



PHILOSOPHY OF TĀNTRIK-YOGA SĀDHANĀ

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The essence of religion lies in the immediate experience of the divine. This experience presupposes, as its essential condition, various forms of discipline. The term 'Sādhana' is a current Bengali expression for the forms of discipline. This Sanskrit form which is more commonly used in this sense, is 'Sādhana'. Its literal meaning is 'that by which something is performed, or more precisely 'means to an end'. In the sphere of religion, it is always used to indicate the essential preliminary discipline that leads to the attainment of the spiritual experience which is regarded as the summum bonum (the highest good or *siddhi*, i.e., completion and perfection) of existence, and thus, though used in a technical sense, it retains still largely its literal meaning. Sādhana includes all the religious practices and ceremonies that are helpful to the realisation of the spiritual experiences, and therefore may be regarded as the practical side of religion. As in the light of Indian thought it has been said, all true philosophy culminates in the religious experience.¹ The moral life is the indispensable preliminary discipline to the religious,² and this is the central teaching of all forms of Hindu Sādhana. Hindu Sādhana has for its goal a spiritual experience which is not partial and one-sided realisation of the entire individual through the whole dimensions of his existence. Such an experience can be had only if one can dive into the serene and transparent lake of Infinite Consciousness of *Cit* underlying the stream of surface-consciousness. Perfect synthesis or harmony that is absolutely changeless and the same everywhere, and with the perception and attainment of this Highest Harmony, and with the steadiness of this attainment, ends the course of Sādhana.

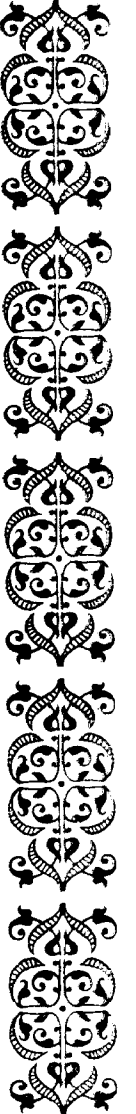
The spiritual experience that apprehends or realises this in its naked splendour can happen only when the divergent elements of surface-consciousness harmoniously blend into a synthetic whole and re-unite into the original bond out of which they seemed to emanate. As Tuckwell beautifully puts it, "It is a sublime rational immediacy, in which the elements of thought and feeling after having diverged and been distinguished in a reflective self-conscious mind, meet and harmoniously blend once more."³ Tāntrik Sādhana aims at the attainment of a stage where the 'aham-idam' division—the subject-object division, disappears. Ritual ceremonies, religious penances, recitation of *mantras* are perennial inspiration for supreme realisations and ecstasy, but they cannot be regarded as end in themselves. As we see in the following utterance : "O Goddess" the Lord says, "there is neither meditation nor concentration after having attained all knowledge and experience, after having realised the 'Essence of Bliss', the knowledge in the hearts of all, all the ritualistic observances are useless when *Brahman* is attained ; of what use is the palm leaf when the blissful southern wind blows ?"⁴ Also, "At this stage cessation from action is the highest form of worship, and silence is the best kind of *Japa*."

Tāntrik school has developed a different spiritual principle based on impersonal movement of will in the place of the personal movement, as depicted in Vaiṣṇavism. Will is the

