CHAPTER VI

WORSHIP OF DEVATĀS

SĀDHAKA, against our wish we are obliged to say again that the healers of whom we have spoken are wont to quote four sayings from the Mahā-nirvāṇa Tantra as evidence in favour of their views. Though these statements are supposed to be evidence on their behalf, we shall, in order to show what this evidence is, quote the entire text consisting of the Devi's questions and the answer of Sadāśiva. From these texts the right thinking will readily understand how difficult it is to become a healer without killing thousands.¹

In the fourteenth Ullāsa of this Tantra,² after Mahādeva had spoken of the rules and ritual relating to the consecration of the images of Devas, Devi said:

"Lord, tell me truly what devotees should do if, for some unforeseen reason, the consecrated image of a Devatā is left without worship. Tell me also through what faults images of Devas become unfit for worship, for what faults they should be rejected, and what means exist for remedying those faults."

Sadāśiva said:

"If there be an omission to worship for a day, then the worship should be twice performed; if for two days, then the worship should be four times performed; if for three days it should be celebrated eight times. If the omission does not exceed six months then the Deva should be bathed with eight jars full of water, sanctified by His mantra, and then worshipped. If the omission to perform worship exceeds six months, then the image should again be consecrated and then worshipped. If the image of a Deva is defective, cracks, or breaks, it should be consigned to water. If it has fallen on unholy ground it should not be worshipped. A defective, cracked, or broken image should be consigned to water, but an image polluted by touch should be purified and then again worshipped.

¹ That is to say, without having had experience at the cost of others.
² Verse 95 at seq.
Mahāpīthas\(^1\) and Anādīlingas\(^2\) are free from all faults—that is to say, the above-mentioned causes do not operate on them to detract from their virtue. For this reason the people should worship their own Iṣṭadevas\(^4\) in them for the attainment of their desired blessings.\(^4\) Mahāmāya, I have thus related to you in detail all that you wished to know for the good of men who act with a view to the fruits of action.”

As He thus spoke the eye in the forehead of Bhagavān Mahākāla opened as if to peer into futurity.

Nowadays one meets with many an adept in Tattva,\(^6\) who professes to have renounced action, and says at every opportunity: “The karma-kānda\(^7\) is intended only for those who are devoid of knowledge; why then should he who has attained to it do action?”

Unfortunately, most of those who say this are themselves doers of karma.\(^8\) What they therefore say must mean that such karma alone as consists in the worship of Devas is for those who are devoid of true knowledge; while such karma as is required for the service of wife, children, and the like may be done even by those possessed of true knowledge. For their Śāstra says: “It is also by doing what pleases Him that He is worshipped.” However that may be, it was as if He thought of what would happen in the future that Bhagavān, who dwells in the hearts of all wise men, said\(^9\): No Jiva possessing body can be without karma for even half a minute. Helpless he is drawn by the current of karma even against his will. That is to say, just as everything follows the wind, which it is unable to check, so everyone follows the irresistible flow of karma. By karma\(^10\) alone Jiva enjoys happiness, by karma alone he suffers misery. Under the influence of karma alone he is born, lives, and dies. For this reason I have made mention of various kinds of karma in

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\(^1\) Holy shrines where the body of Devi as Sati fell to earth (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).

\(^2\) Anādī, without beginning. That is, those lingams which spring from earth supernaturally (called Svāyambhū, or self-existent), as distinguished from those fashioned and installed by men. Of the former class are the lingams at Vaidyanātha, Tārakesvara, the Candrasekhara at Chittagong and other places.

\(^3\) The worshipper’s own chosen Deity.

\(^4\) Dharma, Artha, Kāma, Mokṣa.

\(^5\) That is, those on the path of pravṛtti, who act interestedly (sākāma karma), as opposed to those who renounce, and who act rightly and unselfishly without thought of gaining fruit of their action (niṣkāma karma).

\(^6\) Sacred science.

\(^7\) The portion of the scripture which relates to worship, ritual practice (karma), which last word means that which is done, action.

\(^8\) See post.

\(^9\) Verse 104 et seq. of chap. xiv of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra.

\(^10\) See post.
sādhanayoga, in order to attract the minds of those of little knowledge to nirvāṇa-dharma\(^1\)—that is to say, in order to induce them to work until they reach the stage which follows nirvāṇa-pratihāra,\(^2\) and to keep them away from wrong action (that is to say, if the mind remains ever engaged in the thought of good things, no bad thoughts can germinate in it).”

Sadāśiva next proceeded to explain the subject of karma with more explicitness\(^3\): “Karma is of two kinds, auspicious and inauspicious. Through the latter Īśvara suffers acute pain and, O Devi! through the former Īśvara becomes attached to the fruits of action, and controlled by the bonds of karma, sojourns again and again in this world and the next.” That is to say, you must correct your notion of a twofold bond of karma to the effect that karma consisting of worship of Devas and Devis is the cause of bondage, whilst that done in the service of the world removes bondage; and you must understand that whatever you do is karma, that what is good karma is auspicious, and what is bad karma is inauspicious, and that both auspicious and inauspicious karma are instrumental in causing the bondage of Īśvara to samsāra.

“Not even in a hundred kalpas\(^4\) can Īśvara attain liberation unless both his auspicious as well as inauspicious karma come to an end”—that is to say, as good karma will come to an end so will bad karma come to an end with it; otherwise, if all your good karma pass away, leaving the flow of your bad karma the same or gradually increasing, such a destruction of karma will not remove bondage to samsāra. Rather the want of good karma will break the tie with Heaven and make that with Hell yet firmer still through the influence of bad karma. “As it makes no difference to the binding power of a chain whether it be of iron or gold, so karma, whether auspicious or inauspicious, is equally powerful to bind Īśvara.”\(^5\) Accumulated karma, whether good or bad, inevitably acts so as to bring the Īśvara back to samsāra. “Īśvara, even though he be in constant action and endure hundreds of austerities, cannot attain liberation so long as he does not acquire true knowledge”\(^6\)—that is to say, if knowledge is not sought as the accompaniment of action the latter alone can never be directly instrumental to secure liberation. “It is only after the destruction of sin and the purification of the heart by thought upon Tattva (the thought that Brahman alone in an essential sense exists, while the world does not—that is to say, that the world is nothing but a display of the Brahman) and by performance of

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\(^1\) That is, to the path which leads to liberation.
\(^2\) See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
\(^3\) Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. xiv, verse 107.
\(^4\) See post.
\(^5\) Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chapter xiv, verses 109, 110.
\(^6\) Ibid., verse 111.
\(^7\) Vibhūti, see post.
disinterested action⁴ that knowledge dawns⁵—that is to say, that knowledge only appears when the mind has been so purified by the practice of Brahma-Tattva and constant worship of Bhagavān with karma performed without desire for fruit, that no sinful propensity arises in it, but only the presence of the pure sattva guṇa is felt without the least appearance of the rajas and tamas guṇas.

"From Brahmā to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of māyā. Parabrahman alone is the sole truly existent one. When knowledge of this tattva is gained then the Jiva attains true happiness "⁶—that is to say, whatever variety we see in the dualistic world, is like a dream or a magic show, the creation of māyā. Just as the magician alone truly exists and all which he does is illusion, so the nondual Parabrahman alone is true and all the things raised by Him to form the samsāra are illusory. Just as when sleep is dispelled all dreams disappear, so, when, by the grace of Bhagavān, the sleep of māyā is dispelled, this samsāra, full of māyā, disappears at the same time. As when Jiva awakes he sees that he alone and neither sleep nor dream remains, so when Jiva becomes self-conscious he sees that neither māyā nor the samsāra remains, but only he himself as the Supreme Spirit.⁷ It is only when Jiva thus sinks into the sea of Tattva ⁸ that he gains such happiness as never gives place to sorrow.

