CHAPTER 1

APPEARANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF THE TANTRA SCRIPTURE

NECESSITY FOR THE SCRIPTURE

The living together of many persons in one family is called the Samsāra. He is a praiseworthy Karttā, who in the performance of his family duties, justly makes all members of the family the objects of equal care, and of both affection and punishment. Though the householder has equal care and affection for all, yet punishment is properly awarded to him who strays from the right path and thinks the Karttā is partial. This is household morality in man's small kingdom, the house. This morality, when applied to a kingdom, is called statesmanship. In short, whenever equality is to be kept among a number of people living in union, the King must, as all admit, make provision both for the contentment and punishment of his subjects. Whether these understand it or not, the King must, if he would preserve the kingdom, take hold of this rod of statesmanship which is both stern and sweet. What Indian is there who, living in this portion of the Empire which is under the sole sovereignty of the present Queen Empress (Rājrājeśvari) will deny this? You and I are each the King of a small family kingdom. It is of such combined kingdoms that the Empress of India is to-day Rājrājeśvari. Again, She is the Rājrājeśvari of the three worlds, whose kingdom is the countless millions of vast worlds.

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1 The Samsāra is the coming and going, the cycle of birth, action, death, and rebirth: the world in which all live who have not, by knowledge of the self (Ātmajñāna) and the extinction of the will to separate life, attained liberation (Mokṣa). Brahman is the root of the eternal Asvattha (fig) tree, with roots above and branches below (Kāṭ. Up., iii. 2. 1). It also means in Bengali a family.

2 The head of the joint family in a Hindu household.

3 The book was written under the reign of Queen Victoria, whose name is retained to give point to that which follows.

4 The Devi ("Goddess") or God in Its mother aspect as creatrix, nourisher, and ruler of the worlds (see A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess").

5 The Triloka, Earth (Bhūbh), the upper world (Bhuvah, Suvah, and others), and the underworlds (Pālās).
She is the Queen without a second of the kingdom of the universe, and Śāstra is the name of her universe-controlling and unfailing will. You and I have not the capacity to understand the principles which govern the profound statecraft of the kingdom of eternal worlds which belong to the Empress of the universe. You and I are in this more insignificant than the most insignificant, illiterate, and ignorant people. Our sole capacity is to obey Her commands. They alone understand the world-play of Brahmanāyī, who, by the mercy of Mahāvidyā and the grace of Brahmavidyā, have been able to make their way through the mass of dualistic darkness thick with illusion, and to reach the ultimate truth of monistic doctrine. You and I have come to this world with the duty cast upon us of advancing only along that path which is marked by their footprints. As the courtiers of a royal court are not the authors, but merely the interpreters, of statecraft, so the truth-seeing Rṣīs are not the originators of the Śādhana Śāstra, but its remembrancers merely. It is not a Śāstra marred by mistakes, errors, and deception. Bhagavān, the creator of all creatures and knower of all hearts, is its revealer. He in whom mistakes are mistaken, in whom error is erroneous, and in whom deception is itself deceived. Bhagavati, the supporter of the world is its hearter. Nārada and other Rṣīs learnt the truth from Brahmi and other Devas. Vaiṣṇāvī, Viśvāmitra, Gautama, and other Gurus learnt in their turn from the latter. It is these alone who are the courtiers of the royal court of the Empire of the Universe. You and I, the subjects of this Empire of the Universe, are merely the servants of that statecraft in the form

1 Scripture.
2 The world is the play of the Brahman. As the Śūtra says, Lokāvatālīkā Kaivalyam.
3 The Devī who is one with Brahman.
4 The Devī as destroyer of ignorance and illusion (Avidyā), which veils the Reality. Both Māyā and Vidyā reside in the Lord as His Saktis, like shade and light of the sun, and are the respective causes of bondage and liberation.
5 Dvaita is that which sets the world and the embodied spirit (Jīva), apart from the supreme spirit (Parabrahman), as opposed to Advaita which proclaims their unity.
6 Avidyā.
7 Advaita.
8 Inspired seers, by whom the Śāstra were "seen"—that is, to whom it was revealed.
9 Śādhana is the means employed to attain an end; in this case the ultimate aim of Being. The Tantra is pre-eminently a practical Śādhana Śāstra.
10 The Author of Śāstra is the Brahman (God). The Rṣīs merely heard and handed it down.
11 Feminine of Bhagavān—the Devī.
12 That is, the Śāstra.
13 The creative Deva of the "Trinity" (Trimūrti), who must be distinguished from the Supreme Brahman in the neuter voice.
14 "Shining ones," or "Gods".
15 Spiritual teachers.
of Śāstra which has been promulgated by them. They have had the privilege of being near the person of the King, and have thus had an opportunity of observing with their own eyes the principles which, even in the smallest matters, govern His actions. They have, with bowed heads, admitted the unerring truths of Śāstra. To look, then, askance at these truths, to attempt airyly, without reaching the greatness or acquiring the knowledge of the Rṣis to set them aside is just as if one were to try to blow away the Himalayas—an act which is ridiculous enough to make the intelligent laugh, the mad man dance, and which is likely to bring a violent death to the foolish Non-Ārya.¹

UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCRIPITURE

I hear you say: "Take me there; I will examine with my own eyes whether the thing be true or not." But the answer is that it becomes him alone to say this who has eyes to see and feet to walk, and simply desires a knowledge of the path. As for me, I have neither eyes nor feet nor knowledge of the path, but only a demoniac, indomitable egotism, which prevents me from seeing what I have, and what I have not. Still, I know not how kind She is. Lame as I am, the Mother⁴ has carried me through the journey of eighty-four lakhs of births,² fraught with the greatest of difficulties, and has placed me in an Āryan gotra⁴ in Āryavarta, in the land of Bhārata,⁸ where freedom has its fullest play. But how hard is the wheel of ill fortune! The moment I fall from the lap of the Mother,⁶ that very instant my head is made restless with the waves of freedom. Now, I would rather sink in that sea of freedom which I love so much, and would rather die than believe that I am dying without ocular proof of it.

You may say, "My path leads to death, but, unless I die, how can I know that that path of mine is bad and that yours is good? This is all that I can say about acquaintance with the path." Even he who is prepared to serve egotism with such deadly resolve, the ever-merciful Rṣis call with a sweet tone softened with love, and say: "You are not asked to believe as a favour. Practise, and you will see for yourself that Medicine, Astrology, and Tantra produce visible results at every step."⁷

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¹ The Hindus are properly called Ārya, and their country Āryavarta.
² The Devil who is called Ambikā and Śrīmātā.
³ The previous births, as inorganic things, aqueous animals, creeping animals, birds, beasts, and man, through which the soul evolves. Cf. Empedocles ουδε Diog. Lecont., viii. 77.
⁴ Lineage.⁴ India.
⁵ Literally, "the skirt of the dress" of the mother, to which little children cling.
⁶ A common saying establishing the pratyakṣa and experimental character of the Śāstra, which is primarily concerned not so much with speculation as with fact.
Lame though I am, I thus reach the place I sought by the blessing of the Most High; and by the grace of Śāstra, unbelieving even as I am, the path is made known to me. But still my wants are not supplied. Without eyes, how can I see? How can I look for the path? Instantly the Śāstra says: “Jiva, even though you are blinded by the darkness of ignorance, seek shelter at the feet of the Guru. He with sticks smeared with the brilliant paint of wisdom will open your celestial eyes.” The Śāstra says: “By whom the eye is opened.” But I hear: “By whom the eye is rooted out.”

How may one avert this misfortune? What shall I do with this egotism which makes me feel ashamed to say to the Guru: “I do not understand.” It was for this I said that there is no peace until this indomitable egotism ceases. It is useless to take a Guru if you have yourself understood. But if you have not, why should you be ashamed to admit it? Perhaps you will say: “Explain first, and then I shall believe.” Why all this useless importunity? If you think that you can show that the Śāstras are mistaken by dint of your own intelligence, and that you will destroy it with the sharpened arrows of reasoning, argument, and judgment, then you must have made good progress indeed! This Śāstra is neither philosophy nor science. It is the Śādhanā which leads to Siddhi. It must be practised as well as understood. By practice, even though without understanding, it will be made plain. But no amount of understanding without practice will effect this. A Mahāmahopādhyāya pandit who has conquered the whole world with his learning is, if devoid of practice, not the equal of the meanest of insects in the domain of Śādhanā. On the other hand, should a great fool prove himself to be a faithful devotee attached to Śādhanā, he is considered by Śāstra to be one in a thousand. It has been said: “Perhaps but one man in a thousand strives for Siddhi, and amongst a thousand of those who strive, maybe only one may be found who knows me truly.” It is not the hero of intellect, who is not also the hero of austere practices, who wins the battle of Śādhanā. Just as all the efforts of a great charioteer who has with him an army complete in all its four component parts are useless.

