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An Introduction

TO

The Mantra Śāstra

BY

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PREFACE

MANTRA S'ĀSTRA is another department of Occult Science, which has for its objects all kinds of Siddhis or acquirements of powers for securing the objects aimed at by means of invoking the gods presiding them by repeating such Mantras or formulas as are intended for the purpose with the necessary ceremonies attending thereto. The whole of the four Vedas consist of nothing but Mantras, and as they proceed from the Praṇava (the word Aum), the Praṇava, consequently is the Ādi or Mūla Mantra or the Mantra of all Mantras; and it is acceptable to both the followers of Nigamas (the Vedas) and Āgamas (the Tantras). For this reason no Mantra can become effective or powerful without uttering the Praṇava in the commencement of it.

For the acquirement of the successful study and practice of this S'āstra, the purity of body, speech, and mind is the first condition attending it; otherwise, they would lead to Black magic and to its disastrous results: that is to utter

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destruction of the soul or the higher Manas. Strong will-power and undaunted courage are also the conditions required for this purpose.

Though the Mantra and Yoga Śāstras belong to the occult science, yet the difference between them is very great. The former is an objective science and the latter is a subjective one.

The Mantra Śāstra developes the powers by appealing to the external objects, such as gods and goddesses (the forces in nature), while the Yogin developes them by self-culture or by unifying or identifying himself with the manifested universe as part and parcel of the Īśvara or the Creator.

The Yogin by the virtue of his culture, gets all the powers of the Siddhis without effort while the Māntrika has to evoke them by the Mantras and the ceremonies attending them.

In order to make this difference clear to the mind of our readers, we have in this form reprinted the paper read by Mr. Gopālāchārlu and hope that our object will be accomplished.

We specially draw the attention of our readers to the fourth Section on "The Nature and Teachings of the Tantras".

T. P. H.

AN INTRODUCTION
TO
THE MANTRA ŚĀSTRA

[A paper read before the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society, held at Adyar, Madras, on 27th, 28th and 29th December, 1891, by S. E. GOPĀLĀCHĀRLU, F.T.S.]

SECTION I

THE NATURE OF MANTRAS

IT is with great diffidence that I ascend the platform to-day, to give you my few thoughts on mantras, a subject which, however interesting it may be, cannot be exhausted in a few essays. My object then is to place before you the results of my own studies in that direction, subject, of course, to the correction of my more advanced fellow Theosophists; and thus to benefit myself in one way.

I can only give you, owing to the shortness of the time at my disposal, the barest outlines

of the subject. It is impossible for a single individual to master the information treated of in 37,00,000 verses containing the original writings on mantras and Occultism, known as the *Āgamas*, besides several other works now supposed to have been lost; for occultism is treated in these writings in all its phases, and a theoretical knowledge of them presupposes a good deal of practical knowledge in one of them at least.

I cannot too strongly impress upon your minds the necessity of my giving references, and in important points quoting the authorities in support of my arguments, more especially because a slur has been cast upon us that we do not correctly represent the views of the ancients, and that we give out as correct what emanates from our brains, without taking the trouble of seeing whether our statements are borne out by the master-minds of old. I, for one, beg leave to admit for a moment, without quoting any instances of such neglect of duty, the truth of such statements, and believe that you will all agree with me that the charge is partially true at least. I would therefore try my best to support my statements, with references to the best authoritative writings; for if we give the public, any more room to think

of us as they now do, not only will the truth of our doctrines be less and less appreciated, but we shall be in their eyes no better than a set of self-styled masters who have nothing to show for our title.

The importance of sound has been most excellently sung by a poet of the Ṛg-veda, hoary with antiquity and wisdom, when he said:

चत्वारि वाक् परिमिता पदानि तानि विदुर्ब्राह्मणा ये मनीषिणः ।
गुहा त्रीणि निहिता नेङ्गयन्ति तुरीयं वाचो मनुष्या वदन्ति ॥

Catvāri vāk parimitā padāni tāni vidur brāhmaṇā ye manīṣiṇaḥ, guhā triṇi nihitā neṅgayanti, turīyaṁ vāco manuṣyā vadanti.

This literally means: All *vāks* are of four kinds: so the Brāhmaṇas learned in the Vedas (know); three of which are latent, and the last is spoken.

This statement gave rise to the fourfold classification. The Vedas have been divided into four; the Vaidikas—I use the term in the sense in which Yāska used it, *viz.*, the ancient Vedic teachers—say that the Praṇava (Om) and the three mantras known as Vyāhṛtis (Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ and Suvaḥ) are here referred to; the grammarians consider the same passage as referring to the grammatical forms and

terminations, *nāman, ākhyāta, upasarga* and *nipāta*; those following the school of Nirukta interpret the same as the Ṛc, Yajus, Sāman, and the words spoken of in the world. Those versed in Mantras'āstra only enlarge the views of the last-named by explaining them to mean the Parā, Pas'yantī, Madhyamā and Vaikharī forms of Vāk.[1]

This last interpretation is the basis on which the mantras were formed as I shall show you later on.

The potency of sound has been spoken of in very high terms by all writers of antiquity and by none more so than Patañjali himself, the well-known author of the Yōga Sūtras, in his more splendid work, the Mahābhāṣya, a commentary on the grammatical rules of Pāṇini. He says, the four horns[2] are the four classes in

[1] This Mantra forms the 45th hymn of the 164th Sūkta of the 22nd Anuvāka of the 1st Maṇḍala of the Ṛg-veda. This Sūkta contains 52 hymns the Ṛṣi of which is Dīrghatamas. The first 41 Mantras are addressed to Vis'vedevas; the 42nd and 45th to Vāgdevī, who is explained by Sāyanācārya to mean the same as the Logos. I would in this connection refer the reader for further details to Yogas'ikhopaniṣad.

[2] The reference is here to the Vedic passage: "*Catvāri s'ṛṅgā trayo asya pādā dvé s'īrṣe sapta hastāso asya, tridhā baddho vṛṣabho roravīti maho devo martyān āvives'a*".

चत्वारि शृङ्गा त्रयो अस्य पादा द्वे शीर्षे सप्त हस्तासो अस्य ।
त्रिधा बद्धो वृषभो रोरवीति महो देवो मार्त्यानाविवेश ॥

which the Brahman is compared to a Bull; and this passage Patañjali takes for his authority. Kayyaṭa in his commentary on Mahābhāṣya says that this is a description of S'abdabrahman (Logos) under the character of a Bull. The meaning of the Mantra is :

> Words, noun, verb, prefix, particle, and other kinds (of grammatical terminations). The three feet thereof are the three times, the past, the present and the future; the two heads are the two natures of sound, the eternal, and the factitious. The seven hands there are the seven case affixes. '*Trebly bound*,' *i.e.*, connected with the three localities, the chest, the throat and the head. The bull (*vṛṣabha*) is so called from its showering down (*varṣaṇa*)—(*i.e.*, showering down enjoyments). It bellows (*roravīti*), *i.e.*, makes a sound. How is this? The verb means 'making a sound'. 'The great God did enter mortals': the great God, *i.e.*, sound; mortals in men whose lot it is to die: these he did enter in order that they might become assimilated with the God.

This statement has been explained by his commentators to mean that the ETERNAL SOUND has become manifested in man, in order that he may be again assimilated into Him: In Him (The Eternal Sound or S'abdabrahman or the Logos) verily the man that knows the fitness of speech, whose sins have been removed by the employment of speech preceded by a knowledge of language and who, having split the knots of egotism, doth enter.

Patañjali next turns his attention to the Vedic hymn I have already quoted, and proceeds to say :

Another text says : 'Four are the kinds of words, the divisions of speech. Hence do know the knowers of Brahman (Brāhmaṇāḥ) who have will over the mind ; three placed in the cave,[1] men take no notice of ; the fourth (degree) of speech they utter.' The 'four words' that are the divisions of speech are the four sets of words, the nouns, verbs, prefixes and particles. 'Thou dost know the knowers of Brahman who have will over their minds,'—who have the will of their minds, (or have the mind in subjection to the will)—such is the meaning of the word *manīṣin*. 'Three placed within the cave,' they take no notice of ;—of the three placed within the cave 'they take no note,' they busy themselves not with them, they get not a glimpse thereof. 'The fourth (part) of speech men do utter' : the fourth (*turīya*) is that fourth part (of entireness) of speech which is found among men.

I have almost literally translated the words of Patañjali as a writer on grammar—the grammar of factitious speech, the proper study of which, he says, preserves the Vedas and prevents their corruption. By saying 'factitious speech' he means the Vaikharī Vāk, for we believe that the other three forms of Vāk form the subject of occult sciences.

[1] Vivaraṇa explains 'cave' to mean 'where the occult development of sound takes place'. By 'not getting a glimpse thereof' is meant 'their not being the depositories of any kind of knowledge in regard to the three stages of sound anterior to its articulation'.

The Hindus believe that Hanūmān was taught by Sūrya in nine grammars: and leaving off the ninth which treats of the factitious language, we have the eight grammars speaking the hidden forms of speech, the number eight including certain intermediate stages of the three latent Vāks or forms of speech alluded to above. This lowest form of speech is the object of knowledge, and one of the objects of which is obtaining the full knowledge of words, or, to adopt Patañjali's explanation, in order to obtain a command over his own mind.