"He alone is free from the bonds of karma who, renouncing name and form, has attained to the knowledge that on the immutable Brahman all things⁹ rest."⁷ One must rise above name and form and make all things ⁶ rest in the true immutable Brahman. From this it must be understood that if Brahman is true and immutable, names and forms are false and mutable. What is true is stable and what is false is unstable, so that to reach the true the false must be abandoned. To sink in Brahmatattva, which is above māyā, names and forms which are made of māyā must be abandoned. By name and form we must understand not true name and form, but the name and form which arises from change of nature.⁸ For instance, the true name of earth is earth. Its form is the ordinary ground. When, however, cups, jugs, pots, dishes, and other like things,

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¹ That is, niṣkāma karma (opposed to sākāma karma), or right action done unselfishly without hope of reward and simply because such action is right.
² Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. xiv, verse 112.
³ Ibid., verse 113. Brahmā is the first Deva of the Trinity, a transitory manifestation of the supreme Brahman.
⁴ Paramātmā.
⁵ Here the infinite waters of the ocean of Brahman.
⁶ Lit. "all Tattva rest."
⁷ Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, ibid., verse 114.
⁸ Vikāra: change of form or nature; transformation; deviation from natural state. In Sāṅkhya, Vikṛti is that which is evolved from a previous source or Prakṛti.
are made of it, the names and forms of those articles are due to nothing but change—that is to say, had not the true form of earth been transformed into the changed forms of cups, and the like, the substance earth would never have received the names of cups, jars, and the like. When these break and return to the form of common earth those names also disappear along with those forms. Cups, jars, and the like, are all false; earth alone is true. Just as in understanding the nature of earth I cannot leave out of consideration cups, and the like, so in directing the mind to the nature of Brahma I must not omit to consider the Brahmanda consisting of names and forms. It was earth before the formation of cups, and subsequently it again became earth. Only for a short time between these two states the cry of “Cup, cup!” arose, which alone is to be considered false. Sāstra has therefore said: “If a thing which did not exist either before or afterwards appears to exist during a middle period, know it also to be false.” This falsehood, again, is not fundamentally false. A thing seen in a dream may be false, but neither dream nor sleep is false. Similarly, this world may be false, but the māyā at its root never false. If sleep be false, who shows the dream? If māyā be false, who creates the samsāra? If māyā be false, then the samsāra becomes true. Māyā, therefore, exists and will exist, and it is through this māyā that mother Mahāmāyā must be seen.

Gitānjali therefore sings:

“Veda says: vain is our effort, for everything,
O Brother! is Māyā.
Tantra says through Māyā is heard the laugh of Mahāmāyā;
For it is the Mother’s Māyā.”

Veda says: “Whatever is designated by speech and called by name is Vikāra. Only earth is true.” Vikāra is not false; it is only the state of change of that which is real. A changed thing is only the real thing in another state; it is only the changed name and form which appear and disappear. The true form has neither appearance nor disappearance. Just as cups, jars, dishes, or whatever else you may make with earth will undoubtedly remain earth in substance; as wrist-chains, bracelets, earrings, or whatever else you may make with gold will be gold in substance and nothing else, so in this dualistic world, with all its variety of names and forms, father, mother, brother, sister, wife, son, daughter, you and I, non-moving and moving things, insects, flies, and the other names and forms which we see, are all only the Parabrahman manifesting Itself in different forms, such forms being due to change by Māyā, and in reality nothing

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1 Tattva. 2 A volume of verses by the Author. 3 See post. 4 Referring to the simile of a ghāta (jar). What is called jar is untrue; but the earth of which it is composed is true.
but a manifestation of Brahman. The only distinction is that in the body of Isvara this power of manifestation is fully manifested, whilst in the body of Jiva it is not so. I therefore said that because changed names and forms are false, the true names and forms are not so.

In the domain of Sadhana this is Brahma-vision. Gitanjali has therefore put into the mouth of Menaka:

"Umā is the adored of the world;
No mere daughter is She.
With Brahmā as Hara, on a bejewelled throne,
She sits as Parabrahmasanātani.
Thy Tripurasundara Digambara exists,
Far excelling in lustre ten million suns.
On the left of Hara sits my Umā,
Whose golden beauty shines as a thousand million moons.
There laughs Sañānana, in Sadananda's arms;
Gañānana dances in Jagadambā's arms,
The Music of Sambhu's dambara
Draws peals of laughter from Kumāra.
And from Ganeśa, at the clap of Umā's hands.
In the arms of two Brahmas rest the two Brahma-children,
And you and I again are Brahma's father and mother.
This samsāra instinct, with Brahma-bliss, is but a Vikāra of Brahman,
And thus my perfect Brahman is His charming spouse.
O Mountain! I hear another strange thing—
Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Hara are Umā's sons;
Umā is not thine and mine alone.
She exists as everything moving or immovable in the Universe.
Grandfather says She is grandmother
Who gave birth to Piśambara and Digambara.
Upon hearing you and me call her 'daughter'
How She must laugh in her mind!
Being thus ashamed and afraid to call Her daughter,
The Queen (Menakā) may well call herself the daughter's daughter
But that daughter is not daughter to the Queen alone.
If entreated She becomes even the daughter of a beggar-woman;
Śiva Candra says, O Lady of the Mountain! (Menakā)
Why, now that you know all, do you still call Her daughter?
Be yourself daughter for once.
And offering Jābā flowers to the daughter’s lotus feet,
Cry: ‘Victory to Mother!’” ¹

One must rise above names and forms and make all things ² rest on
the immutable Brahma. In order to rise above written names and forms
discrimination ³ is necessary. Discrimination ³ is nothing but the under-
standing of the true nature of things. In discussing the fundamental
nature of name and form the whole attention must be directed to the
Parabrahman, just as in discussing the question of the substance of a cup
the attention is directed to the earth (of which it is made). But because
you must use names and forms this does not mean that you must
leave this Brahmāṇḍa, with its names and forms, and go to live in
another Brahmāṇḍa. Judge as you are, your name and form will accom-
pany you to whatever Brahmāṇḍa you may go. One cannot, therefore,
discuss name and form by throwing off name and form altogether. Just
as the true nature of light would not be known were it not for the exist-
ence of darkness, so the non-dualistic existence ⁴ cannot be known without
the existence of this dualistic Brahmāṇḍa composed of names and forms.
Without it there could have been no judge of dualism and non-dualism,
nor indeed any necessity for such a judge. To understand the true nature
of earth it is not necessary to go to a country where there are no pots and
potters. A person of intelligence will place a pot before himself, and see
that under its form there is really nothing but earth. He who has rec-
ognized this is not astonished at the sight of a pot, but is, on the contrary,
pleased to see the wonderful capacity which earth possesses of taking
on forms. Similarly, he who has mastered the Brahmātattva ⁵ is not
astonished at the sight of this created universe, but is, on the contrary,
overjoyed to see the eternal tākti of Brahmanayi. He forgets all names
and forms and sees in every form the Brahma-form underlying the worldly
form. As everyone sees that there are pots, but the wise alone know that
there is nothing but earth, so, although all see the samsāra full of wives,
sons, and relations, the Tāntrik sādhaka alone knows that it is nothing

¹ The gist of these verses is that Pārvati and Śiva are not merely the
daughter and son-in-law of the Lord of Mountains and Menakā, but are the
one Supreme Spirit, manifesting as, and dwelling in, all forms.
² Tattva.
³ Viveka.
⁴ i.e., who knows that all, whatever may be its varied appearance, is but
the one Brahman.
but Brahmanayi’s self. He who has understood that in order to rise above name and form it is necessary to forget that things have distinctive properties giving rise to such names and forms, and to know that the true Sakti of Brahma alone exists, he alone has risen above name and form and has perceived that all is but the immutable Brahman.