dominating factor in the philosophy of the Tantras. The whole world is the play of will. The creative will evolves truth, beauty and goodness, but these are humanistic and relative ends. Tāntrik thinkers even concede spiritual powers consequent on the identification of wills, human and divine and emergence of fine being, subtle creative power and divine fellowship. Since immemorial past, it has been the object of search to be spiritual and divine in wisdom and power in human beings, because dynamic identification can elevate him from human agency to divine fellowship. But, in Tāntrik tradition, we witness a somewhat more developed spiritual outlook. Here dynamic identification directs the insight into finer channels and exhibits the impersonal expression of the transcendent will. Will as personal is shadowed in this transcendent will and elevates our outlook from the world of relative values to the world of abstract Truth. Tāntrik Sādhana opens a new door for the uplift of the ordinary Sādhana. The Sādhana goes beyond the ordinary conception of spiritual of Śiva-Śakti. To be more frank on this point it can be expressed that in the Tāntrik approach, metaphysics consists of a higher status than religion as ordinarily understood. Thus, we face a clear demarcation line between Tāntrik sādhanā and modern outlook in science, value is reasserting its claims as finer and higher category than Truth. Science involves space, time and energy as the true Absolute. But *Tantra* crosses such limitation, because, behind the transcendent will and in the association with it, there are the Transcendent being and luminous superpersonal-consciousness. Hence Sādhakas remain aloof from delusion and ignorance. This value may not be overlooked. It is pragmatic but in a high sense. Such pragmatism is, in reality, spiritual pragmatism, for it supplies us with the sublime sense of freedom from the relative outlook on life. The Tāntrik Sādhana gives impetus to acquire impersonal nature through impersonal will which ends in the silent luminous consciousness which is Śiva. The Sādhakas are directed to merge will into will-less bliss by the help of will. Will is the principle of spiritual progress and values, and eventually will is the Vidyā.

Tāntrik form of Sādhana is suited to men of all equipments. It contains within it the elements of all the important forms of Sādhana. It promises to award to the Sādhaka not merely liberation (*mukti*) but also enjoyment (*bhukti*), not merely final beatitude (*niḥśreya*) but also progress (*abhyudaya*).⁵ The individual has in the element of infinitude and absoluteness, otherwise, all Sādhana would have been a myth : but this infinitude has to be realised and actually attained.⁶ The *Tantra* recognises three distinct stages of Sādhana and marks out five sub-divisions of the entire course of discipline. The three stages are Purification (śuddhi), Illumination (*Sthiti*) and Unification (arpaṇa), corresponding roughly to Karma, Bhakti and Jñāna. The five sub-divisions are a ablution (snāna) gratification (tarpaṇa), meditation (sandhyā) worship (pūjā) and complete self-abnegation (*homa*). The process of Bhūta-śuddhi also implies the process of purification or purgation. The gross body, the subtle body and the casual body, all have their respective taints, and these have to be got rid of before there can be union of the absolute and the finite. This purification of *Tantra* seeks to attain through both bhāvanā (meditation) and kriyā, through the harmonious working of both the mind and the body. The Sādhaka meditates on his identity with the Parama-Śiva (The Absolute) and, through this meditation on the state of absolute purity, becomes able to make some amount of progress towards attaining purification.⁷

The learned scholar of Śākta Philosophy, named M. M. Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj, has thrown sincere light on the functions of *malas* in Śākta-Philosophy in the following manner. He observes—"The divine attribute of the self are all diminished in its atomic condition, when the *cit* appears as *citta*. Of the three well-known impurities or *malas* this is the first, called āṇava. It is the state of a paśu in which the sense of limitation is first manifested. This limitation makes possible the rise of vāsanās, as a result of which the assumption of physical body for a certain length of time becomes necessary to work off these vāsanās through experience. These Vāsanās constitute *karma-mala*. The māyīya-mala is the name given to the source





of the triple body, namely—(i) the casual or the Kalā-śarīra. (ii) the subtle or puryaṣṭhaka, i. e., tattva-śarīra. In fact, everything which reveals itself in our experience as knowable and objective comes under māyīya-mala. The function of this impurity is to show an object as different from the subject (svarūpa). All the principles from kalā down to prithivī represent the fetters of māyā or pāśas. These give shape to body, senses, *bhuvanas*, *bhāvas* etc. for fulfilling the experience of the soul. Hence what is popularly known as saṁsāra extends from Prithivī upto Kalā, and not beyond the latter. These impurities persist always in the worldly soul.”⁸ The worldly soul being endowed with body, senses etc., is technically known as sa-kalā, corresponding to the *tattva* or *bhuvana* to which it belongs. The worldly soul have to suffer from migration. They make ascent from lower plane to the plane of kalā. They make flight in accordance with their *Karmans*. The soul has to go through another state where māyīya-mala is invisible or inactive while the other two go on functioning. This state is technically known as *pralaya* or dissolution in which the soul is deprived of all the creative principles. Here the soul remains in a dissembled condition absorbed in māyā. Such souls are called *pralayākālas* or *pralayakevalins*. M. M. Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj observes. “These are bodiless and senseless atoms with Karma-saṁskāras and the root ignorance clinging to them. When, however, the *karmans* are got rid of through discriminative knowledge, renunciation or such other means, the soul is exalted above māyā, though still retaining its atomic state, it is then above māyā no doubt, but remains within the limits of mahāmāyā, which it cannot escape unless the supreme grace of the Divine Mother acts upon it and removes the basic ignorance which caused its atomicity and the limitation of its infinite powers. This state of the soul represents the highest condition of the paśu known as Vijñānakalā or Vijñāna-kevalin. This is *Kaivalya*. Among these souls those which are thoroughly mature in respect of their impurity are to receive divine grace (*anugraha*) acting upon the soul is the origin of the so-called suddha-Vidyā.”⁹

