahman. Images of such Forms, or Yantras, are made, and external worship made to them as Brahman. If a Sādhaka’s Sādhana be intense and high, Brahman or the Divine Mother manifests Her Divine Self in the image, which for the time being glows with Divine Life.

गच्छे सर्वदक्षीर्मे श्रवेत् तपस्यावधयनः

tatha sarvāṅgata deśa pratiṣṭhāṇi dānti ॥

आभिप्राय विभक्तं पूजयति विद्यते ॥

साधनस्य न विश्वासरूपातिनिधिभेदेत् ॥

"As milk, pervading the whole body of cows, comes out through the teats, so is the all-pervading Deva revealed in images, etc. The reflection (of Ātmā) in images, etc., being the same as the Ātmā of the Sādhaka. By virtue of the Pūjā and the Sādhaka’s faith, the Devatā appears."—Kulārṇava Tantra.

Sacrifice to God or the Gods in the form of food and drink is an old institution found in the records of almost all religions, ancient and modern, in all parts of the world, not even excepting Christianity and Moham- danism. But the ethics of these religions do not give the raison d’être of such an institution. This seems to be, on the face of it, an anomaly, considering that the God of most of those religions is extra-kosmic and formless. The Vaidik manifested God being both immanent and transcendent in the Kosmos, the legitimate conclusion is what the Māṇḍukyopanisad quoted above lays down as positive truth. In the Bhagavad-gītā, the Lord says:

"He who offereth to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept from the purified self, offered as it is with devotion."
—Chap. ix, verse 26.

The Tantra, which claims to be the most correct and practical interpretation of Vaidik truths, holds that the Sādhaka who longs to be in harmony with the Divine Mother should not only sacrifice to Her as Vaiśvānara, but as Tajjasa and Prajāśā as well. Indeed, the whole life of a Sādhaka is a sacrifice; he must efface his own personality and Ahaṅkāra (I-am-ness), dedicating all his thoughts, deeds, and speech to the Divine

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1 The Sādhaka communicates the ray of his Ātmā to the image by what is called Prāṇapratīṣṭā (Life-giving ceremony). (B.K.M.)

2 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra and "Serpent Power".
Mother who resides in full glory in his heart, and is the real cognizer of the body.

Understand me as the Knower of the Field (body) in all the Fields, O Bhārata!"—Bhagavadgītā, chap. xiii, verse 2.

This is called Ātmanivedana (self-dedication). Egoism is the cause of heterogeneousness. The thought, "I am the doer, I am the eater, I am the enjoyer, and I am the sufferer," makes apparent divisions within the homogeneous One, thereby rendering the individualized egos a prey of the attractive and repulsive forces of Avidyā and their miseries. The initial work, therefore, of a Śādhaka is to surrender himself completely to the Divine Will.

"Whosoever thou doest, whosoever thou eatest, whosoever thou offerest, whosoever thou givest, whosoever thou doest of austerity, O Kaunteya! do thou that as an offering unto Me.

"Thus shalt thou be liberated from the bonds of action, yielding good and evil fruits; thyself harmonized by the Yoga of renunciation, thou shalt come unto Me when set free."—Bhagavadgītā, chap. ix, verses 27, 28.

The question is, How can this complete resignation be effected—resignation in act, resignation in speech, and resignation in thought? Men’s physical wants, passions, propensities, and emotions are the motives of his actions—either these are to be suppressed for the development of his spiritual nature, or they are to be so used that they may not bind, but become useful agents for leading the small self to the Great Mother. Suppression being out of the question, various devices have been resorted to for circumscribing them, prominent among which is Brahmacarya (absolute continence) and offering of food to God before it is taken. A Śādhaka on the high spiritual path should be a celibate and very abstemious in food. Such are the hardships and restraints imposed upon him that oftener than not he succumbs in his effort to soar to his high aim; the strength of his wings fails, and he falls down, bruised and broken. Thus rendered unfit for both the lower and the higher paths of culture, his life becomes a desert of burning sands and scorching winds. A householder is bidden to offer food to God, and then eat it as Prasāda (gracious leaving). He is enjoined to cohabit with his wife only during a few days in the month when fecundation is physiologically possible. These, as restraints on the propensities of eating and sexual intercourse (the two most prominent propensities which rule man’s life), are serviceable bits wherewith to check the wayward steed of the senses; but the desire to relish the one and the other remains as fresh as ever. Though constant restraint may put down, it cannot efface. So says the Lord in the Bhagavadgītā.