“’No amount of japa, homa, and fasting will give liberation. It is by the realization alone that I am indeed Brahman,’ that Jiva will gain liberation.”

As the mind of a drunken or deeply slumbering man is not affected even if he is embraced by a young woman, so self-realization or perception of the real does not come to one who is intoxicated with an intense delusion and is under the influence of the sleep of maya, even should he be animated by Sadhana. If Japa, Homa, Vrata, and fasts are not accompanied by self-knowledge they avail nothing, even though they be practised for a hundred years. It is not, however, meant that all japa, homa, etc., is ineffectual to gain liberation. For why, then, should it be necessary to state that (under certain conditions) they are so ineffectual? As a matter of fact, japa, homa, fasting are so many means of attaining self-knowledge. Sastra has consequently said that liberation will not be gained even after a hundred years by the mere performance of the ordinary karma, if there be complete disregard for what is fundamental—namely, self-knowledge. Sastra does not mean that one who has known the self has no karma to perform; it rather means that none but those who know the self have a right to perform karma.

Atma is witness (that is, it only looks upon the working of the universe caused by maya without interest therein) and is omnipresent, perfect, true, without a second and higher than the highest. (Like the space in a room) Atma possesses, yet does not possess, body (that is, although Atma inhabits the body, it remains ever detached from its qualities). Jiva attains liberation when he realizes this truth. He is without a doubt liberated who has cast off all idea of name and form as mere child’s play and has become solely devoted to the Brahman.

1 Moha.
2 Ritual acts.
3 Presumably the author here and in next line refers to the stages prior to complete self-recognition—viz., regard for and endeavour to obtain self-knowledge.
4 The Spirit.
5 And so it is said: Atma sakshi chetah kevalo nirguna swa” (Atma is the sole intelligent witness without attributes). To its endurance as permanent witness of all changing states is due the Kantian “synthetic unity of apperception”.
6 That is, space has no form itself but takes form from the room in which it is.
7 See Introduction to Tantra Sastra.
During play children think of their dolls as sons and daughters; but their names and forms disappear when play is over. In the same way, however much you may build in your own mind names and forms by the establishment of relationships, whether by way of wife, son, father, and mother, with jivas who are the mâyā-dolls in the play-ground of this samsāra, know it for certain that with the end of your earthly life all such names and forms will disappear. Therefore, he who has ceased from play and cast aside all mâyik names and forms while there is yet time, and who, setting his mind and Ātmā on the Parabrahman who is above mâyā, has united himself with the Paramātmā, such an one, even though inhabiting the mâyik body, is undoubtedly eternally free, like the Brahman Itself.

"If images imagined in the mind could give liberation to Jiva, then one could also become a King by receiving a kingdom in dream."

As, despite his mâyik body, Jiva may obtain freedom from birth by knowledge of the essential truth,² the perception of the truth of the Self being the sole cause of such freedom, so a Sadhaka may attain nirvāṇa-kaivalya by the worship (with knowledge of the Self) of an image of Jagadāmbā in the form in which She appeared in mâyā for the benefit of Her devotees, and by perception of the greatness of that image—that is, of the presence in it, in eternal forms, of the eternal Śakti of Her who is eternity itself. This is the sole cause of such nirvāṇa kaivalya.⁵

He,⁴ who with loins girt with yellow cloth, sat as Pārtha's charioteer, glorious with the glory of his devotee, on the seat of Arjuna's chariot as the Pāṇḍavas' friend, holding the reins of the white horses in his left, and a whip in the right hand; He, who but a moment before, finding his friend Arjuna overcome by impatience and delusion,⁵ and unwilling to do his own dharma,⁷ had counselled him in words of wisdom; He, in the twinkling of an eye, changed that form of His—that sweet form of a delicate, dark hue, like that of a freshly formed cloud, charming the minds and hearts of the whole world, and disappeared, and in the twinkling of an eye thousands of hands and feet of the universe-embracing great body extended to each of the ten quarters of the heavens, and a terrible mass of light, issuing from thousands of widely-expanded eyes, dimmed the rays of the sun. Notwithstanding his endowment of divine vision, that Prince of Heroes, Arjuna, shook with fear, and with trembling voice and folded hands said: "I cannot see the quarters of space nor am I at ease. Have mercy, O Lord of Devas! in whom the world resides."

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¹ Made of and by Mâyā.
² Tattva.
³ Supreme liberation (see Introduction to Tantra Śūstra).
⁴ Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
⁵ Arjuna.
⁶ Mâyā and Mohā.
⁷ Duty.
In Bali’s heaven, earth, and the nether world were covered by the two feet of the Vāmana Brahmā. By Bali’s good fortune a third foot, hitherto unseen by even Brahmā and other Devas, shot out from Bhagavān’s navel, through the wonderful sakti of the Almighty. Advised by his Queen, who was learned in spiritual lore, King Bali bowed down, and then the foot, the dispeller of fear and the wealth of devotees, was placed on his head. The fortunate King Bali went to the nether world, and Bhagavān, the reliever of the burdens of the world, abandoned even Vaikuṇṭha, and Himself became Bali’s door-keeper in the nether world. To-day, only if he permits and kindly opens the door, can one see King Bali. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, the monarch of monarchs, Himself stands at Bali’s door, though at His own door of Vaikuṇṭha Brahmā and other Devas ever remain standing, praying for admittance to His presence, the all in all of a devotee’s life. Bhagavān, the creator of all things, Thou alone, O Lord! knowest the greatness of a devotee. And you, King Bali, a Prince of Daityas, are a Prince of Devotees. What kingdom is it which you have acquired, to guard which the Supreme Monarch of the universe has Himself become your door-keeper?

Again, on the banks of the Yamunā, at the root of the kadamba-tree, the sweet flute sounded. By what mantra of what secret sādhanā we know not, the fair women of the city of Vraja stood in their thousands in the ecstasy of their great love, surrounding Bhagavān, the son of Nanda, as immovable stars surround the full moon. Instantly, by virtue of his wonderful Vaishnavī māyā, Bhagavān appeared to each of them in a separate body, and threw his arms round the neck of each of the fair women, unseen by the others. The Devas assembled in the sky above Brādāvāna in order to see the incomparable beauty of the body of Kṛṣṇa in the waters of the Yamunā, on land and in space. Admistrd showers of flowers offered by them with reverence, to the joyous sounds of music and dancing by Vidyādhāras, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Apsarās, Yakṣās, and Cānaṇās, to the song of triumph by the hero-women, and amidst the manifestation of the perfect greatness of Purṇa

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1 Bali was a Daitya, grandson of Prahlāda, who conquered the three worlds and then performed a great yajña, in which he intended to give away all that belonged to him, when Viṣṇu as Vāmana appeared before him and asked for land sufficient to put three feet on. This was promised, when the Vāmana with two feet covered the world.

2 Sacrifice.

3 The Viṣṇu avatāra of that name—as dwarf.

4 Viṣṇu’s heaven.

5 Demoniac beings.

6 Of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

7 Rāsa.

8 Various forms of celestial male and female spirits (Devayōni).
Brahmasanātana, the huge waves of the heroic valour of the charmer of Madana rolled in the sea of the play of love.

The sight of the misery of Devas, caused by the oppressions of Mahiṣa the Asura, pained the loving heart of Her who is full of mercy for all sufferers. She, who embodies all saktis, manifested Her sakti and appeared in the form of a mass of fury born of the anger of the Devas. The earth sank under the weight of the beauteous lotus feet of that form, all full of consciousness of Her who is consciousness itself. Her crown pierced the firmament, and, delighting in war, She stood extending Her thousand arms over the field of battle. Seeing the Brahmān aspect of the Brahmayān the immortals shouted: "Victory! victory! victory!" and in joy began to worship the lotus feet of the blissful Devi.