"Of trinal speech distinguished by its several locations as the pronounced (*Vaikharī*), the intermediate (*madhyamā*) and the seeing (*paśyantī*). This marvellous one is the ultimate degree. Among these the pronounced is that which is the object of hearing, the intermediate abiding in the region of the heart is the cause of discourse, since (else) there would never be words perceived; but the *paśyantī* or 'the seeing' (so named actively *honoris causa*; while it means, what is seen by the enlightened) is beyond vulgar concernment, but in it moreover do those with concentrated minds arrive at the distinction between the bases and the affixes. But in the ultimate (parā vāk), it is not so (no

distinction of parts) being there discoverable. Speech is on that account said to be 'trinal'." [1]

It is plain from what has been said above that the laws which govern ordinary speech also govern mantras, the latter being only speech arranged according to certain modulations of sound. Such being the case we shall now enquire into the signification of the word 'mantra'.

'Mantra' has been derived from the root *man* to think: and it has among several other ways, also been explained to be so called on account of its protecting the Upāsaka, *i.e.*, one who developes the occult power by practising it with its accompaniments, from all sorts of dangers and difficulties. The word is also cognate with *Manana* meaning 'to think,' and described as one of the paths leading to Brahman. Mantras are of the Vaikharī vāk and correspond to the Sthūla plane of matter.

The origin of mantras and devatās is this. Brahman which is known in the Mantras'āstras as Bindu, possesses a force called Bīja, but known in the Vedāntic writings as S'akti or

[1] Bartṛhari's Vākyapadīya quoted by Nages'abhaṭṭa in his Bhāṣyapradīpoddyota. I may here add that Bhartṛhari was one of the first commentators on the Mahābhāṣya; and the subsequent commentary of Kayyaṭa, and the commentary thereon by Nāges'abhaṭṭa, are based on this great work which is said to have consisted of 100,000 *granthas*.

Prakṛti. Their united action is Nāda, of Śabdabrahman or the Logos. There is, however, a little difference of opinion among this class of occultists as to the nature of the sounds uttered by the Mantras. One class thinks them to be manifestations of the Logos; others again consider them as the manifestations of the Śakti, and say that Śabdabrahman is the consciousness in all things. This consciousness resides in man in the Kuṇḍalinī Nāḍī and is said to be the origin of all the letters of the Alphabet.

We have now three kinds of creations. From Bindu we have in order, Sadāśiva, Rudra, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, which are either so many different Logoi, or different aspects of one and the same principle. The other creation is from Śakti. Its first manifestation is Mahat, which is either Sāttvika, Rājasa or Tāmasa. These give rise to the three kinds of Ahaṃkāra. On the plane of Ahaṃkāra we have the ten deities known as Diks or directions, Vāyu, Aśvins, the Fire, the Sun,[1] Pracetas, Indra, Upendra, Mitra, and the ten senses and the Tanmātras. From these last we have the five elements

[1] It must be here said that the sun, fire, etc., do not mean those on the physical plane with which we are acquainted, but their astral, or in some cases, even higher counterparts.

known to Indian philosophy. Each one of them is thus symbolised.

Pṛthvī ▭, Ap ❀ (Lotus flower), Tejas ◡,

Vāyu , Ākāśa . All the letters of the Saṃskṛt Alphabet belonging to these tattvas follow the symbol used for the particular class to which they belong and these symbols play a not unimportant part in the practice of the Mantras.

From these elements the physical body of man takes its origin, and in it the Kuṇḍalinī force is located. The three nāḍīs known as Iḍā, Piṅgalā and Suṣumṇā extend from the nose to a little below the navel, and the Kuṇḍalinī is located a little above the anus. It is described as coiled like a serpent, and when awakened by the power of Yoga, it becomes straightened, and shuts up the passages to the three nāḍīs mentioned above. According to Indian writers, Śabda takes its origin in the Kuṇḍalinī; and it is the sound which takes its rise from Kuṇḍalinī that passes the three stages Parā, Paśyantī and Madhyamā, and at last comes out as the one which we all hear and speak comprising the fifty letters of the Saṃskṛt

Alphabet. It has been briefly said that the world of Śabda takes its origin from sounds. In other words, it means that a name or sound expressed to denote a particular object is identical with the object itself.

This idea will no doubt appear very curious to those of us who have been used to the modern way of thinking, but is pre-eminently an Indian idea; and no Indian writer has explained this theory more clearly than Patañjali, whom I quote once more:

> Among those (*viz.*, sounds, or words, secular and spiritual) the secular in the first place are such as cow, house, man and Brahmā. The scriptural are verily indeed as *Agnimīḷe purohitam* (and such other passages found in the Vedas); now (let us take) 'cow'. Here, which is the word? That which is in the shape of a thing with dewlap, tail, hump, hoofs, horns—pray is that the word? Nay, replies he (referring to Pāṇini whose Sūtras on Saṃskṛt grammar and philology Patañjali comments upon). That is not a word, but verily a substance. Then—the hints, gestures and winking—is that the word? Nay, he replies—that verily is the action. Then the white, the black, the tawny, the spotted, is that the word? Nay, he replies, that verily is quality. Then that which in many is different (and yet) not different—and that which is not destroyed in things that are destroyed by disintegration—that which in the common nature (of all that exists)—is that the word? Nay, he replies—verily is the form (implying the genus or Platonic idea). What then is the word? A word is that through which, when uttered, there is the

cognition (*i.e.*,) things with dewlap, tail, hump, hoofs and horns, or in the world a noise; a noise with a recognized series is a word or sound.

This last statement has been explained by Kayyaṭa to mean that an identity (*tādātmya*) exists between a word and the object it signifies. It is generally said that the Kuṇḍalinī has fifty letters. This means a great many things. It has been explained in the Mantrasāstras that all the fifty letters take their rise in their *parā* form of course, from the Kuṇḍalinī; and that the force latent in it becomes manifested in the forms of sounds which to the ancient Indian grammarians comprised the fifty letters of the Saṃskṛt Alphabet. When first any attempt is made to utter any sound, the sound of Praṇava or Om is heard in the heart. It is in fact the very first sound that one is said to hear when he attempts to speak out any word: and in the case of any single sound (Ekākṣara) as for instance, the very first sound you would make, or one hears, before you pronounce the letter or sound, is the Praṇava: and you hear this sound so long as one has life or Prāṇa. Of course we cannot ordinarily hear the sound of Praṇava unless we are trained in Yoga. Proceeding from this analogy, they inferred,

or knew that this sound can be heard everywhere, for, as I said before, any sound that is intended to be produced is always preceded by the sound of Praṇava.

We thus see the reason why the ancients said that Praṇava was the first of all sounds, and therefore of all mantras; how it was held to be universal, and how on this physical plane it came to mean Prāṇa. It also means Brahman, being co-existent with it in being universal; and being thus the first of all sounds every sound or mantra was considered its manifestation.

We shall now proceed to consider the original of mantras. I have already said that sound comes from the Kuṇḍalinī, through the nāḍīs, and the mouth. Those nāḍīs are hollow and terminate a little below the navel, and through them the ten kinds of air known as Prāṇa, Apāna, Vyāna, Udāna, Samāna, Kṛkara, Devadatta, Dhanaṃjaya, Nāga and Kūrma, take their rise.

The sound proceeds from Kuṇḍalinī to one of the nāḍīs, the particular nāḍī being determined by the letter intended to be produced. Thus letters *A* (अ) to *Aḥ* (अः) pass through Iḍā, *Ka* (क) to *Ma* (म) through Piṅgalā and *Ya* (य) to *Kṣa* (क्ष) through Suṣumṇā. These three nāḍīs are

presided over respectively by the Moon, the Sun and Agni; in other words there exists an intimate, and to us inexplicable, relation between these deities, and the nāḍīs, the former influencing the latter. It is on this account that the sounds coming from Iḍā are known in Saṃskṛt grammar as Saumya (literally related to Moon) and those from Suṣumṇā as Ūṣman meaning hot or fiery. The saumyas are also so called, because they do not require much effort in pronouncing them as they pass straight through the Iḍā nāḍī. The letters *Ka* to *Ma* have sprung up from them. Thus, letters *Ka* to *Ma* are called Prāṇins (animated beings) while *A* to *Aḥ* are called Prāṇa (life-principle). They are symbols of the twenty-five tattvas, the last letter *Ma* symbolising the twenty-fifth principle the Jīvātman, or Paramātman according to the view we take. The third series extending from *Ya* to *Kṣa*, and coming through the Suṣumṇā are called Vyāpakas, from their being extended, or composed of the other two series already spoken of, and they play a very important part in the composition of mantras, for their insertion is entirely dependent on the result we may wish to obtain.

To summarize then, the sound in its passage from the Kuṇḍalinī to the end of the nāḍīs

is the stage of *parā*: that of its passage through the nāḍīs is its *pasyantī* stage: from the end of the nāḍīs to the throat it is in its *madhyamā* stage, while that which passes from the throat to the mouth is its *vaikharī* stage. The sounds or letters on the physical plane are divided into those of Pṛthvī, Ap, Tejas, Vāyu and Ākāśa. Thus:

Vāyu,—ka, kha, ga, gha, ṅa, a, ā, ṛ, ha, śa, ya.
Agni,—ca, cha, ja, jha, ña, i, ī, ṛī, kṣa, ra.
Pṛthvī,—ṭa, ṭha, ḍa, ḍha, ṇa, u, ū, ḷ, ṣa, va, la.
Ap,—ta, tha, da, dha, na, è, ai, ḷī, sa.
Ākāśa,—pa, pha, ba, bha, ma, ô, au, aṁ, aḥ.