Tāntrik Sāadhanā as a way to release :

Tāntrik Sāadhanā holds that the individual (jīva) becomes identical with the Absolute (Śiva) when liberation is attained, and there is no difference, in essence, between them in the long run. This distinguishes it from the philosophy of the *Bhakti* schools, which agree in maintaining a difference of some sort or other even after liberation. Again, by maintaining that the Jīva-bhāva is real and not unreal or illusory, and that the many actually come out of the one, it distinguishes itself from the Māyā-vāda of Śāṅkara.¹⁰

‘The Kuṇḍalinī Śakti’ (Serpent Power) brings about the union of the individual and the absolute, and makes the realisation of the absoluteness and infinitude of the individual possible. The absoluteness is not anything foreign to the individual to be acquired from outside, but is inherent and latent in him to be gradually unfolded and realised. It is through the effect of the Sādhaka and the grace of the spiritual Guide (*Guru*) that the Serpent Power which ordinarily lies dormant at the foot of the spinal column becomes awakened and joins itself to the absolute that resides in the thousand petalled lotus in the highest centre of the cerebrum.¹¹ The ‘Serpent Power’ or Kuṇḍalinī Śakti’ is the expression used by the Tantras to indicate the Spiritual Power that sleeps ; it is awakened or becomes active through sāadhanā or regulated effort to arouse and intensify the spiritual energy that is latent in every man. The individual becomes the Absolute, the Jīva becomes Śiva¹², when the lower self of man realises its higher being and becomes identified with the Highest Self. This is nothing other than the Upaniṣad’s view i.e., the highest is one’s own self (ātman). But whereas the Vedānta thinks that this realisation can be had through meditation (bhāvanā) alone, the Tantra recommends the joining Kriyā with bhāvanā, the supplementing of the intellectual process by physical and physiological exercises. According to the Vedānta, the Jīva as Śiva is an eternally accomplished fact; according to the Tantras, the absoluteness, (Śivatva) is to be attained through some process.¹³

As sacrifices occupy the foremost place in the vedic method and hymns in the Pāuranic,

so do *mantra* form the most important item in the *Tantras*. The *Mantra* is not a mere word or symbol of expression, but is a concentrated thought of great power revealed to the Ṛṣi or the adept sādḥaka in the hour of his profound illumination. *Mantra* literally signifies something which saves (trāyate) through reflection (*mana*) on it.¹⁴ The Tāntrik Sādḥaka is, therefore warned against that ignorance, which takes *Mantras* to be mere words or letters of the alphabets.¹⁵ "Prediction is the lot of him, who thinks that Guru is a mere man, that *Mantra* are mere letters of the Alphabet, and that Pratimā (the image of the Deity), is mere stone." The Kulārṇava Tantra says : "A mantra should be repeated with faith, devotion, attention, submission and perception of the Divine image in the mind." The Śiva Saṁhitā says :¹⁶ "When by the grace of the Guru, the slumbering Kuṇḍalinī wakes up, it is then that the lotuses are penetrated, and the knots (of Karma) united. Hence, to awaken the Iśwari, sleeping on the cleft of Brahman, practise Mudrās by all means."