"The objects of sense, but not the relish for them, turn away from an abstemious dweller in the body, and even relish turneth away from him after the Supreme is seen."—Chap. ii, verse 59.
The Yogavaisishta Ramayana says:

स्यय साध्व स्वास्थम तात्प्राप्ति नापते ।
विवेकसिद्धंसत्तममहंसी ज्ञा वेष ॥

"Man's disrelish for the objects of sense does not arise until the Knowable is known, as a creeper (is not born) in a desert."—Chap. ii.

So long as relish remains, so long is man's individuality in the ascendant; and so long as man's individuality is in the ascendant, so long he is the enjoyer of food, drink, and the like. How can, then, all his actions be offered to the Supreme so that the offerer may be liberated from the bonds of action?

The answer is, By self-surrender or resignation to the Supreme. The Tantrik Sadhaka is enjoined to feel the Supreme as Divine Mother and Father, not only within himself, but within every being. By knowledge of Sāstra, by faith, and by devotion to God and Guru, he must persistently practise this feeling so that in time it becomes a part of his nature.

The nature of the Supreme as the True Self, the real doer and the real seeler being realized, he can place his Kārmik self completely at Her disposal in all his acts with a devout heart and inflexible will; he can worship Her with his thoughts, feelings, and propensities, whatsoever they may be, and realize what he recites every morning.

मातललाभ सायाहे सायास्ति धातरे दु ।
बल्लरोशि कान्नातलोभव सब पुजनम् ॥

"From the time I rise in the morning till evening, and from evening till morning, whatsoever I do, O Mother of the Universe! that is surely Thy worship."

This is the mental attitude (अत्थः) of a hero (वीरः) as distinguished from the mental attitude of the animal man (प्राणी), who, however otherwise devoted and wise, eats the gracious leavings of God, relishing them as an individual only and does not dare unite with his wife as an act of divine worship. Whereas every mouthful of food, every sexual relation, and every act is an oblation of the hero, who by these practical means spiritualizes his nature, and with the Divine Mother's blessings becomes a Man-God (दिग्नः), to be eventually dissolved and lost within the blissful effulgence of Mother Anandamayi.\(^1\)

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1 When food (prasāda) is offered to the Devatā by the Paśu, it is considered that the Devatā eats the subtle portion and leaves the gross part for the worshipper. The latter eats it as devotee (Bhakta)—that is, as one who considers himself as separate from the Devatā, and whom he worships. The Vīra however, regards himself as the Devatā, and therefore, when he eats, it is the Devatā, and not the individual worshipper, who eats. This is a fundamental principle of the secret worship.

2 The Devī who is Bliss.
Brahmamayi has created this earth as the field wherein Jivas must reap the fruits of this Karma, and as sparks of Divinity perpetuate the human species. To reap the fruits of Karma the body must be kept up by food, and to perpetuate the species sexual union must take place. But considering the misery attendant upon both these functions, none would care to participate in them were not the monitors of hunger and passion implanted in him, to goad him to action which he would not otherwise willingly take. But mere hunger and passion would not effectually serve the Divine purpose if relish for both were not implanted in him. As the Divine Mother and Father enjoy their creation in the aggregate, so does the Jiva in the individual. The Jiva being essentially the same as the Divine Mother and Father, bliss (Ananda) is his natural heritage.

Thus both eating and sexual union are Divine acts, which have nothing impure in them. Impurity is the progeny of Ajñāna (absence of knowledge), which, having divorced Divinity from the Divine act, has lowered it into being mere sexual enjoyment. Thus, man divine has fallen from his high state to that of man the beast. It is the work of the Vīra (hero) to undo the instincts born of Ajñāna and harmonize himself with the Divine Law.

The Divine Mother creates, maintains, and annihilates the Universe as an act of retributive justice to Karma-bound Jivas. It is Her pleasure or play (Līlā), that Her children, by reaping the fruits of their Karma, may return to Her lap, never again to be tied and fettered by Karma. She enacts this drama of the universe, and Herself enjoys it. Her actions, however, cast no fetters round Her, because She is free from attachment and repulsion, which are the binding cords of Māyā. It is this feature of Her character which differentiates Her from the Jiva. So the Vedāntik terse saying is:

स ईशा: यद्यो मया,
स जीव: यस्तपार्जितः |

"He is God, under whose control is Māyā; He is Jiva, who is lording over by Her (Māyā)."