Mantras being a combination of sounds to suit a purpose, they may be either of one syllable or a thousand syllables. The latter being its maximum limit, mantras of one, two, and three syllables are, strictly speaking, arrangement of sounds scientifically blended together to produce a result, and are consequently very potent: these and the four syllabled mantras do not generally admit of any analysis whatever, as in the case of those of five syllables and more, for the reason that they are generally composed of the least number of Bījas, and have no room for the insertion

of the name of the devatā as in the case of the many-worded ones: and the only way we can find out the devatā is by a careful examination of the Bījas employed. Those of five syllables or more, are divisible into (1) the Praṇava, (2) the Bīja showing the object of the mantra, and (3) the name of the deity. Not *all* the mantras begin with Praṇava, but those that begin with it are considered more sacred to a deity than those which do not begin with it. The reason is plain enough, being that the mere presence of Praṇava, which is considered as the mother of all mantras, will accelerate the force of that mantra.

The objects of the Mantras are various (1) Subjection (*vaśya*), (2) attraction (*ākarṣaṇa*), (3) fascination (*mohana*), (4) deadening the faculties (*stambhana*), (5) creating enmity (*vidveṣaṇa*), (6) death (*māraṇa*), (7) ruining (*uccāṭana*), (8) soothing (*āpyāyana*); and the Bījaic terminations show the object of Mantras. In case of *vaśya, uccāṭana,* and *ākarṣaṇa,* the termination *huṃ* should be used; *phaṭ* for *māraṇa*; *namaḥ* for *stambhana, vidveṣaṇa* and *mohana*; *vauṣaṭ* for *āpyāyana.* This rule should be observed by a beginner, but when once he masters a mantra, this act being known as *Mantra-siddhi,* he masters *will-power*

also, and can then use any termination for fulfilling any object. But immediate results will follow if he also pays attention to the above rule. This leads us to think that only the efficacy of the will-power is necessary, but there is a sort of efficacy in the sounds themselves uttered during the repetition of a mantra.

Mantras are either masculine, feminine, or neuter, according to the nature of the devatā addressed to, and of actions. Those addressed to a female deity are also called *vidyās*. The eight purposes above mentioned may be thus classified according to the nature of the devatā addressed. Those that terminate with the endings *huṃ* and *phaṭ* are male mantras; but there is a class of Indian occultists who consider every mantra as masculine. Those ending with *svāhā* and *vauṣaṭ* are feminine in their action, while those with *namaḥ* are neuter. Probably the reason for this classification lies in the fact that the pronunciation of *huṃ* and *phaṭ* are more forcible, and produce a greater disturbance in the ākāśa, than either *svāhā*, *vauṣaṭ* or *namaḥ*. Under the head of feminine mantras again are included all such mantras of one syllable, but consisting of more than one letter as *kma*, *khma*, *kra*, etc.

One of the advantages of this classification is that these mantras may be best practised by persons enjoying different periods of life; for it is laid down almost as a rule that the feminine mantras should be practised before 16 years of age, and the rest above that age.

The excellence of the Saṃskṛt Alphabet will be apparent when we consider that one had all the occult laws above hinted at, can be observed only in connection with it, and none else; and also that the knowledge of occult dynamics which the ancients possessed, enabled them to find out that these laws can be best worked out in the case of this Alphabet called Saṃskṛt, meaning 'well-done' or 'well-arranged'; in short a perfect Alphabet.

The number of mantras existing in the Saṃskṛt language is generally stated in occult writings as seven crores. This gives us only a rough idea, but the exact number is 67,108,863. Every mantra of any number of syllables must fall under one of the 26 kinds of Chandas, and that the number given out in works on Saṃskṛt prosody. These denote the 26 ways in which different sounds can be arranged, taken one at a time, two at a time, and so on, the total number of ways in which they can be so arranged being, as we

know from algebra, $2^{26}-1$ or 67,108,863. Mantras are also divided into those of Agni and Soma. If in a mantra there are more letters coming out from Piṅgalā Nāḍī it is Agni mantra; if of Suṣumṇā, it belongs to Soma and is called a Saumya mantra; and so on.

SECTION II

OCCULT CORRESPONDENCES

ONE of the most secret correspondences existing between the mantras on the Vaikharī Vāk or the Sthūla plane of matter, and the higher planes is Bījas, which I have partly hinted at in the preceding Section. The central idea involved in the working of the mantras is that certain sounds when uttered produce a disturbance in the Ākāśa which is, in its turn communicated, according to the severity of such a disturbance, to the higher planes. It stands to reason, therefore, that the greater the disturbance, the greater will be the communication to the higher planes. The nature of the disturbance cannot be judged from the known laws of physics, as that science has rarely meddled with the higher planes of matter. All that we can, therefore, say is that there exists some relation between sounds, and the disturbance in the Ākāśa, and that certain kinds of sounds produce certain kinds of disturbance. These sounds are known in Saṃskṛt

by the name of Bījākṣaras, and they have been classed under various heads, denoting those the effects of which are of a particular nature; the latent forces in the letters being known as Bījas. All the letters of the Saṃskṛt Alphabet are also Bījākṣaras, and as everything in nature can be judged from the three standpoints of Viṣṇu, S'iva and S'akti, we have also three different sets of meanings according as they are either Vaiṣṇava, S'aiva and S'ākta. Thus there are three ways of interpreting a mantra, composed as it is of various Bījākṣaras, and according as it belongs to either Viṣṇu, S'iva or S'akti. It must at the same time be said that each one of these *devatās*, is an aggregate of several forces, each known in its turn by the name of devatā; and one can easily see by inspection, what particular force is intended to be invoked in a given mantra. These ideas should be borne in mind for a correct understanding of what follows.

A chart is given at the end, as an appendix, containing the significations of the Bīja forces latent in the 50 letters of the Saṃskṛt Alphabet; as such a thing will be too tedious if it finds a place in the body of the essay. It has been prepared at the expense of a good deal of labour, as it involved the study of

more than seven or eight large Saṃhitās in the three sets of Āgamas,—Pāñcarātra, S'aiva and S'akta. A very curious conventionality is found to have been used in the Āgamas, *viz.*, of designating Bījākṣaras, by the names of certain trees; as for example, "Join Mandāra with Viṣṇu". Here "Mandāra" would be ordinarily understood to mean the Mandāra tree but such an explanation will be found not to have been borne by the context. It means that the Bījākṣara called "ra" should be added to Viṣṇu Bījākṣara 'a,' and should be pronounced "ara". This is given here as an illustration to show how the mere wording of the text of Mantras'āstras is apt to be misunderstood, and why such a thing as initiation into them is necessary. Such sorts of examples I have collected and explained as far as the materials could be obtained, and will also be found in the appendix. This sort of finding out the mantras is called Mantroddhāra. Among the uses of Bījākṣaras, may be mentioned the placing of certain Bījākṣaras in the beginning of the verses composed. A poet, for instance, and in this case he must be a good adept, wishing to destroy a house or anything belonging to another person, sings a song beginning with one of the Agni or fire Bījākṣaras, and

which means that the house should be burnt. Cases of this sort have occurred, but they all depend on the occult powers conquered by the composer. Kālidāsa and several others are said to have done so. Similarly good may be done to any one. But as the tendency in those who are not Brahmajñānins, is to do more harm than good, such things should be discountenanced as far as possible.

It must, therefore, be understood that all the mantras which may mean nothing else than the effect required, are not devoid of force whatever. A magician, for instance, wishing to purify the magnetic aura of a chair would merely say "Raṃ agnaye namaḥ" fancying or willing himself during the repetition, that fire purifies the chair, and if he is sensitive, he would feel that the aura surrounding it has been purified.

As regards the question of relation of mantra, to the force it symbolises, no clear words can be found in the Mantraśāstras. Such explanations as when literally translated mean "the devatā is of two forms, *viz.*, that of a mantra, and that of the Sūkṣma Śarīra," occur, but they do not in any way enlighten us. There seems to be a good deal of mystery cast on this question by the Agamas, but judging from their

context in the Mantraśāstras and from Śaṃkarācarya's words in his famous Commentaries on the Brahma Sūtras (1. 3. 33) that a devatā has the power of assuming any form. I think I am not far from right in supposing that the devatās (by whatever name they are called in the Theosophical literature) are denizens of a higher plane of being, but between whom and the sounds there exists some inexplicable relation, and which when once tuned is sure to invoke those denizens, just as in a piano the keys produce the particular tone required.

Similar cases of intentional secrecy in the case of mantras may be inferred from the fact that the mantras have been specially composed so as not to be of much use when practised as they stand. The mantras are "defective" as they stand, and should be remedied. They are said to be of fifty kinds. Most of these are trivial, but four of these are important. They are known by the names, *Chinna*, *Ruddha*, *Śaktihīna* and *Badhira*.

Chinna means 'broken' and denotes that defect by which a mantra is known, containing a Vāyu Bījākṣara (*ya*) either in the beginning, middle or the end, or containing a double letter (as *kma* for instance): or containing three, four or five vowels.

Ruddha (retarding) is that defect in which a Pṛthvībīja (*la*) occurs twice simultaneously.

Śaktihīna (powerless) is that in which neither a Māyābīja (*ī*) Śrībīja (*Śrīṃ*), or Praṇava, is to be found in a given mantra.

Badhira (or deaf) is that in which there is *anusvāra* both in the beginning as well as the end of a mantra.

It is also considered a defect in a mantra, if it is composed of a large number of syllables. It quite frequently happens that a mantra cannot be formed without any of the defects: and accordingly there are two opposite schools, one holding that these defects exist with a purpose, and the other that they are only accidental. It follows therefrom that in order to compose a mantra, a good deal of care has to be exercised against positive evil consequences, as such defects are sure to produce little or none of the intended results. It will also be seen that those mantras which are either the least defective or not defective at all, are those composed by the highest adepts spoken of in Saṃskṛt writings, and I may add that they are, as a rule, written in Āgamas in a cypher, thus necessitating a real initiation into it.