Thus being awakened, Kuṇḍalinī enters the great road to liberation (*mukti*)—that is the Suṣumnā nerve and penetrating the centre one by one, ascends to the Sahaśrāra, and there coming in blissful communion with the Lord of Lords, again descends down through the same passage to the Mulādhāra-cakra. Nectar is said to flow from such communion. The sādḥaka drinks it and becomes supremely happy and satisfied. This is the wine called Mulāmṛta, which is drunk by the Sādḥaka of the spiritual plane. There are three planes of the Sādḥaka, according to the three planes of the consciousness in which the manifested Divinity is realised. — viz., the Ādhibhautika (subtle physical) plane, the Ādhidaivika (psychic) plane, and the Ādhyātmika (spiritual) plane. In reference to the latter the Tantra says :¹⁷ "Drinking, drinking, again drinking, drinking all down upon earth, and getting up and again drinking, there is no re-birth." In Rudrāyamala, quoted by the author of Prāṇatoṣiṇi Kulakuṇḍalinī, is called¹⁸ "of aerial form, located in the Mulādhāra cakra." The knowledge of the Śakti as Prāṇa is of vital importance of self-culture. The Praśnopaniṣada thus summarises the result of such knowledge,¹⁹ "He who knows in detail the birth, the arrival (in human body), the place (in the body), the pervasiveness, the external (as sun etc.) and the internal (as eyes, etc.) manifestation of Prāṇa become immortal". The importance of possession of a thorough knowledge of Śakti is thus stated in Niruttara Tantra :²⁰ "After many births the knowledge of Śakti-nirvāṇa is unattainable."

Tantra aims at not only self-immolation nor self-extinction but at the self-fulfilment of the existence of man and woman in the delight of psychic unity. Tantra is a union of Yoga and Bhoga and it seeks the divine bliss and freedom in the universe of existence. *Tantra* is wrongly stigmatised as "a libidinous phallic necromancy". This is due to the instances of the excesses of some misguided Vāmamārgins. The real Tāntrik is neither a cynic nor a cyronic hedonist. He is rather an endacmonist than a slave to passions. The much ridiculed five 'M's are only esoteric symbolologies. 'Wine' is the lunar ambrosia flowing from the *Soma Cakra*. 'Woman' is the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti sleeping in the lower Plexus, Mulādhāra. 'Matsya' is the annihilation of "I" and "Mine". 'Māṁsa' is the surrender of the limited human to the unlimited Divine. 'Mudrā' is the cessation from evils. 'Maithuna' is the union of the 'Śakti' with Śiva in man. In Tantra, woman is not considered as an object of animal passion. Tāntrikas consider woman as Parā-śakti. She is deified and adored. If there is any method that enables man to rise Phoenix-like from the dead ashes of the animal passion it is the irreproachable Tantra. Its Sādhana is very complex, indeed. It analyses and scrutinises every atom of the human synthesis. It awakens the latent dynamism in all the planes of consciousness. It divinises every *Tattva* in man and woman. Its method is intrinsically inner, practical and sure of results.

The concept of five M's has been made and expressed in somewhat other manner in the following lines. The 'Divya Pañcatattva' for those of a truly sāttvika or spiritual temperament (Divyabhāva) have been described as follows : 'Wine' (*madya*) according to Kaula Tantra²¹ is not only liquid, but that intoxicating knowledge acquired by Yoga of Pārabrahma which renders the worshippers senseless as regards the external world. 'Meat'



(Māmsa) is not any fleshing thing, but the act whereby the sādḥaka consigns all his acts to Me (Mām), that is the Lord. 'Fish' is the sense of 'Mineness' (a play upon the word *Matsya*) the worshipper sympathizes with the pleasure and pain of all being. 'Mudrā' is the act of relinquishing all association with evil which results in bondage. Coition (*Maithuna*) is the union of the Śakti Kuṇḍalinī, 'the inner woman' and world-force in the lowest centre (Mulādhāra) of the Sādḥaka's body with the supreme Śiva in the highest-centre (Sahasrāra) in the upper Brain. This, the *Yogini Tantra* says, is the best of all union for those who are Yati, that is, who have controlled their passions.²²