The Jīva, who sets his heart upon the task of freeing himself from the bondage of Māyā, must infuse every part of the alluring frame of the Enchantress with Divine love, and then throw them as a sacrifice into the Fire of that Love. It is only by this means that lording Māyā may be brought under control.

What a Sādhaka must do to free himself from the attractions of objects of sense is thus stated in the Vāmakeśvara Tantra:

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1 The Devi who is Brahman.
किन्याशाः कथिताः तन्म बहुतं भवेऽत।
किशिनिभुषणकृतं संघ्रेयत। कथयानि ते॥
काव्यशाः कवरसा भगे चाहो रसः स्मृता॥
अद्यासर्वकारा हि बिषयाः परिचितिता॥
भक्तिर्गो नवरसा रससे विषये स्मृता॥
प्रकाशा रसा देवी प्रक्षासात् स्मृताः॥
बेदं रसांगृ कथानि स्मृत्यवाचार्यैः मिथे॥
शुभा-जीवंकर्महायास्मृतभ्यानकाः॥
श्री-भात: शाश्वको शैवे नवसा काव्यशाखे॥
यमस्क नियमकृत्व आरामं माणसंबम॥
प्रायोहो भारणा न स्मारित्यनमायता॥
नः भक्ति देवसे कथिता विलयात् मिथे॥
गयसे वेदद्वारे अभ्रणो नवसे नवरसे रसाः॥
शिशा भाणं महेषानि हरसी कल्याणं कथये॥
ज्योतिः देवी तन्में निकृष्ट श्रीमुनिये॥
अकानि वेदाध्यायु भीमान्त्रायात्तिति॥
धर्मसांस्थो पुराणं च विषयं धेनकुलर्द्वे॥
आयुके पनुके गान्यसे मति ते भय॥
अधेशास्थमानका विशारदेशा रासा॥
मनं कीर्तनं च्वानं स्नारणं पादसेवनम॥
अर्जनं करनं दार्शं सम्मालसमारणम॥
हुं नवरसा देवी भक्ति भेदं। प्रक्षीतिताः॥
समाधिनित्वाध्यायासंख्यापालनाः न।
कथिता: प्रभुमितानि विषये करतो रस्य॥
माया: पवं रसः गौडीप्रसुपल्लि।।
पुत्रित्व समाक्षा ये ते है विशि। स्मृता॥
क्षणिकां विशिष्टत्रिप्रश्नोपनितके विधि।।
बांधनानस्तत्वं पुन्त्र विशिष्ट परमेश्वरी॥
"Many are the branches of knowledge touching work, some distinguishing features of which I shall briefly tell thee. In literature there are nine Rasas; there are said to be eight Rasas in Yoga; in learning there are eighteen Rasas; nine are the Rasas in the Yoga of devotion; in objects of sense there are six Rasas. O Devi! the Rasa of wine are five. These are the fifty-five Rasas. O Dear One! hear attentively the names of the Rasa in the different works mentioned. The nine Rasas in literature are—sexual love, heroism, compassion, laughter, wonder, terror, hate, peace, and anger. O Mahadevi! O Dear One! In Yoga Śāstra, Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prānāyama, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi are the eight Rasas told in detail. The eighteen Rasas of learning are—(1) Chandras, which are the legs of the Veda; (2) Vyākaraṇa (Grammar) is known to be its mouth; (3) Śikṣā is its nostrils; (4) its hands are said to be Kalpa; (5) O Devi! Jotisā (astronomy, astrology) is its eyes; (6) Nirukta is its ears; (7–10) each of the four Vedas is a limb of the Veda; (11) Mīmāṃsā; (12) Nyāya; (13) Dharma Śāstra; (14) Purāṇa; (15) Ayurveda; (16) Dhanurveda; (17) Gandharva Veda; and (18) Arthaśāstra. The nine Rasas in Bhakti Yoga (Yoga of devotion) are known, O Devi! to be thinking, praise, meditation, remembrance, serving the Holy Feet, worship and hymn, servitude, fellowship, and self-dedication. In objects of sense, O Parameswari! the six Rasas are—flowers, scents, the beloved woman, bod, dress, and ornaments. In wine the five Rasas are—that made of molasses, that made of honey, that made of sugar-cane, that made of fruits, and that made of corn."