Again, when previous to the destruction of Śumbha and Niśumbha, Kauśikī emerged from the body of Pārvatī, beautiful as a golden champak flower, the fair appearance of Pārvatī became instantly changed into the shining blue lustre, more beautiful than that of a blue lotus, of Umā, who appeared as Śyāmā. Into the glowing fire of Her presence the King of the Daityas jumped and was thereupon consumed as if he were a mere insect. Again, in the battle with Canda and Munda, the sakti of Cāmunḍā burst forth from the forehead of Śyāmā, wrinkled with wrath. In the battle with Raktabija, Sivadūtī issued from Śyāmā, who is Miśaprakṛti. In the fight with Śumbha it was into Her body that Brahmāṇi and other Saktis suddenly disappeared. Prior to Dakṣa’s yajña ten Mahāvidyās appeared from out of the single body of Satī and again disappeared into it. Again, at the time of the destruction of that yajña, a shadow-Satī appeared from out of the original body of Satī, and the māyik body was abandoned into the fire of yajña. Later, in the home of Himālaya, he was shown the world-form manifestation of Brahma in the newly-born body of a daughter, and into that body again those manifestations were withdrawn.

The appearance and disappearance in the manner of innumerable playful bodies from and into Her single body clearly proves that the body of Sacchidānandamayi is nothing but Sacchidānanda; that the variety in forms is due to variety in māyā made by Her own desire, and that there-

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1 The full eternal Brahma.
2 The Deva of love.
3 The passage refers to the rāsa-līlā play of love of Śri Krṣṇa and the Gopīs.
4 Demons (see the Devī-Māhātmya).
5 A terrific form of the Devi.
6 A Sakti issuing from Śyāmā.
7 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra and ante.
8 Chhāyāsati.
9 Devī incarnating as Pārvatī.
10 The Devī as existence, knowledge, and bliss. Sacchidānanda is the Brahma.
is no means of specifying any of Her particular forms as being Her real form truly defined by unquestionable signs. From the One comes the infinite, which becomes One again by the disappearance of the infinite. In this manner, in Her body, in the twinkling of an eye, there is creation, and in another twinkling a dissolution.1 In this state of things to endeavour to ascertain the forms of Her who is co-extensive with the universe is but the counting of the waves of the sea. Again, in the hearts of Sādhakas who have attained Siddhi She appears and disappears eternally in infinite forms, such forms changing at every moment; this being so, it is impossible to say that She is in reality bound to any one particular form. To know, therefore, the truth2 as to Her form, we must understand that Her real Self is above all forms. Though connected with infinite forms, She is, in fact, unattached to any form. Whenever the Ichhāmayī3 puts forth any form of māyā according to Her desire, then a reflection appears of the form which She willingly assumes. Seeing that reflection in the mirror of māyā She becomes charmed with Her own form and, like an enchanted girl, the Ānandamayī4 dances with joy and claps Her hands. In the establishment of a dual relationship between Jīva and Brahman She dances in Her own joy, into which She sinks.

Overwhelmed with emotion at this play of Hers, a Sādhaka, had said:

"Kālī, Charmer of the mind of Mahākāla! Thou who art ever full of bliss, Thou danceth in Thy own joy, O Mother! and Thyself dost clap Thy hands."

He who, when practising Sādhana of the Brahma-forms of the Brahmanayī, does not possess this knowledge concerning the Brahma is not, in fact, competent to worship Her forms. Whenever, during creation, preservation, and destruction, a necessity has arisen for any particular form She who is will itself has entered into that form, and when Her purpose has been served, that māyik form has at once disappeared. The forms, however, with which the eternal flow of the universe is eternally concerned and in which the three principles5 of creation, preservation, and destruction are contained are ever true and eternal. As they are eternal before creation, so they are eternal after the great dissolution; for the Sāstra has said that such eternal forms are resident in the non-dualistic region unknown to this ephemeral māyik world.6

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1 So in the Lalitā Sahasranāma (verse 66), it is said: “Unmeṣa-nimirṇaṁotpannavipañnabhūvanāvaliḥ” (The series of worlds arise and disappear with the opening and shutting of Her eyes).
2 Tattva.
3 The Devi whose substance is will.
4 The Devi whose substance is bliss.
5 Tattva.
6 That is, the forms referred to exist in potential state, otherwise there could be no recreation after dissolution.
Veda has said:

"Just as one fire in entering into the womb of earth assumes in every object its form, so the one Dweller in all objects assumes their forms."

Fire exists in a subtle form in every object in this world composed of the five elements; but from without it is not at all visible. If, however, there is friction by mutual contact, or fire from without touches it, the fire burns forth. It is the law of Nature that what does not exist in a thing can never appear in it. Had not fire existed in a subtle form in everything in the world, all things would not have been combustible. We must therefore understand that fire exists eternally in the subtlest form in every atom of any object, and that it also exists in a subtle form in the gross body of any object (which is but a conglomeration of atoms), permeating every part of it. For this reason the body of a piece of wood composed of the five elements should also be considered as the body of one of those elements—namely, fire. Similarly, Paramātmā, which dwells in all things, enters and exists throughout the body of the universe. Tantra has therefore said that he cannot worship images who is ignorant of the spiritual knowledge, that "She exists as Śakti in even vehicles, stones, and metals." Again, Śrīmad Bhāgavata has said images are of eight kinds—namely, those made of stone, wood, iron, vermilion, sandal paste, etc.; painted, made of sand, jewels, and mental. "At the time of worship a Śādhaka first of all worships the mental image inwardly, and then, after communicating the spirit of Brahmān within him to the image without, commences external worship. Again, those who worship yantras without an image, worship the mental image of the Devatā. This is the fundamental principle relating to Her eternal presence and manifestation in yantras and images. For those who do not understand Her omnipresence and this communication of the inward spirit, but merely think to attain liberation by the simple imagination of a form in their minds, such liberation is but a dream." Śāstra has therefore said:

"If the mere imagination of forms in the mind, without spiritual knowledge and sādhanā, can secure liberation, then people can also become kings by receiving kingdoms in dreams."

Along with the contemplation of images the entire fundamental truth concerning them must be understood. When this is understood it must

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1 The Supreme Spirit.
2 The Brahmān is in, though also beyond, the Brahmāṇḍa.
3 Literally, "in inward yajña," as to which see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra and last chapter.
4 Tejas—light, force, brilliance, spirit.
5 See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
6 Tattva, or truths.
be realized, and then the spirit must be communicated to the external image, when the process of giving it life will have been accomplished. It is only when in this manner the Devatā has been established that the lustre of consciousness of Caitanyamayī will burst through that earthly image and scatter its rays around, illuminating the heart of the Śādhaka, filling him with joy and liberating his soul from physical existence. The Śādhaka will find this subject dealt with in greater detail in the Chapter on ordinary worship.

Preserving the former śloka, Bhagavān Himself has explained it in the form of a clear vṛtti:

"Without knowledge men cannot attain liberation, even though they practise severe austerities with the full belief that images made of earth, metals, wood, and the like are Iśvara Himself."

Ritual action is futile if, in performing it, one is ignorant of the supreme Truth which is to destroy the bonds arising from action. If I do not know by what process this earthen image which I worship is changed into an image full of consciousness, then my image worship is nothing but earth worship. Śāstra has therefore said that without knowledge no amount of severe austerities will enable one to see the True Form of Her Who is the embodiment of all spiritual and intellectual knowledge. It is the sight of Her alone which frees one of bondage. He who is devoid of such knowledge is therefore not qualified to worship images. Without knowledge neither asceticism nor enjoyment of worldly pleasure can give liberation.

To illustrate this Bhagavān has said:

"If performance of Karma alone, without knowledge of the Brahman, can give liberation, then those who by fasting have reduced themselves to skeletons, and those who, through gluttony, have become big-bellied, can gain liberation by such abstinence and indulgence. But in truth are they really liberated?" "If the mere performance of a vow to live on air, grass, broken particles of rice, or water alone can give liberation, then serpents, beasts, birds, and animals of the waters also (who live on such things) can be liberated (in spite of the absence of knowledge)."