According to the Āgamaśāstra, 'Wine' is the Somādhāra or lunar ambrosia which drops from the śahasrāra. 'Meat' (Māmsa) is the tongue (Mā) of which its parts (amśa) is speech. The Sādḥaka in eating it, controls his speech. 'Fish' (*Matsya*) are those two (Vāyu or currents) which are constantly moving in the two "rivers" that is, (Yoga "nerves" or Nādis) called Idā and Piṅgalā, that is, the sympathetics on each side of the spinal column. He who controls his breath by Prāṇāyāma, eats them by *Kumbhaka* or retention of breath. Mudrā is the awakening of knowledge in the paricarp of the great Sahasrāra Lotus (the upper brain) where the Ātma resplendent as ten million suns and deliciously cool as ten million moons is united with the Devi-Kuṇḍalinī, the world-forces and consciousness in individual bodies, after her ascent thereto from the Mulādhāra in Yoga. The esoteric of coition or *Maithuna* is thus stated in the Āgama. The ruddy hued "Rā" is in the Kuṇḍa (ordinarily the seed-mantra Rām is in Manipūra but perhaps here the Kuṇḍa in the Mulādhāra is meant). The letter *Ma*²³ is in the Mahāyoni (not I may observe the genitals but in the lightening-like triangle or *Yoni* in the Sahasrāra or condensed form of Śakti and transformation of Nāda-Śakti). When M (Makāra) seated on the Hamsa (the bird which is pair Śiva-Śakti as Jiva) in the form of A (A-kāra) united with R(R-kāra) then the knowledge of Brahman (Brahmajñāna) which is the source of spreme bliss is gained by the Sādḥaka who is then called Ātmārāma (enjoyer with the self), for his enjoyment is in the Ātman i.e., in the Sahasrāra. (For this reason two, the word Rāma, which also means sexual enjoyment, is equivalent to the liberator—Brahman, Ra + a + ma). The union of Śiva and Śakti is described²⁴ as true Yoga "Śivaśaktisamāyoga yoga eva na saṁsayah, "from which as the Yāmala says, arises that Joy which is known as the Supreme Bliss.²⁵

Dikṣā (Initiation)

The significance of Guru is paramount in Tāntrik literature. It is the Guru, who initiates and helps, and the relationship between him and the disciple (śiṣya) continues till the attainment of spiritual *Siddhi*. It is only from that Sādhana and Yoga are learnt and not (as it is commonly said) from a thousand Śāstras. As the Śāṭkarmadīpikā says, mere book-knowledge is useless²⁶ "O Beauteous one ! he who does *Japa* of a Vidyā (*Mantra*) learnt from a book can never attain *Siddhi* even if he persists for countless millions of years." Dikṣā is defined in the following lines thus²⁶ : "That is, by which knowledge is imparted, and the removal of animal-passions are destroyed, and such gifts and dark-removing activities are called the process by Dikṣā. Now, it is clear that the *baddha* (the person in bondage) is surrounded by three kinds of *Malas* and the process by which the removal of ignorance or bondage is destroyed, is called Dikṣā (initiation). Dikṣā which is imparted to the aspirant, has been placed into three heads : viz., Sabija, Nirbija and Sadyonirvāṇdayinī.

Haṁsacāra : Varnocāra

The Bodharūpa-Śakti of Parameśvara, emboxing the universe in its lap, passing through Parakuṇḍalinī and being Vimarṣātmika in nature, bibrates ultimately in Varna Kuṇḍalinīrūpa. Again, suppressing this type of Varnakuṇḍalinīrūpa, within inside, vibrates and appears in Prāṇa-Kuṇḍalinī. This Prāṇa is Haṁsa who goes upwards and downward naturally. Its movement is called "Hakāra and "Sa" Sakāra i.e. appears in Vimarṣarūpa. In this movement ("Hakāra").