"Those who are experienced in the feeling of Rasa in these are called Rasika."

"O Parameswari! O Devi! regulations concerning work are of five classes—namely, regulations as to daily service, Japa, purification, external and internal worship, and Puraścaraṇa. Regulations as to daily service relate to morning, noon, and evening rites."

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1 This term means relish, taste, sentiment, juice, etc.
2 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
3 Philosphies so-called.
4 Science of medicine, warfare, music, and economics.
"Experiencing all the Rasas and performing the prescribed works, the Sādhaka, with tranquil mind, shall perform Pūrṇābhisecaṇa." 1

नेवः रसानां व्याप्ति शृणुवाचविहिता मया।
श्रारो बीत्रो ज्ञेयतस्तिन्ते ते भर्म्यप्रव:।
श्राराद्रिण्यादिर्ख थि म श्रारस्ते भवेत्।
श्रारस्तु यदा देवि परमेष्टकृप:।
तदेव परम शान्ति नहर्ता समप्पते॥
तेन भक्तिपारस्तु श्रुणु मणिविशे नयो॥
पांदे विना शरीरस्थ न गतिविचित्रन्ते पिने॥
खमसा चेतनामः तु मिज्यवेश कराचन।
अलक्ष्ये चित्त छन्दो न शोभित विच्छिदे॥

cहुः प्रेमक्षेत्र: स्वात् ज्ञेयोतिशाश्य ततै च।

cहुः प्रेमक्षेत्र: स्वात् ज्ञेयोतिशाश्य ततै च।

चन्द्रपूर्वस्य भ्रह्माणं ज्ञोतिः भवस्तज्ञिस्वयः॥
वेदसा निवृक्त स्वात् तात्साहितिस्व जायते॥

cहुः प्रेमक्षेत्र: स्वात् ज्ञेयोतिशाश्य ततै च।

cहुः प्रेमक्षेत्र: स्वात् ज्ञेयोतिशाश्य ततै च।

शिशुप्रवस्य नाटकादि शान्तवण्टरण स्वरूपः॥
विविधवाचकस्वयः द्रास्तेर्व शुचिलिते॥

cहुः प्रेमक्षेत्र: स्वात् ज्ञेयोतिशाश्य ततै च।

न्यायेन सार्थ समार्थ सम्भवनां भवन निर्याप्तेः भूमः॥

cहुः प्रेमक्षेत्र: स्वात् ज्ञेयोतिशाश्य ततै च।

भवस्ततव्यस्तराण ज्ञेयवाचिनिन्तिपति:॥
पुराणस्यात्म तेनैव जायते तत्त्वं भिन्ये।

cहुः प्रेमक्षेत्र: स्वात् ज्ञेयोतिशाश्य ततै च।

अयुक्ते धनुक्तं गामवं च समायस्ते।

cहुः प्रेमक्षेत्र: स्वात् ज्ञेयोतिशाश्य ततै च।

वाक संधानो देवि पुरीवाश्य न साभ्यः॥

1 The Pūrṇābhisecaṇa here mentioned is not the second, but the fourth degree of initiation, known as Pūrṇadikṣā (B.K.M.).
PRINCIPLES OF TANTRA

“Hear attentively from me the different characteristics of the Rasa. Sexual love should be learnt of the hero; in it are compassion, etc. Sexual love, etc., and hate, etc., arise from the sexual Rasa” (Śṛigāra). ¹

“O Devī! when sexual love realises the Supreme Object (Paramārtha), then is Supreme tranquillity. (The Sādhaka) then acquires the state of Rudra.”

“O dearer than life! hear from me the purport of this. O Dear One! as the body cannot move without limbs, so the Vedic path none can enter without a knowledge of Chandas (metre). O sweet-tongued Devī! Chandas is not beautiful without rhetoric. The eye penetrates that which is unseen, so does astronomy; eclipses of the sun and the moon make astronomy a science of direct evidence. Nirukta is a branch of Veda; from the branches Brahmā is born. Devotion to Brahmā arises from hearing songs; song arises from the mouth and nostrils. Without song

¹ Which is the root principle of all creation. Sexual love in this passage refers to its manifestation in the individual. The sexual Rasa from which it arises is its general principle of origin.