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1 The embodied spirit, here the human being.
2 Spiritual director.
3 Collyrium, applied with stick to the eyes, which is believed to clear the vision.
4 A play on the words “ummiltam” and “ummiltam.”
5 Art and practice.
6 Siddhi means success generally. It includes the eight lesser great powers, such as dominion over the elements, and the great Siddhi or liberation (Mukti).
7 A title of honour given to learned pandit.
8 Tapas.
9 That is, infantry, cavalry, elephant corps, and the chariots.
if he be himself unarmed, so all the learning of a pandit of mighty intellect is but a vain thing if he be not equally possessed of the power which arises from Śādhanā. Whoever with the resolve, "I will accomplish my object or die in the effort," has jumped into a fire, to him, a crest-jem amongst devotees, the Śāstra gives shelter in its secure arms. If to-day all men had the strength of faith of Kāmadeva Tārikha, hero most powerful in the field of austerity, or of Ganeśa Upādhyāya, whose life was one long surrender to the mother; or of Rāmaprasāda,³ who was, as it were, a bee intoxicated with the honey of the lotus feet of Śakti,⁴ should we in that case have had to sing in Tantra Tattva⁵ the song of all these evil designs (against the Śāstra)? But the day is now lost to us. That unceasing faith in Tantra, the Śādhanā-Śāstra, has been shaken.⁶

**Doubts Concerning this Scripture**

It is said: "We have the Vedas the Śāstra of prayer. Why, then, has the Tantra Śāstra again been put forward?" This is the first point of doubt in the present-day society of men vain of their education. What appears to them as a matter of still greater doubt and the mere raving of a madman is the assertion that by means of the Tantra Śāstra such Siddhi may be gained in one life, in one year—nay, in one week—as can only be otherwise with uncertainty attained after the practice of age-long austerities. Why, they say, should Bhagavān⁶ be so merciful to the Kali age⁷ with all its most heinous sins, as to make it possible to attain in one life or in one week that which was rarely attained even by Devas like Indra.⁸ If such be possible, then Īśvara,⁷ they say, must be highly partial. At such talk it is difficult to restrain a smile.

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³ The celebrated Bengali poet and Śākta.

⁴ Śakti is Devī—that is, both the power of God and God Itself. Each of the Devas has His Śakti or power worshipped under the form of His spouse.

⁵ This book.

⁶ God; that is, He who is possessed of the six forms of aśīvarya which pertain to Īśvara—viz., Śri (auspiciousness), Virya (power), Jñāna (wisdom), Vairāgya (dispassion), Kirti (glory), and Māhāmya (greatness).

⁷ The fourth or last of the four ages in which the orthodox consider the world now to be, and which is marked by sin and weakness. The first, or Satya Yuga, was the golden age; in Tretā Yuga virtue declined by one-quarter; in Dvāpara Yuga by one-half; and in Kali Yuga by three-quarters.

⁸ Deva of the firmament, King of the celestials.

⁹ The "personal God," Creator and Ruler of the world, the Brahman with qualities; thought of with Prakṛti; associated with, but not Himself subject to, Māyā (Māyāvichhinanam ca Paramesvara) (Vedānta Paribhāṣā, 9). The supreme individuality is the quality of Īśvara. In the Viśvaśāstra chapter of the Viśuḍhikṣapāḍāsūkī it is explained as "LORDSHIP, ACTIVITY, INDEPENDENCE, CONSCIOUSNESS ITSELF."
PRINCIPLES OF TANTRA

You and I might just as well be inspectors of the kingly work of Isvara, whose reputation for administration would in that case depend on your or my criticism. On the other hand, I ask, if He is partial, what do you or I lose by that? If He who is the highest, all-powerful, omnipresent, and the knower of all hearts becomes partial, how can you or I prevent that? You may say we shall blame Him. But what does it matter to Him whether you and I blame Him? He who knows the hearts of the meanest insect, does He not know that you and I will blame Him? In spite of His knowing it, He has taken on Himself the blame, and, solemnly declaring, “True, true, again true—true there is no doubt,” has said: “It is true and beyond all doubt true that in the Kali age there is no liberation for him who forsakes the path laid down in the Āgama,¹ and attempts to pursue another. In the Kali age the fool who seeks to attain Siddhi by the paths shown in other Sāstras is like a thirsty man who digs a well on the very banks of the Jāhnavī.² For the attainment of happiness in this world or the next there is no path which leads to both enjoyment and salvation ³ so excellent as that shown in the Tantra.”⁴

What will you gain by threatening with your blame Him from whose own mouth has come this unerring conclusion? He who is afraid of blame or pleased by praise may be your Isvara, but he is not the God of the world. He who is God (Isvara) of the world is the Lord (Isvara). His divinity and lordship over the universe stands supreme, spurning both glory or disgrace, praise or blame. This is the wealth of his Vaikuntha.⁵ If you please, you may blame, you may chastise, you may deal hard blows with your fist at the foot of the Himālaya Mountains, yet the immovable Lord of mountains will not be shaken, though your fingers will be torn and broken. Those who, in endeavouring to discuss the truth as to the divine (Isvara Tattva), have realized the effect of doing so may desist. But those who judge God by their own ideas of justice will not be satisfied with that. We ourselves do not deny the apparent partiality alleged, but we say that His strict adherence to justice has not been broken by the mercy shown to the creatures of the Kali age. On the contrary, not to have treated them with such kindness would have been unjust. We ask what sort of justice

¹Here the Tantra.
²The peculiar claim of the Tantras is that it gives both worldly enjoyment and salvation. It is Bhukti-mukti-karāṇica. In Yoga there is no enjoyment (Bhoga), and in enjoyment no Yoga (union with the Supreme). But the Tantra has both (Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. i, verses 50, 51; Muṇḍamālī Tantra, chap. ii). Bhoga, or enjoyment, is of five kinds—pleasure arising from sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell. This enjoyment may be had on earth or in the transitory heavens of enjoyment, which are to be distinguished from mukti, or liberation, the state which alone endures.
³Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. v.
⁴The heaven of Viṣṇu.
was it on the part of God to give to them of the Satya age a longevity of a lakh of years, with their life centred in the marrow, and then to give to men in the Kali age a longevity of a hundred years, and life dependent on food? If one injustice is done, that is no excuse for doing a hundred others. Moreover, what can you do if injustice has been once done? But, as a matter of fact, “Poison is the remedy for poison.” What does it matter to you or me if He has made up for the deficiency in justice caused by the grant of greater longevity in the Satya than in the Kali age, by, according to Sadhana, a more rapid effect in the Kali age than in the Satya age? In fact, in Him there is neither deficiency nor the reverse. In this drama of the world He is both the Chief Actor and the Chief of Actresses. This drama commenced in the beginning with the union of Actor and Actress, and will conclude, according to His unfailing will, at that night which is the end of time.