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1 Literally, "made Pratyakṣa." There are four kinds of proof, according to Nyāya, and three according to Sāṅkhya. The latter are: (1) Pratyakṣa, or direct perception by the mind and senses of sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound; (2) anumāṇam, or inference; (3) śabda-pramāṇam, or scriptural proof; to which the Nyāya adds (4) upamāṇa—that is, analogy or recognition of likeness.

2 That is, the prāṇa-pratiṣṭā rite (see Introduction to Tantra Śastra).

3 The Devī Whose substance is consciousness.

4 Tattva.

5 Verse.

6 Aphorism.

7 A form of commentary.

8 Karma.

9 Tapasyā.

10 Ritual action, austerities, alms-giving, and action generally, etc.
There are four different forms of worship called "states" or "dispositions," according to four different states of knowledge. These are: "Seeing the Brahman in all things; this is the highest form. Constant contemplation of the Devatā in the heart is the middle form. Recitation of mantras and saying of hymns is the lowest form, and mere external worship is lower than these."

"Perception of the identity of Jīvātmā and Paramātmā is Brahmanabhāva. Concentration of mind on the Devatā by the process of yoga is dhyānabhāva. Pūjā as the bhāva which arises out of the dualistic idea of the servant and the Lord, the worshipper and the worshipped. But he who knows that all is Brahman needs neither yoga nor pūjā, because his competency is such that he has risen above both the bhāvas of yoga and pūjā. For him there is neither worshipper nor worshipped, but all is Brahman. In his sight Jīva and Brahman, Īśvara and Śādhaka are not different things. Where there is no difference between two things there can be no yoga, nor worship of the one by the other. For this reason, hymn, recitation of mantra, contemplation, concentration, vows, restraint, and the like, are not for those who know the Brahman. "For him in whose heart the highest knowledge, that of the Brahman, reigns, recitation, sacrifice, austerities, restraints, vows, and the like are useless." They are not only useless for him, but he has not even the right to do ritual acts.

The Śādhaka will now gradually see who is such a knower of Brahman. "The Brahman, who is the embodiment of pure knowledge and bliss, alone is true"—that is, without Him all this visible world is but the false display of māyā. "Whoever realizes this and becomes Brahman, for him there is no longer any necessity for external worship, contemplation, and concentration."²

"I am Jīva." The liberated Mahāpuruṣa whose heart is freed from the egoism involved in this saying has neither sin, nor piety, nor heaven, nor rebirth. For him who has realized that all is Brahman there is neither subject for meditation nor person meditating, neither Jīva to meditate nor Īśvara on Whom he may meditate.

² Bhāva.
⁴ Dhyāna (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
⁵ Japa, v. *ibid.*
⁶ Stava.
⁷ Pūjā.
⁸ Stava, japa, dhyāna, dhāraṇa, vrata, niyama (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
⁹ Literally, "are beyond the adhikāra (competency)."
¹⁰ Japa, Yajña, Tapas, Niyama, Vrata (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
¹¹ Puja, dhyāna, and dhārapa.
¹² Svarga.
"This Ātmā is always free and unattached to any objects. In what bondage can it be? Why, then, should men of perverted intellect demand its liberation?"  

"The Universe is composed of His own māyā, and impenetrable even to the intellect of Devas. Ātmā exists as one who has entered into it although in reality He does not enter into it."

"Just as space exists both inside and outside all things, so Ātmā, whose substance is consciousness, shines as witness, both inside and outside all things."

"Ātmā has neither birth, boyhood, youth, nor age. It is ever the same, incorruptible, and is consciousness."

"Birth, youth, age, and the like belong to the gross body alone. Ātmā is free of them. Jīvas whose intellect are obscured by māyā see this, but yet seem not to see this."

"Just as the one sun appears as many (when reflected) in the water contained in a vessel (although in reality the sun is one and not many), so in the water of māyā contained in the vessel of the Jīva’s gross body Ātmā appears as many (although in reality it is one and not many)."

"As when the lunar orb is reflected in water a fool, who sees the quivering of the restless ripples, thinks that the lunar orb itself is quivering, so those who are destitute of true knowledge, on seeing the restlessness of intellect, think that the Ātmā is restless."

"As when a cup is broken the space contained in it remains the same, so even when the body is destroyed Ātmā remains the same."

"Devi, when Jīva attains this supreme knowledge of the self which alone can give salvation, he is liberated even in this world. This is true, again true, and without a doubt true."

"Neither action, nor charity, nor progeny can bring liberation. Knowledge of the Ātmā by the Ātmā can alone give liberation to man."  

"Ātmā is the dearest of all. There is nothing so dear as the Ātmā. Oh consort of Śiva! all other things (wife, son, and the like, etc.) become dear because of their relation to Ātmā."

"Knowledge, object of knowledge, and knower—this threefold division is caused by māyā. If we carefully consider the nature of these three, Ātmā alone, which is knowledge, remains in the end."

"It is Ātmā or consciousness who is knowledge, it is Ātmā who is the object of knowledge, and it is Ātmā who is the person who knows. He who knows this knows the truth."

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1 That is, the Ātmā is ever free. It is the Buddhi which must be liberated from the bonds which obscure this actually existing freedom.
2 Karma.
3 That is, through their offering of the pīṇḍa in the obsequial rites.
4 Only the Ātmā can know Ātmā.
5 Tatvā.
"I have thus related to you the truth about knowledge, the direct cause of nirvāṇa liberation. This is the highest treasure of the four classes of avadhūtas." ¹

The religious healers, of whom we have already spoken, quote the following four ślokas out of those above-mentioned as strong evidence in support of their theory that He is devoid of form:²

"He alone is free from the bonds of Karma who has risen above name and form and has made all principles and things rest on the true immutable Brahmān. " "He is undoubtedly liberated who has shaken off all notions of name and form as though they were child’s play, and has solely devoted himself to Brahmān. " "If forms imagined in the mind can give salvation to Jīva, then men may also be Kings by receiving kingdoms in dreams." "Without knowledge men cannot attain liberation even though they practise severe austerities with the full belief that images made of earth, metals, wood, etc., are Īśvara Himself."

From the explanation which, along with those ślokas we have given of their meaning, supported by consideration of the context, conclusion, and object, Śādhakas will understand to what perversion of śāstrik conclusions the wrong interpretations of present day interpreters, blinded by selfishness, lead. Śāstra says that Jīva, before he can attain liberation, must forget the condition of Jīva subject to māyā, assumed by Brahmān in the māyā-built Brahmapūrṇa, and sink himself in the unity of Jīva and Brahmān, which it is the purpose of all great sayings, such as "Thou art It," to establish. Jīva must rise above all names and forms which are the object of dualistic knowledge. According to our notion of this non-dualistic perception of the truth we, whilst keeping intact the names and forms of our own selves and relatives and also of the whole world, consisting of moving and non-moving things, yet consider it to be the pith of the teaching that it is only the names and forms of Devatās which are false and that these only should be abandoned. I fail to understand the necessity for such hurry in doing away with that particular name and form which alone will endure, whilst keeping those names and forms which will prove to be false. It is as though a great

¹ Those who have renounced the world: ascetics. The life of the avadhūta is the Sannyāsa of the Kali Yuga (see Mahānirvāna Tantra, chap. vii., verse 2). The term has been defined as follows:

"Aksaratvāt varenyatvāt dhūtasamsāravandhanāt. Tattvamasyārthaśidhatvadavadhūtobhidhiyate."