² That is when śṛigāra, which the author translates as sexual love, is experienced in the union of the Jīvātma and Paramātma—that is the supreme object of Sādhana. The Bhairavi is Devī. The Sādhaka is Śiva. In their union there is no distinction.
SPIRITUAL CULTURE—VAIDIK AND TĀNTRIK

there is no dance; dancing is born of song. Śikṣā and drama, etc., words and grammar are the couples inseparably allied. The Vedas with their six limbs explain the Brahman. The Nyāya with Mimāṃsā surely explains Brahman. From constant thought upon the Paramātmā, knowledge of Brahman arises in the Jīva. Precepts are settled according to Dharma Sāstra; Purāṇas spring from it, O Dear One; The Jīva, the Supreme object of whose life is bliss Divine (Brahmānanda), and who is eager for self-preservation, must learn Ayurveda (science of life—i.e., medical science), Dhanurveda (archery), and Gāndharva Veda (music)."

"O Devī, the fully wise Sādhaka, with honey, juice of sugar-cane, milk, corn, scents, garlands, dress, and ornaments, should worship in union woman, who is the image of the Mother of the Universe. O Devī! the culture of the Rasa of sexual love1 consists in the worship of woman.2 Worship and the five classes of work already stated should be performed by the hero (Vīra) for attaining the Devī. By worship arise nine degrees of devotion and ecstasy of Rasa. Then the Yogi, practising Yoga, shall be immersed in communion" (Samādhi).

"Therefore, O Mahēśāṁī, have I already stated that by feeling all the fifty-five Rasas one loses all desire for objects of sense and worldly work.3 The effect of non-desire is wonderful, and the Divine Mother is gratified by it. Embodied man cannot give up Karma (action) so long as he is embodied; so, concluding in this wise, divine acts by festive, religious, and other works, the Sādhaka verily becomes liberated in this life (Jīvanmukta) by virtue of his full knowledge and bliss of Rasa."—Chap. liv.

Wine, as a means of spiritual self-culture, is another singular feature of some forms4 of Tāntrik Śādhanā. In India the free use of wine in social and religious festivals was fairly general in the Satya, Tretā, and Dwāpara Ages (Yugas). It was, however, probably after the ruin of the race of Yādus during the last days of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s life that stringent laws were framed in the Smṛti Śāstras against the use of wine by three higher classes. Those laws were sedulously administered by the Hindu Governments, and the result was a general abhorrence of spirituous drinks. Nothing better could have been devised for the welfare of man, for wine not only wastes the body, but it works havoc on the intellectual and moral faculties, pulling down man to the level of beasts. The Tantra Śāstāra—the Word of God—is fully alive to this:

1 Śrṅgāraraśasādhanā.
2 Vanitāpūjane. According to the "Mahānirvāṇa Tantra" the worshipper’s own wife.
3 Each pleasure is but a portion (khāṇḍa) of the whole mixed with pain. He who has felt the whole (akhaṇḍa) attains Brahman bliss and loses desire for worldly things.
4 Not of all and by some Tantras only.
PRINCIPLES OF TANTRA

"One who, being unripe in Kaula knowledge, wishes to drink wine, is, O Devil! a great sinner, and is unfit to perform all religious works."

"He goes to Raurava Hell who drinks unpurified wine, commits rape, and slaughters animals for self-gratification."

"O Devil! that is called drinking of wine which is not for Divine purposes; that is a great sin according to the Vedas, etc."—Kulārṇava Tantra. (5-93, 99). Further, it is said in the same Tantra (2. 117-119):

"If man could attain spirituality by drinking, then all ignoble drinkers would be liberated. If residence in heaven be the result of meat-eating, then all carnivorous beings would be righteous. If O Devil! enjoyment of women be the cause of liberation, then all creatures by enjoying women would be liberated."