Those who are acquainted with the principles of Sanskrit drama know that it is composed in the form of the tail of a cow. I do not know on what evidence rhetorical poets discovered this form of composition, but, so far as one can surmise, it appears that form was adopted in imitation of the ideal drama of that Primeval Poet, the Creator of the universe. From the description of the four ages—namely, Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali—it would seem that in the ideally composed play of the universe the chain of things from Brahma, the Hiranyagarbha and grandfather of men, to the close of the Kali age is arranged in the form of a cow’s tail. When the close of the play approaches, the King of actors, Mahakala, will after hastily withdrawing all the materials for the play, lay down to rest upon the couch of Mahapralaya in the last world-scene, the great cremation ground strewn with ashes. The Mother, the Queen of actresses and Charm of Mahakala, will place Her right foot on His heart, and, losing Herself in the waves of love and joy of the great mass of

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1 The first, or golden age, marked by virtue, prosperity, happiness, health, etc. (see Introduction to Tantra Sastra).
2 100,000.
3 The Hindu belief is that in the first age life was centred in the marrow, in the second age in the bones, in the third age in the blood, and in the last or present age is dependent on food.
4 As Sloka, 277, of the Sahitya Durpana, says: Gopuchchhagraasamagramantu vandhanantyas kirttam. The acts of a drama should be so arranged as to be reduced in size from the first to the last, just as the tail of a cow beginning broadly tapers to a point.
5 Brahma, so called in the Srifmadbhagavata, and elsewhere.
6 See Introduction to Tantra Sastra.
7 Lokapitamaha.
8 Siva (see Mahanirvana Tantra, chap. v).
9 The great dissolution of things, when all will return to that from which they on the morning of the day of Brahma originated.
10 The Devi, as Mahakala.
Next, when you become jealous at the mere mention of His unfathomable mercy towards His creatures of the Kali age as compared with that which He showed to those of the Satya age, it would seem as if you thought that the creatures of these two ages constituted two distinct classes at feud one with the other, and never meeting in each other's home. A creature of the Satya age will not (you suppose) appear in the Kali age, and one of the latter age will not have appeared in the former. No matter; be it so. But I ask: Everyone admits that not every creature in the first three ages has attained Siddhi; nor, on the other hand, is everyone in the Kali age devoid of Siddhi. What, then, is the fate of such Sādhatakas of the first three ages who have not attained Siddhi, and of such men of the Kali age as are not, but are about to become, Sādhatkas? According to your argument, no creature of the Kali age will have appeared in the Satya age, and no individual of the latter age will appear in the Kali age. In other words, at the close of these ages such persons will attain either Nirvāṇa, and be totally absorbed in the Parabrahman, or will sink at once into an eternal hell. Blessed be this judgment to which your justice leads you! What an unerring decision! You were startled at hearing that the Jīva in the Kali age can attain Siddhi in one lifetime. But the Jīva of your Satya age attains Nirvāṇa the moment it commences Sādhanā. It may thus, indeed, happen that a man who by good fortune is born at the close of the Satya age may attain without labour in one life, and by the mere circumstance of his birth at the close of that age, that same Siddhi which another has only attained in the same

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1 Cidghana. Cit, the pure Brahman, is the hearth of fire from which, according to the Lalitā, the Devi springs (Cidagnikūpāsamabhūtā).

2 Ichchāmayi. The substance of the Devi is the three Śaktis, Ichchā (will or desire), Jñāna (knowledge), and Kriya (action).

3 That is, become a siddhāpuruṣa.

4 That is, those worshippers who practise Sādhanā.

5 That is, complete unconditioned Mukti, as distinguished from the temporary and conditioned pādas known as Sālokya, Sārūpya, Sāmīpya, and Sāyujya.

6 The unconditioned, attributeless or higher Brahman, as contrasted with the same Brahman manifesting itself with attributes in creation—the apra or lower Brahman.

7 Valabhi.

8 The embodied spirit, which is the supreme spirit, viewed under the limiting conditions known as “upādha.”
gage by the practice of austerities for ten million years. Advocate of Justice, tell me now of what kind of justice is this the impartial and carefully considered opinion?

'You and I, whose knowledge does not extend beyond, at most, a hundred years, are not in a position to argue as regards that justice, the wheel of which turns but once in eighty-four lakhs of births. In the Viśvasāra Tantra the Śāstra says: "There is no birth like unto the human birth. Both Devas and Pus̄̄s desire it. For the Jīva the human body is of all bodies the most difficult to come by. For this it is said that human birth is attained with extreme difficulty. O Pārvatī, amongst those beings who have obtained this rare human birth, those who have conquered all doubt are very few, and of those who have conquered doubt such as are attached to Mantra and Tantra are again very few. Among such pious men as are attached to Mantra and Tantra, such as are proficient in Tantra, which is adored by all, are the best; and, again, amongst the latter the Śādhaka is the best of all, who is deeply versed in all the Tantras."

"It is said in all the Śāstras that of the Jīva's eighty-four lakhs of births the human birth is the most fruitful. In no other birth can Jīva acquire knowledge of the truth. Human birth is the stepping-stone to the path of liberation. But rare are the meritorious who come by it."

"O Daughter of the mountain, Jivātmā, which decreaseth not, passes through eighty-four lakhs of births as inorganic things, insects, birds, beast, and the like. And after that, O Supreme Devī, it attains that human body which is so difficult to acquire."

Jīva attains the position of the twice-born, having had thirty lakhs of births as inorganic things, nine lakhs of births as aqueous animals, ten lakhs of births as creeping animals, eleven lakhs of births as animals of the air, twenty-four lakhs of births as beasts, and four lakhs of births as human beings, having thus in all travelled through eighty-four lakhs of births. When Jīva attains the human body, it becomes Lord of Dharma. It is

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1 A crore, or an hundred lakhs, or 10,000,000. 2 8,400,000.
4 Devas, the celestial intelligences intermediate between Śiva, the Lord, and Man.
6 The spouse of the God Śiva. The Tantras are generally cast in the form of a dialogue between Her and Her husband.
8 A title of Pārvatī as daughter of the mountain-king Himavat.
9 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
10 Worms, serpents, etc. A lakh = 100,000.
11 Birds, etc. 18 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
again born and again dies. In this manner, controlled by the bonds of Karma, the Jīva takes birth from various sources, and dies eighty-four lakhs of times. By the command of Yama, Jīva goes to the Brahmaloka. On its return from thence, it obtains the human body, which is so rarely obtained, and is able to secure from a good Guru initiation in the mantra of Mahāvidyā and knowledge of the truth. Then alone does the Jīva gain the supreme liberation, and by the grace of Mahāvidyā has not to return so long as the universe endures. In its eighty-four lakhs of births as inorganic and organic things, beasts, birds, insects, flies, and the like, the Jīva enjoys longevity according to its Karma. Some live one hundred years, some a thousand, some a lakh, some even more, and some live crores and crores of years. It passes my understanding that Śāstra can be your authority for the notion that all Jīvas—past, present, and future—of this enormous cycle will attain the highest Samādhi, owing to the simple circumstance that an age has come to an end, and this in spite of the fact that their Karma is of all forms fulfilled, unfulfilled, and partly fulfilled, and partly unfulfilled, worked out and unworked out, partly worked out and partly unworked out.

But you may, as a last resort, say: “I do not believe in eighty-four lakhs of births.” But it does not become you to say this either; for the very authority and reasoning upon which you accept the four ages spoken of in the Śāstras are the same as that on which you are bound to accept the statement as to eighty-four lakhs of births. Both are conclusions of Śāstra. Who will believe the man who accepts one part of the Śāstra and judges the other mistaken? Who thinks the right half of a man’s body to be conscious and the left unconscious? Let me put to you a plain question. Why should you not believe? What is the cause of your unbelief? You will say, The number eighty-four lakhs. But I reply that that very number which is the cause of your unbelief is the ground of my firm faith. Who are you to say that, because these eighty-four lakhs of births are unseen by you and me, that what is unseen does not exist? The most you can say is that you do not know whether they exist or not. For the same reason, that I cannot say that it exists because I have not seen it, you

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1 Karma is action and the product of action. Each action produces its necessary result. So long as a man’s Karma is not worked out, and the thirst for separate life is not exhausted, so long he remains in its bonds. It is of two kinds, good and bad, both constituting the “impurity of action.”

2 Yoni.

3 Lord of the lower world and of death.

4 Satya: region of Brahma, the highest, or, according to some, the three highest of the upper worlds—Satya, Mahāh, and Tapoloka.

5 Brahmānda, lit. “egg of Brahmā.”

6 A crore is 100 lakhs, or 10,000,000.

7 Here “end.”

8 Pūrṇa apūrṇa, pūrṇapūrṇa, bhukta, abhukta, bhuktābhukta.
cannot say that it does not exist because you have not seen it. If it is non-existent because I have not seen it, then the world does not exist for the blind man. The blind man, moreover, does not see himself. Is it, therefore, to be concluded that he does not exist for himself? It matters not if he does not exist. But I ask, who is it that affirms the negative? He who is himself non-existent cannot affirm or deny anything.