Hakāra means taking off or abandoning and ("Sakāra") Sakāra means taking up or accepting. This word Haṁsa symbolises a bird of this name, which serves the purposes of uttering words. Even by remembering or uttering this word "Haṁsa" Haṁsa represents the most highly elevated word in speech. This Varṇocāra (uttering words) is realised by the Yogis in the form of Bindurūpa in the most secret place in the body which has a technical name "Bhrūmadhya-sthāna". This *Bindu* is undifferentiated cognitive fact. All the different states of the world, *i.e.*; Jāgrata, Svapna, and Suṣupti represent three famous mantras 'Om' (A), (U), (M). When these three are mixed together, it creates undifferentiated luminous knowledge (Avibhakte jyotirmaya jñāna) and this brilliance is called 'Bindu'. This achievement can be made in the 'Bhrūmadhya.' Then it turns upward towards forehead which in the place of crescent moon, taking a very subtle form of *Bindu*. In the state of *Bindu*, when the aspirant could realise only the undifferentiated knowledge, yet still the aspirant could focus his attention merely upon the object of knowledge, *i.e.*, the dominating thing is object itself. But in the state of crescent moon (*Ardha-candra*) the knowledge itself dominates in its discriminative form. Hence, it reaches to the state of Nirodhikāvasthā. Then it serves as a disturbance to those, who are not absolutely prepared in their attempts. It checks the unripe aspirant from entering into the realm of Nādamārga. The aspirant crosses this state and then enters the Nāda and Nādānta-Bhūmī. It is the place of God. Here the sense of difference merges into harmony. It should be remembered that *Abheda* of Vāchya lies in *Bindu*, while *Abheda-Nāda* of Vācakas are found in the Nādānta. After this, the Prāṇa, remaining in *Brahmarandhra*, *i.e.* ; Śaktisthāna (the place of energy) enjoys a kind of divine bliss. He crosses Ūrdhva-Pradeśa and culminates in Vyāpinī (it is a considerably expensive energy). Again residing in Samanā-pada, enjoys the bliss of "Viśuddha-manarūpa". But Prāṇātmaka-Haṁsa appears in "Śuddha-Ātma-rūpa" after crossing "Viśuddha-mana." The nature of Prāṇātmaka Haṁsa is to cross the limit of "Mana". In this way, the aspirant has to prepare all the prescribed functions and rules systematically, till and until the realisation of samanā-pada. When the Śuddha-Ātma realises its "Svabhāva (nature) above the stage of Samanā, he losses his step there. Just after the realisation of its purest form, the unity of entire universe appears bright. This "Abheda-Prakāśa" (The light produced out of unity), is the result of Unmanā-Śakti and by dint of this brilliance, the Śuddha-Ātma obtains the Parameśwar-āvasthā. Thus there arises a "Abheda" (unity) which is Cidānandamaya-Parama-Śiva. Hence after the Prāṇātmaka-Haṁsa becomes motionless after reaching the stage of Śivatva. Then, he gets freedom from the act of narrow expansion (Saṅkucita-Prasāraṇa), but he becomes highly expansive (Vyāpaka) *i.e.* ; it begins to function throughout the whole world made of thirty six elements. He becomes expansive in Viśvarūpa as well as Viśvātita-rūpa.

Ajapā-Rahasya

It has been admitted by the Yogis that there are nine types of main distractions in the way of Yoga-Sādhana. They lie deep-rooted in the mind of Sādhaka. They are nine, viz. ; Vyādhi, styāna or inactivity of the mind, Samśaya (suspicion), Pramāda (pride), or the things which prevent the aspirant from Samādhi, inactivity (Ālasya) in the body and mind, produced out of attachment towards mundane world, Bhrānti-jñāna, or Mithyājñāna, perverted knowledge, ignorance of the knowledge of detachment, Samādhi—or fluctuation even at the acquisition of the process of Samādhi, grief at the non-attainment of pleasure, palpitation in the body—the process of taking breath, and throwing off,—these are the main and sub-clauses of the above scheme.

Ajapā is known as the Prāṇādhāriṇi-prāṇa-Vidyā, produced by Kuṇḍalinī-Śakti. Just as the śyena (Bāja, a kind of bird) flies in the sky, yet still, he is attached to the earth, because he is bound to the string. Similarly, the jīva bound by the activities of Prāṇa and Apāna, goes on running upward and downward. Some learned scholars observe that Paramātmā, who is described by the word "Tat" (that) stands for the Parameśvara of of Haṁsavidyā, and God who is described the "Tvam" (thou) has been used for Khechhari-bija, and describes the second letter



