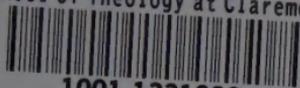


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TANTRAS THEIR PHILOSOPHY

AND

OCCULT SECRETS

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Edited by

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PREFACE

India is the birth place of religion and religious preachers and reformers. In this country many religious reformers endowed with divine virtues and accomplished with highly spiritual development appeared from time to time. These spiritual reformers gave new shapes and forms to religion according to the needs of time and to suit the tastes of the people in general. Thus arose Saivism, Saktivism, Baisnavism, and Tantrism.

The subject of the Tantras is a complicated one in as much as it is full of mysticism and consists of mystic rites and rituals connected therewith which are wholly unintelligible to the uninitiated. The texts on the subject are numerous. Some of these deal with mystic rites, while others with time, processes and places of worship.

In this book, an endeavour has been made to place before the readers, the broad principles underlying the practice of the Tantric form of religion. In order to make it interesting to all classes of readers an attempt has been made to explain the philosophical principle underlying its forms of worship, the conception of the Deity and its fundamental creed. The meanings of the "five makers" which are too familiar with Tantric system have been explained clearly with reference to the Tantric texts on the subject. The "Chakra" form of worship and its proper significance have been noted and explained by quoting different passages from the various texts of different authors on the subject. Lastly a few chapters on Yoga have been added in as much as it forms the basis of all sorts of religious Sadhana including the Tantric form also. In doing so and in order to explain the principle underlying it, the structure of the human body according to the Hindu doctrine with its subtle elements have been properly explained. Several processes of Yoga, such as the purification of the Nadis, the Chakras or the mystic centres with their localisation, the physical processes adopted and the control of breath have been gone into so as to explain their proper functions for the purpose of spiritual development. Hope that the pains taken by me in publishing this book will be amply rewarded if I have been able to give satisfaction to my readers who want to know about the Tantras.

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Tantras their Philosophy & Occult Secrets

CHAPTER I

AUTHORITY AND ANTIQUITY

It is a common-place belief among the people that anything to be of authoritative character in matters of religion, should have the sanction of ages ; as if authenticity of truth depends upon mere antiquity. Hardly anything new in the domain of religious faith is looked upon with reverence ; nay more, sometimes it is sternly put down as a sacrilegious profanation of sacred truths ! Every pioneer of a new truth, every prophet of a new creed, every reformer of a popular superstition has to fight against this stolid conservatism of the populace. Sometimes, one has to pay with his life for the audacity of his new innovation or faith. Socrates had to drink hemlock, and Christ was crucified for revealing new light to their countrymen. Such is the antipathy of the people against all new doctrines in matters of religion. It takes a long time even for an worn out creed to die a natural death.

Likewise, there is a feeling of aversion among the Hindus in general to almost every article of faith, that is not to be traced to the Vedas. Anything of later date than that of the Vedas is not entitled to that amount of veneration in which even the most insignificant Vedic trifles are held. But this is neither logical nor sound. Hindu religion itself has undergone radical changes in various things since the time of the Vedas. It is only Lord Sree Krishna in the past who had the courage to raise a voice of protest against such blind veneration for the Vedas, both in the Gita and in the main body of the

Mahabharat.¹ He said that the Vedas were not all comprehensive, nor fully exhaustive in matters of religion, new cases and new situations and new conditions may arise even in matters of religion, which should be solved by one's inference in the light of reason and truth. To put in the words of Edmund Burke : "Position is the dictator of one's duty." The Vedas themselves were not the last word on religion, so they could not be conclusive about everything in religious matter² That the Vedas are not fully exhaustive in matters of religion is proved by the very existence of the Upanishads and the Sanhitas and other ancient Hindu Scriptures.³

Thus one has to plead for an exemption from such a blind veneration for the Vedas, if he has to speak about any new article of faith or any religious creed, or any new form of worship that has no origin in the Vedas. But the tense of revelation is not indefinitely past, but infinitely future. It is upon this incontrovertible truth that science, with all its branches, rests. A truth may be revealed in a later age and that should not be any reason for rejecting it from the domain of truths. Youth is not an atrocious crime in nature, nor it should be so in human affairs. But sometimes an exception is sought in matters of religion from this general scientific principle. But such an attitude of mind is neither rational nor liberal. Catholicity of views is as essential in religion as in science and in other secular matters.

Now, one of the reasons for which a non-Sakta has little regard for the Tantras and for Tantrick religion is that the Tantras are of later date than

1 Vide the present writer's Lord Sreekrishna

2 Vide Mahabharat the Udyoga Parva and the Karna Parva

3 In one sense they are regarded as so many branches of the Vedas, because they are called Veda'ngas.

that of the Vedas. Certainly, the Tantras are of later origin than the hoary Vedas, but the essence of Tantrick religion is not. The Tantras are of later dates, but their creed is not of later age, nor it is of recent origin. The great Sanskritist, Kalluka Bhatta, the illustrious commentator of Manu, has held the Tantras as a Sruti. He says : "There are two classes of Sruti, — Vedic and Tantrick."

Most of the Tantras are of recent origin no doubt, but the Tantrick creed and the worship of the great Sakti are of hoary antiquity and we find it even in the Rig Veda. In the Tenth Mandal of the Rig Veda we get the famous Devi Sukta, containing hymns to Durga, another name for Sakti (goddess Kali), the main Deity of the Tantras and of Tantric faith.

Thus, it is evident that Tantrick religion, even judging from the point of antiquity, is not of recent origin, but it is as old as any other form of the Vedic religion, although it must be admitted on all hands that formal treatises upon Tantrick religion were composed in later times. It is also clear that the Tantrick form of worship was in vogue at the time when Srimad Bhagabatam was written. There, in the Srimad Bhagabat, we find the Broja Gopis worshipping Yogamaya (Goddess Sakti) for obtaining Sreekrishna as their husband and there are ample references to Tantric gods and goddesses in it.

That Tantrick religion was in vogue in the days of the Purans is also sufficiently clear from the Purans themselves, as from the Markandeya Puran, Linga Puran etc. References to Tantrick deities and to the Tantric form of worship are also to be found in many ancient Sanskrit works. Even in the Atharva Veda we meet with many rites and rituals which are quite similar to what we find

in the Tantras. The Tantras are of comparatively recent date, but Tantrick religion existed from the most early stages of Hindu religion, and we have already mentioned the Devi Sukta of the Rig Veda. To contend after this that Tantrick religion is of recent origin is to go against historical facts. Thus, the popular notion that Tantrick creed is of modern date falls to the ground. An instance from the realm of science will make our position clear. Long before the birth of Organic chemistry, there were in use among the ancient civilised nations several organic compounds, though regular treatises on Organic chemistry came to be written only towards the later part of the Nineteenth Century. Again, ignorance is sometimes responsible for regarding a thing to be new or of recent date. We all know that Newton has discovered the Law of Gravitation, but only very few of us know that five hundred years before the birth of Newton, Arya Bhatta had discovered and established the Law of Gravitation. Long, long before the birth of Copernicus, the Hindus discovered the truth that the earth revolves round the sun, and upon the basis of this scientific truth they calculated exact time of the eclipse, which is still now found to be precisely accurate, even according to the calculations of modern Astronomy. Thus formal treatises on a particular subject might be written in later times, though its subject-matter and its truth might be known from the earliest time of human civilisation. And this, in all force, applies to the case of the Tantras and Tantric religion. Tantrick religion with its rites and rituals were prevalent among the people long, long before the Tantras were written.

Let us once more make our position clear. Even if the Tantrick creed, inspite of incontrovertible historical evidence, is held to be of recent origin, that alone will not take away a bit from the intrinsic worth of the Tantras and of Tantric

religion. Truth is truth, whether discovered in the hoary past or at the present moment, and it cannot be brushed aside because it has very recently come to our knowledge. Nor any truth gives any additional value, like old wine, because it was revealed to our fore-fathers in the hoary past. Time has no influence on truth. Hence the great spiritual truths which Tantrick religion embodies and which have been elaborated in the Tantras in later times, can not lose any value or usefulness simply because they are of recent origin, though we have fully proved, both on historical and literary evidence, that Tantric religion is as old as any other form of Vedic religion.

Again, it is not antiquity, but the real intrinsic worth of a thing which should be regarded as authoritative in the domain of religion and morality. And that is authoritative which is really uplifting, enlightening and chastening, and which is helpful for the attainment of perfection and felicity in life, and conducive to our final emancipation from all sins and sorrows. Simply because a thing is old it is no reason to hold that it should be authoritative in matters of religious faith. A thing might have its usefulness once, but now may be not only quite useless, but even harmful. Nay more, irrational conservatism, even in matters of religion, hinders improvement and progress and induces us to make a fetish of an old, worn out creed.

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”

These wise words of the poet we often forget in our idolatrous veneration for the past.

Thus, a thing is not good simply because it is old, nor it is bad simply because it is new. Hence

truths of a particular religion can never lose their intrinsic value simply because they were not known in ancient times. Judged by the standard of mere antiquity as the only test of authority and authenticity of truth, Christianity and Mahomedanism will appear to be less authoritative than old Jewish religion and heathanism of ancient Arabia. We need not speak more about it and tire out the patience of the learned readers. The great truths of Tantrick religion and of the Tantras will remain quite unaltered in their usefulness and worth whether they are found to be old or new.

There is one thing more and we shall be done.

There are some prejudices even among honest people against the Tantrick creed on account of some of its rites and rituals, which on superficial survey appear to be either highly licentious, or extremely cruel, or exceedingly loathsome. But if one only takes the trouble of going deeper into thing, he will find that they are neither licentious, nor cruel, nor loathsome, but they are some mystic rites and rituals (which have been degraded by the vicious people for their selfish ends and for the gratification of their animal appetites) calculated to help the devotee to advance along the path of moral perfection, which is absolutely essential for one's final emancipation. Again, some are designed for furthering concentration of the devotee, some, for augmenting self-control, and some, for the restraint of his senses, feelings and innate propensities. In a word, they are intended for the attainment of complete mastery over one's senses and passions, which are indispensable both for spiritual emancipation and for moral perfection, both of which go together. These rites and rituals consisting of many mystic symbols, constitute some of the occult secrets of the Tantras and of Tantrick religion, which on closer examination will be found to be of very great psychological value for moral disci-

pline as well as for the attainment of spiritual bliss. We shall speak of them in their proper places.

Thus, the prevalent belief among the non-Tantricks, or the non-Saktas that Tantrick religion is of recent growth and it is full of corrupt and cruel practices are not only quite unreasonable and unfounded, but go direct against truth and history. We should, therefore, proceed with the subject with an unbiased mind, and should remember that some of the greatest saints of India were Tantricks in their faith, and they observed in practice Tantrick form of worship and Tantrick rites and rituals. Good many men, whose public and private lives were uniform records of unsullied purity, whose moral perfection and spiritual greatness can never be questioned even by the tongue of calumny, and who in their lives proved to their contemporaries what great divine perfection a man might attain by devotion and piety, were Tantricks in their profession of faith. We need not go to remote antiquity for instances of it. There are such saintly persons among the Saktas even in our own days. One may find them if he only takes the trouble of finding them out. We need not even refer to Ramkrishna Paramhansa and his world-famous disciple Swami Vivekananda, there are others even like them, though we know little about them. They live and work unseen and even avoid popularity and public noise. They are born 'to blush unseen and waste' their 'sweetness on the desert air.'

They will never themselves come to lime-light. It is one of the main characteristics of the Hindu saints (to whatever sect one might belong) that they never seek popularity or fame ; they do not, at all, wish to reveal themselves to their countrymen. They remain absorbed in their own pursuits and deeply immersed in their spiritual bliss. Fame sometimes follow their foot-prints

and drag them out from their obscurity, as gold and diamonds are dug out from pitch-dark mines. To all impartial seekers of truth, our statement, we believe, will appear to be quite modest. What is in-itself base and corrupt can never produce anything great or noble. A tree is known by its fruit. This we should remember in judging the Trantras and Tantrick creed.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION AND RELIGIONS

“A creature,” says Thomus Huxley, ‘is the resultant of two tendencies; the one, morphological; the other, physiological.’”

This may be true about the physical constitution of every living thing, but this biological law does not explain the mysterious constitution of the human mind. What is it? What it is made of?

Man, defines Logic, is a rational animal. True, but this, we think, is not the chief distinction of man that constitutes his main differentia from other species of animals.¹ If Rationality does not mean mere arguing faculty but intelligence, then it is shared by all living beings more or less;—some in greater degrees, while others in smaller degrees. Nay more, such intelligence as is necessary for the maintenance of life is to be found even in the vegetable kingdom. Trees and plants send their roots in that direction of the soil that contains greater degree of sap and more nutrient elements.² Thus, reason is not sole monopoly of man, though undoubtedly he possesses it in a prepondering degree.

1 Cf ‘Intellect is not the sole faculty possessed by the human Ego—Lord Balfour F. R. S. Theism and Thought,

2 Vide Herbert Spencer’s ‘Psychology’ and ‘First Principles.’

But there is something more in man that is not to be found in other animals or in the vegetable kingdom. His morality, aesthetics and imagination have raised him from the level of brute creation. These are the true differentia of man. His reason has helped him to develop these rare qualities that have widened the gulf between man and other animals. Look to a wild savage whose aesthetic sentiments, imagination and morality are of the lowest order, his difference with other higher animals will surely appear to be less striking. He betrays only that amount of intelligence that is necessary for a living creature just for the maintenance of life but hardly more. His reason, like other animal instincts, is employed only for his survival in the struggle for existence. Thus the distinction and difference between man in the lowest stage of evolutionary progress and higher animals are less prominent. To designate animal intelligence as a mere blind instinct is but a dogmatic assumption without any strict logical proof. It is pointed out that animals are incapable of detecting any deception practised on them ; as Addison, in his Spectator, has said that a hen will sit upon an egg-shaped piece of chalk , as she would do to hatch her real eggs. Now, detection of deception depends upon degrees of intelligence and alertness. Man also is subject to deception ; even the cleverest men are sometimes deceived. Intelligence of ant is quite astonishing ; and how can one say it is a mere blind instinct, whereas the intelligence of a wild Bushman is real intelligence per se. This is only an instance of supreme vanity of man about his own omniscience. The universe is permeated by Divine intelligence, and there is nothing outside it. It is the same Spirit that sleeps in stones, dreams in animals and is awake in man. Again, reason in men themselves varies from vanishing point to superhuman intellect. Difference between a Sankara and an ordinary man is,

we think, more wide than between man and animals. If connotation of man does not denote only men like Plato or Kalidas, or Newton or Shakespeare, reason, we think, is not the sole distinctive feature of man; it is not the only differentia that distinguishes species man from the genus animals. If, however, reason means only mathematical reasoning, which is not at all necessary in the struggle for existence, then, ofcourse, it is the sole distinctive feature of man, but this is found only in the higher stages of civilisation, of which the wild savages have not the least notion. Therefore, to call man merely a rational animal is like Plato's original definition of man, is to call him a featherless biped, which provoked Diogenes to exhibit to his pupils a roasted cock as Plato's man. Man has other attributes which are absent in all other animals, and they are really the special features of man. The most fundamental distinction and difference between man and other animals, we think, lies in the religious instinct of man. Man is a religious animal. This particular feature of the human mind is not be found in any other animal. Even the lowest savage has a religion of his own. No man has yet been discovered without some sort of religious belief, barring the exceptions that are found in the higher stages of intellectual development, who call themselves Agnostics. But even the Agnostic themselves may be said to possess a religion of negation,—a sort of religious faith with them—to ignore all religions.

Now, this universal religious instinct is implanted in every human heart; nay more, it has played a very important part in the development of human civilisation and culture, and it will continue to do so in the advancement of human progress and welfare, and also in moulding the future destiny of man.

“There is a gap in the human heart,” says Romanes, “which nothing but God can fill.” This universal religious instinct which is present in every human heart, unless it is smothered by one’s training or deliberate efforts, or by a particular mode of life, constitute the true basis of all religions from the lowest to that of the highest order, for the cardinal feature of all religions is, in essence, one and the same. Putting aside all learned definitions of religion, religion may very briefly be defined as the worship of a Superior Power, either from veneration, or from love, or from fear for avoiding evils in life. With the lowest savage, religion is a religion of fear, and the Superior Power is to him very often a malicious spirit which is to be propitiated for avoiding danger or distress.

But as man advances in civilisation, that Superior Power is no more an evil spirit or a malicious fiend, but that Superior Power is to him the Creator and Governor of this universe, and he worships his Creator with veneration and love. The more and more a man advances in education and culture, the higher and higher becomes his religious concept. He then recognises in his Creator not only an awe-inspiring majesty, but infinite goodness and love ; thus religion, at the last stage, becomes a religion of veneration and love,—love for God and love for all. Yet, in one sense, the root of all religions is one and the same, whether it is gross animism or the highest form of a profoundly philosophical creed, i.e, it is the adoration of a Superior Power that lies at bottom of all religious creeds, even if you wish to designate, with Herbert Spencer, that Superior Power as an Inscrutable Power manifested through nature. The Tantras call this Superior Power Sakti, the exact Sanskrit synonym for power.

Though the essence of all religions is one and the same, but the forms of religion are many. And this must necessarily be, as there is difference between man and man in temperament, education, imagination, culture and taste. As there are different stages of civilisation so there are different stages of religion. As people differ from one another in their ideals about different things, so they differ also about their religious ideals. The religious ideal or the religious concept of one man is bound to be different from that of another, because two men are not of one identical mind, or of identical imagination and taste, hence there is need for different creeds, and different forms of religion. The Hindus recognised this fundamental psychological truth, therefore, they allowed greatest freedom in matters of religion, for to a Hindu, religion is not a mere philosophical creed, a thing of profession only, but it is very intimately connected with a man's daily life and practice. Mr. Havell in speaking of the religious faith of the Hindus, has very rightly observed that to a Hindu, "Religion is hardly a dogma, but a working hypothesis of human conduct, adopted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life." Therefore, a Hindu hates no creed, no form of religion. but holds every religion in respect. He knows that every form of religion, observed with devotion and faith, helps its votary to attain spiritual advancement and virtue. All roads lead to Rome, all forms of religion ultimately lead to God, Lord Sreekrishna himself has declared in the Gita ; 'In whatsoever manner men come to me, in the self-same manner do I accept them.'

Men brought under the same religious persuasion, and even under the same social institution, may have a great deal of similarity in their religious ideals or religious concepts, but it cannot be said

that every man there has identically the same concept of religion or of God. It must differ according to one's temperament, education, imagination and taste. Hence, utmost catholicity of view is necessary, but it can nowhere be found save in Hinduism, and among no other people except the Hindus. "The word exclusion", declares Swami Vivekananda, in his classical address in the Parliament of Religion at Chicago, "is untranslatable in Sanskrit."

A Hindu recognises the necessity of different forms of religion and never tries to impose one uncompromising creed upon all alike. He even makes allowance for superstitions in matters of religious faith, for even that may help a man in the attainment of greater moral perfection or spiritual bliss. On this point we can not express ourselves better than in the words of an illustrious writer, and we make no apology for quoting his remarks in extenso.

"Superstitions appeal to our hopes as well as to our fears. They often meet and gratify the inmost longing of the heart. They offer certainties when reason can only afford possibilities or probabilities. They supply conceptions on which the imagination loves to dwell, They sometimes even impart a new sanction to moral truths. Creating wants which they alone can quell, they often become essential elements of happiness, and their consoling efficacy is most felt in the languid or troubled hours when it is most needed. We owe more to our illusions than to our knowledge. The imagination which is altogether constructive, probably contributes more to our happiness than the reason, which in the sphere of speculation is mainly critical and destructive. The rude charm which in the hour of danger or distress the savage clasps so confidently to his breast, the sacred picture which is believed to

shed a hallowing and protecting influence over the poor man's cottage, can bestow a more real consolation in the darkest hour of human suffering than can be afforded by the grandest theories of philosophy. The first desire of the heart is to find something on which to lean. Happiness is a condition of feeling, not a condition of circumstances, and to common minds are of its first essentials is the exclusion of painful and harassing doubt. A system of belief may be false, superstitious, and reactionary, may yet be conducive to human happiness, if it furnishes great multitudes of men with what they believe to be a key to the universe, if it consoles them in those seasons of agonising bereavement when consolations of enlightened reason are but empty words, if it supports their feeble and tottering minds in the gloomy hours of sickness and of approaching death. A credulous and superstitious nature may be degraded, but in many cases where superstition does not assume a persecuting or appalling form, it is not unhappy, and degradation, apart from unhappiness, can have no place in utilitarian ethics. No error can be more grave than to imagine that when a critical spirit is abroad the pleasant beliefs will all remain, and the painful ones alone will perish. To introduce into the mind the consciousness of ignorance and the pangs of doubt is to inflict or endure much suffering, which may even survive the period of transition. 'Why is it', said Luther's wife, looking sadly back upon the sensuous creed which she had left, that in our old faith we prayed so often and so warmly, and that our prayers are now so few and so cold ? "

—History of European Morals
by

William Edward Hartpole Lecky

We need not dilate any further on it.

We have shown that the sole distinction between man and animals does not consist so much in his reason as in his religious instinct, it is the latter that distinguishes man from the rest of creation. Man is a religious animal. Bentham says : that Nature has placed man under the government of two great mistresses, Pleasure and Pain. But this is not the whole truth, there is a strong emotion in man apart from that of mere pleasure and pain. It is his religious feeling or religious fervour that very often sets at naught one's instinct for pleasure or fear of pain. Religion is very often pursued independent of all considerations of pleasure and pain. At least, in the higher stages of religion, religion is pursued not for mere pleasure, nor from fear for avoiding pain, it is pursued for its own sake. Like duty for duty's sake, religion is followed for religion's sake. It is only in the lower forms of religion, which in Sanskrit is known as Sakama Dharma, that religion is practised for love of reward, both in this world and in the next. In lowest forms of religion, it is pursued in order to avoid danger, distress, pain and suffering, and its non-observance is dreaded by the savage, for he thinks that if he fails to propitiate the evil spirit they will commit immense mischief to him. But in the higher phases of religion, or Niskama Dharma, religion is pursued for religion's sake, virtue is practised for virtue's sake, neither for happiness, nor for reward nor from fear. Now, whatever kind of religion a man might have, it is a vital part of his existence that influences his life and actions either for good or for evil.

Religion is thus not only a very distinctive feature of human life, but it plays perhaps the most important role in moulding the life of an individual as well as the life and history of a nation. The history of a nation, in one sense, is the history

of its religious creed that ever modifies its political creed and social organisation, unless religion be only a conventional article of social custom, as we find in most of the European countries, where Christianity exists only in name. Nay more, every profound human feeling possesses a religious tint that ultimately leads to religion itself.

Now, once you admit the necessity of religion, which can never be denied without ignoring the broad facts of human life and society, you will have to logically admit the necessity of different forms of religion, suited to different temperaments and to different kinds and different stages of culture, though all religions are at bottom one, i.e. the worship of a Superior Power. The wild savage that in superstitious fear bows down to his stocks and stones, and the civilised man that kneels down in veneration and love before the altar of God, are, in fact, obeying the dictation of the same primitive religious instinct implanted in every human heart, that differentiates and distinguishes man from other creatures.

CHAPTER II

THE SAKTA CREED

There are four great sects among the Hindus, the Vaishnavas, the Ramaits, the Saivas and the Saktas. The difference between the Vaishnavas and the followers of Ram is more of nomenclature than of any thing else. The Vaishnavas worship Vishnu and his divine consort Lakshmi, or Lord Sree Krishna and Radha, who are identical with Vishnu and Lakshmi, though certain rites and rituals differ in the Vaishnavism of old and in modern Vaishnavism of Bengal, founded by Sree Chaitanya who is regarded as an incarnation of Sree

Krishna. The worshippers of Ram and Sita are, in fact, worshippers of Vishnu and Lakshmi, for Ram is Vishnu and Sita is Lakshmi, only in certain respects the forms of worship differ from those of the Vaishnavas of both of the old and the new schools.

Likewise, the difference between the Saivas and the Saktas is a difference without a distinction, as between the Tweedledum and the Tweedledee. There is more wrangling about words than about anything else. A staunch, uncompromising Saiva worships Siva alone as the Supreme Deity of the universe. The Saktas, however, worship not only Sakti, but also Siva. Even the great Sankaracharyya, the great Saiva, has sung warm songs of glory to Sakti, as in the classical hymns of Ananda Lahari etc. In the opinion of the Saktas, Siva and Sakti are inseparable. God is inseparable from His energy or power. Both are, in fact, identically the same,—two phases of Eternal Brahma. Siva without Sakti, says the Sakta, is Cava or a dead corpse. In other words, we can not conceive any idea of God apart from His divine attributes or power. There is an image of the Deity among the Saktas known as Ardhanaricvar, or Har-Gauri, the one half of which is Siva and the other half is Sakti or Gauri i. e. the one is inseparable from the other. It is the figurative image of Brahma and the Principle of creation, which are ever united together. It is both important and interesting to note that images of Ardhanaricvara are found represented in old Javanese sculptural art. There Ardhanaricvara is known as Ardhanarecvari. In Balinese theology, i. e. in the religious scriptures of the people of the Island of Bali, Purusha is the Male and Pradhāna (Prikriti) is the Female principle, and the Cosmos has been born from their union. This Dogma has been connected with the

Hindu Trinity, which in Balinese known as Tripurusa, in sculpture where the combination of Ardhanarecvari is found with two gods of the Trinity.¹ This, again, proves the antiquity of the Tantric creed. There is positive historical evidence to show that Tantric creed and Saiva cult attained their supremacy in Java and Bali between 500—900 A. D. So Tantric religion is not of Yesterday's origin—

The Sakta thus makes no distinction between Siva and Sakti, though in the Tantric form the worship of Sakti predominates, over Siva-worship but Siva is also worshipped.

As there is a wrong notion about the antiquity of Tantric religion, likewise there is a wrong belief, even among many educated people, that the Tantric religion is based upon the system of Sankhya philosophy. Nothing can be more erroneous than this. Only certain words have misled even educated people to this wrong conclusion, viz., the famous terms of Purusha and Prikriti of the Sankhya system of philosophy. But these terms have been used in quite different meanings in the Tantras and in other Hindu Scriptures.

In the Sankhya system of philosophy, Purusha is not the Supreme Soul of the universe, as Siva is in Tantric religion. It is not Indivisible, Infinite, Eternal Brahma, but Sankhya's Purusha is a multitude of souls, like the Monads of the famous German philosopher and mathematician Leibnitz. This Purusha (or the multitudes of souls) exists with Primeval Prikriti, but itself inert and inactive unable to produce anything whatsoever. It is united with

¹ Vide A. A. Bake's article on Dr. Gori's Monograph in Dutch to the knowledge of the Javanese and Balinese Theology—Journal and Proceeding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal Vol. XXII of 1926.

Prikriti in order to contemplate her and to be abstracted from her. Thus difference between Siva and Purusha of Sankhya is obviously clear. Again, according to the Sankhya philosophy—the Prime cause of this visible universe—an eternal Nature exists from eternity. At the universal destruction of all things, all the elements are withdrawn and all return to the First cause, the indistinguishable one, which is Prikriti. But the Tantras follow the philosophy of the Upanishadas; they declare that creation is but the manifestation of God, His Lila, a mode of Brahma, and at the time of the universal destruction (or Mahapralaya) Purusha and Prikriti become merged in Eternal Brahma or God. Again, there is a world of difference between Sankhya's Prikriti and Sakti of the Tantras,

The Tantras call Sakti as Para Prikriti i.e. the personified Divine Energy of the Supreme Deity, in other words, Brahma itself, which is quite distinct from the Mula Prikriti of the Sankhya system, that holds matter to be eternal and Purusha (a multitude of souls) co-existent with it.