These defects should be remedied, and such remedies are ten in number known by the name

of "Dasa Saṃskāras". They are Janana, Jīvana, Tāḍana, Bodhana, Abhiṣeka, Vimalīkaraṇa, Āpyāyana, Tarpaṇa, Dīpana and Gopana.

Janana, literally "birth," is the process of separating the letters of a mantra from a diagram previously drawn, and of concentrating the will thereon; this process is said to intensify the action of a mantra. Jīvana or "protection" is the process of regenerating, and this is done by performing the Japa of a mantra, preceded and followed by the Praṇava.

Tāḍana (beating) is that process of writing the mantra on the *bhūrjapatra* (birch leaf), and after concentrating one's mind on it for a certain length of time, invoking in short the force indicated by the mantra: and then awakening it by making some magnetic passes on the writing, with a drug favourable for awakening the force, such as sandal paste.

Bodhana is that process in which the devatā is after being roused induced to a proper understanding; and this peculiar result is brought about by the throwing of the flowers of Karavīra (*Neriumadorata*). In Abhiṣeka, the devatā is made to yield to the wishes of the operator, and this is done by either pouring water mesmerised by the repetition of the four

bījas Om, Hrīṃ, Klīṃ, Aiṃ, or by throwing the tender leaves of the peepul.

While the processes above described are for the purpose of restoring the devatā to its proper senses so far as the individual operator is concerned, the defects in the mantra, and the devatā are, strictly speaking, remedied in the last three ones, beginning from Vimalīkaraṇa, which literally means "getting rid of strain". It is done by making a Japa of the mantra, preceded, and followed, by the words *Haṃsa* and *Soham*, respectively, and then mesmerising water by plunging a blade of sacred grass into it, while the mantra is being repeated; this letter process being known by the name of Apyāyana, that is equalizing the good and evil actions of the devatā. To attain this result another ceremony is gone through, *viz.*, Tarpaṇa,, which is pouring over the *bhūrjapatra* on which the mantra is written, mesmerised milk, and clarified butter, mixed with ghee and the mesmerised water just described. The next step, therefore, is that of stimulating the devatā, so that the required result, *viz.*, a command over it, may be sooner accomplished. This is done by Dīpana, and Gopana. In the former the Bījas (Om, Īṃ, Saṃ) are added to the mantra and repeated

a certain number of times; the Bījas added thereto, being very powerful ones; and the letter is nothing but a careful preservation to oneself of the secret ceremonies performed all the while.

There is however one important thing. I would call it the most important factor in the practice of mantras and that is, the law of correspondences of several principles to each other. I need not for obvious reasons set myself to explain them in any way but would leave the subject to be dealt with by my readers according to the lights they have had. But as I expended a great labour in finding them out from the Mantraśāstras and other writings, I shall simply enumerate them in an appendix hereafter.

SECTION III

PURAS'CARAṆA

PURAS'CARAṆA as applied to the practice of mantras means that act or a series of acts which should be performed as soon as one is initiated. They are *japa*, *homa*, *tarpaṇa*, *mārjana*, and *charity*. These are called the five *aṅgas* to the practice of mantra.

Before one begins to practise it, it is absolutely necessary that he should find out whether he will in any way be benefited, in other words, whether his Karma is such as to prevent his being benefited at all by the practice of a mantra in that birth in which he wishes to obtain the result in view. This shows that nothing in the world can work against the natural law known to Hindus under the general name of "Karma". Even Vidyāraṇya when he wanted wealth and prosperity had recourse to the practice of Gāyattrī, but it was all of no use. He at last, performed those ceremonies which go to destroy the action of the devatā of a mantra after it is found useless. This action of Vidyāraṇya's certainly evoked at last the

devatā of the Gāyattrī who is said to have told him that he could not obtain the required result in that birth, as his Karma in his previous birth was such as not to entitle him to any such reward. He, therefore, renounced the life of a householder and turned out a Saṃnyāsin, as the life of an ascetic is considered by the Śāstras as a kind of second birth, in which one should try his best to forget everything he previously enjoyed, and even his own name: for this purpose, Hindus take a new name after they renounce a householder's duties. It was only after Vidyāraṇya became a Saṃnyāsin that he was appointed Prime Minister to the King, and was virtually rolling in wealth. We need not question the basis on which the above account stands. It is quite sufficient for our present purpose to see that granting it to be true, it conveys a good deal of meaning; it illustrates in short the law enunciated above.

For purposes of finding out whether Karma allows one to be benefited by the practice of a mantra, recourse should be had to Astrology, from which it should be found out whether at the particular period in which work is commenced or during his life-time he may have control over the mantra in

question. If it is found out from his horoscope that he would control it, he may set himself to work, but not, if otherwise. Granting that it is in his favour, he should then solve the same problem by having recourse to the mantra itself. The object of this problem is to find out whether one should perform the Japa, etc., of a mantra a greater number of times or a less number of times than is usually accorded to it; in short, to see whether he had in his past birth practised it, and with what result. For, if he had practised it, and he had a command over it, he would now be required to do it a less number of times, but still at the same time he will derive the fullest benefit therefrom. This is technically called Ṛṇaṛṇibhāva, and is of three kinds. In all of these three, the general process is counting in a sort of way from the first letter of a mantra to the first or the last letter of his own name. One of these ways is to find out, in the order of the Saṃskṛt Alphabet, how many letters come between the first letter of the mantra, and the first letter of the name of the intending practiser; then multiply this number by 3, and divide by 7, and the remainder will be what the mantra "owes" him.

Then count from the first letter of the name of the practiser, to the first letter of the mantra, multiply this number by 7, and divide the product by three, the remainder is what he owes the mantra. To explain this let me take an illustration. Suppose the first letter of a mantra is क, and suppose at the same time that the first letter of the name of the intending practiser when transliterated into Saṃskṛt is ग. Counting from क to ग we have three letters, multiplying this number by three and dividing by seven, we have remainder 2. This shows that the mantra owes him two parts. Then continuing the same illustration, count from ग to क, we have 49 letters; multiplying this by seven, and dividing the product by three, we have the remainder 1. Adding 1 and 2 we have a total three, and this means that the person whose name begins with ग should, in case of practising a mantra beginning with क, perform Japa and other ceremonies over again half the number of times the number generally laid down for them.

The other method is drawing a figure of 63 squares. In the top-most row the first 9 numerals should be written in the ascending order, and in the lower-most, the same in the

descending order. In the five intermediate rows, all the letters of the Saṃskṛt Alphabet from अ to क्ष should be written in their natural order, omitting ऋ,ॠ,ऌ,ॡ and क्ष as in the diagram given below:

१	२	३	४	५	६	७	८	९
अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ए	ऐ	ओ
औ	अं	अः	क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	च
छ	ज	झ	ञ	ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
त	थ	द	ध	न	प	फ	ब	भ
म	य	र	ल	व	श	ष	स	ह
९	८	७	६	५	४	३	२	१

Here again let us suppose that the mantra intended to be practised begins with क, and the first letter of the intending practiser's name is ग; and counting from क to ग we have threeletters. The top-most row of figures denote those relating to the mantra, while the lower-most are those relating to the person. Such being the case, we should, in order to find out by how

much the mantra " is due," multiply the number three by four, that being the figure which is right above the first letter of the mantra, and we obtain the product twelve. Dividing this product by six, that being the figure straight below it in the lower-most row, we have no remainder, and this means that the mantra is in no way " due to " the person. If the same process is reversed and the necessary arithmetical trial operations undergone, we have a remainder 2. This shows that the performer should perform the Japa of a mantra twice the number of times usually allotted to it.

There is a third method which consists in certain arithmetical operations with regard to the total numbers of letters of the mantra, and the person. But as this is very tedious, and I run the risk of making this already technical subject all the more tedious, I shall for the present omit it. Those who are anxious to know something about it will find it described in greater detail in Mantraratnamahodadhi.

I have been using all the while, the expressions " due to mantra," and " due by mantra ". These were intended to mean the relations which exist in nature between the person, and the devatā of the mantra. While his horoscope reveals the relation of the individual to the

practice of mantras in general, the above methods refer entirely to the devatās presiding over individual mantras, and the person who intends to practise them.

There are again other methods such as Sidhāricakras or squares in which the letters of the Saṃskṛt Alphabet are arranged in particulars, and thus the relation of the devatā of the mantra to the individual is traced, but I now omit them for want of space. By the aid of these methods, one is enabled to find out what sort of mantras will benefit him. He then finds out what sort of relation exists between himself and the devatā as judged by the constellation under which he was born, and the elements surrounding him, and thereby the powers presiding over those elements.