[An avadhūta is so called on account of his being possessed of undecaying greatness, having washed off the bonds of samsāra and learnt the meaning of (the great saying) "Thou art That." ]

² Nirākāravāda. ² Tattva.
famine threatens the market of Brahmagñāna—a famine which will make all things so dear, that whatever purchase be now made will then be profitable. I do not want to deprive them of this profit. What I am sorry for is that the names and forms which constitute the bonds of samsāra remain, whilst the names and forms which will cut those bonds is done away with. Hearing that the price of things will go on increasing our purchasers have been in such a hurry that they have forgotten to bring even the wherewithal to make purchases at the outset. Even He has been forgotten Whose worship gives the fruit of the knowledge of Brahman. I know that they say: “For him whose nature has become Brahman there is no longer any necessity for pūjā, dhyāna and dhāraṇa.” We, too, do not deny this. Śāstra has said: “Whose nature.” That is, the case of the man who, even without dhyāna and the like remains immersed in Brahma-bliss as naturally as he eats or sleeps. For one who has thus become Brahman or, in other words, whose condition of a Jīva has disappeared and been converted into Brahman; for him there is no longer any necessity for dhyāna, dhāraṇa, and pūjā. But through our ill-fortune it has nowadays so happened that a number of persons who, by nature, are Brahma-ghosts, have appeared who have neither dhyāna, nor dhāraṇa, nor pūjā, nor adoration. The words of the Śāstra cannot be false. As a matter of fact, such self-willed people who pervert the true meaning of the Śāstra have no right to dhyāna, dhāraṇa, pūjā, or japa. Consequently, these things do not exist so far as they are concerned. The four ślokas on which they rely are preceded by the śloka: “From Brahmā to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of māyā, and Parabrahma alone is the sole truth. When this knowledge is attained Jīva attains liberation.” The śloka: “Ātmā is witness, omnipresent, perfect, true, without a second and higher than the highest. Ātmā possesses body and yet does not possess it. Jīva attains liberation when he realizes this truth.” is in the midst of the ślokas cited. The following śloka follows them: “If, without knowledge of Brahman, performance of Karma alone can give liberation, then such men as are reduced to skeletons by constant fasting, and such men as become big-bellied by excess of eating may be liberated through such abstinence and indulgence. But are they really liberated?” We fail, then, to understand how these four ślokas, can be put forward to prove that “Brahman cannot have any form;” seeing that they relate to knowledge of Brahman. Śāstra of course, says: “From Brahmā to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of māyā.”

1 Knowledge as to the Brahman.
2 Svabhāvāt Brahmabhūta.
3 The reference is to the sect of Brāhmākos. There is here a pun on the term “bhūta,” which, used as a suffix, means “state,” and used independently means (among other things) “ghost.”
and Parabrahman alone is the sole truth," and we, too, do not deny this. But in the world, where everything from Brahmā to a blade of grass is false, are you and I—advocates of the theories of Brahman possessing form, and Brahman being formless respectively—are we true? If this word "false" means non-existent, then you and I too do not exist. I admit that spiritually you and I do not exist, but because we admit it do we really feel it? Is it possible that such men as do feel it question whether Brahman possesses or does not possess form? Where you and I turn out false, where your "you-ness" and my "I-ness" disappear, two persons cannot exist. And where two do not exist, with whom can there be argument? Now, will the dualistic world become non-existent because you and I desire it to be so? Śāstra has said everything from Brahmā to a blade of grass is false; but the question is, whether we have ever been able to make even a single blade of grass false as the Śāstra says? If we have not, why do we, who have not the power to do away with a blade of grass, presume to do away with Brahmā? Do we feel ashamed even to think of this? Why, the very Śāstra which is invoked to do away with the existence of Devas and Devis, who are Brahmās with forms, that very Śāstra itself says: "From Brahmā to a blade of grass." If Brahman does not take form, whence comes this Brahmā? And if it is "from Brahman" instead of "from Brahmā," then everything vanishes, and nothing remains as true.

Śāstra is the command of Devatā. For Jīvas it contains ordinances and teachings. Because it has said that the world is false you and I cannot beat time to that tune and dance. The speaker of Śāstra is Bhagavān, who dwells in all things, and is above māyā. Its hearer is Mahēśvarī. She who dwells in all things is turiya-caitanya incarnate, and governs universal māyā. To them the falsity of the world is a matter of direct perception, but to you and me it is Brahma-tattva, attainable only by age-long Sādhana, and beyond the reach of mind and speech. What the result of a battle will be is the concern of the King or Queen; the soldier's only duty is to start for war immediately on receiving an order to do so. The King and Queen know that in this war their victory is inevitable, so that in their conversation on the subject they can express satisfaction and joy. But if, on hearing this conversation, their soldiers were to think, "Since victory is inevitable what is the use of fighting?" and were to give themselves up to rejoicing, it is most likely that the banner of triumph would fly in the dust. You say: "Mahādeva has said that the world is false; why, then, should I worship and adore names and

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1 As to the turiya state of consciousness, see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra and ante.

2 The truth concerning the Brahman.
forms?" If, with this idea that the world is nothing but Brahman, Sadhakas were to give up performing worship and ritual,\(^1\) the kind of Brahma-knowledge which will be attained, and is, in fact, being nowadays attained, is not worth mentioning. Veda has said: "When everything in relation to a Jiva has been unified with Brahman what will he then see, what will he hear, what will he smell, etc., and with what?" That is to say, where mind, intellect, body, senses, and everything else is Brahman, then worship and ritual \(^2\) is impossible. It is of no use to see Brahman, to hear Brahman, etc., with Brahman. The author of Vedânta Paribhâga concludes: "Although the world is false, it is not false to those who are in the samsâra." That is to say, a dream is not false when a person sees it. Had dreams been false when seen, why should we have cried with terror at the sight of tigers in dreams? Šruti, again, says as the result of a spurious perception of a dualistic world, Jiva becomes instantly separated from Brahman and sees the world in a separate aspect. Philosophers have therefore said as follows: Although the notion that the body is the Self is spiritually false, it is yet deemed an established fact from the worldly point of view—that is to say, people consider the body to be the Self and say: "I have become thin, I have become fat, I have been cured, I am ill, etc."; yet Ātmâ, which is nothing but existence, consciousness, and bliss, is neither thin nor fat, diseased nor cured, but is ever free from change or corruption, joy, sorrow, disease, grief, thinness, fatness, etc., which are conditions of the body alone. Just as people consider the body to be that Ātmâ, and consider all these conditions to be established facts in the worldly state, so the dualistic world, though in fact false, must yet, so long as Brahman is not perceived in all things, be considered as an established, separately-existing fact. We know that the sun always rises in the east; still, if we go to a new place, it appears that the sun is rising in the west, north, or south. Just as, in spite of knowing the truth in this matter and disbelieving the opposite, we become firmly convinced that that opposite itself is really true; just as this mistake in the matter of the direction or the sun's rising is inevitable, so this false perception of the dualistic world also is inevitable. We cannot be asked as a favour to accept the dualistic world as an established fact. Until this dream of mâyâ is dispelled, until the bonds of Karma are destroyed, until the idea of difference between "you and me" disappears, Jiva cannot but have faith in this dualistic universe, call it false, a dream, or fancy, as you may. The influence of Karma, the force of action, will compel me, even against my own will, to believe in it. Just as a weak fish caught in a net in water can never pass outside the net, however much it may move about inside it, so the

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\(^1\) Karma.
worldly Jiva caught in the māyā of the samsāra can never sever the
bonds of māyā and enter into the unfathomable depth of Brahmātattva
outside of māyā. Just as, in spite of being in water, the fish is prevented
from moving out by the bondage of the net, so, in spite of being in the
universe full of Brahman, Jiva is prevented by the bondage of māyā
from entering freely into that Blissful Presence. Living in this dualistic
world, you and I, māyik Jivas, are, therefore, bound to believe in it as a
constant reality even against our will, although it is in fact not so.