According to the Sankhya system, Prikriti possesses three properties, namely Sattwa, Raja, and Tamas. Creation is evolved from the fusion and agitation of these three basic attributes in the following order :—

- (1) Prikriti or the basic Elemental matter.
- (2) From Prikriti proceeds Mahattatwa or the principle of greatness, i. e. Intellect (Buddhi).
- (3) From Mahattatwa proceeds Ahamtatwa or the principle of egoism.
- (4) From the former five very subtle elemental things (Tanmatras).

- (5) And from the Tanmatras gross elements in the following order :--

(9—19)

(A) Mind.

(10) The five organs of sense and five of action :—
The organs of sense :—

- (a) Eye,
- (b) Ear.
- (c) Nose.
- (d) Tongue.
- (e) Skin.

Five organs of action :—

- (a) The organ of Speech.
- (b) The hand.
- (c) The feet.
- (d) The excretory termination of the Intestines.
- (e) The organ of generation.

(20---24)

(II) The five Elements

- (1) The Earth.
- (2) The Water,
- (3) The Fire.
- (4) The Space.
- 25. Purusha.

Thus in the scale of creation, Prakriti stands at the head of all, and Purusha at the bottom of all,

Thus from Prikriti takes place the creation consisting from the development of intellect (Mahttatwa) down to gross elements.

Whereas according to the Tantras the union of Purusha with Prikriti, Siva and Sakti, is necessary for creation. It is Purusha or the Eternal Spirit that impregnates matter with life, or breathes life into matter. Again, Sankhaya leads to a Dualistic theory, the Tantras, like the Upanishads, declare absolute Monism. According the Tantras, as we find in the Upanishads, Purusha and Prikriti are but different modes of the manifestation of Eternal and Infinite Brahma ; Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma.

Thus the account of the creation given in the Sankhaya philosophy. fundamentally differs from the account of the creation given in the Tantras. Sankhaya's account of creation is the first Materialistic theory in the world's literature about the creation of the universe. Again, it first propounded the evolutionary theory of creation. The Law of Evolution was first discovered and established in India, like the Law of gravitation. It is, again, the ancient Hindus that invented the method of numerical notation viz., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, that lies at the root of human advancement not only in science and mathematics, but also of human civilisation and culture in general. Yet in every thing we always fondly look to the West for our light and guide.

However, to resume our topic. The great sage Kapila, the illustrious founder of the Sankhya system denies the very existence of God : "Isward-siddhe"—(the existence of God is not proven). The great commentator of Sankhya, Vijnan Bhikshu, adds to the above quoted aphorism—Iswarasiddhe Pramanabhavat—i. e. for want of proof. In other

1 Vide Dr Draper's classical book, "History of The Intellectual Development of Europe."

words, for want of proof, the existence of God can not be proved. It practically denies God, and the great author of the Sankhya system traces the origin of every thing to a primeval matter which, exists from eternity. Prakriti at the time of creation, like a tortoise, puts forth her limbs, and at the time of the universal destruction, she withdraws them within her shell. Thus Prakriti is all in all. We have already said that, in a sense, here we first meet with the enunciation of the modern scientific doctrine of Indestructibility of matter. According to the logical conclusion of Vedanta philosophy also, matter is indestructible, not of course in the sense of Sankhya, but in the sense that it is a mode of divine manifestation of Brahma. Matter ever changes its forms, but its essence at the end merges into God, because creation itself is a mode of God, apart of Brahma evolved by Him. But matter is transitory the only Eternal Reality is Brahma.

Sankhya's Purusha is not the Eternal, Infinite, Spirit, as is generally understood in philosophical terminology. Neither the terms Purusha and Prakriti have been used exactly in the sense of Matter and Spirit of the Western systems of philosophy. Nor they convey the same meaning in which they have been used in the Hindu Scriptures. Purusha is quite a nonentity in the Sankhya system, it plays no part either in creation or in destruction. It is a mere sight-seer, a mere spectator to witness the phenomena of Prakriti.

Thus it is wrong to believe that Tantric religion or the Tantras rest on the Sankhya system of philosophy. Not only in the Srimad Bhagavat Gita, but in many other sacred texts of the

1 Vide the First Sloka of the 13th Chapter of the Gita :—
 "Prakritim Purushanchaib Kshetram, Kshetrājnamevacha
 Atad Veditumichhami Jnanam Jneyam cha Kesava."

Hindus, as in the Srimad Bhagavat Puran, the terms Purusha and Prikriti have been used in the sense of Brahma and the creation.

Again, we have already seen that the Sankhya system denies the very existence of God, but the Tantras, like other religious texts, assume the existence of God as the very axiom of religion. The Tantras believe in the existence of one and one God alone, 'Sarvam Khalwidam Brahma. The Mahanirvana Tantram thus declares :—"He is the cause of our being," says Siva to Parvati, "the Cause of all creatures, He is the sole Supreme Lord, and by virtue of His having brought every object into being. He is Brahma and is known among the people as the Creator. And it is on account of His so willing, O Goddess, Vishnu is the Preserver and myself am the Destroyer of the universe, and the guardian-gods of the worlds, with Indra at their head, are all under his sway."

The Mahanirvana Tantram
Chapter II Verses 38-42.

The Account of the creation given in the Tantras, is in essence, the same as given in the Upanishads ; and this is what the Upanishads say about the creation.

Creation is not an act in time. It is only an emanation of God, a mode of Divine manifestation. The universe is evolved out of God. At the time of creation, Brahma covers Himself with Maya, as a spider covers itself with the threads of its own web. The spider weaves its thread

1 Only Buddhism is not distinctly clear on this point, Buddhism bears greater affinity to Sankhya philosophy than any other religion specially in its ideal of emancipation or Nirvana. According to Sankhya, absolute exemption from all the three sorts of pain (proceeding from self, from external object and from divine causes) is the highest purpose of the soul by means of Jnana or perfect knowledge final beatitude is attained, which consists in the perception of the idea that "Neither I am ; Nor is ought mine ; Nor do I exist," This is, in fact, Bouddha Nirvana.

from its own saliva. The whole creation lies merged in God ; it is only when God covers Himself with His own Maya, that He wills it and the creation emerges from Him. The universe is an emergence, not a creation out of nothing.

“Sarvam Khalwidam Brahma Tajjalan.”

—Chhandagya Upanishad.

3—5—1

Every thing is Brahma ; the world has come into existence from Him, it exists in Him and it dissolves into Him.

About the origin and dissolution of the creation the Upanishads say :

As the bubbles rise from the ocean and then bursts on the sea, likewise, the whole creation emerges from Him and dissolves into Him :—

“Tasmineva Layam Yanti Vudvuda Sagare Yatha
Nacyante Vyaktatam Bhuya Jayante
Vudvudaiva.”

At the time of the Pralaya, or universal dissolution of the universe, both Prikriti and Purusha merge into Brahma. “Aksharam Tamasi Liyate Tama Pare Deve Eki Bhavati”. Tama is another name for Prakriti. But Sankhya says it is into Prikriti that the creation merges and Prikriti remains for ever. Again, according the Tantras, Purusha and Prikriti can not be separated from each the other, while in the Sankhya it is only an instance of co-existence of close proximity. In the words of the Upanishad :—Both the Kshara and the Akshara i.e. both the perishable and the imperishable i. e, both Prikriti and Purusha are joined together¹.

1 Matter and Force are conjoined together, to express in a popular phrase of Western philosophy, it is like Thought and Extension of Spincza, two modes of expression of one and the same substance.

In fact, ultimately there is no difference between Purusha and Prakriti, they are but the two different modes of the manifestation of the Eternal Brahma,

Thus the difference between the philosophy of the Sankhya system and that of the Tantras and Tantric religion is quite unbridgeable, only the two terms Purusha and Prakriti have been used in Tantric literature, as well as in the Gita and the Purans, but their meanings are quite different from what they denote in the Sankhya philosophy.

Saktaism or Tantric religion means worship of Sakti as the Supreme Deity of the universe. Saktaism, very briefly speaking, is the worship of God, as the Mother of the universe. It is the worship of the Motherhood of God ; and the love and devout devotion that a Sakta bears to the Divine Mother, are somewhat similar to what is felt by a devoted son towards his mother. and in this respect, it bears a close affinity with Roman Catholicism. We shall speak of this more elaborately in its proper place, But before we proceed with the subject it will be, we think, helpful to the readers to go through a short classification of the Tantras.

CHAPTER III

CLASSIFICATION OF THE TANTRAS

The Tantras, otherwise known as the Agamas, are broadly divided into two classes :—(1) Hindu Tantras and Bouddha Tantras.

In the Hindu Tantras, Siva is the speaker, and in the Bouddha Tantras, Buddha has been represented as their promulgator. It is, however,

clear on the very surface of the Bouddha Tantras that, they were written in imitation of the Hindu Tantras. It is also historically evident that Hindu religious teachers from India, specially from Bengal, spread Tantric religion in Nepal, Bhutan, Thibet and China.¹ The Bouddha Tantras, however, are more mystic and far less lofty than the Hindu Tantras like the Mahanirvan Tantram and others.

The Hindu Tantras, like the Purans, are simple allegorical expositions of the philosophy and theology of the Vedas. The Bouddha Tantras are closely associated with Bouddha philosophy and Buddhistic rites. The Hindu Tantras, we have already said this while speaking of the account of the creation, deal with the higher truths of the Upanishadas, as the Purans do. The only difference between the Tantras and the Purans lies in their descriptions of respective rites and rituals, but the Tantras introduce no new philosophy, nor any novel creed unknown to the ancient Hindus, nor its theology, nor its philosophy is foreign to that of the Vedas and of the Upanishads.

A learned Translator of the Mahanirvan Tantram has written the following :—

“The Tantrick theory of creation is thus at one with the Sankhya’s Prikriti, the material cause of the universe. It is the creative energy of God—the First cause from which everything has proceeded.”

The learned writer continues further, “The only difference is that according to the Tantric system Prikriti is more popularly the name of the

¹ The present writer was once engaged with the late Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sastri, M. A., D. Litt., C. I. E. in preparing a catalogue in English of the Tantras in Thibetan language from an existing one in French, at that time he came across quite formidable list of names of the Bouddha Tantras.

Godness, whereas in Sankhya it is the first creative energy."

We have fully shown how Para Prakriti of the Tantras and the meaning of the terms Prakriti and Purusha differ in the Hindu treatises, such as the Gita and the Purans, from that in which they have been used in the Sankhya, and how Prakriti and Purusha of the Tantras are but the two modes of Divine manifestation. Prakriti, or the material cause of the universe, emerges out of Brahma, so Prakriti is not eternal, it has its origin as well its end in Eternal Brahma who alone is the only Reality—Eternal and Infinite. The learned translator, again, continues. "As in Sankhya so in Tantra, creation proceeds from an union between Nature (Prakriti) and Purusha (Soul).

Purusha has here been wrongly described as the Universal Soul in the philosophical sense of the term. Again, in Sankhya, Purusha is a multitude of souls, and it plays no part in the act of creation, which is the sole business of Prakriti in the Sankhya,

"This union between nature and soul is thus symbolically described in Tantras. The great Sakti or Prakriti, after casting off the cover of Maya, divided herself into two, Shiva and Sakti,¹ The first issue of their union was Brahma. After his birth, the great Sakti said: 'Marry yourself O great hero'. Hearing her words Brahma said: Save thee I have no mother; I will not marry. Confer on me thy Sakti (energy)! Hearing it she created out of her own energy a charming maiden and said:—'She is great Vidya and her name is Savitri. Do you spread Vedas and works of creation on earth with her,' "

"Next was born Vishnu, pervaded by the quality of Sattwa (goodness).

The Mother said to him ;—‘Marry, for seeing you, people will be shorn of desires’. On his declining to marry any body, she conferred on him a maiden, named Mohini, created out of her own portion and said :—‘This Sakti is Vaishnavi engage with her in the great work of preservation.’ ”

“Then was born the third son who was a great yogin and whose name was Sadasiva. The great Sakti united herself with him and was engaged in the work of destruction.”

The learned translator, as a comment upon this Tantric myth, observes :—“From the above symbolical representation, it is evident that not only the work of creation but even that of preservation and destruction is an outcome of union of Prikriti with Purusha. Thus Prikriti or the Mahasakti, as the Tantriks designate her, is the creative power of the Almighty.”

This is a very pertinent and cogent comment no doubt, but it does not at all apply to the cardinal doctrine of the Sankhya system.¹

Now, along with the former observations, the learned translator has added the following :—

“Tattwa or essential principles are thus described in Tantras. There are five elements and every element has five qualities or Gunas, Bones, flesh, nails, skin and hairs of the body belong to earth ; semen, blood, marrow, excretion and urine belong to water ; sleep, hunger, thirst, fatigue and idleness belong to fire ; holding, moving, throwing, withdrawing and giving birth to children belong to air ; lust, anger, stupefaction, shame and avarice belong to ether.”

¹ This is too liberal an extension of the Sankhya philosophy, and the sentences that follow repeat the philosophical conception of the Upanishadas and the Puranas and not strictly of the Sankhya system.

But, we have already seen, that these are not identical with the Tattwas of the Sankhya.

“According to the Tantric teachers” the learned translator adds, “five elements produce not only the component parts of the physical frame but also emotions and passions which are innate in man.”

We have already said that Tantras are but popular expositions of the higher philosophy and theology of the Vedas and the Upanishadas ; we need not dilate upon this any further.

The Tantras are quite a legion in number, Besides the most popular and important Tantras, there are mentions of hundreds of minor Tantras in great many Tantric works. For the satisfaction of the curiosity of our readers, we give below the names of the Tantras mentioned only in the Varahi Tantra.

Name	Number of Slokas
1. Muktake	6050
2. Sarada	16025
3. Prapancha I	12300
4. Prapancha II	60270
5. Prapancha III	5310
6. Kapila	6080
7. Yoga	133311
8. Kalpa	5090
9. Kapinjala	280120
10. Amritasudhi	5005
11. Veeragama	6606
12. Siddhasamvarna	5006
13. Yoga damara	23533
14. Siva damara	11007
15. Durgadamar	11503
16. Saraswata	9905
17. Brahmadamara	7105
18. Gandharadama	60060

	Name	Number of Slokas
19.	Udiyamala	35300
20.	Brahmayamala	2210
21.	Vishnuyamala	240200
22.	Rudrayamala	64065
23.	Adityayamala	10323
24.	Ganeshayamala	64065
25.	Nilpataka	12000
26.	Yogarnava	8307
27.	Maya Tantra	11000
28.	Dakshina murti	5550
29.	Kalika	11013
30.	Kameswari trantra	3000
31.	Tantraraja	9090
32.	Haragouri tantra I	22020
33.	Haragouri tantra II	12000
34.	Tantranirnaya	28
35.	Kuvjika tantra I	10007
36.	Kuvjika tantra II	6000
37.	Kuvjika tantra III	3000
38.	Katyani tantra	242000
39.	Pratyangira trantra	8800
40.	Mahalakshmi trantra	5505
41.	Devitrantra	12000
42.	Tripurnavrantra	8806
43.	Saraswati tantra	2205
44.	Adya tantra	22915
45.	Yogini tantra I	22532
46.	Yogini tantra II	6303
47.	Varahi tantra
48.	Gavaksha tantra	6525
49.	Narayani tantra	50203
50.	Mridani tantra I	4490
51.	Mridani tantra II	3500
52.	Mridani tantra III	330
53.	Vamkeswara	25
54.	Mrityunjaya tantra	13220

We need not multiply. The list is undoubtedly an exaggerated extravaganza, though there are indeed,

hundreds of Tantras. Ofcourse, many exist only in name, because they have not yet been found. All the Tantras, however, deal with the worship of Sakti. Some of them are elaborate liturgies on Tantric rites and rituals; some deal with remedies and cures of chronic and difficult diseases; some with chemical compounds, and they are valuable treatises on chemistry.¹ One thing should, however, be noted here that, in our treatise we shall have nothing to do with medical cures and chemistry. Almost all the Tantras, however, deal in their own ways, with the acquisition of great occult powers by certain particular processes and rites. They are, however, not identical in all the Tantras. Some Tantras lay particular importance and stress upon certain mystic rites, while others on other processes. But in all the Tantras there is mention of the the Pancha Makars :—Madya, Mansa, Matsya, Mudra and Maithuna, and of some of the famous Chakras, as Veera, Raja, Deva, Maha etc. Some of the Tantras deal more exhaustively about the time, place and processes of worship of the different forms of Sakti. We shall, later on, speak about the Pancha Makars and something about the Chakras that play very important part Tantric worship. We should, however, warn the readers that they should banish from their minds literary interpretations of the Pancha Makars, that identify Madya with wine, Mansa with meat, or Matsya with fish. Besides these, certain Ashanas have been prescribed by the Tantras as are to be found in Patanjali's Yoga Darsan, for enhancing concentration of the devotee.

There are certain psychological and psysical processes that are calculated to promote self-

¹ Vide Dr. P. C. Roy's History of Hindu Chemistry.

control and to be helpful for the acquisition of spiritual or occult powers.

Now, to sum up our preliminary remarks. The Tantra's though are of later date than the Vedas but the Tantric religion is not. We find it mentioned even in the Rig Veda, in the Devi Sukta, There are, again, certain rites and rituals in the Arthava Veda which are identically the same as we find in the Tantras.¹ Again, it is abundantly clear that the Tantric form of worship was in vogue long before Srimad Bhagavat Puran was written. That this Tantric form of worship has been vitiated and degraded by vicious people is apparent; had it been really base it could not have produced some of the greatest saints of India, nor could Tantric religion have found any place among the educated class, nor it could have commanded respect of men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ram Krishna Paramhansa and of Swami Vivekananda. We have also shown that the Tantric creed is not based upon the agnostic philosophy of the Sankhya system, and that the Tantras, in their accounts of creation, and in their philosophy and theology, are the expositions of the higher philosophy and metaphysics of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

Permit us to quote some observations from the writings of a learned writer on this point :

“The Tantrik method of Sadhana came into prominence perhaps later than the Purans, although some of the Tantras might be earlier than most of the Purans. There is so much similarity between the Pauranic and Tantric teachings that it seems unjustifiable to regard them as two distinct forms of Sadhana. The union of Siva

¹ The great sage Sankaracharyya has commented upon and annotated Nrisinhatapaniyopanishad of the Arthava Veda which is, after all, a Tantric treatise.

and Sakti (God and Goddess) of the Tantras correspond to the union of Laksmi and Narayana in the Pancaratra and the Vaishnava Purans. Maya Sakti, Niyati and Kala correspond to the six Kuncukas (limiting forces) mentioned in the Saiva systems. The eternal connection between Sabda and Artha and the regarding of Sabda Brahman and Para Brahman as two aspects of the Supreme Lord, emphasised by the Tantras, find expression in the Purans and the Bhakti texts as the doctrine of identity of the Nama (name) and the Namin (the God bearing the name) * * *

In fact, the Tantras and the Purans preach almost the same philosophy as well as the same method of realisation. Both emphasise the importance of worship and rituals and maintain that a difference exists normally between the individual (Jiva) and the Absolute (Siva). But it is to be noticed there is an important point of difference. While the the Tantras have retained much of the absolute monism of the Upanisads by holding that the ultimate Jiva (individual) is to be united with Siva (Absolute), the Purans and the Bhakti cult based on the same have tended towards Dualism and have preached an ultimate difference between God and the individual."

"Although the Tantras preach identity of the individual and the Absolute much in the strain of the Upanisads, yet there is a world of difference as far as the methods of realisation are concerned. While the Vedanta recommends the method of transcendent wisdom, the method of sublime philosophy, the method that could be followed only by men of exceptionally high intellectual and moral attainments, the Tantra prescribes a method helpful even to men of lower equipments, a method which utilises physical and physiological processes for the attainment of spiritual realisation.

“The Tantra is really an epitome of all the Scriptures of the Hindus and contain within its compass almost all the special characteristics of the various forms of Sadhana. If Tantrism prescribes actions of the most rudimentary type and seems to be very much particular about their infinite details, it, again, prescribes meditation on the identity of the individual and the Absolute and thus reminds us of the high transcendent philosophy of the Upanisads, It prescribes different methods and rules for the conduct of life for men of different equipments and capacities.”

“When we remember how Tantra recognises three distinct types of Sadhakas, according to their respective capacities and temperaments (Adhikara)¹ and also how it combines within itself Karma, Bhakti and Jnana and follows the philosophy of Upanisads, Karma of the Vedas and the Upasanas of the Purans and also how it shows us the entire course of spiritual discipline, beginning with the lowest physiological processes and ending with the sublime philosophical intuition, we ought to have no hesitation in declaring that the Tantras sum up all the important features and elements of Hindu Sadhana.”¹

This is what we have meant by stating in our very first chapter that the Tantras may be of later date but the Tantric religion is not, and that the principles of Tantric religion are not of recent origin, they are as hoary as that of any other Vedic form of religion, and we have already referred to the Devi Sukta of the Rig Veda, The

¹—Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana by Nalini Kanta Brahma, M. A. Ph. D. Professor of Philosophy, Presidency College, Calcutta.

² The Tantras distinguish three classes of Sadhakas in order of merit, viz. The Pasu, the Vira and the Divya. —to be explained later on.

Tantras are, in fact, the elaborations of the religious principles and philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

CHAPTER IV

PHILOSOPHY OF WORSHIP

We have already seen that man is essentially a religious animal. It is his religious instinct, more than his reason, that distinguishes man from the rest of the creation. In every man, there is an element of religious belief that manifests itself in various forms, from the lowest animism to the highest philosophical religious creed, and we have also remarked that the essence of all religions is at bottom one, though its expressions vary in various creeds. A man normally feels the necessity of religion, the necessity for believing in something, unless this instinct is forcibly smothered either by training or by habit. This instinctive craving for believing in something is not merely a passive or idle trait in human nature, but a very strong motive-force, and in some people, a supreme urge in life—that governs most of their actions and moulds them to be what they are. In short, this religious instinct lies at the very root of one's conduct and character. It is, in fact, the master-principle of human life.

Now, this religious instinct finds its most prominent expression in the form of religious worship, found in every form of religion, from the crude worship of stocks and stones up to solemn prayer, or calm philosophical contemplation of God. In other words, worship is inseparable from religion. There can not be any kind of religion, without worship, apart from an

abstract philosophical speculation which is, ofcourse, no religion at all. Forms of worship differ according to our religious concept,— according to its crudity or sublimity, The necessity of worship is recognised by all religions, without which religion remains, at best, as an idle belief, merely a thing of profession. It should be noted here that there are very few theoretical atheists but most of us are practical, atheists, because, for want of worship religion becomes an idle drapery of the mind. Absence of worship, and laxity in worship undermine the religious belief which we profess to hold. In truth, there cannot be any religion without worship. They are conjoined like matter and force. They are not only cor-related but co-existent. Hence, worship, though its form may vary in thousand and one ways, is the prime expression of a religious belief. Something like what once Lord Salisbury, one of the famous Prime Ministers of Queen Victoria, remarked that a religion is inseparable from its dogmas. A particular form of worship is certainly a dogma of a particular religion. Thus it is clear that worship is the most essential part of religion which without the element of worship may be characterised in Coleridge's words, "You believe you believe." Yes nothing more than a sheer idle belief. But true religious belief is dynamical in its effect and its dynamical energy is imparted by worship. It is worship, or spiritual exercise, that keeps a religion alive and prevents it from sinking into a dead formula of religion or a lifeless belief. A cold philosophical creed is not religion, It is neither solacing, nor inspiring. It is worship that ennobles the mind, enriches the heart with spiritual wealth, and beautifies life with tender graces. Naymore, its value is even greater; it enhances our concentration and devotion and helps us to realise the glory of God, and like all moral discipline, it

contributes to the perfection of the soul which is the goal of every higher religion, as it is indispensable for ultimate emancipation. The poet is perfectly right in saying.

“More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of”—Tennyson

There is a sacrilegious writing on the gate of the Krimilin Palace of Moscow in Soviet, Russia which purports to mean, “Religion is the opium of the people.” In one sense, even this highly disparaging and heretic remark holds true of religion. Opium and its products are the greatest remedy for excruciating physical pain. The anodyne effect of this drug is well known even from the most ancient time. Likewise, religion is the highest remedy for all mental afflictions, for all tribulations of the heart. It is the only remedy that can minister to “a mind diseased, pluck from memory the rooted sorrow and raze out the written troubles of the brain.” The Gita too, therefore, says that even a little of religion may save a man from great fear.

We have already remarked that the true soul of religion consists in practice, in other words, in worship. We should also remember this incontrovertible fact, that though the lofty philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishadas lies at the root of the highest forms of Hinduism, such as, Saivism, Saktaism and Vaishnavism, yet neither Saivism, nor Sakta religion, nor Vaishnavism is identically one with the metaphysical doctrines of the Vedas and Upanishads, and its reason is obvious. Vedanta, in its uncopromising Advaita form, declares: “Soham”; “Tattwamasi”; “Ayamatma Brahma”; “Aham Brahmasmi.” i.e.—I am He; Thou art He; The Soul is Brahma; I am Brahma.

The great Sankara has also declared Sivoham, Sivoham. Now, the vital principle of religion consists in worship which can not be consistent with absolute Monism. Religion and religious worship imply at least a conditional Dualism. The devotee never identifies himself with his Deity. There is always a conscious difference between the votary and the Deity. We do not know, nor have we ever heard where in religious practice, or worship, the devotee identifies himself with his Deity. We find the greatest sages and the greatest saints all over the world, from the earliest time till now, absorbed in meditation and contemplation of their Deity and engaged in worship or prayer. This fully demonstrates that, in religion and in its practical application, the devotee always thinks himself lesser than his Deity with whom he wants to be united at the end. Philosophy may establish identity between man and God, but religion is not pure philosophy, it is something more. Even at the most casual and superficial glance the vital difference between philosophy and religion will be detected. Highly emotional and strong conative elements that constitute the vital breath of a living religion, are entirely absent from philosophy, though all higher religions are based upon different schools of philosophy.

Even the great Sankara, the upholder of the highest form of Monism, is found engaged in worshipping his Deity. His great hymns of glory in honour of Siva and Sakti testify to the undeniable fact that in religion and religious worship, we must put aside an uncompromising Monism and assume, at least, a conditional Dualism. We do not know if one can worship his own soul, because it is identical with Brahma. Such an instance has not yet been found, though, of course, self-realisation is the highest fruit of religion and it is the goal of all the higher forms of Hindu reli-

gion, because it is by knowing the our own Soul we can know Brahma or God. Raja Ram Mohan Roy who revived Advaitism of Sankara, held that even for a spiritually emancipated man, God remains an object of worship to him, because Brahma is greater than man. Maharshi Devendra nath Tagore, the illustrious father of Rabindra Nath Tagore, vehemently opposed absolute Monism that obliterates all difference between God and man.

True, I am He, but I am not quite identical with Him. Even the Upanishadas make this clear.

“As tiny sparks emerge from a blazing fire, so from that Parmatma (the Universal Soul) all lives, all the worlds, all the gods and all creatures are evolved

Vrihadaranyaka 1-2-20.

Lord Sree Krishna also says in the Gita

A part of mine exist in the living world as eternal life. Gita 15-1.