At the time of the happening of that cause which gives fatherhood to man and motherhood to woman, the child exists in the atoms of semen and blood. He does not see that incident. Why do you, then, without visual evidence on your part and on the faith of others' words believe that those who are called your father and mother are such? Maybe on principle you will object and say that you do not believe in that also. On rare occasions a real cause may exist for this unbelief. But, being a man, can you boldly assert it? Are we to suppose that every father and mother in the world is subject to such a doubt? Such a statement, even if one were able to make it, would be nothing but the raving of a madman. I have no objection to your doubting the eighty-four lakhs of births. But I say in that case let it be strictly a doubt. Do not bring it under the category of things certain. For the doubt is whether the eighty-four lakhs of births exist or not, and no doubt can exist without a knowledge of either existence or non-existence. There can never be a doubt about the existence of that which you know to be non-existent. It does not exist. This is not a doubt, but a certainty. This is why I said that, should you be doubtful, say that you do not know whether the eighty-four lakhs of births exist or not. To arrive at once at the conclusion that they do not exist because it is doubtful whether they do exist is but a shocking manifestation of ignorance. In our discussion upon reincarnation we will set ourselves to dispel this doubt. Here we shall say this much—that when the number of eighty-four lakhs is definitely given, it would be wise to believe in it. Of him who does not admit the fact of reincarnation in any manner, whether partly or incompletely, directly or indirectly, I ask: “Are the eighty-four lakhs of births mentioned in the religious book of any other religious community of any country of which we know the history?” Can either the philosophy of Cārvāka,¹ or the Koran or Bible, proclaim boldly that the Jīva takes eighty-four lakhs of births? Whose sight can stretch to the extremity of the universe, so as to be able to penetrate through the molecules and atoms of the fourteen worlds—namely, Bhūḥ, Bhuvah, Svāh, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, Satya, Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Rasātala, Mahātāla, and Pātāla;² and thus

¹ Sceptic and atheist.
² The worlds from Bhūḥ (the earth) to Satyaloka are the upper world, and from Atala to Pātāla the nether worlds, which according to some accounts must be distinguished from the Hells, which lie between earth and the nether world.
gaining knowledge of the nature of every Jiva with grave solemnity affirm and say: “Jiva has eighty-four lakhs of births. True, true, true again—true, there is no doubt.” Not to speak of pointing this out, how can one even boldly say that the number of births is eighty-four lakhs? The Jiva, through change of the curtain of memory in every birth, forgets its previous birth. Its memory is opened and closed. It is not, then, within its power of intelligence to say with certainty, either by philosophy, science, perception, or inference, that the number of births is eighty-four lakhs. Only that Dharma and that Sāstra can affirm this, which takes its birth in the heart whose substance is will of Her who is the infinite and eternal Intelligence, who dwells in the hearts of all Jivas who are manifested with Her breath. Who can measure the extent of the births of the Jiva but that Sāstra which has emanated from the mouth of Anandamayi Herself, at whose feet this small world is but a plaything for Her eternal play? It is only that Sāstra which dances with joy at the sight of the play of creation, preservation, and destruction taking place at every twinkling of the eye which can boldly assert that the number of births is eighty-four lakhs. If other Sāstras be astounded, let them remain so. You and I have no need to faint away on hearing that. At present merely understand this much: that as he who can count a thousand has surely known the mathematical sign for that number, so he who can assert the number of eighty-four lakhs of births has surely seen them.

Reasoning on the Scripture

You may have heard that a reasonable saying should be accepted even from a boy, and that discussion without reasoning causes loss of Dharma. But perhaps you have not had the leisure to discern what is the subject of that reasoning, and what kind of reasoning it is. The reasoning by which the Sāstra asks you to discuss is that reasoning which is within the control of your intellect—the reasoning of practical Sāstras helpful to discussion. How can you, with worldly reasoning, prove the truth of that unworlly spiritual Sāstra which, if studied and followed with constancy, will develop the intellect and will, and when Siddhi is attained by such Sādhana, open the portals of the super-sensual principle which is within you? Do not lament because you have intellect, nor be ashamed because you cannot come to any decision without it. It is true that you have an

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2 Caitanya—the supreme is Sat (existence), Cit (intelligence, consciousness), and Ananda (bliss). The Devi is Chinnamayi (Lalitā, third hundred).
3 The world is the out-breathing of the Supreme.
4 A title of Devi, whose substance is bliss (see post).
5 Atimātriya tattva.
intellect, but the pity of it is that you have not the intelligence to understand what sort of intellect it is. You may feel sorry and ashamed, but that will not open the lock. If you put too much pressure, the key will be broken, and even a Bengal lock would not open. This is why I was saying that if you proceeded to open the lock of spiritual principles with the key of worldly reasoning, even the play of native intelligence will cease, and, being unable what to decide, you will find yourself at loss in everything. For this reason the Sāstra has, after careful consideration, and taking the oath upon its head, said: “Do not attempt to deal by argument with things which are beyond the range of thought.”

What, again, may be asked, is the necessity for a Sāstra, in respect of a matter which you and I can decide by argument and discussion? That is called Sāstra which deals with things beyond the reach of the senses, which are unthought of, unseen, and unattained by you and me. Where direct vision is blind and inference lame, there Sāstra alone reigns supreme. The fact that you and I have got eyes does not enable you and I to see what the animals moving in the unfathomable depths of ocean see. The power of sight is different in that kingdom from ours. You and I are blind in this respect, despite our eyes. Similarly you and I have not the privilege to behold that which the Rṣis, seers of deep truths immersed in the Divine bliss, have seen.

Many people are heard to say in argument as follows: “How can those whose minds are constantly occupied with the thought of the feet of the Devatā of their heart in Nirvikalpa Samādhi Yoga by the complete immersion of their own mind and Prakṛti in Paramātma, find time to observe also the physical principles governing the molecules and atoms of the untold millions of universes, each of which is composed of fourteen worlds? How, again, can Yogis, Rṣis, and Munis whose state is one in which the illusion of a dual existence disappears through their acquirement of non-dualistic truths, find time to turn their eyes from Brahman to observe the Brahmapāda?” Brahman, you say, cannot be seen unless the Brahmapāda is forgotten. The Brahmapāda cannot be seen unless the Brahman is forgotten. You argue, therefore, that it is impossible to harmonize these two mutually conflicting statements. We, too, do not

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1 That is, locks manufactured in Bengal, which are (or were) of inferior quality.
2 Literally, “to fall off from here and be lost from there.”
3 Brahmānanda.
4 Ecstasy. See Introduction to Tantrā Śāstra.
5 Ibid.
6 The Supreme Spirit.
7 Vastutattva.
8 Āpu and paramāṇu.
9 Brahmānanda, “Egg of Brahma.”
10 Adepts in Yoga.
11 Seers and sages.
12 Advaita tattva.
13 Universe.
deny the difficulty, and, although this is not the place for an elaborate explanation, we will briefly refer to one point.

Poets have said that if a pearl and a javā flower are brought together, the red hue of the javā will redder the pearl, but the white lustre of the latter will not whiten the former. This is because the pearl is free of all impurity, while the javā is not so. A thing which is naturally transparent will take the reflection of other things, whilst that which is not so may itself be reflected but cannot receive reflection. For instance, my face is reflected in a mirror, but the mirror is not reflected in my face, because the mirror is pure, which my face is not. Similarly in a Brahmana made impure by Māyā, everything is impure. Only that one Brahman who is beyond Māyā is pure. The impure Brahman does not receive a reflection of the pure Brahman, but is itself naturally reflected in it.

Looking at a spot of ground on the bank of some lake or river, we see only the verdant land and clumps of trees, but not the stretch of water. Yet the instant we withdraw our sight from the bank and cast it on the water, we see everything therein—the trunks, the tops, the branches, twigs, fruits, and flowers of the trees, and their roots, together with the verdant land on which they stand. We see also the immense zone of the firmament covered with countless clusters of stars. We thus see all things one after another displayed in the lake. But that which faces upwards on land faces downwards in the water, and that which faces downwards on land faces upwards in the water. Similar is the vision of those who are immersed in the sea of truth. Just as we can see everything up to the very zone of the firmament merely by looking at the water of the lake and without casting our eyes around it, so the Rṣis, without glancing at the Brahmāṇḍa produced by Māyā, cast their vision upon Brahmamayi, and see in Her person, whose substance is a mass of conscious bliss, endless millions of worlds in the hollow of every hair of Her body, now appearing and now disappearing in each twinkling of the eyes, as it were bubbles in