“*Asi*” Akāśa, which is present in all the living beings is accompanied with Liṅga-Śarīra. Haṁsa takes the inspiration to make flight from the same element. The Śāstra says :²⁸ “Jīva, after taking off mundane world or Jīvahood (here it means physical attachment or ignorance) feels itself absolutely indetical to Parmātmā. It is the state of ‘Soham’ ‘That, I am.’ Those Sādhakas, who worship their souls in the form of Haṁsa, attain the highest state of Godhood easily. Secondly the Haṁsa is used for “Pratyaka-ātma” or Vyaṣṭi-turiya” i.e., for the sake of Ātmā (self) and the word “Paramhaṁsa” denotes Godhood. It represents “Samaṣṭi-turiya (for the whole). Haṁsa-Yoga is possible only when Vyaṣṭi turiya” and “Samaṣṭi-turiya” (the self in its individual and cosmic form) make compromise. This is the secret of Ajapā-Tattva in brief.

Mysticism in Tāntrik Sādhana

The Tāntrik process of devotion is generally more absorbing than any other devotion, as it tries to turn even all instincts and appetites of a devotee for the attainment of spiritual bliss. Dr. N. K. Brahma observes that Tāntrik mysticism may be condensed in what is designated as the very purificatory *mantra* to be uttered at the very commencement of the spiritual exercise, viz, “Ātm Tattvāya Swāhā” “Śiva Tattvāya Swāhā” and Śakti Tattvāya Swāhā.” This mantra is no less significant than the Brahma Gāyatri of Brahmanism. The first stage in the Tāntrik Mysticism is to have acquaintance with the knowledge of the self within the subject. This is called Sukhāsana of the Tāntriks and the Sūnya of the Buddhists. The second stage is to realise that all these selves which now appear as separate, are not really so but form a part and parcel of a Bigger-self of which the individual selves are like ripples. It is really the self that is actual seer, hearer etc. Our senses being classified under five categories, namely, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling, the Śiva of the Tantra is portrayed as one possessed of five heads. His faces are also five in number, of which four are presented towards the four cardinal points and the fifth one is turned upwards, i.e., turned inwards. Śiva is thus the God of detachment and being the self-effulgent principle from which the individual selves produced, which are enjoyer of sorrow and happiness, birth and death, growth and decay, is himself, “Mṛtūñjaya”, the conqueror of Death. The third stage is to utter “Śakti Tattvāya swāhā”, which is meant to acknowledge the existence of a Śakti or power which sets Śiva, the undifferentiated-self into commotion and breaks the massive self to tiny individual selves always in motion and assuming new formations. Śiva, as we have already seen, is Yogeśvara, is serene in his attitude and solemnly abstracted in his self. The Tāntrik calls it the Ādya Kālī or Mahāmāyā. The Sādhaka is to worship this Śakti as Mother. The Sādhaka is to remain in this stage as a Mukta Puruṣa till the Great Mother in her infinite mercy takes him up, as She is the ultimate governor of the universe and it is at Her will that the Universe is created and will be withdrawn into herself. She is “Kāmākṣya” the Goddess from where arise all desires and Her counterpart Śiva is Kāmeśvara in whom all desires are fulfilled. The Sādhaka has to make spiritual progress. After going through the different stages, as described above, he makes a flight to the most exalted state of bliss and brilliance, named Ānandamayī, i.e., the Goddess rolling in bliss, the chief Goddess of the Tantras.²⁹

Concept of Liberation

Dr. Radhakrishnan has drawn a graphic survey of the concept of liberation in Tāntrik Sādhana in the following lines. He observes, “The Jīva, under the influence of Māyā looks upon itself as an independent agent and enjoyer until release is gained. Knowledge of Śakti is the road to salvation,³⁰ which is dissolution in the blis effulgence of the Supreme. It is said that for him who realises that all things are Brahman, there is neither Yoga nor worship.”³¹ Jīva-mukti, or liberation in this life, is admitted³². Liberation depends on self-culture, which leads to spiritual insight. It does not come from the recitation of hymns, sacrifices or a hundred fasts. Man is liberated by the knowledge that he is himself Brahman.³³ The state of mind in

which it is realised that Brahman alone is (*Brahmasadbhāva*), is the highest ; that in which there is meditation on Brahman (*dhyānabhāva*), is the middle, praise (*stuti*) and recitation (*japa*) of hymns is the next, and external worship is the lowest of all.³⁴ There is protest against ritualistic religion. Kulārṇava Tantra says : “If the mere rubbing of the body with mud and ashes gains liberation, then the village dogs who roll in them have attained it. The distinction of castes is sub-ordinated ; and the discipline of the Tantras is open to all.”³⁵ *Bhakti* is regarded as helpful to salvation. Freedom of worship is allowed. As all streams flow into the ocean, so the worship offered to any God is received by Brahman.³⁶ The subordinate deities are however, subject to the force of *karma* and time.³⁷