Ofcourse, Brahma or the Eternal Soul of the universe is indivisible. The finite soul is a part of the infinite soul, but that the finite soul is imprisoned in time and space, “Man”, says carlyle, is the symbol of eternity imprisoned in time.” Just as empty space of the sky and that within a pot, are the same, so are Brahma and the finite soul, declare the Hindu Shastras :—

“Akacamekam Yatha Ghatadishu Prithag Bhavet”. But religion implies and interprets this Monism that I am not identical with Him, but only a part of Him ; a tiny baffle in the Ocean of light that rises from the breast of the Ocean and bursts on it.

The Manduka Upanishad also declares this : As thousands of sparks of the same nature are

emitted by a well-ignited fire, so from that imperishable Purusha (Brahma) diverse creatures are evolved and dissolved in him.

Manduka 2-1-1.

Thus the greatness of God is obvious. In other words, that I am not identical with God, is the fundamental axiom of religion. Religion implies the existence of a Superior Being, greater than its votary. Every form of religion implies some form of dualism, though ultimately it may merge into the highest monism. In this sense, what Dean Inge has said is right :—

“God is the beginning of religion and the end of philosophy, and the beginning and the end are one.”
—Outspoken Essays.

I am He, nodoubt, because there is nothing but God, there is nothing outside God ; the very creation is a mode of Brahma, the universe lies in him yet the universe is not God. Hindu philosophy does not end in Pantheism, but in Panentheism, Brahma, or God, in Hindu philosophy is both immanent and transcendent. It seems to us, the height of impertinence to declare that I am the Absolute. It is against this uncompromising monism which identifies the devotee with the Deity to be one and the same that Siva tells Parvati in the Padma Puran :—In the Kaliyoga (the Iron age) I have created false Shastra (religious scripture) by upholding the theory of Maya. This is known as covert Bouddha doctrine ; in other words, such a theory is, in fact, Bouddha doctrine in disguise

Mayavadamasachhastram Prachhannam
Bouddhaumchyate

Mayava Vihitam Devi Kalan

Brahmana murtina.

Padma Puran.

Once more let us make ourselves clear that I am He in the sense as has been used in the Vrihadaranyaka and the Manduka Upanishad : 'I am a spark like a thousand other sparks emitted by a blazing fire'. A spark is undoubtedly of the same nature and of same quality with the blazing fire itself, but far lesser than the blazing fire, the origin of the spark. Thus, the difference between a purely monistic philosophical theory and a religious creed is quite obvious. We need not expatiate upon it any more.

Again, the difference between a purely philosophical creed and religion is immense. Religion is rich with emotional elements, whereas philosophy is absolutely devoid of them ; where philosophy leaves us cold, it is religious faith that buoys up our depressed soul, inspires it with hope and quickens it with love. It is religion that upholds the drooping spirit, that uplifts the mind from the mire of impurity, chastens our life and checks our lower desires. It is religious ardour that has richly contributed to the melody of the minstrels songs, and inspired the artists to put forth their best. It is not cold philosophy, but religion, that has contributed to the wealth of poetry, painting, music, sculpture, architecture, and to all noble and tender qualities of the heart. It has inspired the hero to lay down his life cheerfully for his faith, it has spurred chivalrous feelings and gallantry in the knight ; naymore, it has taught the common people to bear patiently all ills and sufferings of life and to look forward to a better and brighter state of things in future. It has taught man not to think this world to be the "be-all and end all" of every thing. It has changed man's angle of vision and his attitude towards the world and thereby has greatly modified his concept about life and the goal of his earthly existence. Again, it is religion that inculcates a spirit of sacrifice. It requires

sacrifice of our selfish interests for higher good and for the welfare of the world. All that is low, sordid or mean should be sacrificed for our spiritual bliss. It is religion that supplies the true motive of altruism, and not any thing else. No system of philosophy, however high, has been able to effect even one hundredth part of what religion has achieved in the world.

Again. Philosophy is statical, whereas religion is quite dynamical in its potentiality. It had inspired in the past men to noblest actions, as well as to cruel persecutions in countries and among people where there were no catholicity of views and toleration for another's belief and it will continue to do so in future,

We need not dwell upon this point any more. The difference between religion and a pure and simple philosophical doctrine is quite patent.

We have already said that it is worship, whatever might be its form, that so richly contributes to the emotional and volitional elements of religion. It is worship that renders a religious faith sacred, the most distinctive feature that distinguishes it from all other secular beliefs. This sacredness of a religious faith is the most important element. This renders "the religious objects as the sacred and the corresponding religious attitude as consisting in such manifestations of feeling, thought and action in regard to the sacred as is held to conduce to the welfare of the community or to that of individuals as members of the community."

Now, what is meant by "Sacred"? Its meaning differs in different religions. It may mean what is purifying and conducive to spiritual welfare, or it may mean what is secret or mysterious. Again, what is sacred to me, may be an abomination to you, or quite an indifferent thing to another.

Please mark the sentence "as is held to conduce to the welfare of the community or to that of individuals as members of the community". This is exactly, in purport, the import of the Sanskrit term Dharma, that is religion that preserves all creatures from harm and contributes to their welfare.

Now, we have already remarked that it is worship that keeps a religion alive. The Tantric creed, like the Vedas, lays great stress upon the forms of worship which are calculated to contribute greatly to our spiritual welfare and moral perfection.

Jaimini's Mimamsa system of philosophy enjoins that religion consists in the performance of rites and ritual prescribed in the Vedas (chodana Laksmanartha Dharma); likewise, the Tantras lay very great stress upon certain prescribed forms of worship which are calculated to promote one's spiritual welfare and enhance concentration of mind and devotional ardour, and are also designed to develop psychic powers, will-force and strength of mind which are necessary for self restraint under great temptations. The Tantras thus speak of some Yogic Sadhanas (modes of worship and prayer) that will bestow on the devotee great yogic and occult powers and will lead him to higher spiritual plane. The question that naturally arises is : Is this true? The answer is given in the most affirmative form by the great Yogins and the Sannyasins, whose occult powers are as established facts as any other undeniable fact of nature. Any ounce of fact is better than a pound of theory. Here, the Tantras are at one with Patanjali's Yoga Darsan which speaks of practical Sadhanas. Practise them and you will acquire great yogic powers. You cannot deny the truth of these propositions without practising them. They require practice, they cannot be proved or disproved-by

theoretical discussions. The great Yogins and Sannyasins of India are the living evidence of their truth, and one cannot ignore or deny incontrovertible facts. Likewise, you cannot deny the efficacy of Tantric Sadhana and Tantric worship without following them. The life of Ramkrishna Paramhansa of our time will show to what a great spiritual height a man can rise by Tantric Sadhana and also what great and wonderful occult or yogic powers can be attained by it. A tree is known by its fruit. We shall speak about some of these Tantric Sadhana or rites and rituals, known as the occult secrets of the Tantras. One thing should, however, be noted that Sadhana or Yoga is not peculiar to the Tantric religion. Yoga or Sadhana is to be found in every system of higher Hindu religion. It is common to the Saivas, Saktas and Vaishnavas, though it predominates in a prepondering degree in the Tantric form of worship. Occult powers are attained by the development of higher spiritual powers by Sadhana or Yoga. You can not deny the existence of a thing, that does really exist, by any jugglery of words. The Tantras, like the Yoga Darsan of Patanjali, deal with practical things and they stand above all formal literary criticism. No logical claptrap can assail them. You are to prove or disprove their truths by practising them. Swedenberg might have been the only mystic in Europe but there are hundreds and thousands of Swedenbergs among the Indians who ever live in close communion with the Deity, and whose occult powers naturally result from Yoga or Sadhana. Call them mystics, if you like, but mysticism, in strict sense, is a phenomenon of highly developed religion. "Individualistic in character, it is the outcome of a longing for intimate communion with the Divine." This definition of mysticism given in the Encyclopaedia Britanica is, in essence, exactly

the same that we come across in Patanjali's Yoga Darsan and in the Tantras ; it is the result of close and ardent communion of the devotee with his Deity, which awakens dormant psychic powers in the devotee. We shall deal with it later on, The power is in you, it is in every human being, but it lies dormant. It is by religious practice, by Yoga and Sadhana you are to awaken it.¹ It does not come from outside, but lies in us. Culture and practice with pure spiritual fervour and religious ardour are necessary to make its latent potentialities patent and active. We shall now proceed with the fundamental philosophy of Tantric religion.

CHAPTER V

FUNDAMENTAL CREED OF THE TANTRAS.

Dr. Martineau after long and elaborate discussions of good many learned philosophical theories about religion came to the conclusion that religion requires a Personal God for worship ; Impersonal God cannot be worshipped.¹ The great philosophical scholar was not acquainted with the Upanishads and Hindu philosophy, or he could have seen that thousands of years ago, the great Indian sages had realised this truth and put it forth in the clearest language, and what is more, and put it on a more profound philosophical basis.

God is an inscrutable power. He is neither this nor that. He, She and It are equally applicable to God, for God is devoid of all attributes ; in fact, He is beyond the conception of our mind ; we cannot think of anything which has no form, no attribute, no action whatsoever, which is eternal

¹ In this connection the reader may read Maurice Materlinck's, Nobel Laureate, drama, 'Monna Vana' and see how subconscious powers can work wonder.

and infinite and devoid of all material and mental attributes. The Upanishads declare that He is beyond our thought, beyond our conception. We cannot have an idea of attributeless Brahma. He is beyond the reach of words, of mind and of vision—"Naiva Vacha Na Manaca Praptum Cakyo Na Chakshusa"—Katha Upanishad 3/12.

So also declares the Taittiriaya.

Yata Vacha Nivartante Aprapya Manasa Saha

Whence speech with mind comes back baffled i. e. He is beyond our conception and is indescribable. Yet the Vedas and the Upanishads do not end in Agnosticism. They are full of living faith and devotional ardour, no where else we find deeper religious fervour. The great sages knew the limitations of human intellect, they were fully acquainted with the psychology of the human mind, They knew that in order to think of God, we must impute attributes to Him, God must be rendered an object capable of apprehension by the human mind, and this we can do only by our inference and imagination. God, in order to be an object of human conception, can not be an Attributeless, Impersonal Spirit,—Eternal and Infinite,—of which we can form no adequate idea whatsoever. Such a God is beyond the realisation of the human mind. All learned attempts to express the Eternal and Infinite God remain but idle expressions—'Words, words, words'—having no significance whatsoever. "The word", says Prof. Tiel, "must become Flesh in order to get admission into human heart." The Eternal, Infinite, Indefinite, Brahma, devoid of all names,

¹ Vide Dr. Martineau's Philosophy of Religion.

² The Sanskrit word Brahma is untranslatable in English. Iswara can be translated by the term God, for God, in Christian Theology, is what Iswara is in Hindu Philosophy, i. e. a Personal God with attributes.

forms and attributes is beyond human conception. So also says the great German poet, Goethe, in his *Faust* :

“Who dare express Him ?”—

Faust Part, Sc. XVI

Here we are limited by our anthropomorphic idea. The great sages of ancient India knew this metaphysical truth thousands of years ago, they, therefore, have declared that we cannot think of Brahma but of Iswara or Brahma with attributes. Brahma is not merely attributeless, He is, again, full of attributes. And what are His attributes ? All the attributes that we find in the universe are His attributes, because the whole creation is but a mode of Brahma. Everything is God, there is nothing outside God ; hence Brahma is both attributeless as well as full of attributes. They are but the two modes of Brahma, “Parancha Aparancha Brahma” (Prasna 5.2). The great Sankaracharyya following the ancient Rishis says, Brahma is known in two aspects ; as attributeless and with attributes. This conception of Brahma with attributes is known as Iswara, or God, as the creator, supporter and destroyer of the creation.

“Saguna Nirguna Vishnu”. So also says the *Vishnu Puran*

He is Maheswara—“Tamicwaranam Paramam Maheswaram.”

This idea of a creator, supporter, a moral governor of the creation and also the final cause of destruction is what find also in the *Tantras*.

“He is without modification, and self-supporting. He is without difference, above attributes,—the Witness of every thing, the Soul of all,—seeing all that is, and endowed with divine powers. He lies hidden in every being and is eternal and all-

pervading. He, it is, that manifests organ as well as attributes; although Himself is without any organ. He is above all the worlds and is their cause. He is beyond the reach of speech or thought, knowing everything. He knoweth this universe but none knoweth Him." The Mahanirvan Tantram Ch. II. V. 35-37.

Again, it further says :—"He is the cause of our beings, the cause of all creatures, He is the sole Supreme Lord and by virtue of His having brought every object into being, He is Brahma and known among the people as the Creator. And it is on account of His so willing that, O Goddess, Vishnu is the Preserver and myself am the Destroyer of the universe, and the guardian gods of the worlds, with Indra at their head, are all under His swary.

Ibid Chap. II. Verses 30—41

Thus the Tantras are at one with the Upanishads in philosophy and in spirit, yet it is wrongly held by many that the Tantras differ from the Vedas and the Upanishads. The only difference of the Tantras with the Vedas and Upanishads lies in their prescribed forms of worship and in rites and rituals. Now, Iswara of the Upanishads is the Mahasakti of the Tantras.

It is obvious that we can worship only a Personal God, and not Eternal and Infinite Brahma, devoid of all forms and attributes. Human mind loves to dwell upon the glory of God which consists in imputing the highest possible perfection of all the great and noble qualities that we find around us. It is not possible to impute any attribute of which we have no idea or knowledge. He is the Fountainhead of all that is good and noble; He is Truth, Good and Beauty—"Satyam Siva Sundaram." We are never contented by limiting the attributes of God. God has created man after his own image, says the Bible, we know not how far

this statement is true, but it is quite evident that man has created God after his own mind. Behind this Biblical statement, however, lies hidden an anthropomorphic idea of God. God, according to this view, is a mighty Superman. But neither Hindu philosophy, nor Hindu theology asserts such an idea of God, though both Hindu philosophy and Hindu theology recognise the psychological necessity of thinking of and worshipping God with attributes, and it is also evident that man is apt to think of God in human form endowed with divine powers. There is hardly any escape from this psychological fact.

Now, the question that naturally suggests itself what kind of Personal God are we to worship? Can the conception of this personal God be one and the same for all men alike? Herein lies the immortal glory of the Hindu Shastras, they did not insist upon one stereotyped idea of the Supreme Deity for all alike. This Personal God has found various expressions in various forms in the Hindu Scriptures that might suit different peoples' education, temperament, imagination and culture. It is the same Deity who is Vishnu to you, Siva to me, Sakti to another. Wherein lies the real difference about our conception of God, but in our own mind? It is only about our own ideas and concepts that we fight and wrangle with one another and declare that ours one is the best.

However, we have seen that that the Tantras, in spirit and in their fundamental doctrines, are at one with the Vedas and the Upanishads. Therefore, the famous commentator of Manu, the great Sanskrit scholar, Kalluka Bhatta rightly says : "There are two classes of Sruti, Vedic and Tantric" The eternal truth of religion is immutable and it remains unchanged even the midst of diverse changes of its forms through different ages and through different circumstances.

From low to high, doth disolution climb,
 And sink from high to low, along a scale
 Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail,
 A musical but melancholy chime,
 Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
 Nor avarice, nor over anxious care.
 Truth fails not ; but her outward forms that bear
 The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
 That in the morning whitened hill and plane
 And is no more ; drop like the tower sublime
 Of yesterday, which royally did wear.
 His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
 Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
 Or the unimaginable touch of Time."

—Wordsworth.

The above-quoted words of the poet we should remember when we judge of a religious creed. The test lies in its truth. We should sift its outward form and see whether its essence is based upon truth or not. Human reason can not pry deeper than that. Our religious creed depends more upon our hopes and imagination than upon anything else. We are not always worshippers of reason. It is our hope for something better in future that urges us towards our goal. We may be right, we may be wrong, but hope that springs eternal in human breast lies at the root of all religious creeds. We may blunder, we may bungle with our life, we may be misled by our own ideas and ideals, but still we hope that everything will be righted at the end, every wrong will be redressed and every error rectified. It lies at the root of our devotion and faith, It fills us with ardent fervour. It kindles our imagination and warms our heart. It is hope that carries us forward and that leads us through troubles and tribulations of life. The poet is perfectly right when, under the shadow of deep sorrow, he utters ;—

“Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroy'd
Or cast as rubbish to the void ;
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last--far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream ; but what am I ?
An infant crying in the night ;
An infant crying for the light ;
And with no language but a cry.”

—In Memoriam.

This also holds good of our religious belief. This hope and belief in the ultimate good after sore disappointments and sufferings is the motive force that carry us along the path of duty,—the path of virtue and raise us from all dejection and despair. When light fails, when there is none to lead us, when all appeals for help become a cry in wilderness, when we sink under doubts and despair, it is belief that everything will be righted at the end, that sustains and upholds our drooping spirit and fills us with enthusiasm, hope and courage to face the grim ordeals of life. It is here that religion holds its triumph over all and every other thing. There is nothing else that is so inspiring, so healing and so consoling in our sore moments of afflictions

and troubles as religion. And the Tantras lay great stress upon this element of religion.

CHAPTER—VI

THE DEITY OF THE TANTRAS

We have already said that the essence of religion consists in worship, and worship requires a Personal God. We have also seen that there can not be one and the same Personal God for all, even professing the same religion, for its concept must vary according to one's temperament, imagination, education and culture; nay more, even after one's inclinations and tastes.

The common idea of a Personal God among the people is that of an Almighty Governor of the universe, who is kind to His devotees, the Distributor of rewards and punishments to men after their death; and one generally thinks of Him as the Sovereign Lord of the universe, holding His royal court in the blissful region of heaven! Thousands of angels wait upon Him, This is what even the great poet Milton thought of God:

—“His state

Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest,
They also serve Him who stand and wait.

This is, after all, a magnified picture of a mighty, earthly king. It is, at bottom, an anthropomorphic idea of God. It is our concept or image that we deify and instal as Godhead. We can hardly get rid of our own shadow, however much we may try. But what is the real image of God? Is God a magnified and a glorified human being? Surely not. It is the creation of our mind, and one man's concept

differs from that of another, though there may be great similarity between the two. There are men who can not think of a youthful God, but only of a God quite venerable in age and wisdom! This is, ofcourse, due to our own limitations of imagination and intellect. It is we that impute different qualities or attributes to God, just to think of Him, to pray to Him and to meditate upon His glory. Ofcourse, all the attributes are the attributes of God, for everything is God, there is nothing outside God. Primary and Secondary qualities are but a mode of Divine manifestation. Hence all the attributes that we see around us and all that we can imagine or infer to exist are the attributes of God. God is, therefore, both attributeless and full of attributes, declare the Hindu Shastras.

“Saguna Nirguna Vishnu.”

The great sage Sankaracharyya says : Dwirupam Hi Brahma Avagamyate, Namrupabhedopadhi Vicishtam, Tad Viparitancha Sarvopadhivarjitan.” —Brahma has two forms—one, with name and form, and the other, devoid of all forms and names.

In the Upanishads, the distinction between attributeless Brahma and Brahma with attributes has been expressed by the use of Neuter and Masculine genders. Attributeless Brahma is grammatically designated by the Neuter gender and Iswara or Brahma with attributes by the Masculine gender.

“Santi Ubhaya linga Crutaya BrahmaVishaya.”

Thus also the Vrihad Arnyaka declares :— “Dwevava Brahmanarupe Murttam Chamurttam, Murttam Chamintam cha, Sthitam cha, Yat cha, Sat cha, Tat cha.”—

Brahma has two aspects, manifested and unmanifested, perishable and imperishable, with

motion and devoid of motion, both with attributes and without attributes." Since Brahma is both with attributes and devoid of them, one is at liberty to have a Personal God after his own liking. One generally thinks of God like what he or she reveres most, or considers to be the highest, or the most glorious, or the most perfect. Now, the Hindu Shastras make the greatest allowance in this matter. One's concept is as good as that of another, because all our concepts about God, however high, must necessarily be inadequate.¹ This cardinal truth was realised by the great sages of India. What reasonable objection may you have if my idea of God differs from that of yours? Yet, this has been the prime cause of all religious strifes and even of sanguinary wars!

The Hindu Shastras, again, differ in one important feature from the scriptures of other religions; they declare that God is not an object of fear but of love. One should not only revere and adore God, but also love Him as his own nearest and dearest one. Fear of God, so common in other forms of religion, is not countenanced by the Hindu Shastras. There is no such phrase as God-fearing man in Sanskrit. One should love God and adore Him with veneration and love but not from fear. Hence, the Hindus always sought to establish a closer and nearer relation between God and man,—between the devotee and the Deity. There is a degree of respectful distance between the master and the servant, but the relation is far closer between the father and the son. Now, God should be the dearest object of love, and man should (at least, he is at liberty) to think of God what he considers to be dearest to him. Among the Hindus, therefore, the relation between God and man is not

¹ The great French writer Jubert has also said in this sense: God is God because He stands above proof.

stereotypedly fixed for all alike. I am quite at liberty to think of Him as I like. Yoshada loved Sreekrishna as her son ; the cowherd boys, as their Friend ; the Vraja Gopis, as their Lover. And, they were perfectly right like the man who adores God as the Almighty Governor of the universe,—though it must be admitted that in the last-mentioned conception there is more element of awe than of love.

Now, the Tantras, emphasise the Motherhood of God. To many people such a concept will appear to be sacrilegious, because they have been taught to look upon God as a Male Being, as Master or Lord. But is it not equally absurd and illogical to assign a particularly definite sex to God? Who can determine it? Eternal and Infinite Brahma is formless and sexless ; again, all forms are His forms, all sexes are His and have been evolved from Him. He is both the Mother and the Father of the universe. The whole creation is an act of emergence from Brahma, call that Brahma Father or Mother as you like ; i.e. think of Brahma in the form of what you love most and revere most. The Tantras have preferred to represent Eternal Brahma, as the Eternal Mother of the universe. And why? The reason is quite obvious. Mother is dearer to the child than the father ; again, it is mother who loves more and cares more for the child than the father. Who can deny this? The whole animal world bears most eloquent testimony to this incontrovertible fact, to the superiority of mother's love over all others' love. The Tantras hold up the Supreme Deity as the Eternal Mother of the universe, for there is nothing more sacred, more deep and more disinterested than mother's love. God's love for the creation is like mother's love, only more deep, more pure and more disinterested. This concept of the Motherhood of God is as good and as

logical as that of Fatherhood, for He is both the Father and the Mother of the universe.

The Tantras, again, explain the act of creation on the analogy of sexual creation in nature. And it is true that we can not generally conceive any other mode of creation :—even in the Hermaphrodites the same process goes on. The Tantras, therefore, explains creation as the result of union between Purush and Prakriti, The Gita also, in Chap. XVI Verse 25, supports this view. In the Hindu Shastras, this union between Purusha and Prakriti has been symbolically represented by the image of Ardhanariswara or Haragouri. And Purusha and Prakriti are Siva and Sakti of the Tantras, ofcourse quite different from the Purusha and Prakriti of the Sankhya Philosophy and we have already discussed that point. Thus the only difference between pure Saivism and Sakta creed lies merely on the predominance of Siva in Saivism, and that of Sakti in the Sakta creed. Now, the philosophy underlying the Sakta creed may be very briefly put.

God and the universe are inseparable, because they are, at bottom, one and the same. One can not be taken away from the other. The creation is a mode of Divine manifestation, but this manifestation appears to us in a Dualistic form, in whatever name we may like to designate it. In purely scientific nomenclature, the whole universe appears in the forms of matter and force. There is no matter without force, and no force without matter. And what we practically notice is the play of several forces or different kinds of energy that have brought the universe into existence and govern all material phenomena of the universe. In other words, we find certain Elements and certain kinds of Energy that bring about all material phenomena of the universe. We donot know how they themselves have come into existence,

nor even their real nature. All that we know about them is how they work ; in other words, their laws of operation. We can at best describe them but can not account for them, i.e. we know not the reason why they behave in such and such manner.

The different kinds of energy that we find working in nature are Light, Electricity, Magnetism, Chemical energy, Heat and Motion. But science has proved that they are but different expressions of One great energy, for a particular energy can be converted into another form of energy, as heat into light ; magnetism into electricity. This is, in scientific terminology, known as correlation of forces. Thus, all these different kinds of energy are but the different modes of expression of One great, supreme energy.

Science has, again, proved that all the different elements which were so long held to be immutably fixed in nature, are but the modifications of One great element, known as Protyle ; as we find that the element Radium ultimately changes into the element Lead. All the elements can, ultimately, be resolved into Protones, Positrones etc., which are identically the same in every element. Now, neither we know the origin of Energy nor the origin of the Elements. Again, there is no element absolutely devoid of energy, nor we meet with an energy without some sort of matter. In otherwords, matter and energy are inseparable and their ultimate origin is unknown to us. This is what is known in the Tantras as the union between Purusha and Prakriti, or between Siva and Sakti. According to the Upanishads the visible universe is a mode of Divine manifestation, hence it is inseparable from Brahma. So what we designate as matter or energy is nothing but a mode of Divine manifestation, or Leela. Hence there is nothing dead or inert in nature, but everything

is living and endued with energy. Sir Jagadish Bose's wonderful experiments demonstrate this great truth, long realised by the great Hindu seers of old. God and His energy are inseparable, and what we designate as physical energy is nothing but Divine energy. There is no other energy besides Divine energy. And this is what the Gita also declares that, the light of the sun and of the moon is His energy :

“Yadadityagatam Tejo Jagatbhasatehkhilam
Yacchadramasi Yacchagnau Tat tejo Vidhi
Mamakam”

—15.12

The energy that in the sun lightens the world and the energy that is in the moon and in fire, know that to be mine energy.—Gita Chap. XV. Verse 12.

Since, we can never separate God from His energy, we can not separate Siva from Sakti. Again, it is God with attributes that we worship; nay more, our adoration is mostly due to his Divine attributes; in other words, we worship God for His Divine attributes than for anything else. To be more explicit, we worship God, because He is almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, merciful, etc. Again, it is these Divine attributes that impress upon our mind the greatness of God, and we worship Him for that greatness. Thus, these Divine attributes play a very important part in our religious belief. Now, what are attributes but so many manifestations of energy? Thus, Divine energy and its acknowledgement constitute the chief element in religious worship, and, we have already remarked that, worship is the life-spirit of religion that keeps it alive. If this be true, the Tantras are perfectly right in giving prominence to the worship of Sakti. It is through the manifestation of certain

attributes that we come to know the existence of a thing. What has no manifestation has no existence to us. Likewise, it is through the manifestation of Divine energy in the universe that we come to know the existence of God, and this energy is but a mode of manifestation of Brahma. Now, this Energy is Sakti of the Tantras. Who can, therefore, accuse him who worships Brahma as Sakti? The Sakta worships Brahma as Sakti, or as He appears through the manifestation of His Divine energy, which has been designated and conceived in the Tantras as the Mahasakti. If a Personal God be the necessary requisite of religious worship, God with His Divine energy or attributes, (which alone reveal to us His existence), conceived as Mahasakti, or the Fountain head of all energy and attributes, is, perhaps, the most profound philosophical concept of Brahma, than what we generally meet with in other concepts about God.