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1 The scarlet hibiscus, the flower of the Tāntrika.
2 Literally, “is dirtless.”
3 Illusion, the power of the Supreme whereby It makes itself to appear other than It really is. Māyā enshrouds and conceals the nature of the Ātman.
4 Tattva.
5 The Devi.
6 Cidghāmāṇanda.
7 The Kāmika is quoted as saying that there are 224 worlds, which should be meditated upon as if they were the hair on the body of the Lord. This is the Bhūvana method. Others are the “letter” method of meditation on fifty letters, as on the skin of the Lord of Devas; the mantra method of meditation on the blood of Śiva by means of Mantra; the “word” method, where they stand for the flesh of the blood-vessels of the Lord; and the “Tattva” method, where the thirty-six Tattvas, beginning with the earth, are the forms of Śiva’s sinews, bone, and marrow (see Bhāskararāya Commentary, Lalitā, v. 52).
water. No need is there for them to take any wearying journey, nor to waste their lives, nor to pass over the courtyard of the world so hard to traverse. But they merely, by the eye of wisdom, in the bed of meditation, in the house of Sadhana, see that beauteous dream of the three worlds, and that truth to which the Jiva cannot attain even in its causal body, and which, notwithstanding the break of ecstasy, they cannot forget. Their vision has, however, this peculiarity: whatever you and I, acquainted with the scientific truths of the gross world, see and think of appears to us to be elevated and of uplifted face, as if nothing else in the samsara was more elevated than they; but, on the other hand, the devotees, looking at the reflection cast upon the waves of blood of the causal sea in the womb of Bhagavati, perceive that that which is elevated in this world is low at the feet of Brahmamayi, and that whatever was downcast in the world has, on approaching the Mother, received Her caress and joyfully lifted its head on seeing the Brahman aspect of Anandamayi. The same things are there in both cases. What was seen on land appears again in water, but reversed through change of the medium through which we view it. For those who only see the Brahmana in the Brahmana, what can be higher to them than it? But those who have seen the Brahmana in Brahman have seen the Queen of Queens, Brahmamayi, sitting on a throne made of all the highest things of the Brahmana from the regions of the polestar, moon, and Brahma to the cloud-piercing peak of Mount Sumeru on earth. Seeing that all-pervading play of Sakti which makes the universe stare with wonder, Devas and Rsis have bowed their heads to earth, and said: “Obscissance, obscissance to the Devi who, as consciousness, pervades the entire universe.”

“Is it necessary to say, O great Devi, that She lives in the bodies of all living creatures when She is present in the form of energy, even in such lifeless things as stocks and stones? There is no place in the world where the substance of Mahamayi is not.”

Man, how dare we expect that that divine sight of theirs and this carnal sight of yours and mine will be the same? The Sastra says that this play of the universe is nothing but the play of the waves in the sea of consciousness. Just as those who have gone to the sea, need, in looking at the sea, make no special effort to see its waves, so those who had seen

1 That is, the surface.  
2 Jaina.  
3 Dhyana (see Introduction to Tantra Sastra).  
4 Tattva.  
5 Samadhi.  
6 Druvaloka, Candraaloka, and Brahmaloka.  
7 Mount Meru, wherein is the pole of the earth.  
8 Virat Tattva.  
9 Caitanya.  
10 Tejas, which also denotes fire, brilliancy, glory, and energy.  
11 Daivi.  
12 Daivi, or sight pertaining to the Jiva.
Brahmamāyī had not to make any effort to see the Brahmāṇḍa. They did not see the universe with the help of telescopes or of vehicles on land, in water, or in air. When they saw the Iśvarī of the universe it was then they saw the latter also resting at Her feet. The difference between the sight of those who nowadays display their knowledge of science by a discussion of the principles of matter and that of the Rṣis is this: The former, in their short lives having seen but a small portion of the small world, gasp out with tired voices: “Who knows what lies beyond this?” However, on seeing this world-play, one only feels that wonderful indeed must be the nature, of the real form of Her whose play it is, and that if one would have knowledge of that wonderful Śakti, there are no better means in human life than to study the principles of the universe. It is here that Rṣis are wont to say that this sport is nothing wonderful for Her who is full of eternal and ever-novel play. The playful manifestation in the molecules and atoms of a single world counts for an incident scarcely worth mention for Her upon whose mere glance depend the creation, preservation, and destruction of countless millions of universes. The universe does not appear wonderful in the sight of him who has seen the primordial Śakti, the source of birth of this perfect play. And therefore the Rṣis disregarding the Samsāra with its charming display of actors and acting, have sunk in the fathomless sea of the ocean of Her who, holding the thread of the universe in Her hand, makes all those actors act. They, after an attentive view and the attainment of Siddhi, have thrown up their hands, and cried and said: “Do not let your mind and heart be charmed with the varied beauty of this world. This pleasant illusion will not last for ever. As you hope for peace, surrender your mind and heart at the lovely lotus-feet of Ānandamāyī playing on the breast of Sadānanda. Cast off the threefold sorrow, and you will then discover that millions of worlds move and move around every petal, every filament, every particle of pollen, of those lotus-feet, and then disappear immersed in the love-pollen of those lotuses.”

To our ears these words, though true, appear somewhat strange. To disregard the joys and sorrows of the visible world, and to be immersed in the joy of the unseen Brahman, is a remote affair. For the present anyone who avers it seems to be an unsocial, witless fellow. This advice to run in

1 Feminine of Iśvara (Lord). Title of the Devī. 4 Tattva.
2 Bhūtatattva. The Bhūta are the elements. 5 Power.
3 Tattva. 6 “The series of worlds arise and disappear with the opening and shutting of Her eyes” ( Lalitā Sahasranāma, v. 66).
5 Śiva, the ever Joyful. 7 Ādyā Śakti, the Devī as primordial source and manifestation of the Divine energy.
7 Tāpatraya (see post).
search of something unseen, in disregard of the visible phenomenal samsâra, is thought to be as unbearable and inopportune as would be flippant talk to a person who, disconsolate and with flooding tears, is holding his dead child to his breast, or as would be a request to accompany a funeral procession to a young man adorned and joyful on his way to his marriage. Owing to the unacceptable nature of the advice, you and I consider the adviser mad; but the latter is not to be put off from his purpose by that.

Let us suppose that you and I do not know what acting is, but are present at a representation of the Râmâyaña. The grief of Kauśalyâ, the death of Daśaratha, the lamentation of Sîtâ, the tears of Manjódarî, move us to profuse tears. On the other hand, the heroic valour of Laksmana, the world-subduing military skill of Râmacandra, the pride of Indrajit, the war-cries of Râvana, fill us now with joy and delight, now with fear, astonishment, and awe. At the same time we observe that someone who is sitting in our midst, but whom we do not know, has been shaking his sides with laughter at the very same scenes. You and I will probably say that the man is mad, but that will not stop his laughter. I say that it does not matter whether or not you call the man mad. Still you ought to reflect why the man laughs. The place is the same, the scenes are the same, the subject is the same. But while all other people are laughing at one time and weeping at another, why does that one man alone constantly laugh? If we seek to know why this is so, we shall discover that there is only one cause for the laughing and weeping, and it is this: You and I have come to see the play without either knowing how to act or what acting is. But that man has come to it with the full knowledge of what acting is. To us Râma and Râvana appear as real, and so we make a great display of weeping, and so on. But that man sees that Nilâmbara Cakravarti¹ is playing the part of Râvana and that Pitâmbara Cakravarti² is crying in the part of Sîtâ. What to our eyes are Râma and Sîtâ to him are Nilâmbara and Pitâmbara, and so he is full of laughter. We become restless at the sight of the incidents in the play, but that man who sees what is at the back of them is calm. We are calling him mad, but you may be certain that he is forgiving us on account of our ignorance. The man whom we slight by repeatedly referring to him as “that man, that man,” is not mad. From the spiritual point of view, he is who is possessed of the highest wisdom, and is the crest-gem of the race of devotees. He who knows that all things on the stage of Samsâra are merely the materials for the play is not, on seeing the performance, charmed with the acting, but is intoxicated with the blissful love of the actor and actress whose acting it is. Râsî, though calm, are yet maddened

¹ “Monsieur un tel.”
by that love; and so they have told us not to waste this human birth, which is so difficult of attainment, by thinking of the little things of the Samsāra, but to think that thought only which will save us from all further thinking. And, so speaking to himself, the Sādhaka has thus expressed the purpose of his heart:

"The time of life (Kāla) is past, death (Kāla) approaches; let me repair to solitude. In deep seclusion let me sing the glory of Kalakāmini.”