Every worshipper is actuated by an earnest desire to know the
nature¹ of his real self; but the existence of the desire does not bring
about its fulfilment for all. It is for the accomplishment of this desire
that sādhana is required. Without sādhana it can never be fulfilled. A
child in the womb may, of course, form a desire to see its mother, but
so long as it is in the womb it is impossible for it to do so. The desire
can be fulfilled only for that child who has fortunately been safely born.
Similarly, it is impossible for people living in Mahāmāyā’s māyā-womb
of this universe to see that beautiful appearance of Hers which charms
the heart of the conqueror of Death.² He who has, by the accumulation
of religious merits in many births, been delivered from the sheath of the
womb of māyā of the Mother of the Universe, he alone is a fit child to
see the Brahma-form of the Brahmamayī. It is only such a child who
truly has the right to suck that milk from the breast of Brahmamayī,
which even Brahmā and other Devas rarely obtain. He alone may share
Her assuring lap with Kārtika and Ganeša. If, however, on seeing the
pains of austere Sādhanā practised by any of Her children, the merciful
Mother should gratify him; if She, who dwells in the heart of the
Lord of Yogīs,³ should rend the deep darkness of the black night⁴ in
Her womb by the mass of light issuing from Her black, cloudlike appear-
ance, which dispels the fear of death and Herself appear in the heart of
the child lying in yoga in her womb; if She cuts the bonds of samsāra-
māyā with the sharp edge of Her own māyā sword and takes the devoted
sādhaka up on Her lap—then also in such a case know that this is done
as the inevitable fruit of much austere sādhana practised in many
previous births, and that none of these things have been accomplished
without sādhana. It is a domain which none can reach but through real
sādhana. Although the desire for going out may be strong, yet the door
of the room in which Jiva is shut is not within his reach. The utmost that
Jiva can do is to lie down on the bed of māyā and weep; but it is Mother
alone who can open the door. Jiva can only weep loudly and awaken
the Mother. By virtue of austere sādhana the Sādhaka can awaken Mother

¹ Tattva.
² Mṛtyuṇjaya, or Śiva.
³ Mahādeva; Śiva.
⁴ Kālarātri.
Kulakundalini,¹ sleeping in the Muladhara,² If She rises and opens the
door of Brahmarandhra,³ then alone may Jiva come forth; otherwise all
worship and adoration are but a crying in the wilderness. The siddhi,
which is attained in Sādhanā by the piercing of the six chakras,⁴ is
never attained by Jiva whilst he is crushed by the wheels of the Samsāra.

Secondly, it is not within the province of Jiva to say whether Brahman
has or has not name and form and even if he speaks none will hear him,
for the matter⁵ is beyond the knowledge and intellectual perception of
Jiva. Our belief and unbelief in this world are due merely to the fact
that what we believe has been stated, and what we disbelieve has been
denied, by a Śāstra, which is revealed and not of human origin. The
point is this: the very Śāstra which says that Brahman has no name and
no forms also says, "From Brahman to a blade of grass everything in the
world is the creation of māyā." If the practical existence of a thing could
be done away with by the mere statement that it is the creation of māyā,
why, then, does this world, consisting of moving and non-moving things,
exist?

The world is not a thing imperceptible to Jiva. If it is perfectly true
that in the world created by māyā even a blade of grass can exist, we are
unable to understand what it is which makes the existence of Brahman in it
impossible. If, by a far-fetched interpretation,⁶ it is said that the root
word Brahman here does not refer to fourheaded and red-coloured
Brahman possessing a body, there is an end of the matter. If even formless
and attributeless Brahman becomes the creation of māyā and, conse-
quently, false along with a blade of grass, then what remains as the true
Brahman? To cut the branch of a tree on which one sits; to do away with
formless Brahman in endeavouring to dispense with Brahman possessing
form is a Kālidāsa⁷ kind of intelligence which will produce an inevitable
fall for the interpreter. In this connection we have nothing to say but to
give a warning. It is on the authority of that Śāstra we say that Brahman
is included in the world, so that Brahman will exist so long as the world
exists, or the world will exist so long as Brahman exists. As the world is
not false to you and me, in spite of its being the creation of māyā, so
Brahman and other Devatās also are not false to Sādhakas.

Thirdly, if, in spite of its being untenable according to reasoning,
argument, and authority, we were to accept the interpretation of the
followers of the theory that Īśvara is formless and to say that Brahman

¹ Vide ante and Introduction to Tantra Śāstra. ² See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
³ Śaṭacakrabheda (vide ante).
⁴ Tattva. ⁵ Ādhyātmik, in the sense of untrue.
⁶ Kālidāsa, the great poet, is said to have been in his early years such a fool
in practical matters as to have attempted to cut down the branch of a tree
whilst sitting on it.
has really no name and form, then also there is no escape. If Brahman has no name and form, who is it, then, that says, "Brahman has no name and form"? The speaker of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra is Sadāśiva and the person spoken to is Ādyāśakti, both being the Brahman with names and forms. Śāstra says: "Mahēśvara has introduced the Tantras by means of questions and answers, Himself taking the places both of Guru (teacher) and Śiṣya (pupil)—that is to say, in Āgama the Devī has put questions as disciple and Mahādeva has answered them as guru, and in Nigama Mahādeva Himself has asked questions as disciple, and the Devī has replied as Guru; or, in aspect inseparable from the Devī, the Deva Himself has, in both places, revealed the Tantras both as guru and pupil. If Brahman has no name and form, then this Deva and this Devī become false; and if the Deva and the Devī become false, how can the Tantra Śāstra remain true? Tantra is the most glorious of all Śāstras because it is the word of Mahādeva and Mahādevī. If to-day that Deva and Devī, the speakers of Tantra, turn out to be false, where then is the glory and authority of Tantra? If Tantra is not the command of Devatā it may be easily explained away as the mistaken word of man and, consequently, unworthy of respect. No one will then bow his head to the authority of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. If the follower of the theory of Brahman possessing no form says that he does not believe that Brahman has name and form, the follower of the theory of Brahman possessing form will instantly reply that he has no faith in the authority of Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. Thus all discussion and reasonings will cease, all interpretations will be useless, and all authorities and evidence will be of no value. I therefore say, where there is no means of defending one's own side, it is the height of folly to try to serve one's purpose by tricks.

Another thing. If in discussion a position of authority must be assigned to Śāstra everything which is said in it should be accepted as correct. If a sādhaka abandons the worship of images and takes to dhyāna and dharāṇa alone, then the mental image formed by him in his mind becomes the object of his dhyāna and adoration. If an image imagined in the mind is supposed to be unable to give liberation, then there is no reason why dhyāna and dharāṇa without image worship should give it, because in that dhyāna also the sādhaka has to depend on a mental image. And if dhyāna does not bring liberation, then Devaṛṣis, Mahāṛṣis, Rājaṛṣis, Yogis and Munis are mere fools, who waste their days in useless labour. Accomplished great sādhakas also become deprived of siddhi. Moreover, why in that case should the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra have said: "The dhyānahāva is the middle form of worship"? Who says:

1 Meditation and concentration of mind (see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra).
2 Classes of Rṣis, or seers.
3 Adepts in yoga and sages.
that only the four ślokas of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, referred to above, are worthy of being considered as authority and the rest of the book, consisting of two voluminous parts—Uttarakhaṇḍa and Pūrvakhāṇḍa—is erroneous? If this Tantra is correct, then the whole of it must be correct; if incorrect, then the whole of it must be incorrect. What sort of impartial judgment is it to consider only four ślokas which are to one's liking as correct and all the rest incorrect? I take out four palmfuls of water from the Ganges and consider that small quantity of water as Brahmanayi Gangā, who dwells in Brahma's Kamaṇḍalu,¹ and all the rest of the stream flowing in an irresistible current from the Himalaya to the sea, as but ditch-water. What sort of faith is this? The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra deals with Varnāsrama,² Yugadharma,³ Yogatattva,⁴ the six Cakras,⁵ politics, Vyāvahāra dharma,⁶ Sādhanā dharma,⁷ creation, preservation, and destruction, the divisions of the Brahmaṇḍa,⁸ the fourteen worlds,⁹ seven svargas,¹⁰ and seven pātālas,¹¹ names, seats, and worships of Devas and Devis, the divya, vīra, and pāśu forms of worship,¹² Mantras¹³ and Yantras¹⁴ of Devatās, the consecration of temples and images, the various kinds of liberation,¹⁵ and with a whole mass of rules and regulations on various other subjects.