It is Divine energy that makes us aware of the existence of God, it is Divine energy that appears as Divine intelligence in the great Teleological design of the creation.¹ Thus the Tantric conception of the Supreme Deity is, rather, a very apt symbolical representation of Brahma with His Divine energy, that has brought the visible universe into existence, that governs, upholds and sustains it, which has been classified and specified by science as the great Laws of Nature. Thus, Cosmic energy is the most

¹There has recently been published a very valuable book in English under the name of the Great Design, It contains highly thoughtful contributions of several eminent scientists, philosophers and men of letters. There, the world famous Mathematician and Scientist Sir James Jeans has observed that the very constitution and working of the universe demonstrate the prominence of Mind over Matter i. e. an intelligent design is more than amply evident. Science no longer regards the creation as a matter of mere accident, a casual product of primordial matter,

tangible thing that at once captures our wayward attention and fills our mind with an overwhelmingly oppressive emotion of deep awe and wonder ! How insignificant is man ! To what a vanishing dot our earth dwindles in the vast abyss of space ! What countless vistas of time are involved in the formation of the visible universe ! Who amongst us can conceive the Eternal and Infinite, in whom all the worlds exist like beads of pearls in a pearl necklace ; i. e, who is transcendent of the vast universe itself ? The Sakta bows down trembling with deep veneration and awe and relieves himself of the oppressive and stupifying emotion by exclaiming with devotion and love, Mother ! Mother ! Oh Great Mother !' In spite of all awe-inspiring majestcity and grandeur, mother's love is always assuring to the child, and it always protects and delivers the child from all fear and feelings of distress. Who has the audacity to laugh at the devotee who, in profound devotion and love, prostrates himself before the image of the Divine Mother,—the creator, the preserver, and the destroyer of the universe ? The 'inscrutable Power manifested through nature,' is Sakti, This Power is Brahma, devoid of all names and forms, and one is at full liberty to think of this Supreme Power in any form he or she likes. No image of the Eternal and the Infinite is possible. but Viswarupa, or, the cosmic image of God, with the whole universe lying in Him. Our concept of the Eternal and Infinite Brahma must be limited by the limitations of our imagination and intellect. Therefore, the devotee is fully justified in worshipping God in whatever form he likes.

It won't be out of place to mention that the world-famous orator and preacher and the founder of the New Mission Church of Brahma Religion, Keshab Chandra Sen, whose name is a household word among the educated Indians and who was one

of the most jealous supporters of Brahma religion, which took its birth by way of protest against idolatry, (as the Protestantism rose against the excesses of Roman Catholicism and papacy), sometimes meditated upon the Motherhood of God, and invoked the Supreme Deity as Mother. There is a prayer of Keshab Chandra in Bengali, wherein he prays to God, as a Sakta prays to Sakti, repeatedly calling God as Mother with deep emotion and devotional ardour: "Come Mother, come Mother! Ah Mother! make me mad. Oh, what delicious wine is being served at Thy place!" The prayer not only reminds one instantly of Ramprosad and Ramkrishna Paramhansa (with whom Keshab Chandra came in close touch in the closing years of his life and whom Keshab Chandra held in the greatest regard and esteem) but even the very words seem to be theirs! Keshab Chandra was deeply imbued with the devotional ardour and love of a true Sakta, worshipping God as the great Divine Mother, Sakti! Thus, all distinctions and differences in all forms of worship, and between all sectarian creeds vanish away in devotional ardour and love. Ramkrishna Paramhansa found joy and solace in every form of religion, and he discovered the fundamental unity of all religions in the midst of their great diversities.

Now, there is a more subtle and higher process in the Hindu Shastras than worship, for realising Nirguna Brahma i. e. Impersonal and Indeterminate God, devoid of all forms and names. This consists in realising Brahma by the realisation of our own soul. I am (Cogito ergo sum); I live, I exist, is an incontrovertible truth, but what is this mysterious I? I say, I am not well; my mind is sad; it is my house; he is my son, etc. etc. What is this I? Do I mean my body? Do I mean my mind? Then, how can I say My mind is sad? It is the mysterious Self

or Ego which is both consciously and unconsciously referred to in thought and speech. Now, what is the real nature of this Self or Soul? The Hindu Shastras declare that I am He; a spark from the blazing Fire, a bubble in the Ocean of light. I am indeed a spark, I am indeed a bubble, yet I am of the same nature with the 'blazing Fire' and with 'the Ocean of light',—lesser no doubt, but of the same quality, I am like the empty space enclosed in a small jar or pitcher, but the same with the vast empty space of the universe, and when the jar will be broken, it will be one with the empty space of the universe. The great Hindu sages, therefore, have laid foremost stress upon the Realisation of Soul. By realising my own Soul, I shall realise Brahma. But how this Soul can be realised? There is no short cut to it. It is the most arduous thing and the highest achievement in human life. For this, utmost moral and spiritual discipline, devotion, meditation and prayer are necessary. It can be realised only by Yoga and by nothing else, for which only one in a million is found to be fit. But the Hindu Shastras also declare that by worshipping Brahma with attributes i. e. Saguna Iswara, with devotional faith and love, and by self-control and knowledge, one can gradually attain knowledge of Brahma. Ofcourse, there is no royal road to it, and he that succeeds, attains the highest emancipation which is the ultimate goal of Hindu religion, that is to be one with God, or to be merged into Brahma. Since this is not meant for the people in general, since it is the most difficult thing to achieve, since it is beyond our ordinary capacity and power, there is need for worship and prayer; there is need for a Personal God to love and worship, and to concentrate our mind upon Him. Herein lies the logical justification of idolatry. It is wrong to hold that we can do away with all forms of idolatry from our

religion. Why the Church is sacred to the Christians? If God be omnipresent, and if He be present in every object, then every place is equally sacred as the church. Hence, Carlyle is right when he says that no religion is possible without idolatry. Ofcourse, this does not mean that idol-worship is a necessary factor of religion; yet, since I do not worship any idol, have I the right to hate an idolator or to persecute him? An idolator too worships the same God whom he invokes in his idol. It is a wrong belief among the non-Hindus that the Hindus worship idols. Nothing can be more removed from truth than this. It is Brahma, the Eternal and Infinite Brahma, that one worships in his idol, with whom he becomes one in his mind and not the idol itself. Whether such worship is efficacious or not, that depends upon one's devotional ardour and faith. It has been enjoined in the Hindu Shastras that the votary by placing a flower on his head, should think himself as the Deity that he is going to worship. Now, in such worship, Ramkrishna Paramhansab ecame so much absorbed in meditation and thought that he very often forgot all differences between the Deity and his ownself; so on many a occasion, when Ramkrishna was engaged in worshipping his Deity—the Goddess Kali—he lost all consciousness of any difference between him and Kali and appropriated all the articles of worship himself!

Thus, every form of worship, every form of religious creed may be conducive to the highest spiritual bliss, if observed with devotional ardour, sincere faith and love. Ramkrishna used to say there are as many paths (to God) as many as there are views (i. e. creeds). Religion, in this sense, does not consist in any particular, prescribed form of faith, but in devotion and love which one possess for God.

CHAPTER VII

SIVA AND SAKTI

Though the Supreme Deity of the Tantras is known as Sakti, but our idea of the Sakti will be incomplete unless we look into the Hindu concept of Siva. We have already remarked that Siva and Sakti are quite inseparable, and the one goes with the other. They are not two double-stars, two independent co-existent things conjoined together, but Siva and Sakti are ultimately one and the same, because they are but two modes of the manifestation of the Eternal and Infinite Brahma, as Purasha and Prakriti, (not that of Sankhya,) i. e. Matter and Spirit, which the Tantras have described as Siva and Sakti.

Siva and Sakti are inseparable like heat from fire, whiteness from milk, sweetness from sugar, luminosity from light, weight from material bodies. We have, therefore, in the preceding chapter used singular number in designating the Deity of the Tantras. The Deity of the Tantras is both Siva and Sakti, in other words, Brahma and His Divine energy. Therefore, it will be both wrong and inadequate to designate Sakti alone as the Supreme Deity of the Tantras, though, ofcourse, greater prominence has given to Sakti in the Tantras. The reason is obvious, because it is the Divine energy that has brought the universe into existence, and preserves and governs it, and it is that which primarily arrests our attention and overwhelms us with wonder and awe. Thus it is but natural that Sakti will occupy the first and foremost place in the Tantras, which have been written to emphasise this aspect of Brahma and to glorify the Motherhood of God,—a quite novel view in theology, though as sound and as logical as the Fatherhood of God, for Eternal and Infinite Brahma

is both the Father and the Mother of the universe, but up till the Tantras no other scripture has viewed Brahma from this angle of vision. There is no mention of it in any other creed.

God is both the Father and Mother of the universe ; and, in this very sense, Kalidas,¹ in his invocation for blessings for using proper expressions, bows down in the first verse of the Raghuvancam, to the Father and Mother of the universe, who are united together like a word and its meaning.

“Vagarthiva Sampriktau Vagarthapratipatyē Jagatapitarau Vande Parvatiparameswarau.”

Mallinath explains Pitarau as Matacha Pitacha, i.e. mother and father. In other words, Siva and Parvati, who are inseparably united together, are the parents of the universe.²

In philosophical terminology, Sakti is Kinetic energy of Brahma, and Siva represents the Static aspect of Brahma. The one is inseparable from the other. According to the Tantras, creation is not an illusion, but the creation is real, because it is a mode of Divine manifestation of Brahma, and there is, therefore, ‘a real nexus between Brahma as cause and the world as effect.’ The Tantras do not dismiss the creation totally as a Maya, but regard it as a Conditional Reality. “So it is held that the supreme experience—Amarsha—is by the self-Siva of Himself as Sakti who, as such is the ideal or perfect universe, not in the sense of a perfect world of form but of that ultimate formless feeling—Bhava,—of bliss, Ananda, which at the root of the whole

¹ The Raghuvancam, Kumarsambham, Meghduta and the Sakuntala conclusively prove that Kalidas was a Sakta by creed.

² Thus, it is evident that Tantric creed and Tantric form of worship were in vogue long before Kalidas.

world is." (A. Avelon). Thus Siva and Sakti are inseparable.

This is what the Tantras tell us : Siva and Sakti are inseparable, though the Tantras, we have already remarked, have emphasised the Motherhood of God—a concept as logically sound as any other philosophical concept of Brahma or God.

Before proceeding any further, the writer must offer an unqualified apology to the readers for one strange omission and also for a startling commission. After making over the Manuscript to the press, the writer left Calcutta for some months, and during his absence an omission and a commission have been made. First, the omission, the title of the present treatise ; 'Tantras, Their Philosophy And Occult Secrets', except over the first page, has not been printed over any other page ! A strange omission, though not a very material one , Next, to the commission. It is, indeed, for graver than the omission, for which the writer takes the whole blame upon himself. In transcribing Sanskrit words in Romanised forms I attempted to spell Sanskrit words from the phonetic point of view, as one may find with many English words in Bernard Shaw's dramas. But in my absence it has proved a dangerous experiment. I wrote Prkriti instead of Prakriti. The proof-reader, however, following the general Bengali pronunciation of the word, supplied the missing vowel (after Pr) and in doing so instead of putting a (after Pr) which both the correct pronunciation and correct spelling of the word demand, he has inserted in place of a. Nodoubt, the writer's weak vision is responsible for many misprints, but the readers, the writer hopes, will exonerate him for such silly mistakes, as they will credit him at least with knowledge of the correct spelling and pronunciation

of the word Prakriti. The writer has nothing more to add but to apologise again to his generous readers for such omissions and commissions. We shall now discuss the Tantric conception of Siva and Sakti.

Strangely, there is a very wrong notion among some people that both Siva and Kali are non-Aryan god and goddess. Siva, the non-Aryan god of ghosts and fiends, and Kali a demonic goddess of the aborigines of ancient India, in course of time, have crept into Aryan theology and found their places in the pantheon of Aryan gods and goddesses. But please mark they do not occupy any subordinate or insignificant position, but they are the highest of the deities of the Hindu pantheon, as Vishnu. What an absurd idea!

We do not know how such a monstrous notion came to be first cherished. Perhaps, such a strange theory was first promulgated by the vagaries of the so-called Sanskrit researches of the Western scholars, who more than often betray their colossal ignorance of the real import of Sanskrit words and of Sanskrit works and interpret them in their own fanciful way; or it may be the result of the propaganda of early Christian missionaries for the spread of christianity among the Hindus. Whatever might be the origin of such a misleading and erroneous idea, there is not an iota of historical evidence in support of this strange assertion.

First of all, their concepts are too high and too sublime even for an educated man's grasp not to speak of a wild aboriginal savage. They are the products of the highest philosophical reflections. Secondly, it is a notorious fact that the aboriginal tribes are very slow in giving up their religious rites and practices. They keep themselves far from the contact of civilised people and hold fast to their primitive institutions and to their old, accustomed habits of life. In the fastness of hills and mountains, in dense forests, we still come

across wild savages in India, the primitive children of the soil, who were driven from their homes by the onrush of the Aryan conquerors. Among these wild tribes up till now no evidence of the worship of Siva or Kali has been found. They still adhere to their primitive religious faith of Animism, and worship stock and stones. Among them evil spirits, fiends and ghosts still reign supreme. It is the medicineman who, with his magic and mysterious charms, wards off the evil spirits—often those of their dead enemies—and relieves these aboriginal people from their disease, distress and fears. One may search from the foot of the Himalayas up to the Cape Comorin in vain to find even the slightest trace of any Tantric form of worship, or of Siva or Kali among these wild aboriginal people. Not even a phallic symbol of Siva has yet been found worshipped by these wild tribes. They still worship stocks and stones and propitiate the evil spirits by the sacrifice of animals and other gifts. If it were a fact that both Siva and Kali were originally non-Aryan god and goddess, one could have very reasonably expected to find some traces of the Tantric rites among these wild savages of India, from whom the Aryans are said to have taken Siva and Kali. Nor any Tantric creed is found among the savage tribes. Hence, such a preposterous theory absolutely falls to the ground. We need not detain our readers over this untenable view. It should be put aside without further ado.

Certainly, no definite form, can be attributed to Indeterminate, Infinite Brahma. All forms are His, all attributes are His attributes, there is nothing besides Him. Therefore from the Rig Veda's 'Purusha Sukta' down to the Upanishads, it has been declared by the great Hindu sages, that He has thousand faces, thousand feet, thousand

eyes. His eyes are everywhere, His feet are everywhere and wherever there are two persons, there is one more besides the two. This has been most beautifully and most emphatically declared in the Srimad Bhagavat Gita in its famous description of the Viswarupa, that Lord Sree Krishna revealed to his great devotee, Arjuna.¹

Then the question arises why different images of Brahma have been conceived by the Hindus? Before answering that question, we shall first quote the famous apology of the great sage Vedavyas asking forgiveness of God. He says: Thou art without any form, yet I have imagined Thine images; Thou art equally present at every place, yet I have extolled the sacredness of the places of pilgrimages." Again, the Artharva Veda most emphatically declares: All the gods find shelter in Him."

Then why the Hindus have imagined so many gods and goddesses; in other words, so many images of Brahma? The answer is quite obvious. Different images of Brahma have been conceived simply to help the devotees for enhancing his devotional ardour and for augmenting his concentration of mind; to fill his heart with enthusiasm and inspiration by setting up before him something tangible, symbolically representing certain Divine attributes or certain aspects of Brahma, for which the devotee loves and likes to worship God. Different images have been conceived to suit different tastes and also to represent different attributes of the Indeterminate and Infinite Brahma. Each image (i.e. each god or goddess) has particular significance of its own. Now, let us see in what light the Tantras look upon Siva and Sakti and what is the inner significance of each of the aforesaid two deities.

1 Vide the present writer's Lord Sree Krishna for the Comment on the Viswarupa, page 309.

What is the highest virtue in man ? There is no unanimity opinion even about this ! Some say it is charity ;—charity covereth every sin. Some hold it to be truthfulness ; some, purity ; some piety and some, righteousness. Some, as the ancient Romans did, think it to be valour ; while others an all-round perfection. The last named virtue that is an all-round perfection found much preference both among the ancient Hindus and the ancient Greeks, but there is still great difference between the Greek ideal and that of the ancient Hindus. The Greeks were disposed to physical perfection, but the ancient Hindus gave preference to the perfection of the soul above all other kinds of perfection. The outlook of the ancient Greek art corresponds to this view of physical perfection ; ofcourse, that also implied a sound mind in a sound body. But the ancient Hindu ideal of perfection is more spiritual or moral than that of the ancient Greeks. One or two solitary instances, like that of Socrates or of Plato, won't make out a case for the whole national mind. Now, the ancient Hindus held another virtue to be the highest of all human virtues, that is the virtue of absolute Detachment. In the opinion of the ancient sages of India, detachment, in truth, is the mother of all virtues. If a man be thoroughly detached, all other virtues will necessarily find place in him. He will, thus by nature, be truthful, honest, just, upright, generous and charitable, for there is nothing to which he is attached ; there is no interest uppermost in his mind, he will naturally be thoroughly selfless and absolutely disinterested in his actions and conduct towards others. No joy can elate him, no sorrow can depress him, no suffering or despair can overwhelm him. He is above all earthly joys and sufferings, above all attachments to worldly things. Nothing can swerve him from the path of uprightness and

virtue ; no interest can distract his mind. He is thus far above all others. Upon this great virtue of detachment, Lord Sree Krishna has laid the greatest emphasis and stress in his immortal teachings in the Gita, and his own life was the highest example of detachment from all worldly objects.

Now, the great God Siva is the highest personification of the virtue of detachment. He is the highest ideal of all Yogins and Sanyasins, He is the greatest ideal to all those who have renounced the world. Look at his serene and sublime image, white as a silver cliff, the emblem of purity, innocence and spiritual light. He is above all temptations. Love or lust, that plays such a havoc among us, has been reduced to ashes by the fire of his indignation. Gold and ashes are same to him. Poison and nectar have no difference to him. He is immersed in his own self, self-contained and self-contented. He is Brahma, no external stimulus is necessary to stimulate him with gladness. He cannot have any desire for anything, for there is nothing but Him or outside Him. He is the fountainhead of joy, Ananda Ghana Murti. He reels with his own joy, with Bhumananda. He is Nataraj, the Lord of arts. Thus self contained and self-contented, Siva is the highest personification of detachment. And this should be so in the very nature of things, for the idea of detachment is always closely associated with the idea of the ultimate end of all worldly things. In other words, the idea that everything is subject to dissolution and death, inspires one with an inspiration of detachment. Nothing lasts, nothing is permanent, and everything melts and vanishes like mist or vapour. All that we love and prize in life will vanish, causing us disappointment and sorrow. Nothing is immutable or permanent in Nature. What mighty changes

our own planet has undergone through millions of ages :—

“There rolls the deep where grew the tree,
O earth what changes hast thou seen ?
There where the long street roars, hath been
The Stillness of the central sea.”

“The Hills are shadows and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands,
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds, they shape themselves and go.”

—In Memoriam.

Siva is the great God of Destruction. He is the image of Brahma as the Destroyer of the universe. Terrific destructive forces lie dormant in Him, as if in sleep. The moment they are awake the whole universe will come to its end. His mighty Trident will break the worlds into atoms when He will dance in the frantic joy of destruction, (i.e. when the destructive forces will commence their operation, the whole universe will reel in the wild rhythm of the Dance of Death. Then His matted locks will break asunder from their ties and will overcast the sky, and the crescent moon will shake and tremble on His forehead, the vast sky! He is Lord of death, but Himself deathless, the conqueror of death, Mrityanjaya.

Thus Siva is the emblem of the Ultimate dissolution of the universe ; to put in Tantric phraseology : Sakti will withdraw the world into Herself and withdraw Herself into the Transcendental Siva.

Now, the very consciousness that everything is subject to death and decay fills one's heart with feelings of Vairagya or non-attachment, if not of detachment proper. We then readily realise the vanity of our desires and world attachments, and

do then also realise that our attachments are vain and will cause us disappointment and sorrow. Hence, there grows instinctively an yearning to be above all attachments ; in other words, a desire for acquiring detachment in life.

Thus, in the fitness of things Siva, the God of destruction, should also be the highest personification of the virtue of detachment.

Yet Siva is not the God of the Yogins and Savayasins alone, not the Deity of only of those who renounce the world, but he is the benignant Deity of the householders too. He is God of one and all. He is Siva i.e. auspicious and benign to everybody. He is Bholanath—He remembers no wrongs, no sins or transgressions. He forgives and forgets every thing ; so merciful is He. He is, again, Ashutosh, readily and easily propitiated ; not at all a difficult one to please. Such is Siva, all forgiving, ever benign and merciful to man. He is God of no privileged class, no pompous ceremony is necessary for his worship, no elaborate rite needs be observed in his worship, but a wild Dhutura flower (Stramonium flower) will gratify Lord Ashutosh. No privileged priest needs officiate in his worship. You can worship him in any way you like, no particular shrine is necessary for his worship, you may have his emblem even under a tree and worship him with only water. He is God of every body, every body has access to him, and every body can touch his sacred image. It is the most unique feature about the image of Siva. A non-Brahmin is not allowed to touch any Hindu idol or any other image of god or goddess, except that of Siva. He is the most democratic of deities, he is not the God of any privileged class, even an untouchable Chandala has an access to him ! He is pleased with all, favours none, rejects none. Every body is

welcome to him. He rejects no body's worship ; whoever comes to him with devotion, faith and love receives his blessings and boons. God is ever kind to us and is even ready to bless us, to forgive us ; and He makes no distinction between man and man.

Such is the lofty conception of Siva and Sakti, yet we are asked to believe that they are non-Aryan deities ! Nothing can be more preposterous than this.

Now, no people like the ancient Hindus were so keenly alive to the transitory character of all worldly things, hence they extolled the virtue of detachment over all other virtues. Detachment is the domineering ideal of the Hindus in every walk of life,

The poet Rabindra Nath, in one of his noble verses, has said, 'O India ! Thou hast taught the sovereign to renounce the sceptre and to retire to the forest (for meditation and prayer).' There was not a solitary Emperor like Marcus Aulerius of Rome among the Hindus, but all the great Hindu kings were great ascetics at heart.

In course of time, the sentiment of detachment filtered down from the highest to the lowest stratum of society ; and by degrees the whole mass became permeated by this sentiment, and this has greatly changed the national character of the Hindus and deeply affected the history of ancient India.

From the earliest time, the attention of the ancient Hindus was directed to the great mystery of Death, and they became alive to the inevitable end of all worldly things. This meditation of the ultimate end made the Hindus a nation of philosophers, as Plato, at one place, has observed ; "philosophy is meditation of death."

The idea of the ultimate end was uppermost in the Hindu mind, so they did not attach much value to worldly success or material prosperity ; and all the Shastras have laid very great stress upon the virtue of detachment in all phases of life and religion.

But though the ancient Hindus extolled the virtue of detachment over every thing, though their attention from the earliest time was directed to the mystery of death, yet they never gave themselves up to despair. Pessimism does not find any place in Hindu philosophy. Contemplation of death made the Hindus a nation of philosophers, but it could not turn them sceptics or Agnostics. They refused to yield to sceptic doubts.

“There was a door to which I found no key :
There was a veil past which I could not see :
Some little talk a while of Me and Thee
There seemed —no more of Thee and Me.”

Omar Khayyam’s Rubaiyat—Fitzgerald.

Such a sceptic note was never dominant in Hindu philosophy, religion or art, except in Charvaka, the world’s first uncompromising Agnostic and materialist.

The Hindu sages, on the other hand, emphatically declared “Hear ye all, ye inheritors of immortality.

“Crinwantu Viscwey Amritasya Putra”—They prayed :—“Tamoso Ma Jyotirgamaya”—Lead us from darkness to light.

Vrihadaranyaka 1-3-28.

Again, they have declared :—“Vedahametam Purusham Mahantam Adityavarnam Tamsa Parastat” ;—I have known the great Being who is light beyond the bounds of darkness.¹

¹ We have translated these passages freely than literally to make their import clear to the non-Sanskritic readers.

They have, again, proclaimed in joy :

“Apam Somam Amrita Abhuma
Agauma Jyotirvidan Devan.”

“We have become immortals, we have obtained light, we have known the gods.”

Thus a bold note of robust optimism finds its expression in the Vedas and in Upanishadas.

In the midst of mundane changes, the great sages of India sought for what is permanent, imperishable and changeless, and this they found in their own Soul, a spark of a Blazing Fire (Vrihadaranyak and Manduka) a bubble of the Ocean of light. Human soul is but the Universal Soul imprisoned in a mortal frame. (Akacamekam Hi Jatha Ghatadishu Prithag Bhavet) It is a tiny spark of the Blazing Fire (Brahma) ; human soul is a part of the Divine Soul. This, in the words of Max Muller, is, the greatest discovery that man has made, and this great truth was discovered by the great Sages of India. Therefore, to know one's Self is to know God. The knowledge of Soul is the knowledge of God. “Atmano Va Arey Darcanena Cravanen a Matya Vijnaneno Idam Sarvam

-Viditam Vrihadaranyaka 2/4/5.

Everything becomes known from the knowledge of the Soul.

Thus to a Hindu, human life is not a meaningless existence. To put in the words of a great Tantric, who is no other than the world-famous Swami Vivekananda, “Life is a continual development and unfoldment of Being under circumstances that tend to press it down.”

Human life is not a blind existence ; it has an end of its own and that supreme end is to realise Brahma or God.

From the earliest dawn of civilisation, the attention of the Hindus was directed towards this supreme end of human life. This ever-consciousness of the fleeting character of all worldly objects and their inevitable end urged them to set less and less value to material prosperity and worldly success, and a feeling of detachment became more and more prominent in their character. Therefore, God Siva is the most apt and typical Hindu creation of the embodiment of the virtue of detachment, rather the most appropriate conception of God, consistent with the national character of the Hindus. And this great ideal gradually turned the Hindus indifferent to all vicissitudes of fortune that might befall in their individual lives or in the life of the the nation. What Carlyle, in his *Sartor Resartus*, has described as "The Great Centre of Indifference", that comes from a living faith in Divine Providence, is to be found even in the commonest, illiterate man among the Hindus. Such is the great, traditional heritage of Hindu culture even among the common people; and this, we believe, is the secret that has preserved the Hindus through centuries of revolutions, anarchy, foreign aggressions and cruel oppressions. The ancient Greeks are dead; so are the ancient Romans, only their ruins survive; but the Hindus are still alive and there exists a distinctly tangible thread of continuity of culture between the Hindus of the Vedic times and of the present age! It is, in essence and in spirit, the same stream of culture that is flowing among the Hindus from the hoary time of the Vedas down to the present age. And in spite of radical changes in different departments of life, in spite of all political, social and economic revolutions that divide the Hindus of today from those of the distant past, the Hindus even now cherish and pursue the same great ideals in religion and morality which the great sages of

the Vedas and the Upanishads held before their contemporaries. There have been no doubt radical changes in Hindu Society and in manners and customs from the palmy days of Hindu civilisation, of prosperity and power, but the Hindus still cling fast to their paternal faith and to the great truths and ideals which the great sages of ancient India have enunciated to their country. Such is the wonderful continuity of Hindu culture through thousand and thousand of years.

There is, however, another side of the shield. This indifference to worldly success and to material prosperity has rendered the people apathetic even to improvement and progress. From a false idea of detachment they have grown averse to all exertions and arduous endeavours to fight against adverse circumstances. A dark fatalism rules the majority of the people and they, calmly resign themselves to their fate. A feeling of eunui and indolence has possessed the mass. Lord Sree Krishna who, in his divine wisdom, has distinctly envisaged the probable effects that might arise from a false notion of detachment, raised his clarion voice against it in the Gita and urged the people to do their duties. Duty, for duty's sake, will teach us the true virtue of detachment, and not cessation from all activities.

Against this baneful feature of lethargy and apathy of the people, the Tantras have urged for worship of Sakti or Divine Energy. Worship of Sakti will disturb the pathetic contentment of the people, rouse them from the stupor of centuries and inspire them with energy to strive and to put one's utmost energy for the attainment of perfection and power. And we venture to suggest that Tantric Sadhana rose by way of protest against abject fatalism which very often renders a man indolent and apathetic to all kinds of exertions.

And the Tantras declare that the blessings of Sakti can undo fate. With this end, we think, great stress has been laid upon the worship of Sakti, by whose worship the devotees can attain perfection and power, and can, thereby, annul his fate.