The day upon which you and I shall be on their side, and shall believe or attain the fitness for believing their word, on that day all thinking will be at an end. And we, too, shall understand that the Samsāra is but a mock representation, and that both the things we see, as well as the people themselves who see, are She, the Brahmanāyī, full of the bliss of the mass of consciousness who has entered the Samsāra as jīva, and is revelling in this joyous play. But because you and I have not eyes to see, we say:

"What sort of a play is this of yours, O Mother? It is not a play, but the very father of imprisonment. The first scene of the play is a gathering on the stage before the actor and actress. Here the actor is nowhere to be found, so who can find the actress? With the first act begins the play; next the scenes of a drama are required. Here, be it the first act or the last, from beginning to end, the drama is full of scenes. The scene in which the son appears is that in which the father disappears. Instantly the curtain is dropped before the eye, and then who is the son, and who is the father?"

You and I have restless hearts, and so we become disconsolate with weeping. But the very same play raises waves of love in the heart of a calm devotee. Kamalākānta, the peaceful Sādhaka, has therefore sung as follows:

"You know not, O mind, the highest cause
Śyāmā is not always in the form of a woman.
At times assuming the colour of clouds,
She takes on the form of a man.
With dishevelled hair and sword in hand,
She strikes terror into the hearts of the sons of Danu.

1 Śiva’s spouse. 2 The Devī.
At times She comes to the city of Vraja,\(^1\) and, playing on the flute, captures the hearts of the women of Vraja. At times, holding the three guṇas,\(^2\) She creates, preserves, and destroys. Oh! She binds Herself\(^3\) with her son Māyā.\(^4\) The sufferings of the world She Herself endures. In whatsoever form one thinks of Her,\(^5\) in that form She grants one’s desires.

In a lotus in the lake of Kamalākānta’s heart She appears.\(^6\)

It is for this, I was saying, that in what the Śāstra has said there is nothing to discuss, but there is ground for faith. Of Her to whom the Śāstra belongs, the Raṣis have said that that eternal highest Vidyā,\(^7\) who is the sole first cause in samsāra both of bondage and liberation, is the creatrix of all creators.\(^8\) The creative power of none surpasses Her who is the creatrix of all creators. Whether you and I understand it or not, the unfailling wheel of state of that Queen of Queens,\(^9\) whose substance is will, is sure to turn in eighty-four lakhs of births of the Jīva. Should you ever after this ask why it should be so, and what is the reason for it, I shall not in reply need to say much, but will simply put you this question: What reason is there which establishes that the present birth has at all taken place? At base the reasoning is the same for all births. For reasoning which establishes this birth establishes that which follows it. If one section of a wheel turns, all sections turn at the same time. This is the law of Her nature. From Brahman, the Jīva who is His avatāra has come into this samsāra. Thereafter wanderings and wanderings, it will again assume the aspect of Brahman and be absorbed in the Para-brahmāṇ. This is the natural law in the world of Jīvas. In our discourse on the principles of reincarnation, we will enter into a detailed explanation as to the law under which, and the process by which, this will be accomplished.

Should, even after this, anyone say, “Everything ends with death. Who will then be born again?” to him also we shall explain in that discourse that he is probably ignorant of what life and death mean. He who knows the nature of life knows also that Jīva has no real death except that in Nirvāṇa.\(^9\) What you and I speak of as death is but the death of the mind, and not the death of Jīva. In short, just as it is impossible to make a complete survey of a life in its various stages of

\(^1\) That is, in the form of Kṛṣṇa.
\(^2\) That is, the three “qualities” which form the substance of Prakṛti—namely, sativa, rajas, tamas (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
\(^3\) That is, in the person of Jīva.
\(^4\) Power of illusion.
\(^5\) The Devi.
\(^6\) Īśvarī of all Īśvaras.
\(^7\) Rajarājēśvarī.
\(^8\) When the Jīva ceases to exist as such.
boyhood, youth, manhood, old age, and so forth, so also it is impossible to judge of the justice or injustice of eighty-four lakhs of births, or even the justice or injustice of any single birth—which forms but a fraction of the entire life of a Jiva. Bhagavan Rāmacandra, crest-gem of the race of Raṅgu,1 after killing all Rākṣasas2 in Viśvāmitra’s yajña,3 threw Mārica with the force of his arrows to the other side of the sea. On hearing this, a short-sighted, restless man might easily form the idea that Rāmacandra felt weak after slaying so large a number of Rākṣasas, and thus, while able with such strength as he still retained to throw Mārica to a great distance from the seat of the sacrifice, was yet unable to kill him. But he who has read the whole of the Rāmāyaṇa from the Ayodhyākāṇḍa to the Aranyakāṇḍa4 knows that Mārica reappears in the guise of a deer in the forest of Daṇḍaka at the time of Sītā’s abduction and has at the same time understood whether Rāmacandra had strength or not. Bhagavan, dweller in Vaikunṭha, who ever relieves the burden of earth, there incarnated to carry out the work of the Devas—the killing of Rāvana. It was because he knew that the work of destroying Rāvana would, later on, have to be commenced through the same Mārica, that Rāmacandra, instead of killing him, threw him to the other side of the sea. Had this not been so, no greater effort would have been needed to send Mārica to the other side of the sea of existence5 than to send him to the other side of the salt sea. To understand the deep mysteries underlying this play of Bhagavan, the dweller in hearts, it is necessary to know the incidents of the Aranyakāṇḍa; otherwise I should not understand more than this—that the Almighty had not sufficient strength in His body to enable Him to kill Mārica.

Similarly, in order to judge of His justice or injustice towards Jiva in the Satya and Kali ages, I must know the history of all the ages to their final chapter, Brahmakaivalya or Nirvāṇa. Then only can be considered the justice and injustice of the entire existence of Jiva. It is therefore the height of impudence to judge the justice of Her who is the eternal ever-present truth by a life of forty years’ duration. If we are to judge His justice upon the strength of reasoning alone, why should we not suppose that it is the Śādhus of the Satya, Treta, and Dvāpara ages who failed to acquire Siddhi and have therefore been reborn in the Kali age through the revolution of the wheel of time, and the attraction of the mass of their religious merits. This mass, which is nearly ripe, is about to bear fruit through the opportunities offered by place, time, and person. They, the children of the

1 The solar race, celebrated in the Rāghuvaṁśa.
2 Demons.
3 Sacrifice.
4 The titles of the parts of the Rāmāyaṇa epic.
5 Bhāvasamudra.
Mother, will again get up on Her lap. You say that Siddhi has been attained in one age, but I see that Siddhi has been attained in Kali, the fourth age, after austerities which have extended over three ages. The jack-fruit which ripens in the month of Aṣṭāda does not first grow in that month. It first grows in winter, increases in spring, and matures in summer. The bael fruit first grows in the month of Caitra. It also ripens in Caitra. From this fact a European eating the fruit, but who had never seen it growing, might draw the conclusion that the growth, death, and final dissolution of a bael fruit all took place in one and the same month; but a descendant of the Āryas living in India knows that:

"In the month of Caitra the bael grows
In the month of Caitra it ripens.
In one Caitra it grows,
But in another Caitra it ripens."

ON MEETING ŚĀDHAKAS

You may ask, "Why, then, is the number of Śādhakas so small in the Kali age?" But I reply: "Who says that it is small?" You may rejoin that if the number be not small, why do we not see them everywhere, in every village, in every city? I, however, say that the population of a country may be considered to be small if people are not seen everywhere in it, but the number of Śādhakas cannot be so considered. It has been already stated that the Creatrix of the universe, incarnated as Daughter, told Her father that "one in a thousand struggle for Siddhi, and perhaps only one amongst such thousand knows me in my true aspect." The same was said⁴ to Arjuna by Bhagavān, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. She has again said: "It is only on attaining Siddhi after many births that Jīva reaches the highest station." Again: "Jīva attains to me only upon the acquisition of knowledge after many births." In the Niruttara Tantra it is said: "The root of knowledge is that which relates to the union of Śiva and Śakti. Knowledge of Śakti is acquired after many births. O Devī, without a knowledge of Śakri, Nirvāṇa can never be attained."