The next thing to be done is the selection of a good day for the purpose, but before this comes the initiation into the mantra itself by a competent Guru, who should have a complete control over the devatā of the mantra, which is known in Mantraśāstras as Mantrasiddhi. The Guru should on the day of initiation worship the devatā of the mantra, by concentrating the force denoted by the mantra in a pot, already filled with water and in which the five best gems, *viz.*, diamond, ruby, sapphire,

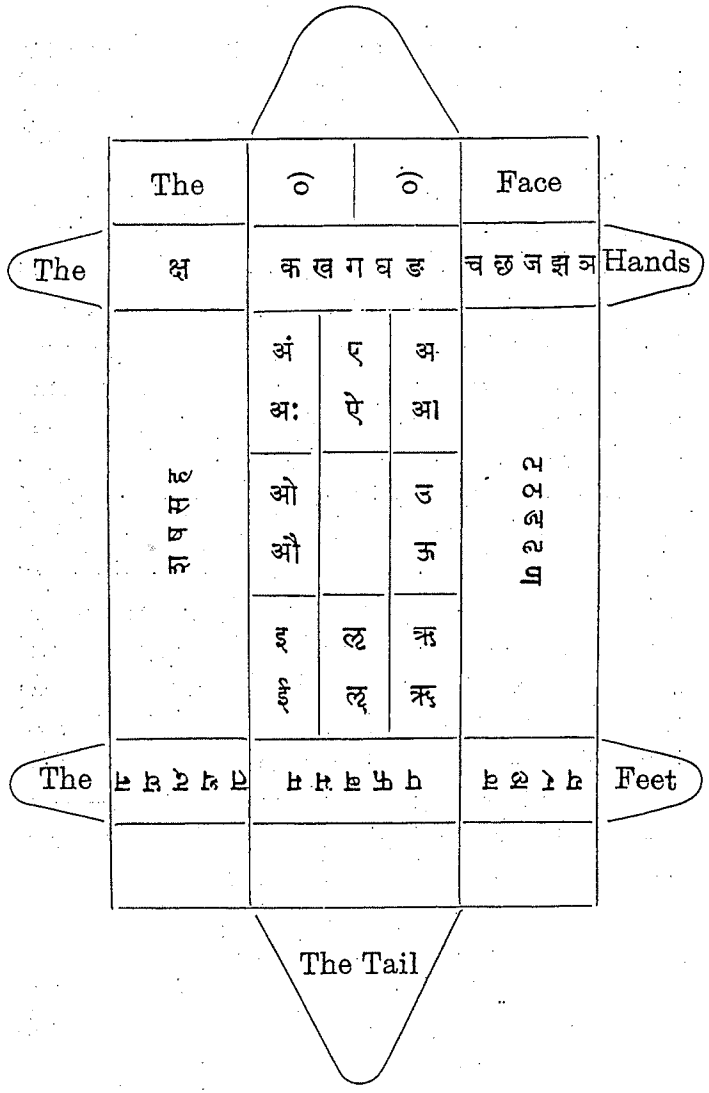
emerald and cat's-eye are placed. The Guru should then make in the presence of the disciple, 100 offerings to fire, by ghee generally, although special oils are considered favourable in the case of special mantras. He should then fill another small vessel with water and after covering it with the palm of his right hand, the Guru should repeat the mantra 800 times, and bathe the candidate with the water; the vessel should then be placed aside and the mantra pronounced in his ear. This completes initiation, and a portion of the force generated in the Guru by his control over the devatā of the mantra he is to initiate into, is thus transformed by the same method as we find in the case of modern mesmerists: and you thus see that as has been frequently and truly remarked by our President-Founder mesmeric methods of manipulation form the A. B. C. of all occult practices.

It is now the turn of the disciple to practise the mantra. Special months are selected for the purpose. The month of Vaiśākha (May-June) is very favourable, to the production of early results, so also are Āśvina, and Kārttika months (October-November, and November-December); of a more doubtful nature are those of Phālguna (March-April), Mārgaśira

(December-January), Jyeṣṭha (June); less beneficial still are Āṣāḍha (July), Śrāvaṇa (August-September), and Māgha (February); while the remaining months should always be avoided. The full-moon day, the second, fifth to seventh, the tenth, the twelfth, and the thirteenth days are good ones. The Moon being more connected with these matters, any mantra practised during these days in that half of waxing Moon will be productive of worldly comforts; but if on the corresponding days of the waning Moon, it will be more productive of spiritual bliss. The other days, unless in special cases, should be entirely avoided. Special periods again, such as the sixth day of either of the halves in the month of Bhādrapada (September-October), the thirteenth day of the waning half in the month of Āśvina (October-November), the ninth day of the bright half of Kārttika (November-December), the first day of the dark-half of Śrāvaṇa (August-September) are held to be very sacred. They are in fact called Devaparvans, days sacred to the devas. Of the days of the week, Tuesday is attended with loss, Saturday with death, and Monday in the dark-half of a month with no use: the rest are good ones. Of the constellations Aśvinī, Rohiṇī, Hasta, Svāti, Viśākhā, Jyeṣṭhā, Uttaraṣāḍhā, Uttarābhādrā,

and Uttarāphālgunī are the best. If the day is an eclipse day, none of these need be observed. A mantra should be remedied of the various defects mentioned in the foregoing section, and the "ten arts" also therein referred to should be performed.

One should fast the day previous to the day of practice, probably to enable him to concentrate his attention better on the mantra. On the day fixed, he should resolve within himself not to leave the place or village in which he is put up, until the practice is over, as also to avoid sexual intercourse, oil bath, studying other subjects, vain talk, midday meal, etc., abstinence from all of which tend to improve the psychical part of the person, and to enable him to concentrate his attention better. Until this practice is over, he should rise early in the mornings and perform all the duties involved upon him. The next thing to be done is the ordinary pūjā or worship, but done as a special accompaniment to his practice. He should then draw the figure of a tortoise, in which should be written the various letters of the Saṃskṛt Alphabet in a certain way; and on that part of the figure where the head is drawn he should take his seat. The following is the figure:


The
ं
ः
Face
The
क्ष
क ख ग घ ङ
च छ ज झ ञ
Hands
अं
अः
ए
ऐ
अ
आ
ओ
औ
उ
ऊ
इ
ई
ऌ
ॡ
ऋ
ॠ
The
Feet
The Tail

The number of times a mantra should be repeated is regulated as regards each. The best way is by counting the fingers, although beads are also recommended, but not quite necessary. Out of the number of times one repeats his mantra in Japa, he should make one-tenth the number to each of the following: *homa* (offerings), *tarpaṇa*, *mārjana*, bathing and food to Brāhmaṇas. This last, and in fact all the essentials, are necessary only in the case of the more powerful mantras, but not for the lesser ones, such as the inferior devatās. As for the substances required for *homa*, *palāśa* flower (*Butea frondosa*) is necessary, if the object is to obtain knowledge; if for Brahma-tejas, or increasing his aura, Aśvattha branches; if for increase of age, *darbha* (the common grass); if anxious of sovereignty, cooked rice and ghee exclusively; cracked rice will bring success in love; *bilva* leaves bring on fame; *Putrāñjivi* seeds will induce fertility; if sesamum seeds are used, the cure of sickness results; and if flowers of any kind, prosperity.

For *Tarpaṇa*, a little quantity of milk and ghee may be mixed with water, and the mixture let down through the fingers, each time the mantra is repeated the particular

mantra being followed by the word "Svāhā" while being so repeated.

Mārjana is the sprinkling oneself by water while a mantra is being repeated. A pot or vessel is filled with water mixed with a little milk while the practiser takes a blade of darbha grass and by it sprinkles on his head the water in the vessel, invoking mentally the devatā of the mantra. In feeding Brāhmaṇas he should similarly invoke the devatā in each individual Brāhmaṇa thus fed.

He should take his meals in the evening, eating just sufficient to keep his body and soul together; and all sorts of rich food should be altogether avoided.

After all this is performed for the number of days fixed for each mantra, he is said to have obtained that power of controlling the devatā of the mantra, this state being known as mantra-siddhi, presentiments of which will be found in dreams. It is only after one becomes a complete master of a mantra, that he can have recourse to any of the eight actions spoken of in the first section.

I cannot but conclude this section with a warning to one and all of our brothers and sisters not to be led away by what I have here given out and set themselves to practise.

These are general rules no doubt applicable to most of the mantras, but care must be taken to see if the particular mantra you wish to practise has any special mode of performance laid down in Mantrasāstras. I need not touch the question of knowing it through a proper Guru, for certain evil effects resulting from any unintentional omission in any of the ceremonies above described can only be best averted by one, who has had a practical experience, and such a person is the Guru.

SECTION IV

THE NATURE AND TEACHINGS OF THE TANTRAS

THE Tantras or Āgamas[1] which I have explained in the beginning of this paper as the great storehouse of mantras are of three classes: (1) Pāñcarātrāgamas, or those which speak of the worship of Viṣṇu; (2) S'aivāgamas, or those which deal with the worship of S'iva; and (3) S'āktāgamas, those of S'akti. The first

[1] The terms Tantra and Āgama are here loosely used. The expression 'Tantra' has been said in the Kāmikāgama, to apply to that work which speaks of the twenty-four subjects, *viz.*: (1) the nature of Brahman, (2) Brahma-Vidyā, the science of knowing Brahman, (3) The names of the Āgamas and Tantras, (4) Creation and destruction of the world, (5) Astronomy, (6) The sixteen mystical diagrams called Cakras which are auxiliary to the practice of mantras, (7) Mantras, (8) on the uses of Mantras, (9) Yantras, (10) Worship of the special deity about whom the work treats, (11) The ways of people in the four yugas, (12) Origin of devas, (13) Creation and destruction of universe, (14) Holy rivers, (15) Duties of different castes, (16) Old traditions, (17) Sacred days in a year, (18) Pure and impure objects, (19) Elements in nature, (20) Secret virtues of herbs, (21) Elements in nature, etc.

Āgama is defined to be that which contains only the following, *viz.*, (1) creation; (2) destruction of the universe; (3) nature and use of mantras; (4) nature and worship of devas.

The words Tantra' and Āgama are, however, generally used as synonyms. It is noteworthy that Amarasiṃha used

are in 108 saṃhitās or texts promulgated by seven Ṛṣis[1]—Brahmā, Śiva, Skanda, Gautama, Vasiṣṭha, Nārada and Kapila. Thus seven schools were formed; but 101 others subsequently taught the doctrine, and this accounts for there being 108 saṃhitās. They are as given below with the number of their Ślokas opposite to them:

(1) Padmasaṃhitā † 10,000; (2) Padmodbhava † 1,00,000; (3) Māyāvaibhava or Trailokyamohana; (4) Nalakūbara 5,000; (5) Parama 1,500; † (6) Nārada 4,000; (7) Kaṇva 7,000; (8) Viṣṇu-tilaka 750 (?); (9) Sanaka 1,500; (10) Arjuna; (11) Vasiṣṭha 4,500; (12) Puṣkara 4,000 (?); (13) Sanatkumāra 1,000; (14) Satya 1,000; (15) Śrīdhara and (16) Sananda 750; (17) Mahi-praśna; (18) Īśvara 500; (19) Lakṣmī-Tantra or Śrī Praśna, dialogue between Indra and Lakṣmī 4,000; (20) Mahendra 2,000; (21) Puruṣottama 1,000 (?); (22) Pañcapraśna;

the words 'Agama,' and 'Tantra' in different significations. But this is no reason why the writings which call themselves by either of these names may not be more ancient than Amarasiṃha.