Why, then, it may be asked, are all these "gates of hell" introduced in self-culture, the object of which is liberation from the fascinations of Māyā? The same Tantra which prescribes Śādhana with woman, wine, and meat, prescribes also various other methods of worship, and supplies Mantras, without which Hinduism all over India would be paralyzed. It is irrational to accept one portion of a Śastra as valuable and reject another as worthless. The earnest inquirer must forgo his prejudices and passions, cherished ideas and preconceived notions, before he can enter the holy temple of spiritual truth embodied in the mandates of Lord Śiva. It must always be remembered that this is spiritual culture, and not the culture of the body and its senses.
The Tantra Sastra, like all other revelations, does not always assign reasons for its mandates, but asserts that as Sadhana is practical, the most direct evidence of the truth of its statements can be obtained by accepting the Sadhana and working according to instructions.

The principle underlying this Sadhana is thus enunciated:

ैैै तां तौक्येत सिद्धिर्वोपयिता।
श्रीकौलदानों ईश्व श्रीरवेन महालेन।||

"The Great Bhairava has ordained in the Kaula doctrine that Siddhi (spiritual advancement) must be achieved by means of those very things which are the causes of man’s downfall."—Kularnava Tantra.

The consideration of this principle leads us, in the first place, to adopt the evidence of analogy in regard to the physical body of man. Cobra poison, arsenic, aconite, croton, opium, and other animal and vegetable poisons, are destructive of life. But skilfully prepared and purified, they not only save life but invigorate it. The Indian physician’s preparation of cobra poison is famous for its life-giving and invigorating virtues, so are the apothecary’s preparations of arsenic, etc. In some parts of India raw arsenic is used in moderate quantities for prolonging life and putting off old age. It would thus appear that nothing is absolutely harmful in Nature. By skilful manipulation even poison yields manna. The poison of wine, by skilful treatment according to Tantrik precepts and instructions of Gurus, is not only rendered innocuous, but is turned into a distinct force of labour, energy, patience, and intrepidity, all of which are essential in spiritual culture.

Wine, by exciting the brain, turns the mind to that channel of thought which is uppermost in the drinker’s mind.¹ When the mind is pre-eminently devotional, the effect of wine upon it is to render it more so by concentrating all the thoughts upon the object of devotion. Ecstasy (Ullasa) and communion (Samadhi) are after a long practice its riper developments in a Sadhaka.

That which most attracts men to the taking of wine is its power to develop happiness in the drinker. The Sadhaka’s mind, freed from all base and ignoble thoughts and feelings, enjoys Brahmānanda (Brahman Bliss) under its influence.

As to the use of meat and fish, the Vaidik and the Tantrik Sastras agree in holding that slaughter of animals for Divine purposes is not sinful.

¹ The effect of wine is to intensify and reveal what is already in the mind. Hence it is said In vino veritas.
O Dear One! in sacrifices to the Pitrs and Gods killing of prescribed animals is ordained. For self-gratification killing of beings is nowhere permitted. Even a blade of grass should never be cut without a lawful purpose. Killing for the satisfaction of the Gods and twice-born (Dvijas)\(^1\) is not sinful.

The Kulārṇava Tantra says:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{नैच्छिकतं तुम्हारे शांति हेतु येषां करामतं} \\
& \text{देवतार्थ द्विजाभे वा हला पार्वेन सियते} \\
& \text{“O Dear One! in sacrifices to the Pitrs and Gods killing of prescribed animals is ordained. For self-gratification killing of beings is nowhere permitted. Even a blade of grass should never be cut without a lawful purpose. Killing for the satisfaction of the Gods and twice-born (Dvijas) is not sinful.”}
\end{align*}
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\(^1\) Here Brāhmaṇas to whom the sacrificial meats are given.
तृत्यं सर्वदेवानां ब्रह्माणायसेव च।
सेवोऽहुँ मद्यभक्ति वृहत् चैत्यस पालकी॥
मन्तराङ्गसुरसाराध्यं अनस्तः श्रीकृष्णदेहे।
मद्यपानिन्द्रयथं मद्यपानं साधृपरेत॥
सेवोऽहुँ य: हुलाबाय मधादीनि स पालकी।
मानवेदेवताभाउ: वामिक्यत्विधितः॥
मन्त्यमानसावाचारिनां मादनानां निपेक्षणस।
यागकां मनोवान्च द्वृषां कृष्णं कथितं प्रयोऽ॥
यथा करुणा किरणां सेवानां सिद्धान्ते।
मद्यपानं लोऽ लोऽ सम्ये मोगमोक्षदन॥
श्रीगुरोऽ: कुजास्वस्य: सम्यक्षिज्ञाय वासनाम।
पशुहं निषेधेत चालयं चाली पालकी सवेत॥
अवधु: शैलवं देवभक्तता गम्यतर्पिण्।
पशुपालकिङ्ग पीला: कृदेदिनि नर्के ब्लेत॥

.......