To consider the statements contained in the book on all these subjects to be incorrect with the exception of four ślokas, and these only subject to a wrong and perverse interpretation, is not judgment but treachery, intense selfishness, lawlessness,¹⁶ or the raving of a madman. Everywhere the Sādhanā dharma has been classified under the three distinct sections of Karma, Jñāna, and Bhakti, whether according to Tantra or Veda or Purāṇa.¹⁷ According to this system Bhagavān has, in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, given instructions in the Jñāna division after purification of the mind by performance of Karma. It is from these instructions, when handled by the senseless interpreters of the present day, that all this scepticism, by which nothing is gained but everything is lost, arises. Just

¹ A vessel carried by ascetics. ² Caste system and rules. ³ The peculiar characteristics and Dharma of the different ages. ⁴ Science and art of Yoga. ⁵ Centres in the body which are dealt with in works on Tāntric yoga (see Introduction to Tantra Sāstra). ⁶ Law. ⁷ Rules relating to Sādhana (Introduction to Tantra Sāstra). ⁸ Universe. ⁹ See Introduction to Tantra Sāstra. ¹⁰ See Introduction to Tantra Sāstra. ¹¹ Suited to the three classes of men. ¹² Mukti, which is not gained at one step. ¹³ Sveccchhā—that is, acting according to own will, and not according to law or rule. ¹⁴ Action (including ritual), knowledge, and devotion.
as milk put into the mouth of a naturally venomous snake is turned into poison, so Śāstra, handled by selfish persons who are naturally faithless, gives rise to such scepticism. As a matter of fact, it is not the case that those who are determined thus to ruin the Āryan society by wrong interpretations of Śāstra are themselves unaware of their own treachery; but although they are aware of it the selfishness of the weak human heart prevents them from acting according to that knowledge. What they know remains within them, and what they try to make illiterate and foolish villagers understand is something quite different. Nowadays we can, in speaking of them, merely use the expression "double-tongued," one tongue being within and another without. But we can dare say that had an Āryan Prince now ruled the country the tongues of such interpreters would forthwith have been actually made double.¹

Again: It is not to be wondered at that he should always speak ill of that, the excellent virtues of which he has no knowledge; just as a huntswoman throws away the pearl which is formed in the heads of elephants and adorns herself with a garland of berries.² Āryan poets have, therefore, said that such things should not be regretted, for what one has no power to comprehend one neglects but does not dis honour. "The nose alone smells the fragrance of Mallikā and Mālatī flowers and not the eye." The eye does not, however, commit any offence thereby; it is merely devoid of the power of smelling. Similarly, should a person (who has yet to await many births before he acquires that Jñāna and Bhakti and purity of mind which befit one for the worship of images) say that worship of images is a mistake, he must not be understood to commit any offence or to deserve any punishment. In fact, he is an object of pity to the public, for Bhagavān has not yet granted him the power to comprehend the deep and solemn truth³ relating to the worship of images of the Deity. It should be understood that although he is a mānava (man) in outward appearance, internally he is still imperfect in mānavatva.⁴ He is still a stranger in the human world only just elevated from the lower stratum of being. However that may be, wayfarers need be warned before giving moral advice to a highway robber. All this argument should be postponed and first of all society should be warned. Fortunately, the robbers have, by their inopportune howling, made themselves known, and wayfarers have recognized their voice. The Āryan

¹ Their tongues would have been slit for their heresy.
² Gunjā, a red blackberry, used by goldsmiths in India as a small weight.
³ Tattva.
⁴ The proper state of a descendant of Manu or Humanity. As some one has remarked, the bulk of human beings now existing can only be said to be candidates for true humanity.
society has for some time discovered the hidden purpose of these interpretations of the Śāstra. The Mother of the world, the subduer of Daityas, has appeared in the hearts of devotees and saved the world from these Daityas of Kali Yuga. At that part of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata where Bhagavān, the dispeller of the fear of existence, in dealing with sādhanā dharma, discusses with Uddhava, the Prince of devotees, the subject of devotees, He says:

"Tīrthas consisting of water are not such tīrthas; images of Devas made of earth and of stone are not such Devas as sādhus are, for tīrthas consisting of water and images of Devas made of earth and stone purify sinners after long service and worship, whilst sādhus possess such wonderful power that their sight alone sanctifies Jīva."

"He who worships my image without (through illusion) knowing me, as Āmā-Iśvara, the dweller in all things, merely pours oblations into ashes."

The aforesaid healers consider these two ślokas also as evidence in favour of the theory of the Deity possessing no form. From the first śloka they glean that tīrthas consisting of water are not tīrthas at all, and images of Devas made of earth are not Devas at all. But, I ask, had it been so, why should it be said that they purify after a long time? By what power can a tīrtha which is not a tīrtha, and a Deva who is not a Deva, purify Jīva even after long service? When Bhagavān has said that they purify if they are long served, the śloka must be understood to mean that the power of purification which pious devotees possess is greater than that of tīrthas and images of Devatās. Purification by tīrthas and images of Devas depends on long service and worship by Jīva, but this is not needed to gain purification by the gracious look of devotees who freely dispense their mercy. We are confident that sādhakas will forgive the thieves who possess so little intelligence and cunning as to proceed to commit theft in the first and second parts of a verse, in the third of which they are detected.

Again, from the second śloka they have gathered that those who worship images instead of praying in this fashion, "Iśvara, who dwells in all things," merely pour oblations into ashes. We regret to say that the thought of this illustration in connection with such an illustrator

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1 Daityas.
2 The rules relating to Sādhanā. For Dharma, see Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.
3 Lit.: "states the tattva."
4 Places of pilgrimage, such as Kālighāt, Gaya, Kāmākhyā, Pūrī, etc. The esoteric tīrthas are in the human body itself.
5 Saintly men.
6 That is, he does what is useless; for oblation should be poured into fire.
induces us to smile as well as puts us to shame. Why do such men as have no faith in pūjā, japa, stava, and homa\(^1\) make use of the illustration of pouring oblations into ashes? It is because oblations are actually poured into fire that the expression “pouring oblations into ashes” means the contrary thing. To pour oblations into fire is an act of worship towards an embodied Deity. If this worship of embodied Deity is itself a mistaken act, whence comes this illustration drawn from homa? However that may be, Bhagavān has said that whoever worships His image without the knowledge that He dwells in all things and is Ātmā and Iśvara, merely pours oblations into ashes, because without the knowledge that He is in all things, sentient as well as non-sentient, how can one believe in His existence in that image and in the possibility of the invocation of His life into it, and the like? In other words, whoever has not the knowledge that He is Brahman without distinctions is even totally unfit for image worship. The import of the sloka, therefore, comes to this, that without knowledge of Brahman, image-worship is of no avail; but by virtue of the pernicious influence of the present time it has come to mean that whoever worships images merely pours oblations into ashes. Great man! keep your interpretation to yourself. Do not, with an uncalled-for generosity, come forward to preach that to people which will make them as poor as street beggars. Do not, I pray, any longer create mischief in the name of interpretation.

\(^1\) Worship, recitation, hymn and fire-sacrifice (homa) (see Introduction to Tantra Sāstra)