The term Yāmala is also used as a synonym. It should treat of subjects (1) creation of the universe; (2) astronomy; (3) daily duties; (4) difference of caste; (5) Yugas and their nature (Śabdakalpadruma).

[1] The term Ṛṣi is used in its literal sense, "See-er" or promulgator. Hence Brahmā and some others who are not Ṛṣis in the general sense of the term are here so called.

(23) Kāṇva; (24) Mūla; (25) Tatvasāgara; (26) Vāgīs'a; (27) Saṁvarta 1,000; (28) Sāttvata † 250; (29) Tejodraviṇa[a]; (30) Viṣṇu Sadbhāva; (31) Viṣṇu tattva[a]; (32) Viṣṇu:Siddhānta[a]; (33) Viṣṇu-vaibhava [a]; (34) Viṣṇu-rahasya; (35) Kaumāra † 250; (36) Jaya 500; (37) Saura[a] 150; (38) Bhāgavata 150; (39) S'aunaka † 200; (40) Puṣṭi Tantra[a]; (41) Madhura; (42) Upendra; (43) Yogahṛdaya; (44) Marīci 100; (45) Hārīta † 700; (46) Ātreya † 250; (47) Parames'vara † 200; (48) Dakṣa 150; (49) Aus'anasa 250; (50) Vaikhānasa 1,000; (51) Vihagendra 500; (52) Viṣvaksena † 250; (53) Yājñavalkya 250; (54) Bhārgava 200; (55) Jāmadagnya 150; (56) Paramapuruṣa 150; (57) Gautama 750; (58) Pulastya 150; (59) S'ākala 200; (60) Jñānārṇava 150; (61) Yāmya 100; (62) Nārāyaṇa 150; (63) Jīyottara 100; (64) Jābāli 100; (65) Parās'ara 100; (66) Kapila 250; (67) Vāmana 250; (68) Bārhaspatya 700 (?); (69) Prācetasa; (70) Vālmīka; (71) Kātyāyanīya 250; (72) Agastya 500; (73) Jaimini 200; (74) Aupagāyana; (75) Hiraṇyagarbha; (76) Bodhāyana 1,000; (77) Bhāradvāja † 500; (78) Nārasiṁha; (79) Kās'yapa † 1,500; (80) Saumya; (81) Uttaragārgya; (82) S'atātapa; (83) Āṅgirasa; (84) Yoga 200; (85) Trailokyavijaya, or, Bharata, 200; (86) Piṅgala; (87) Vitta 150;

(88) Vāruṇa 150; (89) Kṛṣṇacāmara; (90) Vāyavya; (91) Mārkaṇḍeya †; (92) Agneya 500; (93) Saṃhitāsaṃgraha; (94) Mahāsanatkumāra; (95) Vyāsa; (96) Viṣṇu 300; (97) Umāmahes'vara † 1,500 (?); (98) Mihira; (99) Ahirbudhnya 750; (100) Rāghava 350 (?); (101) Kalki 250; (102) Dattātreya 500; (103) S'arva; (104) Saṃkarṣaṇa 1,500; (105) Pradyumna; (106) Vārāha; (107) S'uka; (108) Kapiñjala 2,500.[1]

These writings amount to 400,000[2] s'lokas. Only those that are marked with † are to be found now-a-days in the various public and private libraries in India, and elsewhere, as catalogued by the several scholars. From the *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* of Vedāntācārya written six centuries ago, we learn that several of these could not be obtained in his days. Most of these, are, however, referred to and even

[1] Those marked † can be found. For those marked *a* the authors are unknown. The numbers in case where the sign ? is affixed are not quite correct. In the case of Padmasaṁhitā, one in 1,00,000, is said to exist in the house of a *devaloka* in Conjeeveram, but I have not seen it. The one I now use is of 10,000 Slokas. It is now being printed in Madras.

[2] The above number is not quite correct; for works that are generally said to be of, say, 250 s'lokas are sometimes found to be an abridgment, of a larger work of the same name, and this difficulty is experienced on account of many of the Saṁhitās being lost. But these remarks do not apply to S'ivāgamas for most of the complete sets of the 28 works, I have seen or heard contain the exact number of s'lokas mentioned opposite them in the list given below. Special care should, therefore, be always taken to distinguish abridgments from real Saṁhitās.

quoted in the writings of Viśiṣṭādvaitins who lived from about the 10th Century down to the present day. Of the 108 text books, the first two are the most important and are generally considered to contain all the more important matters in these writings. Of the remainder, Lakṣmī Tantra, Bharata, Ahirbudhnya, and Sāttvata Saṁhitās, are very often spoken of as teaching a system of spirit-communion (*Śaraṇāgati*) which bears a very close resemblance to that practised by the initiates of the Grecian mysteries of old. With very few exceptions, like Nārada Saṁhitā which is divided into chapters, these writings are generally of four parts or *pādas, viz.*, Jñānapāda, Yogapāda, Kriyāpāda, and Caryāpāda.

This order is sometimes reversed in some of them and there are others again in which Caryāpāda alone is dealt with. Their origin according to Mahābhārta is given below in an abridged form (Śāntiparvan Mokṣadharma Parvan):

Nārada in his wanderings met Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi at Badarikāśrama[1] and put to him several

[1] Badrināth in the Himālayas. He is an incarnation of Viṣṇu, and taught several mantras. There is, however, another Ṛṣi of the same name who is the author of a code of laws, and referred to by Madhavācārya in his commentary on Parāśara Smṛti.

questions on philosophy and on the origin of the cosmos. The Ṛṣi replied that Brahmā was first created and He created the devas, and the Ṛṣis, Atri, Bhṛgu, Kutsa, Vasiṣṭha, Gautama, Kāśyapa, Āṅgirasa and Marīci. The doctrines promulgated by them were followed in the Kṛta Yuga. One of them, Uparicaravas by name, performed a sacrifice in the presence of the above-mentioned and several others, with Bṛhaspati, officiating as priest. The other Ṛṣis assembled soon found that the oblations given by Uparicaravas disappeared, without being received by the Devas as was usually the case. Bṛhaspati accused him of dishonest motives and offered to perform the Yajña himself. He then found to his astonishment the disappearance of the oblations, and therefore enquired of the performer as to the reason of such a disappearance.

Uparicaravas replied that Nārāyaṇa received them. The Devas were very much enraged and asked the Ṛṣis to explain how it was that Nārāyaṇa could be seen by none of them. The Ṛṣi explained by saying that as they were the mind-born sons of Brahmā, they alone could see Nārāyaṇa face to face. They further said that once upon a time they went to Śvetadvīpa to see him. They could see him

only after performing a *tapas* there for a long time.

Nārada hearing this went to Śvetadvīpa near the Mount Meru, and performed a long tapas there and saw Nārāyaṇa. The latter taught him the great secret that the easiest way of worshipping Him was by means of idols.

Such is the origin of the Pāñcarātra Āgamas subsequently presented to the world by Nārada, then by six other Ṛṣis and afterwards by several others.

Pāñcarātra Āgamas are so called, because the five kinds of knowledge (Rātra) are taught; *viz.*, (1) general knowledge of realities; (2) knowledge of that by which one will be able to reach the highest goal; (3) knowledge of that by which one will be able to serve Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṇṭha; (4) knowledge of that by which one will get the eight Siddhis; (5) knowledge of the means by which wealth, children, etc., can be obtained. There are also several ways of explaining the expression, but in none of the works, so far as I have seen, is the meaning given out to be "nights" as explained by M. Barth in his "Religions of India".[1]

[1] It is further explained in the Padma-Saṁhitā of Pāñcarātra Āgamas that Siddhāntas are so called, because they

But this expression is not to be found in any of the works themselves. They call themselves either as Siddhāntas (definite conclusions) or Tantras (easy way of doing things) in contradistinction to Mantras, and are so called on account of their containing more of the easier ways of accomplishing things than by Mantras.

These writings, Śaiva and Śāktāgamas included, are further divided into (1) *Mantra Siddhāntas,* those that speak of the Mūrti, or form of worship in a temple; (2) *Āgama Siddhāntas,* of four *mūrtis* or forms; (3) *Tantra Siddhānta* of nine; (4) *Tantrāntara Siddhānta* of three or four-faced forms or idols, whether of Viṣṇu or Śiva. These differences arose on account of the particular symbols adopted, and of the Mantra uttered when they are made. The Padmasaṁhitā, for instance, is a Mantra Siddhānta, and it is supposed to have been composed in fifteen millions of ślokas by Nārāyaṇa himself, and taught to Brahmā, the composer saying that although the true mode of worshipping Him was as described in the Vedas, but that if any easier method was necessary it was by *Mantras.* Brahmā is then said to have condensed it into 500,000 ślokas and taught it to

treat of *positive knowledge* leading to Nārāyaṇa and best practised by those who are well-versed in the Vedas, and the Śāstras such as Pūrvamīmāṁsā, etc.