स्वल्पवादिदिनम्मण्यं संपादकस्मि योजयेत॥
मांशाय सं: केतेदिवं श्रीन: सहिष्णुस्कां॥
अभ्युद्वा पत्रोऽ: शक्ति: मद्याद कृतिक्षय च॥
शक्ती ता सेवेशस्ततु स मेवेच्छितत्वत्॥
परस्यवालसिद्धस्योगङ्गदनिश्वेत।
य जाते मैथुनं पद् स्पादितरे ब्रजिस्कृतः॥
इदादि पशुपालणां वासनां कुलानिष्के।
जाता शुष्कसारेव य: सेवेत स सुन्न्ये॥

.......

पूजातिरिक्तात्वतो वेबं शाबार्यम्भवित।
देवतारुक-के च नियंत्र पोज्येवेत् प्रयोऽ॥
कुजागरस्याय: देवतारापनस्कृतः॥
गुरुपदारसस्युः पूज्येवेत् कुलानिष्के॥
As the personal servants of a king and not the State servants are dear to him, so, O Devi! are those who are devoted to internal worship, not others. Those who with devotion offer with their hands meat and wine cause bliss (Ananda); they are, my Dear One! Kaulikas. Our Supreme form described as Sat, Cit, and Ananda, verily develops, O Dear One! by the enjoyment of wine. Bhairava inspires those who drink with a knowledge of the principles of Kula (Sakti), and who view all objects with an even eye. As a dark house is illumined by light, so does the Atma, enveloped by Maya, become visible by drinking. O Dear One! those who drink wine sanctified by Mantra (the mystic words of power) and offered to Gurudeva will never drink the mother's milk again (that is, will never be reborn). Wine is Sakti, meat is Siva. Their enjoyer is Bhairava himself; the bliss arising from their union is called liberation. Ananda is Brahman. It exists in bodies. Wine reveals it; hence Yogis drink it. Without attachment, fearless, unmoved by pairs of opposites (as pleasure and pain), without curiosity to know, versed in Vaidik lore, the Vira drinks wine which grants blessings."

"O Parvat! the drink of nectar purified by Mantra develops god-like nature, and liberates man from the bondage of the world."

"For the gratification of the Gods, and also for the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman, should wine and meat alone be taken; he is a sinner who consumes them in order to satisfy his carnal appetite. Wine should be drunk in order that a clear perception of the form (of the Devata) arising from the Mantra (of the Sadhaka) may be thereby attained, and for pacification of the mind and the undoing of the bondage of the world. He who takes wine and the rest for self-gratification is a sinner. These things should be taken without thirst and longing, for the satisfaction of the Devata alone. O Dear One! the
partaking of fish, meat, wine, and other things which cause excitement, at times other than those of worship, is sinful. As Soma-drinking is prescribed to Brāhmaṇas during sacrifice, so wine, as that which yields joy and liberation, should be drunk at its proper time. It is only after the true import of the Kula Śāstra has been learnt from the Guru that one should partake of the five articles, otherwise one becomes a sinner. Even a Kaula goes to hell who drinks after the manner of Paśus without worshipping Bhairava Deva, and without doing Tarpāṇa with Mantra."

"He who withdraws the senses from their objects and unites them with Ātmā is a true meat-eater, others are mere slaughterers of animals. The Śakti of a Paśu is asleep, that of a Kaula is awake; he who enjoys this Śakti is an enjoyer of Śakti. He who enjoys the bliss arising from the union of Parāśakti with Ātmā has true sexual union, others are mere enjoyers of women. O Mistress of Kula! he who partakes of the five articles, knowing from the mouth of the Guru their true significance, is liberated."

"O Devi! I myself with Thee accept with pleasure Śrīcakra Pūjā performed with Mantra by one, well-versed in the Śāstrik import of Pūjā and Abhiśeca, who is devoted to Devatā and Guru, who worships daily, who knows the esoteric meanings of the Kula Śāstra, who with zeal performs worship, who has received instructions from Guru, whose mind is pure, who is active, who is devoid of anger and greed, who is averse to the religious practices of Paśus, and who offers oblations. The wise Yogi should perform Kula-pūjā, filling his mind with the thought 'I am Bhairava'. Possessed of these and other qualities the Kaulika who regularly worships Thee obtains enjoyment and liberation."