How, then, dare you and I expect to see crowds of travellers upon a road on which the Śāstra says they are so very scarce. There is a full number of Śādhakas even should but one man in a hundred thousand become such. Wise men have said that a ruby is not to be had in every hill, and that every elephant’s head does not contain a pearl. A saint⁵

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¹ A Śādhaka is he who does sādhanā (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra), a devotee.
² In the Bhagavadgītā.
³ Śādhu.
is not to be met with everywhere, and sandal does not grow in every forest. Bhagavân Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Uddhava, crest-gem of devotees, that when a Muni\(^1\) passes who is calm, free of malice, and equal mind he follows him, hoping to be sanctified by the touch of the dust of his feet. What impurity could attach to Him, the utterance of Whose name by a devotee sanctifies the three worlds,\(^6\) so that He should need to purify Himself by touching the dust of the latter's feet? It was no impurity, but intoxication caused by love for the devotee, which led Bhagavân, in his desire to proclaim his greatness, to lose Himself, and to show that, were it possible for Him to be tainted with impurity, even He could regain purity by touching the devotee. Realize from this how rare a thing a true devotee is. Another Śāstra has said: “As a cow runs after its calf, so Śiva and Gaurī\(^3\) run after him who repeats, ‘Mahādeva, Mahādeva, Mahādeva.’” Why, what reason has the consort of Bhavāni,\(^5\) the Creator of all, the shade of Whose feet supports the Brāhmaṇḍa, to run after His devotees? The necessity was none other than that of showing that where there is a devotee there He Himself is.

It is said in the Tantra that “all admit that the places of pilgrimage\(^6\) are the cause of purity. But, O Girijā,\(^7\) in very truth, I say that it is the Śādhaka of the Kulācāra\(^8\) rite who gives purity even to all such places of pilgrimage. Blessed is the mother\(^9\) of a Kaula!\(^10\) Blessed are his father and kinsmen and relatives! Blessed are those who have conversed with him! In heaven the ancestors of a master of Kula,\(^11\) sing: ‘In our race will be born a master of Kula.’” In the Utpatti Tantra it is said: “Devi, wherever a Vīra\(^12\) or a Divya\(^13\) resides, there also are all the sacred

\(^1\) A sage or saint. Uddhava, son of Devabhāga, was versed in Yoga.
\(^2\) The earth, the upper and nether worlds.
\(^3\) A name of Devi as spouse of Śiva.
\(^4\) “The great God” Śiva. In the Aṣṭamūrti, Śiva is so called in his form of the moon.
\(^5\) A name of the Devī as spouse of Bhava (Śiva).
\(^6\) Tīrtha, holy shrines, such as Gaya, or the temple of Juggernath at Puri, with which India is studded.
\(^7\) Daughter of the mountain—a title of the Devī as daughter of the Mountain King.
\(^8\) The way of the Kaulas, one of the divisions of Tāntrik worshippers.
\(^9\) The mother is always, by way of honour, placed first and before the father.
\(^10\) One who follows Kulācāra (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
\(^11\) One who is versed in Kulācāra.
\(^12\) Men are by the Tantras divided into three classes or temperaments: Pāśu (“animal”), in whom the dark, inert quality (Guṇa) of tāmas predominates and who is bound by the bonds; Vīra (hero), or those in whom the active quality (rajas) prevails; and divya (celestial), in whom the pure (Sattva) quality prevails. Worship varies, and is adapted to the temperament of the worshipper (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
\(^13\) See post.
shrines. O Thou who art desired of the Vira, there is no doubt that a Vira, though having a human body, is in flesh and blood a Devata and Śiva Himself. O Devi, what fear can he who lives where a Vira lives, and under his protection? The protection of a worldly Vira relieves us of worldly fear, but the protection of the spiritual Vira relieves one of the fear of famine, disease, the king, and death. It relieves of the three forms of fear—namely, that which arises from troubles of the body, senses, and mind, from external material objects and from all superhuman beings.

In the Kūlāṇava Tantra it is said:

"My beloved, in all the world the sight of a Kūlācārya is indeed rare, and is only obtained after enjoyment of the fruits of a vast heap of religious merit." Should even a Cāndāla or a person of still lower caste become attached to Kuladharma, then the very memory of him, the recitation of his name and qualities, the singing of his praises, sight of, and talk with him purifies a Jīva. "O noble lady, you and I for ever reside there where he who has a knowledge of Kūlācāra lives. It is not on Mount Kailāsa, Sumeru, or Mandāra that I always live. I ever abide there where Śādhakas versed in Kulatattva are." (The meaning of this is that He would rather abandon his abode on these mountains than the companionship of Kauśikas. The devoted Śādhaka will know from this which is the greater—the glory of Mount Kailāsa or that of a Kaula.) "The place where a great Tāṇḍrika lives should be visited and seen with care, even if it should be remoter than the remote, for you and I live in joy there."

The meaning of this is: It may be asked why one should take so much trouble to see a man. Lest such an evil notion should seize the naturally weak heart of man, Bhagavān has clearly given us to understand

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1 Tīrtha, see ante.
2 Deva.
3 Laukika, or hero in the ordinary English sense.
4 Pāramārthika.
5 Ādhyātmika.
6 Ādhibhautika—e.g., fear of injury from the elements or other men.
7 Ādhdāviśika, such as Devas, ghosts, demons, etc.
8 Chap. ix.
9 Master of Kaula doctrine.
10 One of the lowest castes, rag-pickers, cleaners of privies, etc.
11 The Dharma or doctrine of the Kaulas, a division of Tāṇḍrik worshippers.
12 The paradise of Śiva.
13 Vide ante, and chap. ii, Viṣṇu Purāṇa. The Devi is Merunilayā (residing on Mount Meru) (Lalitā S., v. 149). The Śrīcakra has, it is said, three aspects—Bhūmi, Kailāsa, Meru; the last being when it is identified with the sixteen Nitya Deities.
14 Used as a staff to churn the Ocean for Amṛta.
15 Kaula knowledge.
16 Kaula.
17 Mahāpuruṣa.
that we should not desist from visiting a Kulasādhaka, considering him to be a mere man. It is not a human body that the Kaulika possesses. The Śiva Śakti aspect is that of which the Kaulikas are worshippers, and is that which the world is so eager to behold. In that aspect Śiva and Śakti unite and, as Ardhanārīśvara, live in the enjoyment of perfect joy in the body of the Kulasādhaka. To see him, therefore, is the same as seeing Their undivided and united form.

"If a Guru of Kulatattva lives even afar, visit him, but not a pāśu, even if he be near." By the term "Kaulika," worshippers should understand a Sādhaka of Kulcārā, the characteristics of which we shall explain in our discourse on Acāratattva. By Pāśu is meant a person bound by the eight fetters of shame, etc. "Sacred is the land in which a master of Kula is born. By seeing and honouring a Kaulika one gives deliverance to thrice seven generations."

"Seeing a master of Kula born in their family and living in their house, his ancestors in heaven say, 'At length we shall obtain the highest abode.' As cultivators with craving eyes pray for rain, so the ancestors in heaven pray with eager hearts that a son or grandson of their family may be initiated in the truths of Kula doctrine. Then blessed will that sinless great man be in Samsāra."

"Beloved after death, masters in Kula joyfully come to me. When a great Kaulika comes to the Kaulika house, with Yoginis, with Yogis, come to see and welcome him." "Even Pītrys and Devatās seek the protection and pay homage to the great Kaula Yogi. And for this great man devoted to the knowledge of Kula should be honoured and worshipped."

"Devi, such sinful men as after the adoration of Thyself fail to worship Thy devotees never win favour of Thee."

"When Sādhakas place the Naivodya before me, I accept it by sight only. But, O lotus eyed, I eat it by the mouths of the saintly devotees."

"Devi, there is no doubt that if one worships Thy devotee he worships Me, so that he who would do that which is pleasing to Me adores Thy devotees only."

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1 Mūrti, or form.  
2 Vide ante, See post. See Introduction to Tantra Šāstra.  
3 One and the highest division of Tantrik worshippers, whose way of life (ācāra) is according to Kula doctrine.  
4 See ibid. The reference is to the classification of the Kulārṇava Tantra. The "afflictions" which are variously numbered, are given as five in the Liṅga Purāṇa. The Devi Bhāg. Pr. says: "In the knower of truth they sleep. In the Yogis they are burned up. In those attached to the world they arise unimpeded."  
5 That is, to Śiva's abode.  
6 Female yogis.  
7 A full plate of offerings to the Deva, consisting of rice, ghee, vegetables, honey, etc.
"Whatever is done in the name of Kula disciples is done in the name of Deva. All Devatās love Kula. Therefore should Kaulikas be worshipped."

"Pārvatī, even if in any other place, I am worshipped with great reverence, I am not so well pleased as when a great Kaulika is worshipped."

"The fruit which he cannot obtain even by pilgrimage, austerities, gifts, sacrifices, and voluntary religious practices, that the Jiva can obtain by the worship of a Kaulika. O, Ambikā, even if a Kaulika (not to speak of any other) dishonours a master of Kaula, all his gifts, sacrifices, homas, austerities, worship, and recitation of mantra are of no avail."