Now, Sakti is almost the reverse of the concept of Siva. Siva is Sthnu, immovable ; it is in one respect, the concept of Divine energy in its Static aspect, motionless, inert and without agitation ; whereas, Sakti is the concept of Divine energy in its Dynamic aspect. Sakti is the personification of the Divine Energy that has brought the universe into existence, that preserves it from disruptive forces. In other words, Sakti is the creative and preservative energy of Brahma. Mother Sakti has brought the universe into existence that lay within her and maintains and preserves it from disintegration and dissolution. Whereas, Siva is the emblem of the destructive forces that lie dormant in the universe. Goddess Sakti is the fullest conception of Brahma in all its aspects. i.e., as Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe. Creation comes from Brahma, rather it is a mode of Divine existence. It is Divine energy that sustains the universe that binds the atoms with atoms. Again, Destruction is also an aspect of Divine energy that goes hand in hand with the creative energy, Thus, the creative, preservative and destructive forces are but the three aspects of the same Divine Energy that exists in Brahma, for there is nothing outside Brahma. Thus Sakti is the fullest conception of Brahma. It goes without saying that we can not think of Brahma without thanking of some attribute of Brahma. The great Ramanuja, the illustrious founder of the Vishista Advaitavad, holds that the absolutely distinctionless and divisionless and indeterminate Brahma which Sankara seeks to establish can not be proved to be real. Thus for the convenience

of human thought there, we think, has arisen the conception of the Hindu Trinity :—Brahma as creator of the universe is Brahma ; Brahma as Preserver of the universe as Vishnu ; and Brahma as Destroyer of the universe, is Rudra or Siva.

“Ekam sad Vipra Vahudha Vadanti”

The Brahmins designate that one reality in various names.

Now, Sakti is the fullest conception of Brahma with all the three great aspects of Divine energy that creates, preserves and destroys.

We have already said that it is simply ridiculous to ascribe any definite sex to Brahma. Nirvikalpa, Nirguna and Nirakara Brahma cannot have any sex, so to say. The Universal Soul is sexless. The Upanishadas also declare that Jiva or soul has no sex : “Na Stri Na Puman Esha Na Chaivayan Napunsaka.” As the apprehension of a formless, attributeless Brahma is not possible (for every apprehension is in the nature, it is such, and as such implies the presence of particular features) and we think of Brahma with some attributes in our imagination ; likewise, we attribute sex to Brahma. Brahma devoid of all attributes, we have already said, has been designated by the Neuter Gender in the Upanishads. Now, logically speaking, Brahma is both the Father and the Mother of the universe ; and Maha-Sakti is the fullest conception of Brahma with the three Gunas, Satwa, Raja and Tamas ; the personification of the creative, preservative and destructive, forces of the universe. Permit us to quote from the Devi Bhagavat a hymn named Sarva Vicwa Janani.

(1)

“I call to mind the Mother of the whole universe
Who has created this world both real and unreal¹ .

¹Real and unreal--Sat and Asat of Vedanta philosophy.

And who by Her own power with three Gunas¹
Protects it, and having destroyed it, she then plays²,

(2)

Commonly it is said that Brahma creates the universe,
Yet the learned in Veda and Purana
Speak of His birth from the novel lotus of Murari,
Although it is said He creates, yet

He is Himself dependent therein.

Even Murari, in the blossom of whose navel-lotus
Brahma was born—

Deeply sleeps upon His serpent-bed
at the time of dissolution,

Therefore, Ananta, with his thousand
hoods, is His support,

How can He who is Himself supported
Be called a leader in the creation of the world ?

(4)

Even the water of ocean which is a liquid substance,
Can not exist without a container, therefore,
I take refuge with Her, the Mother of all beings
Who exists in all things in the form of power.³

(5)

Brahma in the lotus
Seeing the eyes of Vishnu were
closed in deep slumber
Prayed to the Devi with whom I take shelter.”

—A. Avelon's Translation

We shall now speak about the Tantric conception
of the Mahasakti, but before that allow us to
quote the great Sankaracharyya's Tripura Sundari-
Stotra just for one thing. The hymn will show
that the conception of Mahasakti is so abstrusely

¹Satwa, Raja and Tamas.

²Having passed beyond the worlds, She plays, hence she
is called Lalita. Her play is creation.

³Saktirupa

Her body pasted with saffron and sandal,
 Her hair kissed by musk.
 The Mother with smiling eyes,
 With red garlands, ornaments and raiment
 Who holds the arrow, bow, noose and goad
 The charmer of countless men.

(8)

I worship the world-Mother
 Who is served by celestial women,
 The spouse of Indra,
 Skilful in plaiting hair,
 The devoted spouse of Brahma,
 Anointed with sandal paste.
 The spouse of Vishnu
 Adorned with pleasing ornaments."

A. Avelon's Translation.

We now respectfully draw the attention of the readers to certain mystic phrases of deep metaphysical significance in the above quoted hymn, and from this hymn alone it will be amply clear how difficult it is to follow the mystic and figurative expressions of the Tantras by which Mahasakti has been described and Her glory proclaimed, and the hymns and prayers have been composed. We have marked only twenty three expressions from the above hymn, though they require more elaborate exposition. The readers will be pleased to read again the hymn after consulting the following notes. Ofcourse, we do not pretend to possess that amount of knowledge by which we can make everything clear to our readers, nor we presume that all our readers want to be enlightend on these things; rather, we confidently beleive that to the majority of readers our notes and interpretations will be superflous and tedious, like twice told tales, because they are sufficiently known to them. However, as some

might require notes on these things, we have ventured to put them below.

(1) Tripura—The body of Siva became triple in the form of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. The Devi is then (the spouse) the Sakti of the Paramsiva i. e. Divine energy of Brahma.

(2) Kadamba forest i.e. the universe which the Devi permeates., Sree Krishna too has been represented to stand under a Kadamba tree and playing upon his divine flute, calling all to his fold of love,

(3) Three-eyed, we are two eyed ; the central eye is the eye of wisdom which Siva possesses.

(4) Sages—like a rain-cloud, she quenches the spiritual thirst of the sages and devotees.

(5) Greatness, obviously refers to the cosmic image of Sakti, like that of the Viswarupa in the Gita and of the Purusha Sukta in the Rig Veda, and this has been referred to in 8, 10 and 15. Priceless gems refer to stars and other heavenly bodies of the sky. Breasts in verse 10 refer to that in her Viswarupa ; full moon also to that of Viswarupa, her brow is the sky.

(6) Ever-wandering—Dynamic forces of the universe, the Divine energy that is ever working in the universe. There is indeed nothing stationary in nature, but every thing is in motion ; even the door nail is ever in motion. The word rest is a misnomer. (Vide The Restless Universe)

(7) Vina-lyre, stands for harmony. Harmony is the expression of the cosmos, the order of the universe. Out of harmony rose the world and in harmony does it exist. (Pythagoras).

(8) Wine—ambrosia.

(9) Glowing with wine—the spirit of gladness that pervades the creation. She is the Fountainhead of gladness and joy.

- (11) Sweet songs—Reeling in her own joy or self-contentment.
- (12) Playful one—her play is her creation.
- (13) Circle—Nebula of light.
- (14) Six lotuses—Six Chakras of the human body, viz. Muladhara. (2) Svadshisthana
(3) Manipura (4) Anahata (5) Vishuddha
(6) Ajnapadmas.
- (15) Great power—awaking the great potentialities of yogic powers in the devotee.
- (16) Daughter of Matanga, another name of Kali is Matangini.
- (17) Hair—the clouds.
- (18) Destroyer of the wicked ; so Sree krishna speaks of himself in the Gita : Vinashayetu Duskritan.
- (19) Enemy of the god of love is Siva, who reduced Kama into ashes by the fire of his anger.
- (20) Blue garment obviously the vast space designated by the blue sky.

Drops of blood. At the florescent period of youth, garment stained with drops of blood shows that the woman is ready to bear. Here signs are seen which herald her creation.

(21) Paragraph 7 is the Dhyana Murti of Sakti, i.e. the image which the devotee has formed about Sakti in his mind for meditation.

(22) Charmer of countless men—She deludes the people with Maya.

- (23) Spouse of Indra—Sakti or energy of Indra
" " Brahma— " " Brahma
" " Vishnu— " " Vishnu

She is the Sakti of every God ; in other words, she manifests herself as Sakti, power, force or

energy in every thing and in every being. The universe is the manifestation of Sakti.

In the famous Anada Lahari Stava of Sankaracharya, the great philosopher, thus speaks of the great glory of Mahasakti :—

“O Devi ! How can we speak of Thy qualities
Which are not to be described by any Nigama ?

As the Sweetness of Ghee, (1) milk, the grape
and honey.

Can not be distinguished and described by words,
But may be perceived by the tongue only.

In like manner, Thy beauty can be seen only
by the eye of Parameswara.”

*

*

*

“Thou art the Mother of all Vedas,

The Regulator of all Tantras,

And the root of all wealth

Thou whose lotus-feet are worshipped even by
the wealth-giver.

O Mother ! Thou art the Primal cause of all desires,

Victrix of Kandarpa. ¹Thou art the seed of
liberation for the good.

Thou art the spouse of the ParaBrahma” (1)

Again, the Adyakali stotra of the
Mahanirvan Tantra begins thus:—

Hring—O Destroyer of time. (2)

Shring—O Terrific one. (3)

Kring—thou who art beneficent, (4)

Professor of all the arts, (5)

Thou art Kamala. (6)

(1) Spouse, wife in Sanskrit is also called Ardhanagini. So it means half of Brahma, but it denotes, in purport, Divine energy.

(2) Time and space are annihilated in Brahma.

¹The conqueror of lust, Kandarpa

(3) The terror of terror. We shall speak of it later on when we deal with the image of the Goddess Kali.

(4) Merciful and the giver of all blessings.

(5) Goddess of learning, Saraswati, the presiding deity of knowledge and arts.

(6) Kamala, the goddess of prosperity, beauty and wealth and of every thing auspicious.

Such is the lofty conception of the Goddess Sakti in the Tantras, yet, in all seriousness we are asked to believe that Kali as a non-Aryan goddess of the wild aborigines of India, that, in course of time, has crept into the Hindu pantheon of gods and goddesses! Nothing can be more preposterous than this.

We shall now draw the attention of the readers to the image of the Goddess Kali (Sakti) as has been described in the Tantras, and then shall explain the different features of the image.

The Goddess Kali is of pitch-dark complexion, like the blackest night. Her dishevelled hair streames about her like banks of rain-clouds. She wears a necklace of skulls round her neck, and a girdle of severed palms round her loins. In the upper one of the two left arms, she holds an upraised sword, and from the lower arm dangles the severed head of a demon (Danava). She is surrounded by dreadful, ghostly phantoms on all sides. Blood trickles down from the two corners of her mouth. Of the two right hands, by raising the upper arm she assures protection to all creatures against all distress and fear, and she pours forth her blessings on all by the lower one of the right hands.

Mahakal (Mahadeva) his prostrate under her feet. Her face beams forth with divine beauty. Her

expression indicates her bashfulness—she bites her own tongue, as if overwhelmed with a deep sense of shame ! Bright light streaming from the eye of her forehead dispels all darkness around her. The effulgence of her divine beauty illumines the vast abyss of space.

Such is the image of Goddess Kali or Sakti. The image is but the figurative expression of a highly philosophical concept of Brahma, representing all the great divine attributes that we can think of possessed by Brahma or God. The Hindu Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara, stands for the concept, as every one knows, of Brahma as the creator ; (2) Brahma as the preserver ; (3) and Brahma as the destroyer of the universe ; here the three aspects of the three great attributes of Brahma have been separately thought of but Brahma, the creator, Brahma, the preserver and Brahma the destroyer are one and the same,—the Indivisible, Infinite and Eternal God. Goddess Sakti stands for the image of the fullest concept of Brahma representing all the above three aspects or attributes of Brahma together. Sakti is the creator, the preserver and, at the same time, the destroyer of the universe.

We shall now venture to offer the simplest possible explanations of the image, avoiding all metaphysical intricacies as far as practicable.

The complexion of the Goddess Kali is pitch dark, like a Newmoon-night of the blackest hue. Why it is so ? The reason is obvious. What is the concrete object that naturally suggests to us an idea of the Infinite ? Evidently, the vast, illimitable and unbounded sky. And the sky is normally dark. Hence, the colour of the Goddess Sakti is dark, like that of Sree Krishna, who also stands for the conception of Brahma, as the Eternal Lord of love, and of the Spirit of love that pe-

meates the universe, the love that appears in the physical world as the force of attraction that preserves the universe of things from disruption. Lord Sree Krishna is the incarnation of Vishnu, and the derivative meaning of Vishnu is the pervader of the universe i. e. He who exists by pervading the universe. Vishnu is the preserver of the universe. He represents the divine love of Brahma, for the creation that sustains it. Lord Sree Krishna's complexion is dark, because he is Infinite God.

The dishervelled hair of Sakti that streams around her evidently signifies the vast banks of clouds that we ever find floating in the sky and these stand for, as we have already observed, the matted locks of Mahadeva or Siva.

She wears a necklace of skulls, a girdle of severed a palms; she holds an upraised sword for destruction in the upper hand of her two left arms, and in the lower one she holds the severed head of a demon. She is surrounded by ghostly phantoms of hideous sights. Blood trickles down the two corners of her mouth. These are the indicative of the terrible aspect of universal death, destruction and dissolution that are ceaselessly and silently going on, i.e. occurring every moment around us. It is a part of the Brahma's Viswarupa. It inspires us with paralysing fear. This is exactly what has been described by Arjuna in the Srimad Bhagavat Gita, when Lord Sree Krishna revealed to him the Viswarupa.

—Vide Gita chap. II ! verses 24 to 30.

This is what has been stated by the expression, "Shring, O Terrific one' in the Adykali stotra of the Mahanirvan Tantra.

We have already said that the Hindus from the earliest time became keenly conscious about

the ultimate end of all things and beings. This reflection about the ultimate end has turned them a philosophical people. It was not that the Hindus were afraid of death but they knew that death will, one day, come to all, and they kept themselves ready for that inevitable end. This is what Manu has said:—

“Donot hunger for life, nor hanker after death, keep yourself ready to respond to the Master’s call whenever it comes.” This resignation and calm philosophical attitude of the Hindus towards death is what shakespeare has said, “Readiness is all.”

It is hard to restrain the temptation of quoting a few lines from a highly thoughtful and a theistic writer:— “The knowledge of the real facts about death at once destroys both the terror and the anxiety; the man who is instructed upon these points, recognises death as but an incident in life and realises that the existence upon the other side is no more to be dreaded than is that upon this side”—The Other Side of Death—The Rt, Rev.

C. W. Lead Beater.

That our fear of death springs mostly from our ignorance and from the instinctive terror of utter annihilation can not be gainsaid,¹ whereas knowledge dispels that fear.

By raising the upper hand of the two right arms she assures all creatures protection against all fear and danger. There are terrific forces in Nature, puny beings tremble before them, they are too weak too helpless; they may be utterly annihilated at any moment by any one of those terrible, destructive forces of nature, but there is mercy of God, that infinite kindness and mercy protect the universe and fill every heart with

¹The reader on this point may profitably read Maurice Materlinck’s treatise called, Death’

kind assurance and hope that there is, after all, great shelter against all these in the Divine love that sustains and supports the universe, like a mother's love. Again, with the lower hand of the two right arms, she bestows her blessings on all. Here, there is no discrimination. All the children alike, independent of their merits or demerits, share in mother's divine love for her offsprings. Mother is generous, kind and loving to all her children ;there is no limit to mother's blessings or bounty. Likewise, there is no limit to Divine grace and love. They are unbounded, they embrace all, nothing can exist even for a moment outside this magnetic zone of Divine love that attracts every thing and every being to the loving bosom of God. This is what has been expressed in the Adyakali Stotra of the Mahanirvan Tantra by Kring—Thou who art beneficent. Fifth, Mahakal rolls under the feet of the Goddess Kali.

Mahakal is another name for Siva, or the great Lord of destruction and death. But the Sanskrit word Kala also denotes time. Mahakal here evidently denotes the image of eternal Time. Now, Time has no existence to God. Time and space are annihilated in Brahma and this is what has been expressed in the Adyakali stotra of the Mahanirvan Tantra, as "Hring—O Destroyer of Time." Sixth, It seems, the great Goddess is ashamed of her own conduct and there is an expression of bashfulness on her divinely beautiful face. It naturally denotes an incident that is connected with the mythical legend associated with the image of Kali. Mahakal or Siva in Hindu mythology is the divine consort of Goddess Kali. So the Goddess becomes naturally smitten with a deep sense of shame by witnessing her own husband rolling under her feet, which Siva did in order to dissuade the Goddess from her further act of destruction. Sakti is Destroyer

in both her capacities as the universal Destroyer of everything and as the destroyer of all wicked souls that stand in the path of universal welfare. These wicked souls are the Demons and Danavas of the Hindu mythology. About these evil elements that interfere with the well-being and peace of the world, Lord Sreekrishna says, in the Gita, that, for the destruction of the wicked ones and for establishing the rule of righteousness, He will take his birth again and again on the earth.

The idea of universal destruction is also closely associated with the notion of the destruction of all moral evils that stand in the path of universal peace and progress. The great Goddess Kali, in one aspect, is the Destroyer of the universe and, in another aspect, the destroyer of all evil and, wicked elements that disturb the well-being of the world. Now, we have ventured to put a very humble interpretation to the incident of Mahakal rolling under the feet of the Goddess Kali. This representation, we think, not only denotes that Time is annihilated in Brahma, but also figuratively implies that divine mercy ever counteracts and interferes with His latent potentiality for universal destruction. Siva, or God Bholanath, is all-forgiving and all-forgetting. Divine mercy is ever ready even to bless the wicked, it is by their own perverseness that they invite their own destruction and death, divine mercy is helpless to save them, for they will rush head long to ruin.

Again, we have ventured to interpret the expression of bashfulness in our own humble way. We are very often blind to this Divine love that surrounds us like the mother's love and often saves us from destruction and ruin. It remains concealed from our distorted vision, which is all-engrossed with the sights of material objects. In our overjealousness for material welfare and in

over-anxiety for all material obstacles that may stand in the way of achieving our ends and in fulfilling our desires, we overlook the saving grace of God. This is, we venture to think, one of the reasons, that expression of the Goddess is indicative of bashfulness; our spiritual blindness turn us indifferent to this saving grace of God, so it fights shy to reveal itself to us. Again, the revelation of the Spirit in us is like the revelation of an extremely shy maid, very reluctant to reveal her beauty to the profane gaze of the world. God's creation loudly proclaims its existence, but God remains hidden behind His creation. So Goddess Kali is shy to reveal Herself to us. We must by our efforts and Sadhana make Herself reveal to us.

God is ever unknown to us, but, the Hindu Shastras declare, though unknown but not unknowable. By our Sadhana, moral and spiritual discipline, by Jnan (knowledge) we can know or realise God. This rare incident is like the revelation of an extremely shy thing to us. This is, we think, is one of the meanings that we may find in the expression of shyness of the Goddess Kali. Brahma, as if, is always shy to reveal Him to us.

Seventh, the central eye, or the eye on the forehead, indicates the eye of wisdom or knowledge. It is Jnan or knowledge that dispels all ignorance and doubt about God, like physical light that destroys all physical darkness and illumines every object with its brightness.

Eighth, the effulgence of her divine beauty illumines the universe. The beauty of the universe, the beauty of every thing and every being, is the expression of Divine beauty. It is divine beauty that we love and admire in an object, which in-itself has no intrinsic beauty of its own. The beauty of the universe and of every object in it is the reflection of Divine beauty.

This is what is figuratively expressed by the image of the Goddess Kali in the Tantras. Ofcourse, we have as briefly as possible described the broad outlines of the great image, without least attempting to go deep into the abstruse philosophical significance connected with it.

“There was darkness in the beginning, let there be light and there was light, so says the Book of Genesis in the Bible. We need not be harsh as Thomas Huxley in his ‘Illogical Geology,’ where he tears the Biblical account of creation into fragments by his irrefutable logic. The theory of creation as given in the Upanishads can stand the scrutiny of strictest logic and Science, and the Goddess Sakti, in one aspect, is the image of the begining and end of universe. The origin of the universe, as well as of every thing, is dark, and its end is also shrouded in darkness. The great Goddess of darkness or Kali alone can dispel this and can illumine the devotee’s heart. Once, you are blessed with divine grace, all darkness melts away, and you become immersed in the ocean of light; you are carried away on the crest of the waves of light that surge all round you, and you lose yourself in the rapturous emotion of joy that defies all attempts of description, and your spiritual darkness is removed by divine light, the light that was never on the land or on the sea. That was what Ramkrishna Paramhansa realised when the great Mother revealed herself from the stony sheath of the image, which Paramhansa worshipped with rapturous devotion and love¹. The divine transport and the rapturous emotion that the flashing image of the great Goddess awakens in the devotee’s heart, struggling in the darkness of doubt and despair, defy all attempts of

¹ Vide Romain Rolland’s Life of Ram Krishna Paramhansa.

philosophical reflection can not fully exhibit the living character of reality, for reality in the light of philosophy is more an object of intellectual comprehension which is more to be understood than to be realised or felt. Therefore, sheer philosophical view of things lacks all emotional elements, so religion in the light of pure philosophy is more a cold intellectual abstraction than an object of deep emotion. But it is the emotional content that is all-important in religion, and the emotional element may be said to be the vital breath of religion that keeps it alive. Herein mysticism comes in and scores a triumphant victory over cold philosophy. Permit us to quote something from the observations of a learned Bengali professor :—

“The Philosopher and the mystic start from the identical point, self-consciousness, but while the philosopher limits himself to its normal functioning and intuitions, the mystic acquaints himself with its growing ranges and its subtler expansions and, therefore, his venture is the natural fulfilment of the enquiries into self-consciousness and its functioning. The philosopher encounters the natural opposition between the self and not-self and can not over-ride it, and, therefore, only views the sections of conscious life, leaving its wide range untouched. The mystic is more appealing, because he is more adventurous in withdrawing his consciousness from natural limitations and hence his claim is higher. The philosopher accepts the grades of knowledge as sensuous, conceptual and intuitive ; but his task is a construction upon the former two ; even when he demonstrates the contradictions involved in the nature of thought, he takes his inspirations either from the creative aspect of consciousness or takes his rest in the absolute thinking that contradictions are somehow

harmonised therein. But the philosopher is not sufficiently equipped to pass beyond mental construction into the elastic life of the spirit and and to enjoy its delicate movements and subtle formations."

"It is indeed a great privilege to be acquainted with the subtle turns in conscious life. The wider reaches of consciousness may understand better the laws of the limited expression, its meaning, movement and force and may finally educate and transform it by shedding its own light upon them. The continuity of life and its expression can be seen in finer light of gradation through the subconscious, conscious and the super-conscious, and the same thread of life can be traced through them, for they really represent the same in its increasing elasticity and fineness. The law of formations in the lower movement of life then stands clear. *Mysticism seizes upon the fine threads of consciousness to unlock the mysteries of existence.*¹ And in this attempt it has a scientific interest; for it unmask the hidden depths of supra-conscious life. Psychology can not confine itself solely to normal mental activities, for whatever is conscious is a matter of interest for Psychology. The method that is followed is simple, for it is none other than introspection carried into the finer and higher reaches. The mystic is the self-experimenter, for his method is to give up conscious study and let the consciousness tell its own story in its wise passiveness. Really, in this height, consciousness is made free, and probably the one end in spiritual philosophy is to taste the joy of this freedom of conscious life by the removal of its limitations and ignorance. It should not be lost upon us that mysticism has its chief attraction in

¹ We have put the passage, in italics, for it describes the true nature of mysticism.

acquainting us with the cosmic ways and ends and in releasing us from the short ways of life. This is specially true of Indian mysticism. Even in dynamic mysticism this ideal has not been lost sight of. Though personality has been the chief basis or hold of mystical consciousness, the ideal has been the access of conscious life unfettered and cosmic in its movement. The cosmic depth of existence with the free play of life has been the rock upon which mysticism fastens its anchor, the aspiration being the intimate acquaintance with the movement of life in infinite layers of existence. It is naturally this sympathy with the symphonies of life enjoyed in their concreteness, as well as in their vastness, that makes mystical life a blessing and an attraction. Mystical life exhibits the unity of existence in a superior way ; the details of existence are shown in the cosmic setting and it is this knowledge and its ways that human mind in its profound aspiration must discover as the demand of our being. The real value of non-attachment lies in affording a release from the insurgent ways of life and in intimating us with the divine ways. Non-attachment releases us from the dubious ways and opens out vista of wider sketches of life. It affords release from the mentalised ways of expression in art, history, philosophy and discovers new path ways of expression born of extreme detachment. Mysticism in all its forms does not silence life and its creative expression, in some form it emerges out with diviner synthetic note which pervades life. The mystical experiences are not cut off from our personal life. The personal here exhibits itself as the cosmical ; at least, the dimension of an being and feelings show their cosmical nature for they are elevated to a supra-mental plane where the character of our experience changes. The limitations of our experience are withdrawn and our consciousness is released

from its historicity and environmental setting. The opening of our consciousness on the higher levels does not mystify our experience, but shows its wideness and infinite modulations. It is indeed the privilege of dynamic mysticism to the vertical and horizontal expressions of spirit and to accept and to deny the details of existence and to read them with cosmic meaning and significance. The conflict and discord are dissolved as soon as the access into the fountain spring is attained. This is not a mentalised understanding but a direct seeing into the heart of things."

"Dynamic mysticism here in India has taken its chief expression in Vaishnavism and in Tantricism. Both of them have a philosophic approach to Truth and in spite of the differences in the cast of thought their unanimity lies in the emphasis put upon the dynamic aspect of existence and upon psychic harmony of being as yielding final insight and access. A poise of being with complete detachment from the usual ways may be a necessity. It does not follow a philosophic understanding or contemplation but the psychic tremor of being. Dynamic mysticism relies more upon it than upon anything, for it reveals the mysteries of divine life which it is not possible for intellect to see or understand. The intellectual background is necessary to equip the understanding but the psychic insight is required to enter into the mysteries of the spirit and to enjoy them. A psychic unfolding may give us more than what even we can imagine and without this dynamic in its full particulars and possibilities can hardly be followed and appreciated."

Contemplation And Rapport

By

Prof. Mahendra Nath Sircar

Such mystico were the great sages of India from the earliest time up to Ramkrishna Paramhansa; and there are many such even now, whose ardent devotional fervour has lifted them to the highest spiritual plane. It is, however, a highly striking thing that most of the famous mystics of India within the last thousand years were mostly Tantric saints. The reason for this, seems to us, to be the unique feature of Tantric Sadhana, which, we have already remarked, utilises and employs all mental and physical potentialities of the devotee for the attainment of spiritual bliss. The Tantric form of worship is generally more absorbing than other forms, as it tries to turn even all instincts and appetites of man for the cultivation of religion and for such moral and spiritual culture that may stand the test of all wordly temptations. Thus, Tantricism is apt to create a mystic temperament in its devotee; and the greatest maystic since the birth of Sri Chaitanya of whom we possess any authentic, historical account was a Sakta devotee of Bengal, whom Ramkrishna designated as an Emancipated Being from the very birth. The name of this great devotee is Ramprasad Sen, who, it is said, ever lived in the living presence of his deity, the Divine Mother of the universe. That he always lived in deep spiritual transport is evidenced by his immortal songs which are unique in world's literature for their devotional fervour. They are also unparalleled for their poetical wealth, happy imagery, flights of imagination, depths of thought and deep philosophical import.¹

¹The present writer does not pretend to be a linguist or a literary scholar, but if any idea or knowledge of songs in other languages can be gathered through the medium of English, this humble writer feels bold enough to assert, with all the emphasis he can command, that Ramprasad's songs are the highest and best in the sphere of divotional songs. Their spontaneous flow, graceful ease, unaffected simplicity "ravishing sweetness and deep emotional fervour have rendered them quite unique in world's literature. No sooner than a song

Ramprosad Sen was born about 200 years ago and was a court-poet of Maharaja Krishna Chandra of Krishnagar (Nadia) one of the conspirators against Sirajuddaula, the last independent Nabob of Bengal. Ramprosad Sen was a Vaidya by caste, one the three higher castes, of Bengal. But he made no distinction between man and man simply on the ground of birth. He was, indeed, one of the greatest cosmopolitans of men. Nay more, to him even the humblest creature was the child of his Divine Mother. In one of his great songs, Ramprosad protests against the animal sacrifice before the Goddess Kali, saying :

“Every creature is the child of the Mother ;
The Mother never disowns any ;
And in order to please that Mother
Thou killest a kid !