These rather long extracts will, it is hoped, amply repay perusal, and bring home to the mind of the unbiased, earnest inquirer the truth of the compatibility of enjoyment and liberation existing harmoniously, provided that such enjoyment be lawful and not sinful. Yoga, which liberates, and Bhoga (enjoyment), which chains down, have been treated as though they were poles asunder in other schools of thought, which make it incumbent upon the pursuer of the one to shun the other as one would shun a deadly cobra. The effect of this has been referred to more than once in this essay. The Tantra Śāstra reconciles the two, not only in theory, but in practice. The testimony of thousands of Tāntrik Yogis from remote antiquity corroborates its truth.

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1 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
2 Pañcamudrā.
3 This is the Śṛgāra Rasa of the Vīra.
According to the eight-limbed Yoga process, Kula-kundalini can be united in the thousand-petalled lotus with Paraśiva. This is the union of Śiva and Śakti, and the fluid arising from this union is wine which the Yogi drinks. The truth of this is unquestionable, and forms the basis of the Śācakra-Sādhana briefly described in a previous part of this essay. This system of Sādhana is called Jñāna Yoga—that is, the Yoga of Knowledge as distinguished from Bhakti Yoga, the Yoga of Devotion. The Yoga of Knowledge is so arduous and difficult that but very few amongst many thousands can appreciably succeed in it. On the other hand, very many persons are physically unfit for it.

Tāntrik Yogīs who pursue the path of knowledge regard the path of devotion as indispensable, for the latter wonderfully develops the spiritual faculties, unites worldly bondage more effectually, and operates as a guarantee against fall, the danger of which attends every step taken in the practice of the Yoga of Knowledge.

Tāntrik Bhakti Yoga stands upon its own feet, firm, sure, unerring, and suited to all constitutions and to all stations of life. It is for the prince as for the peasant, for the poor as for the rich, for the man of business as for the man of leisure. It makes no distinction of caste, colour, creed, or nationality, welcoming one and all who will bow to the lotus-feet of the Divine Mother. It exhorts no privation, imposes no hard and fast conditions, but accommodates itself to the tastes and capacities of its followers, so that they may slowly but surely march on like heroes to the capture of the citadel of bliss. It only asks the ordinary disciple to be honest, sincere, kind, compassionate, and truthful, and to keep his passions and greed under control. If he wants prosperity, progeny, and other material advantages, let him devoutly pray to the Divine Mother, and “depute” Her angels to secure them for him. His desire will thus have a better chance of being gratified than by servitude, servility and many another questionable worldly artifice.

Passion and greed being the two great powers of Avidyā, which sow seeds of disease, death, discord, poverty, and ruin broadcast all over the world, they are so handled in the Yoga of Devotion that they not only lose their own strength, but become cheerful friends of the sojourner. The path of devotion—that is, the Kaula path—is therefore a blessing, not only individually, but socially.

Extreme Vedāntik pessimism has rendered India what it is to-day—neither soaring to heaven nor blooming on earth. Both heaven and a fruitful life on earth were the portion of its great ancestors who were wont to perform the Soma sacrifice in bygone ages. Casting our eyes on the West, we are dazed by the dazzle of worldly wealth on the one hand, and terrified by the ghostly shadow of poverty on the other. Big religious bodies there are, but where is God? Whilst India has no faith
in the world, and only a dreamy faith in heaven, the West seeks a heaven in this world. The best remedy for this disease is to be found in that religion which both fully recognizes the reality of the world, and regards it as the training-ground whereon man may grow into God. And so says the Kulārṇava Tantra:

भेगो भोगायते सम्पद्ध दुःखत्व सुखायते ।
भोगायते ष्ठ संसारः कुलमेव कुलेश्वरि ॥

"O Mistress of Kula! in Kuladharma, Bhoga (enjoyment) becomes complete Yoga (union of Jīva with Brahma), bad deeds are made good deeds, and the world becomes the scat of Liberation."

Om Śāntih, Om Śāntih, Om Śāntih, Om Kāli.

Barada Kanta Majumdar

Benares

March 23, 1914