Kapila Ṛṣi, who in his turn abridged it into 100,000 s'lokas, and initiated Padma, an elephant in Pātālaloka, into its mysteries. The Saṁhitā is therefore named after the elephant. The elephant again abridged[1] it into 10,000 s'lokas. Saṁvarta learnt it from Padma and taught it to the world. Kaṇva was one in the long line of teachers, and the work is strictly speaking that of Kaṇva and other Ṛṣis. These, as well as S'aivāgamas, are divided into Jñāna,[2] Yoga, Kriyā, and Caryā pādas, or rather sections treating respectively of the nature of Brahmajñāna from the Vis'iṣṭādvaitic and Advaitic standpoints, adopting the teachings and even the technicalities of the Upaniṣads; of Yoga or the practice of Brahmajñāna and its four kinds Jñānayoga, Karmayoga,[3] and Bhaktiyoga.[4] The last forms the principal

[1] The dialogue in Pādmasaṁhitā is, however, between Viṣṇu and Brahmā.

[2] *Jñānayoga.*—The contemplation described in the Yoga-s'āstras with its eight parts, *yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhyāna, dhāraṇā,* and *samādhi.*

[3] *Karmayoga* is the performance of one's duties, moral and religious, and without any self-interest in the result after obtaining a knowledge of the realities (Cit, Acit and Is'vara) through the Scriptures, and always contemplating it with various kinds of Karma (*Vide* the S'rī Bhāṣya of Rāmānujācārya, Adhyāya 3, Pāda 3).

[4] *Bhaktiyoga.*—This is also called *upāsanā.* It is the contemplation of the Brahman with its various qualities, and attributes, without any interruption whatever, throughout one's whole life; at the same time discharging his duties to the best of his ability.

subject of this work and is considered easier than either the Jñāna or Karmayogas, and is therefore recommended to those who are desirous of obtaining Mokṣa, but unable to practise the various ways leading to it. It treats in the Kriyāpāda, of the construction of temples and their different modes, and also of the modelling of idols; and lastly of the various ways of worshipping the idols thus prepared, treating of course of the various Mantras, Vaiṣṇava or S'aiva as the case may be, and other topics such as the principles of Vaiṣṇava mantras, their nature and uses, the secret virtues of herbs, etc. The philosophy of these Agamas leans more towards Advaita than anything else, and although this four-fold division is not to be found in some of them, still all of them, after a short introduction, take up the question of *Caryā* or the mode of worship of idols.

The above remarks apply as well to S'aivāgamas, of which there are twenty-eight, with the only difference that in the case of S'aivāgamas the word S'iva must be substituted for Nārāyaṇa. The names of the twenty-eight are given below.

(1) Kāmika—125,000; (2) Saṃtāna 50,000; (3) S'arva; (4) Kiraṇa; (5) Sūkṣma; (6) Yogaja; (7) Dīpta; (8) Cintā; (9) Kāraṇa;

(10) Añcita (agita); (11) Vijaya (jaya); (12) Vīra; (13) Viśva; (14) Aṃśumat; (15) Svāyaṃbhuva; (16) Nīla (anala); (17) Siddha (Sarvottama); (18) Suprabheda (Bheda); (19) Raurava; (20) Makuṭa; (21) Bimba; (22) Vimala; (23) Lohita; (24) Sahasra (Niśvāsa); (25) Pārameśvara; (26) Prodga; (27) Candrajñāna; (28) Vātula (Niśvāsa) 100,000.

These are generally of the form of a dialogue between Śiva and his consort Pārvatī. She always begins "What are the most interesting secrets in the world?" and the luxurious husband relates all that she wants. The first twenty are given out from his four faces, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa, Vāmana and Sadyojāta, at the rate of five Saṃhitās from each face. The remaining eight were taught when he assumed that terrible aspect called Īśāna.[1] The arrangement is the same as in the Pāñcarātra in being divided into Jñāna, Yoga, Kriyā, and Caryā-pādas, treating of the worship of Śiva, in the form of idols and analogous to that of Viṣṇu; there being, however, some exceptions.

[1] Five more Saṃhitās, *viz.*, Śuka, Vāsiṣṭha, Śaiśaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumāra, works subsequently written and attributed to Śiva, each of which is said to contain about 30,000 ślokas, but not having seen any of them nothing definite can be said about them. They are however said to treat of the different kinds of Yoga.

The Śāktāgamas begin in the same strain as Śaivāgamas, Pārvatī questioning Śiva as to the best way of worshipping and knowing her real nature. It is then told that she has sixty-four aspects. Each of them is dealt with in one of the 64 Saṁhitās of the Śāktāgamas. In these Tantras as in the Pāñcarātra and Śaivāgamas, the Vedas are highly spoken of as a rule, and the Vedic methods approved. But in Kaliyuga when people have a predominent tendency towards worldly pleasures, the worship of Śakti is recommended as the easiest way of obtaining happiness.

If, however, one should worship her with no other desire (*Niṣkāma Karma*) than of obtaining mokṣa, he will either obtain mokṣa at the end of this life-time or in his next, but that depends on the nature of the Karma he has done which may lead him from birth to birth. All these ideas are decidedly Vedāntic, but even in such writings as *Jñānārṇava*, and *Kaulārṇava Tantra*, the goal *is not lost sight of*, and the importance of the Vedas not forgotten; and the Śākta worshipper is enjoined to attend to the regular duties of caste. Unfortunately, however, this matter is mis-represented by European writers, and even to a certain extent by the Indian writers

themselves, who with a prejudiced mind and after going through a portion of these Tantras and seeing the depravity of morals as shown by that portion of the work, jump at once to the conclusion that the Tantras, in general, and the Śākta Tantras in particular are opposed to the Vedas; but forget that in the very Saṁhitās they have gone through, the Vedic duties are spoken of highly and the importance of obtaining mokṣa described. In all such cases, therefore, a careful study should be made of two or more Saṁhitās, and then a calm judgment should be given. The practices of Śāktas are no doubt indecent, but that is not the end or aim of the Śāktāgamas. For instance, this point has been argued, and the same conclusions arrived at in the 1st Ullāsa of Kaulārṇava Tantra and the Mahā-nirvāṇa Tantra. This view is also taken in the Rudrayāmala, Pheṭkāriṇī, and several other Tantras inculcating Śakti worship.

The writer is no sectarian follower of Śāktas, but while he abhors the moral depravity exhibited in them his individual conclusions are based on a study of more than five Tantras selected specially for the study of the different aspects of Śakti worship. The sixty-four Śāktāgamas are as follow:

1. Mahāmāyā S'ambara—explains the formation of the universe and of illusions.

2. Yoginī Jāla S'ambara—speaks of the illusion caused by Yoginīs, a certain class of Devatās which one will conquer over only by certain practices in the burial ground.

3 & 4. Tattva S'ambara, of command over the elements; and Mahendrajāla Tantra, of showing water in air, in earth, etc.

5 to 12. Aṣṭa Bhairava: Siddha, Vaṭuka, Baḍabānala, Kāla, Kālāgni, Yoginī, Mahā and S'akti Tantras. They treat of the eight Siddhis (*Animan*, etc.)

13 to 20. Bahurūpāṣṭaka: these treat of the worship of Brāhmī, Māhes'varī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Māhendrī, Cāmuṇḍī, S'ivadūtī. The most important subject therein touched is S'rīvidyā which is one of the highest of occult methods.

21 to 28. Yamalāṣṭaka treat of the worship of Devī; they are Vedāntic and highly esoteric in their nature.

29. Candrajñāna (Nityāṣoḍas'ī Tantra) speaks of Kāpāli worship.

30. Mālinī treats of diseases and their cure.

31. Mahāsaṃmohana. Making a waking man sleep, *e.g.*, by means of black art, such as the cutting of children's tongues.

32. Vāmajuṣṭa.
33. Vāmadeva.

34. Vātūla.
35. Vātūlottara.
36. Kāmika.

} Erection of temples, etc. These should not be confounded with the Śaivāgamas of the same name.

37. Hṛdbheda Kāpālika, speaks of taking and placing of Hṛtkamala in Brahmarandhra.

38. Tantrabheda—killing of men by mantras, fascination, etc.

39. Guhya.

40. Kalāvāda—speaks of Kalās of every kind.

41. Kalāsāra—Vāmācāra or left-hand worship.

42. Kuṇḍikāmata of *gulikā* or certain secret herbal preparations.

43. Matottara. On mercurial preparations, alchemy, etc.

44. Vīṇā.—This is the name of a Yoginī; and the Saṃhitā treats of the different ways of conquering her, she being also (called Saṃbhoga Yakṣiṇī).

45. Trottāla speaks of Gulikā, Añjana, and Pādukā.

46. Trottālottara winning over the 64,000 Yakṣiṇīs.

47. Pañcāmṛta; of the ways of preventing death.

48 to 51. Rūpabhedaka, *or* Bhūtoḍḍāmara, Kulasāra, Kuloḍḍīs'a, Kulacūḍāmaṇi—teach of the different ways of killing a man or Vāmācāra methods.

52 to 56. Sarvajñānottara,
Mahakālī-Mata,
Aruṇes'a,
Modinīs'a,
Vikunṭhes'vara,
} Of Kāpālika worship.

57 to 64. Pūrva Tantra,
Pas'cima Tantra,
Dakṣiṇa Tantra,
Uttara Tantra,
Niruttara Tantra,
Vimala,
Vimalottara,
Devīmata,
} The doctrines of the Digambara.

The existing works on Mantras are mostly compilations and abstract of one or more of these 200 Saṁhitās. Their number may be estimated at not less than a thousand in Southern India, and it is not possible to say how many that were formerly written, are now lost. To this class belong works, such as *Mantramahodadhi, Tantrasāra, S'āradātilaka,*

Prapañcasāra, *Mantrārṇava*, and others ordinarily met with.