It was Ramprasad sen who first expressed in Bengali the true spirit of the Tantras, explained their profound philosophy, and gave correct interpretations of many Tantric rites and mystic rituals, and strongly protested against their profane and wrong interpretations by the ignorant and immoral people. His songs are a living protest against popular superstition and prejudice. Ramprosad made no distinction between Saktatism and Vaishnavism. To him, Krishna and Kali were one and the same, exhibiting only the two phases of the Divine Lila. In one of his great songs, he sings :

of his is sung, it sets the inmost chords of one's heart, vibrating with the deep devotional ardour of a living faith which, for the time being, is generated by the song even in the most sceptic soul. Such is the wonderful power of Ramprosad's devotional songs, one need not at all be Sakta to enjoy them. They express the noblest religious sentiments of man in general.

¹Vincent Arther Smith in his History of India has observed that the Vaidyas were a sect of Deccanese Brahmins who settled in Bengal and took to medical profession.

There is lotus of thousand petals in the
 body, offer that to the Mother's feet.
 What use hast thou of a lamp or a chandelier ?
 Let the light of knowledge burn day and night.
 Ramprosad says, what need hast thou of
 musical instruments ?
 Clap thy hands in joy, resting thy mind
 on the Mother's feet.

Such was the spiritual and moral alchemy or ardent mysticism of Ramprosad Sen, that could invest even the common articles of worship with profound a spiritual signification. Such a mysticism comes only from a very close communion with God, that enables the devotee to live ever in the transport of spiritual bliss and in the beatitude of spirit. We can not better explain this than in the words of a remarkable writer, Alexis Carrel, Nobel Laureate. Alexis Carrel is a man of science and he has observed the following about mysticism in his famous Book "Man, The Unknown," that has earned him the Nobel Prize. He says ;—"It (mysticism) requires an elevation of the mind toward a being who is the source of all things, toward a power, a centre of forces, whom the mystic calls God."

Further on he thus observes :—"Mysticism in its highest state, comprises a very elaborate technique, a strict discipline. First, the practice of asceticism. It is impossible to enter the realm of mysticity without ascetic preparation, as it is to become an athlete without submitting to physical training. Initiation to asceticism is hard. Therefore, very few men have courage to venture upon the mystic way. He who wants to undertake this rough and difficult journey must renounce all the things of this world, and family, and himself. Then he may have to dwell for a long time in the shadows of spiritual night. While asking for the grace of God and deploring his degradation

undeservedness, he undergoes the purification of all the things of this world and, finally, himself. Then he may have to dwell for a long time in the shadows of spiritual night. While asking for this grace of God and deploring his degradation and undeservedness, he undergoes the purification of his senses. It is the first and dark stage of mystic life. He progressively weans himself from himself. His prayer becomes contemplation. He enters into illuminative life. He is not capable of describing his experiences. When he attempts to express what he feels, he sometimes borrows, as did St John of the Cross, the language of carnal love. His mind escapes from space and time. He apprehends an ineffable Being. He reaches the stage of unitive life. He is in God and acts with Him."

"The life of all great mystics consists of the same steps. We must accept their experiences as described by them. Only those who themselves have led the life of prayer are capable of understanding its peculiarities."

"Mysticism," again observes Mr. Alexis Carrel, "is splendidly generous : It brings to man the fulfilment of his highest desires. Inner strength, spiritual light, divine love, ineffable peace."

"Man, The Unknown"

The above-quoted observations stand true, word per word, about Ramprosad Sen, as we read his life-history, and the account of his Sadhana as expressed in his immortal songs. It was he, as we have already said, who at least in Bengal, first penetrated into the deeper significance of the figurative and mystic teachings of the Tantras and illumined them by his divine light, and whose own life was the living embodiment of the highest spiritual attainments.

Such were all the great sages of India and such was Ramkrishna Paramhansa in our time. Ramprosad and Ramkrishna will ever be honoured as the greatest Apostles of the true tenets of the Tantra and of Tantric religion which were corrupted by their vicious adherents, by men, which the Tantras have themselves described to be of Pashu Bhava i.e. of animal proclivities. In the lives of great saints, like Ramprosad and Ramkrishna we should seek for the true interpretation of the tenets of Tantric religion and not to their superficial literary import, because they have been mostly expressed in cryptic language that very often hides their real meaning. Again, Tantric form of religion tries to lead the devotee through temptations for the attainment of the highest moral and spiritual perfection that will triumph over all temptations and wordly attachments and conquer everything that may stand in the way of the attainment of the highest spiritual bliss or emancipation.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME MYSTIC SYMBOLS

The Tantras make an extensive use of mystic symbols, which were and are very often misinterpreted either from ignorance or from corrupt motives. We have called them mystic symbols because they help the devotee to be in closer communion with the Deity, which is the true significance of mysticism. Whether they help or not is to be found out by practice. No amount of literary discussion can prove or disprove their truth.

The Tantras claim for their doctrines the support of experimental test and are ready to accept the challenge of demonstrating how the Deity can be realised through the Mantras.

The Tantric form of Sadhana is of a highly mystical type, as we have already remarked, and much of it is expressed in dark symbols, "the key to which rests only with the initiated." Like all other occultism, the Tantras "Vile their teachings under the garb of cryptic words and symbols, People uninitiated in the mysteries of deep spiritual significance embodied in the symbols, very often misunderstood these latter and engaged themselves in dark and obscene and definitely immoral practices with the false idea of following the genuine Tantric methods."¹

The most notorious instance of the aforesaid misinterpretations of these cryptic expressions is the deliberate misconstruction of the Pancha Makars of the Tantras ; Madya, Matsya, Mansa, Maithuna and Mudra, Now, Madya is not wine ; Matsya is not fish ; neither Mansa is meat, nor Maithuna is sexual intercourse, as they are literally interpreted to be.

"People, only looking at the literal translation, charge the Tantric worshippers," observes a profound scholar of the Tantras, "with so many technical terms for various Yoga processes, having a grand esoteric meaning behind them. Even if these words are taken in their literal sense, they indicate a great and a hard trial for a worshipper. If, however, one can overcome his temptations, his passage is clear."

We must here, however, admit that certain rites and rituals, which of course though not, in any way, immoral seem to be meaningless and even in some instances appear to be atrocious, as for example, annual sacrifice, have crept into general Tantric forms of worship. How and when they

¹ Vide Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana by prof Nalini Kanta Bahma.

found their acceptances, it is impossible to speak any thing definitely on that point. Animal sacrifice, however, seems to us to be an offshoot of two literal interpretations of some of the Tantric Mantras. Now, some of the animals typify our passions, as for instance, a goat stands for carnal desires ; and buffalo, for anger. It is highly desirable that we should sacrifice our carnal desires and anger at the feet of the Deity ; henceforth, we think an innocent kid and a harmless buffalo have come to be sacrificed on the altar before the Deity. Likewise, the grim practice of human sacrifice that, we hear, was sometimes observed in connection with some Tantric forms of worship, perhaps resulted from a distortion of the lofty injunction of the Tantras that we should sacrifice body and soul at the feet of the Mother i.e. should lead a dedicated life. It might have been also the result of Sab-Ashana Sadhana, which we think was introduced to conquer the feeling of disgust and hatred, and also to inspire a feeling of detachment and a consciousness of the ultimate end of human life at the time of Sadhana. Sab-Ashana would induce an ardent devotee to search for an unclaimed body in a public crematory, whose doleful environments were calculated to inspire the devotee to renounce all desires for worldly things and to life to the feet of the Deity. This, we think, dedicate his might have been the origin of human sacrifice before the goddess. Very fortunately, however, that dark days are absolutely obsolete for ever.

The real significance of the Pancha Makars, we believe, have been deliberately perverted by vicious people from a desire to give a sanctimonious air to their animal appetites than from real ignorance. The Tantras are believed to encourage immoral practices ! But permit us to quote a few lines from the Mahanirvan Tantram.

“He, who renouncing truth, follows Tantric religion, does not obtain salvation from it, on the contrary he is polluted with sin.”

Against drunkenness, the Mahanirvan Tantram thus declares : “The king should confiscate the property of, and punish that dreadful wight whose words falter and hands and feet shake, who makes mistakes, is of deranged mind and fretful.”

It asks the king to administer a condign punishment to the drunkard whose senses are not under his control :—“The king should confiscate his property and burn his tongue.”

All the Tantras strongly protest against the inclusion of any person of animal proclivities and of low desires within a Tantric Chakra. Then even the virtuous, says the Tantra, will be contaminated by sin and will be degraded to hell.

In Bengal, first Ramprosad Sen and then Ramkrishna Paramhansa showed by their pure lives what Tantric Sadhana really signified and how it was far removed from false and corrupt interpretation of Tantric rites and rituals and the immoral practices committed under the false garb of religion.

Now, the following is the simple meaning of the Pancha Makars : Madya is the nectarine stream issuing from cavity of the brain where the soul resides.

Matsya means the suppression of Vital airs.

Mansa—Vow of Silence

Maithuna—Meditation on the acts of
Creation and destruction.

Mudra—Interweaving of fingers during religious worship. It is a physical process that is calculated to enhance concentration of the worshipper.¹ Of

¹ Vide the end of this Chapter.

the Makars, the word Maithuna, perhaps, may require some elucidation.

Meditation about one's self resolves into three main enquiries :—What am I ? Whither shall I go ? or What is my end ?

Reflections about these questions naturally lead to the contemplation about creation, *cogito ergo sum* can be properly understood only in relation to the creation of the universe. In fact, the philosophy of Self is intimately connected with the Philosophy of the World and the Philosophy of God. One naturally leads to the other two.

Now, the Tantras hold that creation results from the union of Purusha with Prakriti, which, of course, ultimately are the two modes of Eternal Brahma. This union between Purusha and Prakriti has been figuratively expressed in the Phallic symbol of Siva,—the emblem of creation. If we leave aside a few exceptions, the whole world of living things is the offshoot of sexual creation. A sexual creation is only a very rare exception where the propagation of the species takes place by the fragmentations or divisions of living cells or by the fusion of male and female sperms lying in the same organism. But they seldom meet our eyes. Hence a man is apt to think about the origin of life as an act of sexual creation. This empirical knowledge about creation, on the ground of analogy, has been extended to the creation of the whole universe, which has been figuratively expressed as the fruit of the union between Purusha and Prakriti. Tantras have expressed this union in the esoteric figure of the united Phallic symbol of Siva and Sakti (Purusha and Prakriti) united together, the emblem of creation. Maithuna too contemplates about the wonderful origin of creation and its final end. The very meditation about

one's self and about God is apt to lead, at least, to arouse a casual contemplation about the creation. It is not only highly sacrilegious, but also nothing is more ridiculous than to think that coition is a necessary adjunct of worship. Coition is a provision of nature for creation. The Tantric creed, we believe, implies that the act of coition should induce us to think of the wonder of creation and that it should be viewed and practised only as an act of creation (with which instinct every creature is born) and not merely as a vehicle for the gratification of lust. At least that was the lofty ideal of the Hindu and is still the cardinal principle of Hindu marriage i. e. for begetting issue.

Now, these esoteric expressions and mystic symbols are but auxiliaries to Yoga, the most fundamental feature of Hindu Sadhana among all the schools of Hindu religion.

What is Yoga? Yoga literally means union or addition, but in its special sense it means withdrawal of mind from everything (Yoga Chittavritti Nirodha) and concentrating it upon a particular object, which is, generally, the Deity of the devotee. Yoga is that psychical condition that enables the devotee to be in closer communion with the Deity. Yoga not only helps the devotee to acquire the highest spiritual bliss, but it also arouses great occult powers that lie dormant in man, by awakening great potentialities of the mind that normally exist, as if in a stupor of sleep, in the subconscious region. Now, for this greatest concentration of the mind an utmost self control is necessary. But this cannot be easily acquired. For such acquisition, severe moral and intellectual discipline, which consists of certain physical and psychical processes, are necessary. We may call these processes as the mechanical contrivances of Yoga, something like what is known in Logic,

as the collection of forces with regard to the Law of causation. These mechanical contrivances consist of certain bodily postures (as in the form of Asanas etc) and the regulation of breath or Pronayam; and the regulation of the vital airs of the system is the most important of all the processes in Yogic Sadhana and it is upon this regulation of breath and Mantras that the Tantras lay the highest stress. We quote below the observations of a learned writer on this point as they very aptly, and at the same time quite briefly, describe the cardinal feature of Tantric Sadhana:—

“The Hindu Risis discovered the great energy (Birat Sakti) which is the source of creation and Nada, Prana, Sabda etc. are only synonymous for that Cosmic Energy. This Sabda or Nada, as cosmic Energy, is the soul of this universe, and, as the breath of living beings, constitutes their life. This Nada or vibration is the source of the universe, and, as illumination, is also consciousness. This gross form of Nada supports the things of the universe as their soul, and its subtle form, again, is represented by the Absolute Goddess (Parameswari) as Chinmayee Kali. The Hindus attempted to realise the subtle form through the gross one and to reach illumination by generating the corresponding vibration. The recitations of the name of God, all aim at awakening illumination through vibration.”

“The Tantras explain clearly Chit and Sabda, illumination and vibration, reach two parallel aspects, the subtle and gross forms of the same thing. Nada or Sabda is the very first manifestation of Chit and is just adjacent to it. The external things and their shapes are materialised forms of vibrations, and in them the Chit becomes more latent and hidden. In Nada or vibration, the Chit is not so materialised, but retains much of its fluidity, and it is because of this fact that

it is easier to awaken the Chit element in and through vibration (Nada) than through external things and forms."

"Nada is really intermediate between Chit and Nada, neither so solid as external things nor so fine and absolutely immaterialised as Chit. The utility and efficacy of Nada Sadhana cannot be overestimated. It is the invaluable discovery of the Tantras and the priceless gift to the world, that Vibration (Nada) and illumination (Jnana) are two parallel manifestations of the same Cosmic Energy or Sakti and that, as such, the one can lead to and awaken the other without fail. The vibrations can be easily got hold of in the forms of breath (Prana) and Sabda (Dhvani) and Chit can be realised through them, which by itself eludes the grasp of even the most discriminate and intelligent amongst men (Yamala Tantra)"

"The Dhvani or Nada acquires immense strength when joined with Susumna Nadi, which is supposed to be the central nerve of the nervous system. The Susumna is really the point of harmony and is represented to exist intermediate between the 'Ida' and 'Pingala' on the left and right respectively. It is the nervous or physical counterpart of synthetic and harmonious thought. As thought attains great strength when these synthetic point is reached, so also does sound gain immensely in strength when the point of synthesis, which is marked by a peculiar resonance, is reached. The rhythmic and harmonious sound is the nearest and the most immediate physical expression of Chit or consciousness and is thus expected to awaken illumination. Much stress has been laid upon the Susumna in the Tantras. The mantras which remain mere dead letters so long they are not uttered with Susumna joined unto them, acquire wonderful powers as soon as the Susumna joins

with them. (Tantra Sara) The Tantras recognise six important centres (Chakras) in the nervous system and the Susumna Nadi passes through all of them. In the ordinary normal state of the individual, the Susumna is not awakened or recognised, and the path through these centres to the thousand petalled centre in the cerebrum (Sahasvara) is also closed. Through proper exercise (Krya) and meditation (Bhavana) the centres begin to work and the working of the Susumna is clearly perceived. The Kundalini Sakti which remains latent and dormant in the Muladhar passes along the Susumna to the Sahasvara and becomes fully awakened there. What this Susumna is difficult to explain in physiological terms. But there is not the least doubt that same physiological process within the centre of the nervous system and which the Tantras have discovered to be most immediately connected with consciousness, is implied by it. And there is also hardly any doubt that Susumna implies the harmonious working of all the parts of the nervous system and represents the working of the system as a whole rather than any particular process. It seems to be a higher point of harmony than what is implied by Kumbhaka or the equalisation of respiratory process in Patanjala-Yoga. Prana and Nada, breath and sound, both are concomittants of consciousness ; but harmonious sound seems to stand more adjacent to the consciousness than harmonious breath.

“The groin body is to be harmonised through regulated physical postures (Asana); the internal vital processes are to be harmonious with regulated breath (Pranayam); the higher cerebral centres are to be harmonised through regulated sounds with Susumna and the mental processes are to be harmonised through meditation (Bhavana) and thus harmony in the physical, physiological and mental spheres has to be attained in order

to prepare the proper pre-condition for spiritual realisation. In fact, thought, sound or vibration, and motion are but the three principal factors in creation and they represent the three stages of the same energy in three different planes. That there are points of harmony in thought, harmony in sound and harmony in motion is clearly perceptible, though their location in the nervous centres has not yet been scientifically traced. The Tantras found in the harmony the secret of all realisation, and preached a method that sought harmony in all planes and sides of existence. Harmony lies in the middle of two extremes, and the Susumna also lies between the two extremes Ida and Pingala. In one word, Susumna is harmony, and to discover this reconciliatory meeting point (Sandhi) or the point of synthesis or (Susumna) is everything that seems to be the central aim of the Tantric mode of Sadhana”

* * * “The Tantras would claim for their doctrines the support of experimental task and would accept the challenge of demonstrating how Devata (Deity) becomes realised through the Mantras.”

“The Tantras recognise four distinct forms and stages of Sabda, Para, Pasyanti, Madhyama and Vaikhari Vak. The first three are 'inaudible. By Sabda-Brahma or Nada the Tantra does not mean Vaikhari or manifested sound, but the Para Sabda or Dhavan that is the dynamic source of the universe.”

“Para and Pasyanti represent Iswara Sakti and Vaikhari represents Virat Sakti.”

“The Tantra recognises three stages of Sadhana and marks out five subdivisions of the entire course of discipline. The three stages are purification (Suddhi) Illumination (Sthiti) and unification (Tarpana) corresponding roughly to Karma, Bhakti

and Jnana. The five subdivisions are ablution (Snana), gratification (Tarpana), meditation (Sandhya), worship (Puja) and complete self-abnegation (Homa). Snana and Tarpana (purification of body and mind) prepare the Sadhaka for the next stage. Meditation and worship (Sandhya and Puja) of the Divine become possible when a divinity is earned through prior purifactory process. 'Only the divine can worship the Divine' (Worship of Siva who represents absolute purity and goodness as all white, is only possible by a heart free from all impurities). The next stage is the stage of complete self-surrender and absolute merging. This is the stage of unification and is described in the Bhagavad Gita by the word Visatay XVIII. 55) enters or merges into one. This is what is signified Homa, the culminating process in Tantric Sadhana. The Jiva Sakti, which, through purification, previously attained an element of divinity became Deva Sakti, now becomes identified with Siva-Sakti. Then no distinction between the worshipper and the worshipped remains."

Full correspondence between the mind and the body was recognised by the formulators of the Tantras,

"The Jiva Sakti lies dormant at the root of the spine (Muladhar) and passes through the gradually higher and higher centres in the base of the penis, navel, heart, throat and forehead to the cerebrum. The controlling cerebral centre is Parama Siva. The Susumna is the innermost nerve-current that joins the lowest and the highest nerve centres, the Jiva and the Siva. The bondage of the individual consists in his being determined by the lower nerve centres; liberation, again, happens when the highest centre controls and subordinates all the other lower centres. The conscious working at the higher centres, the definite

turn from the control of the lower self by the Higher is, perhaps, what is signified by the awakening of the Kundalini Sakti.”

The learned author further adds:—“It (the Tantra) prescribes different methods and rules for the conduct of life for men of different equipments and capacities. It distinguishes three classes of Sadhakas in order of merit, viz. the Pasu, the Vira and the Divya.

“The Pasu is a person who has not yet attained self-control but is attempting to have mastery over his passions and impulses. The Vira is a Sadhaka who has attained complete self-control and does not forget himself even in the most trying and tempting circumstances. He is not only allowed but is definitely instructed to include such things as wine, meat etc. as articles of offering to God. The Pasu is not allowed even to touch or have a sight of those things.¹ The method prescribed for the Vira is more risky than holding a snake. The Durga Sadhaka need not undergo the trials of the Vira Sadhaka. He does not require the help of external objects for rousing spiritual sentiments and the meditative mood emerges spontaneously in him.

“The Tantras mention different kinds of Achara for different classes of Sadhakas at different stages of their development. Vedachara which forms the first and the lowest stage, comprises the Vedic rites that are to be strictly practised. Kulachara the highest stage which does away with all rules and injunctions of the Sashttras. For the Kaula there is neither any Vidhi nor any Nishedha, neither merit nor demerit, neither virtue nor sin.”

“When we remember how the Tantra recognises three distinct types of Sadhaks according to

¹ Kularnava Tantra.

their respective capacities and temperaments (Adhikara) and also how it combines within itself Karma, Bhakti and Jnana and follows the philosophy of the Upanishad, the Karma of the Vedas and the Upasanas of the Puranas and also how it shows us the entire course of spiritual discipline beginning with the lowest physiological process and ending with the sublime philosophical intuition we ought to have no hesitation in declaring that the Tantras sum up all the important features and elements of Hindu Sadhana." Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana."

We have already said that Pancha Makar is symbol of many yogic process. They are apt to be misinterpreted from their central meanings. Thus Siva says :—"O Goddess ! even the Gods cannot master Pancha Makar. With these five, namely, Wine, Meat, Fish and Mudra one should worship the goddess."

Agamsara thus explains the Pancha Makar :—

(1) Madya—

"Somadharakshared Patu Brahmarandkran
Varavane
 Pityanandamaaim Tam Ya Sa Eva
Madya Sadhaka

If a man drinks the nectarine stream that issues from the cavity of the brain he is filled with joy. This is Madya or wine.

(2) Mansa,

Masabdadrasana Jnaneya Tarasanan
Rasana Priya.
 Sada Ya Bharkahayeddin Sa Eva
Mansa Sadhaka.

The word Ma means a tongue from which proceeds words. One who always feeds on them

is called a worshipper of Mansa. This man is really yogin who has controlled his speech,

(3) Matsya.

Ganga Yamunayomardhya Matsyan Dwan
Charata Sada
Tan Matsyan Bharkshayat Yastu Sa Bharan
Matsya Sadhaka.

Two fishes are always moving about between the Ganges and the Yamuna. He is the worshipper of fish who eats them up.

Both the Ganges and the Yamuna represent the two nerves Ida and Pingala. The two fishes represent respiration, drawn in and sent out. So the worshipper of fish means one who has suppressed his vital breaths. This is Pranayam.

(4) Mudra

“Sahasrare Mahapadnu Karnika Mudrika Charet
Atma Tatreva Deveshi Kevalam Paradopama
Suryya Kati Pratikasham, Chandrakoti
Sushitalam
Ativa Kamaniyaneha, Mahakundalini yutam
Yashya Jnanodayastotra Mudra-Sadhaka
Uchyate”

On the great lotus of a thousand petals situate on the head resides soul. Though it is like millions of suns in effulgence, it is like so many moons in coolness. One who acquires the knowledge of this charming soul is the worshipper of Mudra.¹

(5) Maithuna

“Maithunam Paramatattram Srististhityanta-
karanam
Maithunat yayate Sidhi Brahmajnanam
Sudarlabham”

¹ Mudra also mean interweaving of fingers vide ante,

Cohabitation is at the root of creation, preservation and destruction. It is regarded as a great principle in the Sastras. It achieves all ends and confers the most difficult knowledge of Brahma. The esoteric meaning of Maithuna in the sense of yoga is the recitation of famous attributes of God and contemplation about the creation and its end.

In another Tantra the esoteric meaning of the Panchamakar is thus explained :—Matsya or fish is that which washes away the dirt of attachment, lays down the route to Moksha or emancipation and destroys eight-fold miseries. Mansa or meat is what produces auspiciousness or joy is dear to the gods. Panchamakar is like my very life in all worworks without it no one can recite the Mantra dedicated to Chaddi and so they can not achieve success. Joy is the great Brahma and Panchamakar expresses it.

Now let us look a bit closely to the 'Panchamakar's as they are literally interpreted by the uninitiated and the common populace.

It is already clear that however abhorrent these rites may appear on the face of them there is a great esoteric meaning behind them, and we have quoted Agamsara on this point. It must be admitted that wine, meat, fish and women are objects of great temptation. If a worshipper can overcome this great temptation, the road to eternal bliss is clear to him. It is not at all an easy affair for a man to have a young beautiful damsel before him and worship her as goddess without feeling the least lustful impulse within him. He is to take wine after dedicating it to the Goddess and not for the purpose of intoxication but for that of concentrating his mind on the object of his devotion. He is to take meat and fish not because they are palatable but because he must be in good health for performing religious rites. Thus we

find that in Tantric form of worship, a worshipper is to approach his god through diverse objects of pleasure. He is to relinquish his desire and self and convert the various pursuits of enjoyment into instruments of spiritual discipline."

Such is the lofty teachings of the Tantras. The Tantras do not, in the least degree, encourage any corrupt practice as is very often wrongly supposed to do. Let us conclude our remarks from the observations of two famous Tantras on this point.

It is written in the Kularnava Tantra :—

"Imposed on by false knowledge many labour under the mistake that they may acquire piety by drinking wine etc. It is their mistake. If by drinking one could attain to spiritual consummation all drunkards would have done the same. If by taking meat one could have acquired piety then every man could have been pious. If by cohabiting with a woman one could have attained emancipation it would have been easy for every body. Useless drinking is accompanied with all the evils described in the Vedas. It is a great sin. Even to smell such a wine is iniquity. Every sort of wine is to be avoided by the twice born. Even if one accidentally cast a look on the wine he should look at the sun. If by accident he smells it he must practise pranayam."

Thus useless drinking has been prohibited in the Tantras. The ceremony of Sadhana is to use wine for spiritual purpose for bringing about concentration of mind. One can not offer anything with an impure heart to the Diety. We should purify everything and offer it without any low selfish desire. Gratification of animal appetites is not the object of Tantric worship. The Mahanirvan Tantra goes further :—

“During the supreme prevalence of the Kali, when the householders’ hearts will be deeply attached to their household objects, Madhutrayam should be used in view of the chief Tantra. (1) Milk, sugar and honey are known as Madhutrayam, considering them to be equivalent to the libation (of wine), the worshipper should offer them to the God. Those born in the cycle of Kali, being naturally of limited intelligence and lustful proclivities, cannot recognise women to be manifestations of Sakti. Therefore, O Parvati, for them the

(1) Twata—wine.

contemplation of the lotus feet of the Goddess and the reiteration of the Mantra appertaining to their respective tutelary gods, have been prescribed in lieu of their practising the last Tatwa or Maithuna.” Mahanirvan Tantram Chap. VIII. Slokas 170—173.