As a reward for what religious merit can worldly creatures like you and I expect to meet those unworlly great men whose greatness the Śāstras have declared by lakhs of such evidence? To what hill, to what forest hermitage, to what great cremation ground, to what great shrine have we been? In what Muni's hermitage, in what saint's humble abode, in what Dāṇḍī's maṭha, in what Brahmācāri's abode have we sought protection? What mantra have we recited according to the rules of Japa? What Devatā have we worshipped? In what Vrata have we been initiated? Along what path have we advanced? Restrained of mind and body, contentment, forbearance, meditation, concentration of thought and process towards ecstatic contemplation—which of these have we practised? Listening, thinking, and constant meditation, which of these have we done? Of discrimination, dispersion, what have we understood? In the name of Dharma open your heart and say, brother, what have we done to deserve to meet the saintly Śādhakas whom even Devas rarely meet? You will say, maybe, we have not done anything, but still we honour and revere them, bow to them, and anxiously pray to meet them. That is not altogether untrue. We pray in our minds, but what of our actions? Had we acted, we should not have remained satisfied with mere prayer, but

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1 That is, than in the person of a great Kaulika.
2 Tapasī (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
3 Yajña (ibid.).
4 Vrata (ibid.). Voluntary, as distinguished from those which are obligatory (Niyama).
5 Mother, title of the Devi (see post).
6 The sacrifice made by pouring clarified butter into fire.
7 Japa (see ibid.).
8 Mahāpiṭha.
9 See post.
10 Śādhu.
11 A class of ascetics.
12 See post.
13 Celibate ascetic. See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
14 Ibid.
15 Samādhi.
16 Śravaṇa.
17 Manana.
18 Nididdhyāsana.
19 That is, between the real and the unreal.
20 Vairāgya: unattachment to worldly things.
we should have run with passionate hearts without looking at the path, and having found him, we would have prostrated ourselves and clasped his feet, and said: “Lord, I have made no provision. How shall I be saved?” Say truly, O brother, has anyone’s heart wept in this fashion? If it had, it would not have had to weep any more. The pious poet Dāsārathī Ray has, on the subject of the coming of the Mother of the world, said:

“My child, the mother says, you will come to know,
You will no longer have to weep.
Incessant tears have brought an end to weeping,
The child who clings to and calls ‘mother,’
That child holds the mother fast.
The mother is ashamed to let it weep.
Mother does not care for the children who mix with others
And go about laughing and playing,
She does not go to them and easily obtains leisure,
And takes the child who weeps on her lap.”

O Thou who art full of mercy for the poor, tell me, O Mother, when will the day come for Thy Sādhaka, when I shall weep as I ought to weep for Thee, the day on which Thou wilt come and say: “No longer weep. Incessant tears have brought an end to weeping?”

A patient in delirium suffering from Sāmnipātika fever feels no sorrow. Hari, Hari, shall we learn to weep? If, when we are at worldly work, anyone should happen to stand before us in the dress of a Sādhaka we instantly leave the work, and with all the frown and fury at our command, expel him from our house and then find peace. Being such as we are, will our sinful hearts weep to obtain Sādhakas, instead of weeping for Hell. O thou Dweller in the Heart! O thou Saviour! Dost thou know, O Mother, how long it will be before we are delivered of this sin? With a heart such that the very attempt to speak of it makes me fear because of the fearful visions of sin which it raises before my eyes, I am prepared to dishonour Śāstra, Śādhu, and Dharma. With such a heart again I proceed to meet Sādhus. How great is my shamelessness! To say that were there living any saintly Sādhaka, he would surely one day or other meet me in my house, argues great vanity on my part. What a ridiculous display of impudent presumption! Why, what Indras, Candras, Vāyus or Varuṇas, have you and I become that we should meet Śādhakas without having to stir from our houses? You will say, you

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1 Āgamanī.
2 Jagadambā, a title of the Devi.
3 A violent fever, said to affect the blood and produce delirium.
4 Name of Viṣṇu.
5 Devas of the firmament, moon, wind, and water.
have learning, wealth, and a following. You have. But what is that to the Sādhaka? It is our mistake which leads us to tell him we have learning. Shall I speak of learning to him who, through the grace of Mahāvidyā, holds the eight forms of Siddhi in the palm of his hand? Shall I boast of my wealth to those who, possessing the priceless wealth of the feet of Tārā, consider even the position of an Indra of no worth? I want to show the strength of my following to the son of that Mother, Creatrix of all, Whose very glance commands the service of everyone from Śaṅkara Himself to the molecules and atoms of the Brahmāṇḍa! How mighty is the strength of my intellect! And even should we, whilst sitting at home, or going to places of pilgrimage, or moving about cremation grounds or places of execution, ever come across Sādhakas are we able to recognize them? Have we come to know Devatā because He is installed in every house? When, after killing Hiranyakasipu, Bhagavān Nṛṣimhadeva wished to grant a boon to Prahlāda, crest-gem of devotees, the latter at once said: "As worldly persons who are unable to discriminate the unreal from the real, form lasting attachments to wife, children, and other things, so often as they willingly or unwillingly constantly think of them, so may I constantly remember Thee. May my love for Thee never forsake me." Bhagavān, the abode of the supreme love, was then standing in a visible form before him, but yet Prahlāda did not say: "I want Thee." Without seeking Bhagavān himself, he prayed that he might have devotion towards Him. For, Prahlāda, the crest-gem of those who have true knowledge, knew that the presence of Bhagavān was not rare, since He pervades the universe. He knew, however, that what is rare is devotion to His feet. To him who desires to possess devotion, the presence or absence of Bhagavān are the same, since there can be no realization of Bhagavān without piety. But if a man have devotion, Bhagavān, even though he were at a distance of hundred crore of yojanas must appear before him wherever, and in whatsoever form, he desires. Just as the water of a river when mingling with the sea cannot be distinguished from it, so the existence of a devotee mingling with

1 The eight great powers, as to which see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
2 One of the ten great forms (Daśa Mahāvidyā) of the Devi (see Daśa Mahāvidyā, Upāsanā Rahasya, by Prosanna Kumar Śāstri).
3 Śiva.
4 Referring to the image (Pratimā) installed in Hindu households.
5 Visnu in his man-lion incarnation, undertaken for the destruction of the atheist Hiranyakasipu, who had cruelly tortured his son Prahlāda because the latter was a devotee of Visnu.
6 For his great devotion to the Deva.
7 Literally, persons proficient in tattva.
8 A crore is 10,000,000, and a yojana is about eight miles.
Bhagavān cannot be distinguished from Him. Just as the rare presence of Bhagavān is obtained through devotion, so pious men too, though rare in every place, are subject to control by love. Again, just as through want of piety we are a hundred yojanas from the presence of Bhagavān, though he is always before us, so we are unable to discern the real self of a saintly Sādhaka, a devotee of Bhagavān, even if we meet him. We see with our physical eyes, but our eyes of wisdom are ever blind. The Tantra Śāstra has said that he alone is dear to the Mother of the world,¹ whose heart naturally rejoices with love at the sight of Kulasādhakas,² in the same way as the heart naturally rejoices at the sight of wife, children, and friends.

Now, to speak truly, do I look at Sādhakas with eyes open with such joy and softened with such love? If I did, how could my heart forsake their company and be charmed by that of kith and kin? And why does my heart long for the latter even after I have seen a Sādhu? The reason is, that a saint is saintly, but my vision is unsaintly,³ and is therefore a hindrance instead of being a help towards meeting Sādhakas. Say now, is it not a great sin to think that there are no Sādhakas merely because we do not see them in every city or village? Whether we see them or not, do not widen your own path to Hell by saying that there are no Sādhakas in the world. Do not also be astounded to hear that in the Kali age Sādhakas who follow the Tāntrik form of worship attain Siddhi in one lifetime. At the very moment when you and I are virulently criticising the subject of Sādhakas, be sure that at that moment hundreds of Sādhakas in the boundless kingdom of the universe are making their births blessed, their lives blessed, and the world blessed by clasping to their hearts the feet of Her who gives success to all purposes. Blessed are we who, being born in Bhāratavarṣa,⁴ made holy by the touch of their feet, are able to gratify ourselves by the taking of their names.

¹ Jagadambā.   ² Worshippers according to Kulācāra.
³ A Sādhu is Sādhu, but the vision is Aṣādhu.
⁴ India.