The difference between the Pāñcarātra and Śaivāgamas lies in the Pāñcarātras treating more of those things that would lead to Brahmajñāna; and are therefore more transcendental than the Śaivāgamas. A similar remark applies when we speak of the relative merits of Śaivāgamas and Śāktāgamas. The latter treat of indecent subjects devoting some of the Saṁhitās to Dakṣiṇācāra, and some to Vāmācāra. Several matters, are, however, common to all the three Āgamas, *viz.*, a devotion to the subject of mantras in general, including the general principles which regulate a mantra, and the Siddhi or acquirement of certain occult powers through a contemplation of mantras and their symbols.

The subject of mantras, however, is introduced to help their practice, and in order that the worship of the idols specified therein may be performed more efficiently. In the Śaivāgamas, again, several of the more obscure and little known subjects, are treated of; such as the occult sciences of breath, omens, astrology, and other topics. Another subject common to all these Tantras is the incapacity of people to practise the methods of Brahma-vidyā as

described in the Upaniṣads; and an attempt to substitute easier methods of worship. Regarding the worship proper, each of them specifies its own objects, although there is not much difference in either their rationale, or the object with which the idols are worshipped.

Having therefore explained the nature of these writings, we shall now speak of their teachings.

To take up the Pāñcarātra āgamas first, Jñāna is essential to attain mokṣa. For that purpose, Nārāyaṇa is described as indescribable in the same strain as Advaitic works.

The first manifestation of Nārāyaṇa is Vāsudeva with all the emblems of Viṣṇu: he is said to be located in the heart in the microcosm. He is the object of worship and the goal to be reached. Vāsudeva divides himself into two, Nārāyaṇa and Vāsudeva, the former being of a blue colour, the latter being white. From Vāsudeva there sprang up another manifestation called Saṃkarṣaṇa. From him comes Aniruddha and from Aniruddha we have Pradyumna. These three represent one of the three attributes, *viz.*, Jñāna, Bala, Aiśvarya of Vāsudeva, predominating in them. Twenty-four devas come into existence, six belonging to each of these manifestations and having one of

the six attributes of Nārāyaṇa, *viz.*, *Jñāna, Bala, Aiśvarya, Vīrya, Tejas* and *Śakti*. These Devas are as follow :

Vāsudēva, Keśava, Nārāyaṇa, Mādhava, Puruṣottama and Janārdana ; *Saṃkarṣaṇa*, Govinda, Viṣṇu, Madhusūdana, Adhokṣaja, and Upendra ; *Aniruddha*, Trivikrama, Vāmana, Śrīdhara, Narasiṁha, and Hari ; *Pradyumna*, Hṛṣīkeśa, Padmanābha, Dāmodara, Acyuta and Kṛṣṇa. From these four original manifestations eight mūrtis, *viz.*, Brāhmī, Prājāpatyā, Vaiṣṇavī, Divijā, Ārṣī, Mānuṣī, Asurī, Paiśācī and also the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu spring up. When all these manifestations took place, the various emblems of Viṣṇu, such as *Ananta*, the discus, the conch, etc., corresponding to the eight *Mūrtis*, and the eight Prakṛtis have also sprung up ; and also Garuḍa. These four manifestations seem to correspond to the Vedāntic ideas of Hiraṇyagarbha, Sūtrātman, Prājña, and Virāj. Brahmā is then created by Aniruddha, and he in his turn created the world in the same way as is described in the Purāṇas, with no difference, except that from Aniruddha, *Māyā* sprang up and enveloped everybody in the universe. The laws of Karma are explained as the reason for people suffering for the wrongs they do. The escape from this lies in *Jñāna* which is

either Sattrunstta (?) Jñānā, of knowledge that "I am Brahman"; or Kriyā Jñāna (knowledge by work) or Yoga as explained in the writings on the subject; an alternative is allowed, namely, of concentrating one's mind on an image or idol (*Praticchāyā*) of Brahman. In this and a similar manner the Jñāna-pāda finishes and a third method, *viz.*, the practice of Abhyāsa Yoga is described in the Yoga-pāda. He who is unable to perform any of these methods, but is at the same time anxious to obtain mokṣa, is enjoined in the Kriyā-pāda to have plenty of wealth and to dedicate a temple to worship Nārāyaṇa in the manner therein described.

A similar worship is also enjoined for S'iva in the S'aivāgamas. The subject is introduced in the same way as in the Pāñcarātra āgamas. Here S'iva is considered as a manifestation of the Brahman who is also sometimes called Sadās'iva. He is said to have five aspects (*mukha*), *viz.*, Īs'āna, Sadyojāta, Vāmana, Aghora and Tatpuruṣa. As every one of these contains three eyes, it follows that he has fifteen eyes when he appears at one and the same time in all his aspects. Then the Īs'āna is his head, the Tatpuruṣa his mouth, Aghora his heart, Vāmana his secret part, and

Sadyojāta his feet. This body he is said to have assumed simply to enable the devotee to worship him. He is also called Paśupati, lord of jīvas (*paśu*) who are entirely dependent on him. Paśupati informs his consort Pārvatī that as it is impossible to practise Brahma-vidyā, he will teach Yoga for the good of mankind. Different kinds of Yoga are taught, and Śaivāgamas contain more information about Yoga than the Pāñcarātra āgamas. He again says, that in the Kali Yuga, it is not possible to practise Yoga, and therefore recommends his worship in some form or other. These subjects are taught in the Jñāna- and Yoga-pādas of these āgamas. Then comes Kriyā-pāda, in which he says that his worship in the form of *liṅga* (phallus) is preferable; if for such a worship a temple is built. If he cannot do even that, he is enjoined to worship a liṅga which may be carried along by a devotee. This is Caryāpāda in which many other subjects such as Rudrākṣa which is recommended to be worn by the devotee, the secret of mantras, and the occult properties of herbs, etc., are also taught.

The Śāktāgamas have a similar tale to tell. Prakṛti or Śakti is said to be the primal force in the cosmos. She is defined to be of eternal

existence and independent of Brahman and the plastic origin of all things. A detailed description follows in which the origin of all kinds of sentient beings including the devas is traced to her, and she is said to be eight-fold, (Vārāhī, Cāmuṇḍī, etc.). S'iva explains that by the power of Yoga, he divided himself, in the net of creation, into two. The right half was male (Īs'vara) and the left was female (Nārī), and the whole was hence called Ardhanārīs'vara. The three female divinities Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Pārvatī are considered her manifestations. The rest of the Jñāna, Yoga, and Kriyāpādas are treated in the same manner as those of Pāñcarātra and S'aiva āgamas, worship of S'akti being only instituted, it is said, as a substitute in this Yuga, for the higher mode of worship.

With regard to construction of temples, there is very little difference between them. Temples according to these Āgamas are of four forms, circular, quadrilateral, oblongular, and elliptical. The last is very rarely to be met with now-a-days. The outer walls may be either one, three, five or seven with entrance gates. There may be one, two or four towers for the outermost wall. The towers may have any number of stories up to twelve. The temple should be in

the centre of the village, and directions are given to find out which is the centre of the village.

That point is taken as the centre point of the temple intended to be constructed, and further directions are given as to the size of the temple according to the space available. A large number of temples constructed now-a-days do not at all conform to these instructions, and we thus see them sometimes at the end of the village.[1]

Such has been a brief out-line of the teachings of the Tantras. They have been most severely criticized by Bādarāyaṇa in his Brahma-Sūtras (2nd Adhyāya, second pāda) and condemned by S'aṃkarācārya. But the Pāñcarātra āgamas have been upheld by Ramānujācārya, on the ground that although there are some theories in those Āgamas antagonistic to the teachings of the Upaniṣads, those parts of the former that are not antagonistic to the latter might be considered authoritative. Nīlakaṇṭha in his S'aivabhāṣya is reprehensible; he takes up the

[1] S'iva being a non-quiescent deity (Krūradevatā) temples dedicated to him should be built outside or at the end of a village, if possible and so also for S'akti. The reason is said to be that if these are not properly worshipped, the force latent in them, will at once cast its influence around, and not only will the temple become useless as a centre of that force, but even harm will be done to the villagers.

Sūtra condemning the Śaivāgamas, fills in certain words which he thinks are understood, and twists the whole Sūtra to mean "The worship of Paśupati is upheld". Such has been the relation of Vedānta to the teachings of the Āgamas, and as Hinduism is degenerating, their teachings and more especially the baser part of them, are gaining over the minds of the fallen Hindus. Yet we should be only too glad to find that Idol-worship, the least harmless of those teachings is still dragging on its existence; and in these days a correct understanding of the mode of worship will no doubt help us in our onward progress, for there lies the key to our development in occultism: and the exotericism of idol-worship, will I hope one day form the subject of my paper on the next occasion we may meet in this Hall to celebrate another epoch in the history of the Theosophical Society, had it not been for the work of which we would not all join our hands so gladly.

The practice of mantras is a form of Yoga, the other kinds of Yoga being Rāja, Laya, and Haṭha; these practices are taken up by persons who have no command over their own will. With a dangerous weapon as Mantra Siddhi in their hands they can do any amount of harm to mankind, and if a man becomes so depraved

in morals, he is in no way better than the Atlantean of old. It is the duty of every true Hindu not to meddle himself with these writings, if he finds he will soon become allured by their teachings; but if any one does take them up, let me, for one, be allowed to recommend the best of them—idol-worship—as a means to the Higher Science, and let me warn, one and all who have seriously made up their minds to study these writings in the light of the words of Kṛṣṇa "He who worships them (the minor deities) goes to them, he who worships me attains me."

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