Thus it is more than evident Tantric worship is far above all corrupt practices that are practised by the vicious people in the name of religious worship.

Again the Tantras are the most liberal of all Hindu scriptures. They make no distinction between man and man. The Tantras recognise this cardinal psychological fact that every body has supreme need for religion hence each and every body should have access to religious scriptures, they are not meant for any particular class only; nor religious rites and rituals are intended for a privileged class only they are meant for all and each and every body can practise them. Thus Tantras are most cosmopolitan in their doctrines. In the Goutamiya Tantra it has been laid down even at the very outset ;—‘People of all castes and even women are entitled to receive mantras.’

“Sarvavarnadhikarascha Narinam

Yogya Eva cha”

Thus Tantric religion or Sakta religion is meant for all. It holds no special brief for any privileged class. Men and women; the high and the low have the same right and freedom in religion. Religion is meant for all and needed by all then why one should be barred from it simply on the ground of arbitrary social distinction between man and man and between man and woman. This great principle of Equity underlies the fundamental philosophy of the Sakta creed or Tantric religion.

CHAPTER IX

SOME MYSTIC TECHNIQUES

Not only the Tantras but many other Hindu religious Scriptures make use of several mystic techniques regarding the forms of worship and certain appendices appertaining to it as for instance the Mantras or the cryptic expressions used in religious worship; the Asanas, i. e. how the worshipper should seat for physical posture at the time of worship the Mudras etc. The Hindu sages from the earliest times have laid great stress on physical processes that led to spiritual discipline. Control over physical organs and senses is absolutely necessary for mental concentration. It is needless to say that neither contemplation, nor prayer, nor any worship can be effected without proper concentration of the Mind. These Mystic techniques are meant for enhancing mental concentration and for helping the physical processes necessary for this purpose. We shall in this chapter mention some of these most prominent techniques common to almost all forms of Hindu worship and Hindu Sadhana.

Mantra universally found in all forms of Hindu worship and in all schools of Hindu religion are not mere meaningless jargons. They are rather the

phonetic symbols either of profound metaphysical propositions, or of deep spiritual truths, some of them involve highly intricate psychical process of Yoga-Sadhana (as Pranayam); and some are intended to enhance the concentration of the mind, in the perfect state of which the worshipper loses all consciousness of everything else even the consciousness of his own separate existence apart from the Deity of worship. In a word, the worshipper loses himself in his Deity and his own existence, for the time being, becomes merged into that of the Deity. This is what should be in perfect contemplation and worship conducted with sincere devotion and faith. The mantras are calculated to help the aforesaid mental concentration of the worshipper. About the true spirit of the Mantras Siva thus speaks to Parvati in the Mahanirvan Tantram :

“O Mistress of the celestials, the presiding spirit of the Mantra is the all pervading Eternal one,—above discussion, having no form, beyond speech and incapable of being apprehended by sense”—Mahanirvan Tantras Chapter III Sloka 36. Thus Mantra is, infact, an invocation of the Deity by some mystic phonetic expressions

Of these Mantras the most sacred one is Pranava or Om. Infact, the most sacred word in the Hindu Scripture is Om, known as Pranava¹.

The Parnava consists of two vowels and one consonant : Akara, Ukara and Makara. Akara denotes the Protector of the Universe ; the Ukara the Destroyer thereof and the Makara the creator thereof. Thus Om is the phonetic emblem with Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. According to the Vedas and the Upanishads the word Om is the expressive

¹ This Chapter of disjointed notes is mainly meant for the information of the non-Hindu readers, though, of course every Hindu is not well acquainted with everything here in dealt with.

of one True God who is the creator, preserver and the Destroyer of the universe. In the language of the Tantras it expresses Siva and Sakti or Hara and Gouri ; and you may denote it in philosophical phraseology as Purusha and Prakriti.

We cannot better express the significance of the mystic esoteric word Om than quoting an elaborate note on the word by a learned English scholar, well versed in the Tantras :—

Three powers have emanated from the Pranava representing Original Force, viz, will, active energy and knowledge. The will-force in the parlance of the American spiritualists headed by Andrew Jackson Davis is Gauri or Mahakali. She is associated with Maheswara agreeably to the action of the disorganising tendency in her. The Active Energy pertains to Brahma, and is the Mahasaraswati. Associated with Brahma, she brings about the genesis of things through the principle of Rajas. The power of knowledge pertains to Vishnu and is Mahalakshmi. Associated with Vishnu, she protects the world by virtue of the principle of sathwa or goodness. The Deity that is the object of worship here, is the conscious enlivening the primæval Prakriti or Original Force. This Original Force dividing herself into three parts agreeably to the action of the three Principles has developed into Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Brahma associated with Savitu creates Vishnu, associated with Mahalakshmi, protects, and Siva, associated with Gouri, destroys. Will-force, Action-force and knowledge-force are parts of the Prime force, and, in the same way Brahma Vishnu and Maheswara are parts of the Turiya Brahma established in the original Force ; consequently Pranava signifies the Brahma residing in the original Prakriti, holding the three Principles in equipoise. He it is that is Designated as the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer. If Brahma were not present in Prakriti she would not possess the power of acting nor would

she be endowed with consciousness. But each interpenetrating each Prakriti has received the consciousness of Brahma and Brahma has received the active energy of Prakriti. If they were independent they would remain inert. The conscious Brahma resident in the original Force is signified by Brahma.'

Arther Avelon. Commenting on the 32 verse of Mahanirvan Tantra. A Avelon has added the above quoted note.

Next to Pranava, the most important thing in Hindu Sadhana (meditation, prayer and Yoga) is Pranayam, or the regulation or modification of breath. The Hindu sages have laid great stress upon the regulation for the practice of Yoga. It is the most essential part of Yoga Sadhana.

There are three modifications of Pranayam or breathing. The first is expiration which is performed through the right nostril whilst the left is closed with the fingers of the right hand ; this is known as Rechaka. Drawing up air through the left nostril by closing the right is called Puraka. When both nostrils are closed and breathing is suspended it is called Kumbhaka.

After Pranayam certain Asanas are considered essential for the practice of Yoga, that are calculated to enhance mental concentration. In other words certain physical processes are held to be necessary for developing and augmenting our psychic powers. The Hindu sages have always insisted upon certain physical processes in Yoga and worship that are helpful to spiritual discipline and augment our mental concentration. Asanas are one of them. Asanas have two distinct meanings ; firstly they denote the seats on which a worshipper is to sit for meditation or worship. Secondly they imply different prescribed postures of the body which the worshipper should conform to at the time of

worship or Yoga Sadhana. In Tantric worship there are some notable seats on which a spiritually advanced may sit for practising Yoga or for meditation and worship such as Savasana (sitting on a dead body). Mundasana sitting on five skulls of different animals including a human skull; Chitasana sitting on the funeral pyre. Again, certain Asanas, or the different prescribed forms of the bodily postures of a worshipper sitting for worship or Yoga, consist of various modes of sitting and bodily postures such as interweaving of arms, legs, fixing the gaze in a particular manner, keeping the trunk quite erect etc., such as Pudmasana, Veerasana, Vajrasana etc. considered essentially indispensable parts of Yoga practice. These physical auxiliaries are calculated to facilitate the practice of Pranayam which is necessary to control the vital airs of our system. In Yoga-practice air plays a very important part and this air has been divided into five classes, the combination of which maintain life. These five are; Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana, Vyana, Prana or the first of the life winds has its seat in the lungs. Apana air which is breathed out and goes downwards and out through the anus. Samana air has its seat in the navel and is an important factor in helping digestion. Udana air which goes up the throat and enters into the brain the seat of knowledge. Vyana air is diffused throughout the entire system. Now, Pranava Pranayam and Asana are common to all sections of the Hindus; likewise are the Yoga Sidhis and Arghya.

Sidhis are supernatural powers or perfections which a man may acquire by Yoga or an ascetic course of spiritual discipline. These are the following:—

(1) Animan—the supernatural power of becoming as small as an atom.

(2) Mahiman, just the reverse of Animan, i. e. supernatural power of increasing size of the body at will.

(3) Laghiman, the faculty of assuming extreme lightness at will.

(4) Gariman—the power of making one's self heavy at will.

(5) Prapti—the power of obtaining everything.

(6) Prakamya, irresistible will.

(7) Ishita, supremacy.

(8) Vashitya, the power of subduing anything.

Hindu Yogins and sannyasins sometimes exhibit miraculous powers to the astonishment of all, that baffle all attempts of scientific explanations of them.

In worship among all the sections of the Hindus Argha or offering of libation to the deity of worship is an important feature. The Arghya consist of the following eight articles :

1. Water
2. Milk
3. Ends of the Kuca grass.
4. Clarified butter.
5. Rice.
6. Barley.
7. Curd.
8. White mustard.

As regards other offerings to the deity there is no fixed universal rule for all sects alike. A worshipper generally offers to his Deity what he considers to be pure, Sacred and best. The offerings consist of all that is sweet, palatable, delightful, delicious and pure, such as flowers, sandal, milk, honey, clarified butter, fruits ; and sometimes meat and fish are offered. It is only in Tantric worship that wine is offered though not always as a rule. Wine, meat and fish are hardly to be found in daily worship of the Deity even according to Tantric rites

they have enjoined by the Tantras for Yoga Sadhana by the Beer Sadhaka. The Tantras have divided the worshippers into three classes according to their mental proclivities or Bhava. There are three kinds of Bhava : (1) Pacu Bhava (2) Beer Bhava (3) and Divya Bhava..

Pacu Bhava—men with the tendency of a brute
i. e. of low mental proclivities and animal
appetites.

Beer Bhava—men of heroic temperament, who can
control their senses.

Divya Bhava—men with divine tendency i.e. of
noble propensities.

The Tantras go further, they point out the periods of human life when a particular tendency predominates. It is thus stated in the Bamakeswar Tantra :—From the birth up to the sixteenth year one has Pacu Bhava. In the second period of life up to the fifteenth year has Beer Bhava, and afterwards Divya Bhava. These three Bhavas are ultimately unified,—which state of mind is Kula-chara. By this man becomes god-like. These are mental proclivities and they should be mentally cultivated.

The Tantras again, have divided the Tantric worshippers into several classes :—

- (1) Vedacharas
- (2) Vaishnavacharas
- (3) Saivacharas
- (4) Dakshinacharas
- (5) Bamacharas
- (6) Sidhantacharas
- (7) Kantacharas

of the above classes, Dakshinacharas and Bamacharas are the most important, Dakshinacharas

worship the goddess according to the rites and rituals laid down in the Vedas and Bamacharas according to Tantric rites.

The Tantras again, mention some mystic practices under the name of Chakra. These are the darkest of the dark oracles, and none but the initiated can realise its real significance. We shall, however, describe here some of the important Chakras. Deva Chakra :—“I (Siva) shall now describe Devachakra which the celestials always practise, In this five female agents (Saktaya Pancha Devata) are Rajaveshya, Nagari, Gupta-Veshya, Deva Vashya and Brahma Vashya. The royal harlots are those who are devoted to the service of the king, secret prostitutes belong to family, dancing girls are the celestial prostitutes, and Brahma prostitutes are those who visit sacred shrines. And any maiden when she is in menses is called Nagari, These should be engaged in Devachakra.”

(2) Raja chakra—“Five beautiful and most charming maidens of five castes as Yamini, Yogini, Washerman, Chandala and Kaivarta should be engaged. The worshipper should next offer honey, wine and meat. This is Raja Chakra. By its influence one acquires piety, worldly gain, desire and emancipation and lives in the celestial region for sixty thousand years.”

(3) Veerchakra—“I shall now describe Veerchakra by which worshippers soon acquire spiritual consummation. In it a capable man need not offer all but only the best articles. Meat of birds or beasts is most desirable. All sorts of Corn, white, red and yellow flowers should be collected, one should fix in his mind one hero. This is Veerchakra. Then offering presents to the preceptor, the worshipper should make presents to the hero imagined. By this ritual all sins, even Brahmani-

cide are washed away. If a chakra is devoid of presents and ordinances it yields no fruit."

These mystic practices pertain to Tantric Sadhana or yoga (such as Pancha-Munda-Asana etc.); they do not form any indispensable part of daily or common form of Tantric worship. Their efficacy is known only to the initiated and can hardly be understood by the laity. We shall now conclude with the famous Bhairavi Chakra as has been described in the Mahanirvan Tantra so that its details may help the reader to have some idea of special Tantric practices intended for spiritually advanced persons, who are above temptation and possess fullest control over their senses. Siva speaks of the Bhairavi chakra thus to Parvati :

"As regards the Bhairavi chakra, O dear, there are no special rules, and this auspicious Chakra may be performed at any time without much distinction. I shall relate to thee the manner of practising this Chakra that confers happiness and prosperity on its adorers, and when worshipped through this Chakra the Supreme Goddess soon fulfils one's desires. In the beginning the Koula priest having spread a good seat on a delightful piece of land and purified it with mystic aphorism Klim Fat should make himself seated thereon. Then the wise worshipper should describe on the ground both a triangular and quadrangular figure with red lead or red sandal paste or simply with water. Then the wise worshipper having brought a beautiful Ghata (earthen pot) besprinkled with curd and Akshata (unhusked rice) bedecked with fruits and new twigs, painted with Tilaka (peculiarly shaped marks on forehead) of red Vermillion, and filled with scented water and having placed it on the ground of worship by means of the Mantra. One should offer it Dhupas (incense) and Dipas (light). Then Worshipping the Ghata with fragrant flowers and

frankincence, he should invoke therein his tutelary deity, in these cases the ceremony of worship is to be carried on in the abridged form. Now, O thou adored of the gods, listen as I describe the peculiar features of this Chakra. In it there is no necessity of placing or using nine receptacles or Vessels commencing with Guru. The devotee or worshipper should take one of the Tattwas (wine, etc.) or articles of worship according to his own will, and placing it in front of him, consecrate it with the Mantra Fat and then look upon it with his spiritual eyes. Then placing flowers and incenses on the Aliyantra (receptacle for wine) he should meditate upon the Goddess Ananda Bhairavi and the God Ananda Bhairava successively. He should meditate upon the Goddess, glorious in the prime of her youth with a semblance effulgence like the newly risen sun, with the lotus of her face blooming forth under the nectarian influence of charming smiles, deeply delighting songs and dances, adorned with various kinds of ornaments, robed in beautiful garments, and holding in her lotus like hands, boons and benedictions. Thus having meditated upon the goddess Anandamayi, he should begin meditating upon the God Ananda Bhairava.¹ He should represent before his mind's eye the God Ananda Bhairava, saying:—I meditate upon the God white as the mass of camphor, with eyes extended like the petals of a lotus, with his effulgent person decked with beautiful ornaments and robed in charming garments, with his left hand holding a vessel full of nectar and his right holding the Sudhagutika,² The devotee having thus meditated upon them both, should contemplate their

¹Such is god as we find in other ancient Hindu scriptures God in the Vedas and the Upanishads, like many things else is Ananda, the Fountain head of joy, spirit of gladness.

²Fish and flesh held in the palm in a particular prescribed manner.

love for the exhilarating beverage, then worshipping them with incense and flowers, purify the wine by at first uttering the Pranava and then saying the names or salutations (Om Namas Am Hrim Krom Swaha). He should then further purify the wine by reiterating the Mantra 'Om Hrim Krom Swaha'. During the supreme prevalence of the Kali when the house-holders' hearts will be deeply attached to their household objects, the Madhutrayam should be used by them in lieu of the chief Tattwa. Milk, sugar and honey-these are known as Madhutrayam ; and considering them to be equivalent to the libations (of wine) the worshipper should offer them to the God. Those born in the cycle of Kali, being naturally of limited intelligence and lustful proclivities can not recognise women to be manifestations of Sakti (or the supreme goddess of the Tantrics). Therefore, O Parvati, to them the contemplation of the lotus feet of the goddess and the reiteration of the Mantra appertaining to their respective tutelary gods have been prescribed in lieu of their practising the last Tattwa or Maithuna. The devotee should, however, purify and inspire each of the Tattwas that had been collected with the Mantra Om Hrim Krim Krom Swaha. Thereafter closing both his eyes and realising in meditation that every thing is pervaded by the supreme God, he should drink and eat having, as before, at first presented them to the goddess Kali. This is the Bhairavi Chakra scrupulously concealed in all the Tantras, and O gentle lady, I have disclosed before thee, this highest of the high and holiest of the holy religious rites. In practising the Bhairavi Chakra and Tattwa Chakra, the worshipper should under all circumstances, O daughter of the Mountain marry himself according to the Saiva mode. The

¹In spiritual ecstasy all social distinctions between man and man vanish.

devotee who in a state of celibacy practises the devotion of the goddess Sakti undoubtedly reaps the sin of Cohabiting with others' wives. When the Bhairavi Chakra begins to roll, all the Varnas are considered as high class Brahmans and when it stops the Varnas are distinguished one from the other. In the Vairavi Chakra there is no distinction of caste and there is no restriction about one eating the remnants of others' meals. The worshippers joining the Chakras are to be considered as my own portion, there is not the least doubt in this. In practising this Chakra no hard and fast rules regarding time or place or the eligibility of persons are to be observed. Any thing (fit to be used in the Chakra) brought by any one may be accepted and employed. Whether it is brought from a distant land, whether it is ripe or unripe, whether it is brought by a devotee or one of beastly nature, a thing as soon as it is accepted in the Chakra becomes pure and holy. At the commencement of the Chakra, O great Goddess all the obstacles (personified) struck with fear and terrified by the spiritual power of the devotees take to their heels and away they fly. The Pisaches, the Guhyakas, the Yakshas, the Vetalas (baser spirits) fearfully fly away even only hearing that Bhairavi Chakra is practised here. The Tirthas, the Mahatirthas and the celestials with Indra at their head, eagerly appeared at the place where the Bhairavi Chakra is practised. O Siva the place where this Chakra is practised is a Mahatirtha (a highly sacred pilgrimage) and it is superior to all other Tirthas (places of pilgrimage). The inhabitants of the heaven come there to partake of the offerings presented to thee. Any thing ripe and unripe (fit for use or not) be it brought by any one whether a Mlechcha, Svapacha, Kirata or Huna becomes purified and holy as soon as it is placed in the hand of the (principal) devotee. Beholding the Bhairavi

Chakra and my devotees therein who are my semblences the corrupt sinners of Kali are liberated from the trammels of their sins. When the influence of the Kaliyuga is on the ascendance, the devotee should not conceal the performance of this Chakra, but should practise it every where and at all times. In a Chakra or during the continuance of the worship idle talk, fickleness, garrulity, spitting, passing wind through the lower organs of the body, and distinction of caste should be shunned. Those who are narrow-minded, those who are mischievous, those in whom beastly nature preponderates, those who are sinful, those who are atheists, those who find fault with the Koula (a system of Tantric mode of worship, and those who blame sacred books of the Koulas should be left at a distance from the Chakra. Introducing a Pacu (in whom animal proclivities predominate) in the Chakra out of love, friendship or fear, even a Beera (an advanced devotee) is dragged into hell, being cast off from the Kula dharma (or the Koula mode of worship).¹ Whether Brahmanas or Kshatriyas or Vaishyas or Sudras or Samanyas—those who betake to the Kula form of worship, are always adorable like the gods themselves. He that is proud of his own higher caste recognises caste distinction in the Chakra goes to dreadful hell inspite of his being well conversant in the Vedas and the sacred literature. The pious Kaulas pure at heart when practising the Chakra are so many Sivas, where there could be any room for sin in them ?”

Mahanirvan Tantram
Chap VIII Slokas 154—175

¹ None but who possesses the highest self control and who is a perfect master of his senses should be taken in the Chakra.

It is evident that a Chakra is a special mode of yoga-sadhana in which only the highly spiritually advanced persons can take part. Persons who have complete self control and mastery over senses may gather together in a Chakra and worship the great goddess in the midst of the objects of great temptations such as wine, women etc. A fiery ordeal for a worshipper, which the Tantras forbid for men of animal prelvities. Only highly spiritually advanced people who possess complete mastery over themselves can conquer these great temptations under the spell of spiritual ecstasy and concentrate their minds upon God. One must not venture upon such risky things unless he is perfectly sure of himself can venture to undergo such practices. A Chakra is pervaded by a cosmopolitan spirit in which there is no distinction between man and man, no restriction about caste and food and to become absorbed in meditation of god in the midst of strong temptations. Only the Paramhansa can venture in such a practice, the Mahanirvantantra says : "The best devotee practise the Chakra mode of worship only during special services." It is not a thing of daily practice nor does it pertain to daily rituals of worship. It is a congregation of spiritually, advanced people in some special occasion. Like the Chakras certain other rites and rituals have been enjoined by the Tantras appertaining to Yoga or Sadhana. Such as Sodhana, time for Abhisheka etc.

The ceremony of Sodhana or purification is of vital importance in the rituals of Pancha Makar. Without purification the worship is fruitless. The worshipper must purify the Tattwas or wine, fish and flesh before he dedicates them to the Deity. He is not allowed to partake of them unless he purifies them according to prescribed rituals accompanied with proper Mantras. We cannot offer

anything with impure heart to the Deity who is the object of devotions and worship.

Now, anybody and everybody is not eligible for Tantric form of worship ; only the best are fit to receive initiation. "One should be born in a good family, of pure heart, manly, diligent in studying the Vedas, intent on doing good to his parents, pious, well-read in the Shastras (theology) devoted to the service of his Guru, expert in understanding the esoteric meaning of the Tantras, well-built, of a firm mind, and always working for the benefit of his after life. He must avoid useless and trivial works always practise Tantric rites, be a master of his passions, be shorn of idleness and pride. He must show respect towards the sons and other relations of his spiritual guide."

The above mentioned qualifications are essential for a man for being initiated in Tantric form of worship. Nay more, there are also directions for the time of initiation, Thus the Neela Tantra observes :—

"On the eighth day of the dark fortnight of a month, on an auspicious day, and on an auspicious conjunction in Purvabhadrapada under the auspices of Anuradha or Revati, during lunar eclipse, in the month of Ashwin or Kartik, it is the best time to receive initiation ; the great Asthami is the most auspicious day for accomplishing religious profit, worldly profit and desire. Rohini Sravana, Ardra, Dhanistha, Uttarashada, Uttarabhadrapada, Uttaraphalguni, Pushya and Satabhisha are the most auspicious planets for receiving initiation."

All these directions at the first sight appear to be simply meaningless, but they are not so. They are helpful to mental concentration and Yoga. But why the great sages insist upon Yoga ? What is its intrinsic worth and efficacy ?

Its efficacy and worth are obvious from the Hindu stand-point of view. All the religious Scriptures of the Hindus declare in one voice that the ultimate goal of human life is to realise God in life or to be one with God. And this is the final object of religion and all forms of religious worship. The great systems of Hindu philosophy save Sankhya lend emphatical support to it. Yoga has been found by the great sages of ancient India as the most effective means for that and of all other ways and means. Yoga has been found, at every step, by the great Hindu sages of ancient India, to be the best and highest form of spiritual discipline for the consummation of the highest spiritual bliss. Yoga is necessary for the highest mental concentration. It is only by yoga that one can develop all potentialities and powers that lie dormant in the subconscious region. To awaken our fullest self to all its great potentialities there is no other means but yoga. Every ardent form of worship culminates into yoga or complete absorption with the object of meditation and prayer. To realise God in life or to be one with God, yoga is essential. The reason is not far to seek. Both experience and intuition are necessary in religion. Mere experience can not carry us far. It is intuition that shows the way and helps us to realise the highest end. One without the other is incomplete and inadequate for spiritual purpose. Permit us to quote here a few lines from the observations of a learned European writer and the reader, we believe, will find the necessity of yoga, so strongly insisted by the great Hindu sages for moral and spiritual perfection :—

“Underlying the apparently numerous, phases of activity in the life of nature and humanity, there are two main directions of the movement. In the great world of nature they are seen as disintegration and integration ; in its special phases as motion centrifugal and centripetal ; in man’s particular

world of conscious activity as analysis and synthesis."

"Through whatever phase of life these two main movements operate, their characteristics are the same; on the one hand, separating, elaborating, scattering; on the other gathering, co-ordinating, simplifying, unifying. Going to extremes, either movement would, theoretically, nullify itself, the one in annihilation, the other, in inertia, the equal bankruptcy of poverty and plethora. This, however, is apparently not the intention of life."

"Between expansive energy and contractive substance as we find them in life (and leaving aside recent scientific formulae which make energy a mode of substance, and substance a phase of energy) there is a perpetual interplay for the purposes of life's necessity of continuity, and a perpetual shifting of the point of balance on either side of the centre of poise for the purposes of life's pleasure in variety and interest. Radha and Krishna, as vedic thought and art have personalised these processes (which is not denying, but fulfilling, the declaration of Hermetic vision that in the cosmos all things are persons), dance the dance which keeps life alive; but sometimes Krishna, who is embodied energy, strays away from home (which is round about but not exactly on the pole of life); and sometimes Radha, who is embodied substance, remains too sedulously at home; and out of these defections from the perfect have arisen the stories that life loves to tell itself for self-edification and entertainment, stories of the limitations wherewith substance and form must shackle and manacle energy in order to provoke it into dynamic definition, and of the struggle and adventure of energy towards liberation from its limitations."

"The history of humanity is the record of this interplay of resistance and release of the process of

disintegration whose end is death is one or other of its many forms, and the circumventing of this process by the expedients of integration for the preservation of identity. In group life this integrative necessity shows itself, and never so urgently and largely as today, in alliances, in trade, politics and otherwise. The balance of activity has oscillated too near the danger point of group—disintegration and the pull in the opposite direction is correspondingly emphatic.”

“In individual life the preservation of identity has, generally speaking, evolved no more intelligent technique than that of self-assertion and acquisitiveness, both of which tend to defeat their own purposes, since they relate the individual to the others on terms of separateness and antagonism, which reduce the nourishing and continuing properties of ideal human association as regards both the body and the Psyche.”

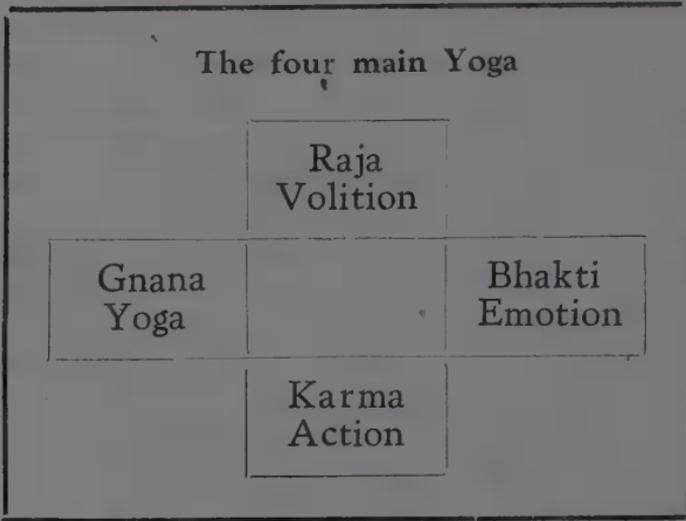
“The mediaeval monastic discipline of the occident sought to establish and carry it on to kingdom-come; but their method, while it was deep, was narrow. It responded to a realization of the possibility that, if we do not consciously align the individual will and action with those of the ‘divinity that shapes our ends,’ that divinity which is the law behind and within life, will eventually end our shapes. But it touched life through an expensive emotion cramped by a creed. It mistook theological formulae, which were means to ends, as origins, because they proved effective, not seeing that life has an amazing knack of utilising and surviving the most peculiar prescriptions from the spiritual pharmacopoeia.”

“The oriental genius got nearer the discovery of a complete technique of individual integration. It recognised the possibility of emotional disintegration, but it did not meet it by mental construc-

tion. Neither did it meet the trend towards mental disintegration by setting up a counter-trend in the emotional nature of the individual. The wheels of life must revolve in a mutual reaction for a unifying purpose beyond their individual service ; but each must revolve on its own centre. It is good advice to 'feel intelligently', it is equally good advice to 'think sensitively' ; but for the good performance of these synthesis (not merely the simultaneous exercise of two different functions) both feeling and thinking must be cultivated to their finest flowering, its from its own root and according to its own necessities."

"Out of such realization of psychological law arose the yogas of India ; means to the discarding of the non-essentials to the work in hand ; and to the attainment of the enlargement and intensity through which the individual achieves integration, first within his own nature, and last between himself and his universe. This is the union which is the etymology and purpose of yoga."

"India evolved numerous systems of individual integration (yoga) ; but for the purpose of this study, we shall generalise them as the integration (1) of action (Karma-yoga), (2) of Cognition (Gnana-yoga), (3) of emotion (Bhakti-yoga), (4) of Volition (Raja yoga)."



“In familiar speech these are the disciplines of the body, mind, heart and will, each turned in upon itself, yet affecting the others, not in the time of specific exercise of the Yoga discipline, but in the spontaneous sharing of increased capacity in the activities of ordinary life.”

* * * *

“The Yoga thus summarised serve the four basic functions of the human entity. But they do not serve them completely. Their intention is, as integrating expedients, naturally from without to within, and they have been drawn behind the out-turned aspects of cognition and emotion. Gnana Yoga is contemplative and only incidentally uses the out-turned function of the mind. Bhakti yoga is devotional, and only incidentally uses the out-turned emotional function. Yet the mind turned outwards in the exercise of observation (which is the function of science) serves the purpose of the inner light which lightens the path of the will; and the emotions turned towards in creative expression (which is the function of the arts) serve the inspiration so action which sometimes calls, sometimes drives, and always accompanies the Will

on its explorations in life for further illumination to still finer inspiration."

"Karma yoga is concerned with the inner aspect of action ; that is, with action between entities realised as interacting constituents of a more inclusive therefore higher entity than the external individual. Out of the tendency to disintegration in external action the Occident evolved the partial yogas of ethics, which seek to control conduct intellectually, and of morals, which seek to control the emotional aspects of conduct. But these expedients can never be effective, because they seek to control individual action from without instead of from within, and take their authorizations from effects instead of causes. The Oriental genius, however, realized also that there is no yoga without health,¹ and evolved the preliminary discipline of breath control (Pranayam) as a way to making the physical and neural phases of individual endowment more capable of responding beneficently to the intention of the higher discipline of group activity (Karma-yoga). Without such health which systematic rhythmical breathing brings about, the intensification of life which follows any yogic discipline may, by frustration or distortion, lead to disaster. On the other hand the accession of personal power which may come from Pranayam is preserved, by the restraints of the collective activity of Karma-yoga, from the disintegration that would follow the exercise of such power for selfish therefore separative purposes."

"Now it is precisely because the out-turned movement of the cognitive function, which is science, has in the occident been denied the natural

¹ Nayam Atma Valahinayna, says the Upanishad—The author of the present treatise.

restraints of its in-turned movement of contemplation, whose historical expressions are philosophy, that science for all its gifts to external life, threatens the destruction of human achievement if some unforeseen and probably trivial impulse suddenly translated present international suspicions, jealousies and fears into overt action that would bring into play the demoniacal agents of mutual destruction that science has within the last generation conjured out of its witches' cauldron of hellish invention. It is also precisely because the out-turned movement of emotion, which is creative expression, has been denied the restraint of its in-turned movement of aspiration, whose expressions are the religions, that is occidental arts, in some of their more reprehensible and popular phases, have threatened the spiritual destruction of humanity by the disintegration of its aesthetical consciousness and the degradation of its capacities for sensitive reaction to the level of self-destructive forces of sensuality. To meet this double threat there is need for a yoga of science and a yoga of art."—James H. Cousins.¹

Thus the necessity of Yoga in Sadhana is obvious. It is by yoga that one can attain perfection of the different functions of the mind. Thinking, Feeling and Willing i. e. intellection, emotion and volition. For the attainment of the highest spiritual perfection yoga is absolutely necessary. That was why the ancient sages of India laid such great stress upon yoga. The Tantras have given the highest prominence to Yoga-Sadhana. In fact all the esoteric physical and psychological processes enjoined by the shastras are but so many auxiliary steps to yoga. We shall conclude this chapter with few more observations connected with the yoga in general.

¹ The Yoga of Art contributed to Prabudha Bharat (March 1933).

The Hindu Shastras mention four kinds of yoga :—

(1) Mantra yoga (2) Laya yoga (3) Raj yoga (4) and Hatha yoga.

Mantra yoga—It means the mental concentration brought about by the process of repeating mentally Pranava one and other sacred mantras of the sruti as well as by the constant mental worship of the Supreme Deity.

(2) Laya yoga—The Shastras say that there are three kinds of forces in a man's nature, viz. higher, middle and lower. By certain yogic processes man realises the middle force by the exercise of the two other forces.

(3) Raj yoga—means concentration of the mind through the suppression of the vital airs.

(4) Hatha yoga—It means concentration of mind through various physical processes.

The Asanas are included within the Hatha yoga.

Yama—Niyama, Asana -Pranayam-Pratyahar-Dharana-Dhayana-Samadhyostavangani.”

Yama—means self control.

Niyama—regulations.

Asana—Various postures in which a yogin is to sit when he engages in meditation.

Pranayam—suppression of vital airs.

Pratyahar—withdrawal of the organs of senses from their object.

Dharana—mental concentration.

Dhayana—meditation.

Samadhi—the state of the mind in which the devotee and the object of devotion are unified.

Pranayam—we have already said is an indispensable adjunct of yoga. Pranayam is necessary for rhythmical breathing without which the body can not be kept fit for the arduous practices of yoga. We have also seen that the Hindu Shastras recognise five different kinds of air that play a very important part in human physiology and they have named Prana, Apana, Samaña, Vyana and Udana. Now, to keep these airs in a harmonious balance Pranayam is necessary. Pranayam or Nyasa is practised by the regulation of breath. It is common to all kinds of yoga. There is hardly any particular characteristic or special feature in any school of Hindu Sadhana. We shall, however, quote here what the Mahanirvan Tantra says about Nyasa, because it mentions certain Tantric Mantras for practising the Nyasa.

“The devotee should heedfully and in accordance with the rules relative to Nyasa perform this one uttering consequitively, the Tara and the Sat Chit Ekam Brahma and then Om Sachidekam Brahma together with Namas, Swaha Vashat, Hun, Vaushat and phat and also utter in succession touching his thumbs, forefingers, middle fingers, ring fingers and small fingers and finally the backs of his hands with each other. The process should be gone through from the chest to the hands. Then, O Parvati, the devotee should practise Pranayam reciting while the Mula Mantra or the Pranava. O Parvati pressing the left nostril with the middle and ring fingers of the right hand and while reciting the Mula Mantra for eight times he should fill himself with air through the right nostril, then pressing his right nostril with the thumb of his right hand, he should suspending the respiration, practising the yoga Kumbhaka, recite the Mula Mantra for two and thirty times, Then reciting the Mantra for sixteen times, he should expell the air slowly by means of

his right nostril. In this way also he should practise puraka, Kumbhaka and Rechaka¹ pressing the left nostril. I have described the mode in which Pranayam is to be performed for the success of the Brahma Mantra."

Mahanirvan Tantra
Chap. III, Verses 41-48.

CHAPTER X

ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF YOGA

Yoga is the mystic science, the accepted basis of all religious forms. It transforms the human body so that the Divine can effectuate the purpose of creative evolution. The presence of the divine in man is coincident with a continuous process of transformation and purification, of elimination of the courser elements with a view to the supreme identification.

The purification of the human body depends upon physiological knowledge concerning that being. This science of the human body has nothing in common with the anatomical description of the human body as laid down by the medical science of the west. Analogy may be drawn but there is no localisation or correspondence. The Chakras and Nadis cannot be identified with parts of the nervous system, but they belong to a quite different plane composed of subtile matter belonging to the subtile body.

The word *yoga* is derived from the sanskrit root *yog* which conveys the idea of union. It is in fact the science of the union of the human being with the divine dwelling within him. It is the sum of

¹ Puraka—the process of closing the right nostril and drawing up air through the left.

physical, psychical and mental processes which brings about deep transformation of the human being, the awakening in him of the new man which is unattainable by a man in his normal state. It awakens new modes of consciousness, of the new perceptive faculties of new powers, the use of which quite transforms the delicate complex of which we are made.

To accomplish this, the sage Patangal in his Yoga system lays down processes and methods consist of eight different stages :—some of them are physical while others are mental ; The following are the eight stages of Sadhana :—

- (1) Yama—i. e. complete self-discipline.
- (2) Niyama—Purity in mind and body.
- (3) Asana—different sitting postures so as to keep the body and mind free from any external disturbance. They are eighty four in number.
- (4) Pranayama—that is to say the control of breath.
- (5) Pratyahar—complete control over the five organs of sense.
- (6) Dharana—It is the mental process by which the mind is made to concentrate itself upon an object so as to accustom itself to remain calm and to take absolutely the "form" which the will of the yogi wishes to impose upon it.
- (7) Dhyana—is the mental process by which the mind is made to fix upon one object and is technically known as Dhyāna.
- (8) Samadhi—That is to say the unity of the mind with the object of contemplation is absorption and when the consciousness has

become one with the object contemplated a state of trance or Samadhi is reached when the mind can identify itself with the divine presence in every human being.

It may be stated here that the Tantrics declare that by an upright and pure life, by a deep and intense appeal and devotion to the Divinity automatically awakens the Divine Sakti in him as can be accomplished by elaborate process of purification and other methods as laid down above, and thereby acquires "Siddhis" such as clairvoyance, lightness mastery over the physiological instincts e. g., sleep, thirst hunger etc, and it becomes possible for him to obtain nourishment not from the corporeal elements of food stuffs but from subtile element.

The essential principles of yoga according to Hindu doctrine is the existence of the Supreme Being, Brahma, the unknown, the unknowable the unborn, the unthinkable. His activity manifests itself in two aspects the *Purusha*, the essence of all things, the eternal omnipresent, the creator and the *Prakriti*, the mother, the primordial undifferentiated substance that which supports or bears up all manifestations. In the *Prakriti*, the three forces are in action. The *Swatta* or the ascendant force which tends towards more perfect virtue, which awakens consciousness and perfects creation.

Second *Raja* which is an expansive dynamic force and implies activity, desire and which modifies the excess of both the *Sattwa* and the *Tama* tendencies, and third *Tama* which implies darkness, inertia, idleness and veils consciousness. The object of the yoga is the liberation of these three forces.

To practice Yoga, the regularization of breath plays and important part in it, in as much as by its action, the circulation of the vital fluid is modified.

By such regularization and modification of *prana* or vital fluid the psychic is acted upon which in its turn modifies the mind.

The Yoga are of several kinds :—

(a) *Raja Yoga*—which works upon the mind and thereby modifies the current of *prana*, In it mental concentration plays an important part.

(b) *Bhakti Yoga*—or the Yoga of devotion or love for the Divine. The devotees in the presence of their Deity as it were in the presence of the Divine.

(c) *Karma Yoga*—In this Yoga duty is accomplished without affection, without selfishness and without self interest.

(d) *Jnan Yoga*—Intellectual realisation of the divine leading to its intuitive realisations.

CHAPTER XI

HUMAN BODY ACCORDING TO HINDU DOCTRINE : ITS DIFFERENT ENVELOPES :

Hindu doctrine specifies five different *Koshas* or envelopes of the human body. These are *Karan sarira*, *Linga Sarira* or subtle bodies consist of the three different *Koshas* or envelopes viz. *Vijnanmaya Kosha* which directly reflects the *Buddhi* of the *Karansarira*. It is in contact with outside objects through the five *tanmatras* -or the principles of the five senses of man second *Manamaya Kosha* the actual mental body with its processes, its doubts and its wandering thoughts. The mind is a faculty of sensation and action of the *indriyas*. Its work is to discriminate between and examine the physical sensation of the five perceptive *indriyas*. It can be modified and rendered suppliant. Third the *Pranmaya Kosha* which includes the ten *indriyas*. They

are formed of *prana* or vital breath. It belongs to the subtile manifestation and lastly the Sthula sarira, the material body consisting of the five elements or *Bhutas* as they are properly called viz. earth, water, fire, air and ether.

The three states that of *Jagrata*, *Swapna* and *Susuptha* which a man can attain according as the vital principle is centred in one or the other of the three envelopes. In the *Jagrata* or the waking state, the human being is fully conscious of his ego (*Ahamkara*), the sense of individuality. The mind believes that it alone is the Supreme Principle and that after its disappearance at death nothing remains. Above this state is the dream State. In this state, the *jiba* or the vital principle retires, into the subtile bodies. Normally this state is attained by human sleep. The Subtile bodies then experience freely the conditions of Subtile planes. The beings who inhabit them really live. The dead man dwells in the subtile plane waiting to resume a physical form. After death just as the material body returns to the bosom of nature and serves again to make the physical supports of life (e. g. vegetable bodies, animal and human) so the subtile bodies dissolve into the planes of matter corresponding to these to which they impart a very strong impregnation proceeding from the beings whose envelopes they were. When a human being is born again these subtile elements return to him according to the Karma law of affinity and sometimes bring contrary tendencies, contradictory urges and diverse personalities in the same human being. Thus this explains the law of rebirth after death and so on until liberation is attained. The third stage is the *susuptha* state, this state is attained when a man attains beatitude. This state is attained by identification with the interior ego, the living immortal *atma*. Yoga is the way which leads to it. By reaching this stage the human being liberates himself

from the bonds of the physical and the subtile bodies as his consciousness returns to the Being within himself.

Upon an analysis of the *Linga Sarira*, we notice the principle which places it in communication with the outside world are the five tanmatras, the essential principle of the five human senses, the five indriyas ruling sensorial action and the mind. To this must be added the sense of the ego. This makes altogether seventeen elements in the subtile envelope in the *linga sarira*.

The mechanism of perception is composed in the following manner. The five objective senses (the five indriyas) are acted upon by the five material elements (the Bhutas). The modification is transmitted to the mind which perceives, to Ahamkara which reacts and finally to Buddhi which determines. But there are frequent interferences. Internal or external elements connected with the subtile planes, falsify, corrupt and divert the process of perception and intuition. This is what is known as the "play" of manifestation which tends sometimes to become "dull" while at other times to "develop" according to the predominating influence of *Gunās* which always exist in different measures in every human being.

Over and above this material perception there is continual interchange between the cosmic sphere and the human being. This interchange takes place through some open centres of the subtile bodies and the channels through which this internal diffusion takes place are the *Nadis* which connect the various openings. These *Nadis* are woven into the *Linga Sarira* like threads in a spider's web,

There are in this subtile envelope certain centres of consciousness which work very slackly in the normal man, but they can be 'awakened' by certain processes both physical and psychical so as to make

them active. This awakening increases the activity and brings about a very great transformation in the human being.

By this awakening and activity of these centres of force, the human being acquires powers over the subtile planes. He becomes master of his subtile bodies and acquires "gifts". Such as clairvoyance, lightness, mastery over the physiological instincts, such as hunger, thirst, sleep etc. It becomes possible for him to get nourishment not by the absorption of corporeal element of food stuffs but by direct absorption from the pranic subtile elements.

CHAPTER XII

THE NADIS AND THE CHAKRAS :

The purification of the Nadis is the first process to be adopted in the *Yoga Sadhana*. The number of these Nadis vary according to different schools.

But among these Nadis three have been specially dealt with by the Tantric scholars. According to them these three play an important part, as they are the principle channels of spiritual force in the human system. They are Ida, Pingala and Susumna, of these three Susumna is the chief and plays an important part in the transformation. It is through the Susumna that yogic power is forced to pass and to escape through the top of the head. So we will describe the Susumna first and then deal with the other two.

The Susumna is the principle Nadi of the human being. It is situated inside the Merudanda (the cerebro-spinal-axis). It begins from the Muladhar, the lowest centre of the human body, that is above the anus and behind the penis. It passes the other Chakras (centres) and ends at the last Chakra situated between the eye-brows. It is of subtile matter consisting of various forces.

The three *gunas* are present in it in the form of three concentric Nadis. It is uniform, long, straight and erect. It passes through the six Chakras. Through it passes the *kundalini* the divine sakti or force by which liberation is attained.

The Nadis Ida and Pingala also begin from the Muladhar and rise towards the Chakra in the forehead between the two eye-brows but in a serpentine movement from left to right in the case of the Ida and inversely from right to left in the case of the Pingala. They rise in a circular path surrounding each Chakra but without actually passing through it like the *Susumna*. These two Nadis meet at the Chakra in the forehead and then separate again. The one proceeding from the left penetrates the left nostril, the other penetrates the right nostril. These *Nadis* are subtile and absolutely invisible to the eyes of the physical body. It is the yogis who can actually see them and determine their position and direction.

CHAKRAS.

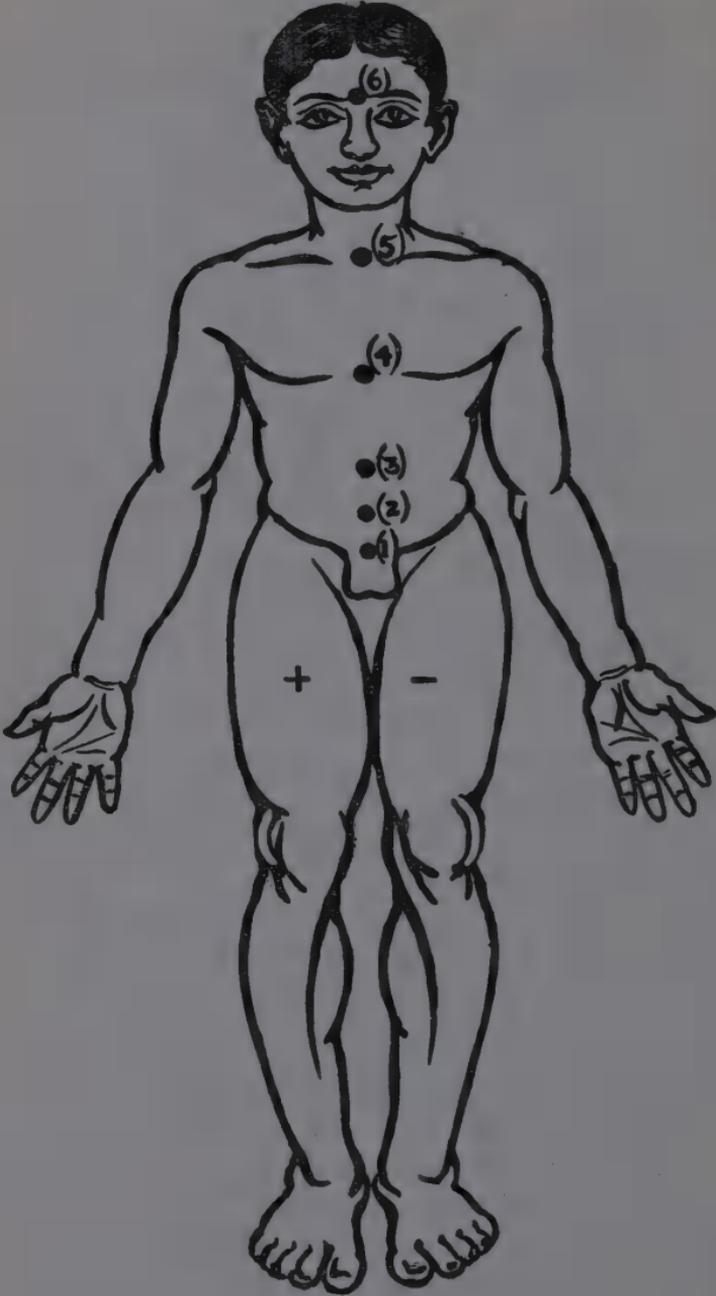
The Chakras are the centres of subtile forces. Their position is on the Merudanda (vertebral column). They are the centres of cosmic consciousness the generation of Prana or vital force and the openings on the macrocosm. There are six chief ones viz. (1) Muladhar (2) Swadisthan (3) Manipura (4) Anahata (5) Bisuddha and (6) Ajna.

The Muladhar Chakra is situated behind the penis and above the anus. It is the root of the *Nadi* *Susumna* where the *kundalini* rests closing the doors with its mouth. It is the real occult centre of the human body. Meditation on it awakens the sleeping goddess. The *kundalini* then sinks into the *Nadi* of which it covered the opening and because of this the divine force awakens in its turn the various centres on its way. Meditation on this awakens, the Sakti which is the key of liberation. The Swadisthan Chakra is situated above and behind

the genital organs. The meditation on it leads to the mastery over yogis passions and selfishness. The Chakra Manipura is situated at the height of the heart, the Chakra Bisuddha is situated at the height of the throat and the sixth the *Ajna* Chakra is situated between the two eye-brows on the forehead.

Each Chakra has a subtile force peculiar to it as well as the sensation caused by its activity. Each has its particular presiding Deity. These Deities are not only symbolic, but the Tantricks actually see them during their meditation and these acts as insingnia to the Tantric scholars by which they can judge the progress of their psychic development.

The Satchakranirupana enumerates the qualities acquired by concentration upon each of the six centres and indirectly by the passing of the Divine force the kundalini through them. The meditation on the Muladhar Chakra leads to the mastery of the yogis enemies, namely his passions and selfishness. The passions are luxury, anger, greediness, deception pride and envy which all proceed from Ahankara. This meditation brings victory over the physical elements. The meditation on this leads to the mastery of the subtile elements. That on the Anahata leads to the mastery of sound. The Tantrick student acquires the faculty of penetrating into the body of other man and animating it in their place. Other gifts are the power of becoming invisible of flying in the sky of walking on water etc. That is to say the mastery over the planes of creation. That on the Bisuddha Chakra brings one to the threshold of the great liberation. That on the Ajna Chakra is the way to the development of the qualities and possibilities of the preceeding Chakra. The disciple attains the state of Adaita-badi when he sees no duality. He becomes one with the supreme soul. He becomes the witness of the universe.



Position of the Chakras or Vital Centres.

- (1) Muladhar Chakra (2) Swadisthana (3) Manipura (4) Anahata
(5) Vishuddha (6) Ajna

CHAPTER XIII

The methods of Purification of the Nadis and the awakening of the Kundalini—the divine Sakti

Amongst the methods for the awakening of the Kundalini, the first action required is the cleaning of the *Nadis*. In order to make the drowsing subtile force to pass through the channels and to awaken the sleeping centres, the way must be prepared for the currents to pass by the psychic purification of the *Nadis* through which the vital fluid passes. Now, what is meant by the Psychic purification of the Nadis? By the Psychic purification is meant the change of direction of the flow of the vital force. The yogis assert that in a normal man the vital force ascends and descends along the *Nadis*, Ida and Pingala and some other *Nadis* and the object of purification is to empty these *Nadis* of this vital force so as to make them dead and to force the vital force to pass through the central one, namely the *susumna*.

This purification is carried out by means of special postures of the body (*asanas*) and by breathing exercises (*Pranayama*). The mind is also made to concentrate itself upon one object so as to accustom itself to remain calm and to take absolutely the form which the will of the student or disciple wishes to impose upon it. A sitting posture if rightly and properly adopted regulates the fluid current in the *Nadis* of the body. After the purification of the *Nadis* the next essential step is to control the breath, that is *Pranayama*. This breathing exercises when strictly adopted make the vital force to frequent other *Nadis* and helps to awaken the Kundalini, the divine Sakti as it is called. At this stage the Tantric scholars make use of the mantras and the meditations on the Chakras as stated above. This is the most important part and in it lies the secret of various schools. The

Kundalini which lies in a dormant state in the Muladhara at the entrance to the susumna closing with its mouth the entrance to the susumna. This Sakti Kundalini is considered as a Goddess and is the Supreme Sakti (Parasakti) dwelling in the human body.

Normally the vital force ascends and descends along the *Nadis* Ida and Pingala and some other *Nadis*. The object of these methods is to free these *Nadis* of their vital force and to make them pass through the Susumna and thus awaken the Kundalini. The Kundalini thus awakes from its sleepy state, that is to say, the Kundalini changes the character of the static equilibrium and becomes a dynamic force. It penetrates into the Susumna the only free way open to it which leads the Kundalini to the various Chakras. She absorbs into herself the *tattwas* corresponding to each centre and leaves after her passage her energy alone and as it passes from centre to centre they become more and more subtle.

It has been stated above that the use of certain postures the functions of which are to purify the *Nadis* and to bring about concentration of the mind. The simplest and most practical of the physical postures which bring about this concentration are :—

(a) *Nasagra dristi*—that is to say the fixing of the attention on the end of nose. Its action on the mind is certain. It calms the mind.

(b) *Bhrumadhya dristi*—that is to say the fixing of the attention on the space between the two eyebrows for a pretty long time.

THE PADMASANA OR LOTUS POSE

The sanskrit word Padma means lotus. This pose is called lotus because the hands and feet are so arranged as to imitate the lotus. In it the two feet

placed upon the opposite thighs represent the leaves, the two hands placed one over the other the lotus flower.

The breath control exercise mentioned previously lead to the Pranayama or regularization of breath which leads to control of mind. This respiratory movements are classified by the yogis as follows :—

- (1) *Rechaka*—i. e. exhalation of the breath.
- (2) *Kumbhaka*—the stopping of the breath.
- (3) *Puraka*—the inhalation of more air.

The Yogis lay great stress upon the retention of breath. The regularization of the breath is brought about by inhaling and exhaling it in accordance with a particular rhythm through one nostril or the other.

The exercises essential to pranayama consists in first stopping up the right nostril with the thumb inhaling slowly with the left nostril and exhale slowly. The process is to be repeated twelve times. Then stopping the left nostril with the two fingers, inhaling slowly through the right nostril and then exhaling twelve times. Secondly stopping the right nostril, inhaling through the left. Holding the breath. Then stopping the left nostril, exhale through the right one. The same thing is then repeated inversely.

Of course these physical postures, the Tantrics hold, play an important part in their Sadhana. In fact, it is the vital part and the success of the student or disciple depends upon the correct method of following these processes as well as upon the degree of purity in him and other factors. As they are very difficult and complicated in their actual performance so the help and service of Guru is necessary for proper guidance in their right directions.

The Tantrics use numerous means of calming the jerks of the mind by concentrating it. They gradually replace the activity of the ordinary reason by that of a force controlled by the Divine which they call Sakti.

The Tantrics admits that sexual energy issues directly from the Kundalini. It is quite natural that human creative energy is derived from the universal creative power. But the Tantrics attempt to bring about that force to retain its subtile nature so as to incorporate it with the ascending spiritual force instead of allowing it to descend it as a seminal liquid.

The Tantrics admit that there are amongst them certain people—Bamacharins—who know of the existence of the Kundalini and the subtile centres, but who deliberately turn the divine energy from its right path and use it for satisfaction of their own desires. They stop at certain Chakras in order to obtain extra-ordinary powers and thereby win applause and personal gain. Certain Tantric sexual practices proceed from the falsified application of Divine laws.

From the view point of oriental asceticism all tends towards the divine. All mystic realisation is naturally accompanied by the transformation of the subtile bodies of man and the awakening of the centres of psychic force which lies in a dormant state in a normal man. External or internal circumstances may hasten or delay the evolution but the methods of setting the psychic energies into action are always the same.

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