M. M. Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj observes that the Tāntrik method of sublimation consists of three steps : purification, elevation, and reaffirmation of identity on the plain and pure consciousness. Tāntrik literature along with its mysticism, symbolism, and occulticism fulfil all the requisite demands of human life, *i.e.*, empirical and transcendental.

References :

- 1 Anubhavāsāntvāt —Bhāmati. 1.1.2.
- 2 Nāviraṭo ducaritannāśānto nāsamāhitaḥ,
Nāśāntmānaso vāpi prajñānenainamāpnuyāt.
—Kāthopaniṣad, i, ii, 24.
- 3 Tuckwell : Religion and Reality, p. 311.
- 4 Samprāpte jñānvijñāne jñeye ca hṛdi samsthite,
Labdhe śāntipade devi na yoga naiva dhāraṇā,
Pare brahmaṇi vijñāte samatairniyamairalam,
Tālavṛntena kiṁ kāryam labdhe malemārute.
—Kulārṇava Tantra : IX.27-28.
- Also, “Akriyaiva parā pūja mananāmeva paro japah”.
- 5 Japa bhuktiśca muktiśca labhate nātra saṁśayaḥ.
—Kulārṇava Tantra III, 96.
- 6 Yathādhyānasya sāmāthyāt kits’ pi bhramarāyate,
Tathā samādhisāmāthyāt brahmabhūto bhavennarah.
—Kulārṇava Tantra IX.16.
- 7 The above extract has been taken in fragments from the book entitled “The Philosophy of Hindu Sādhana” by N. K. Brahma.
- 8 M. M. Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj : Aspects of Indian Thought, pp. 204-205.
- 9 M. M. Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj : Aspects of Indian Thought, pp. 205-206.
- 10 Advaitam mecidicchanti dvaitamicchanti cāpare |
Māma tattvaṁ no jānanti dvaitadvaitavivarjitam ||
—Kulārṇava Tantra IX-16.
- 11 Suptā guruprasādena yadā jāgarṭi kuṇḍalinī,
Tadā sarvāṇi padmāni bhidyante granthyo pi ca,
Tasmāt sarvaprayatnena prabodhyitumīśvaram,
Brahmarandhranmukhe suptam mudrābhyāsam samācaret.
—Śiva Samhitā.
- 12 Jivāḥ Śivāḥ śivo jivāḥ kevalaḥ śivāḥ.
—Kulārṇava Tantra. IX 42,
Ibid 43.
- 13 “Karaṇbandhaḥ smṛto jivāḥ karmamuktaḥ sadāśivāḥ.
- 14 Mananam viśvavijñānam trāṇasām saṁsārabandhanāt,
Ytaḥ karoti samsiddham mantra ityucyate tataḥ.
—Piṅgala Tantra quoted in Sāradaṭilaka.



- 15 Garo mānusa budhi ca mantre cakṣarbhavanam,
Pratimāyaṁ shilajñāṁ kurvaṇo narkaṁ brajeta.
- 16 Suptāgurunprasādena yadā jāgṛti kuṇḍalinī,
Tadāsarvāṇi padmāni bhidyante granthyo pi ca,
Tasmāt sarve prayatnen prabodhitumīśwaram,
Brahmarandhranmukhe suptāṁ mudrābhyāsam samācaret.
- Śiva saṁhitā.
- 17 Peetvā Peetvā Punaḥ peetvā, Peetvā patati Bhootale.
Utthāya ca punaḥ peetvā punarjanma na vidyate.
- 18 Vāyuroopāmoolāmbujsthitam.
- 19 Utpattimāyatim asthānam vibhutvam caiva Pañchddhā,
Adhyātma chaiva Prāṇasya vijñāyāmṛtamśnute.
- 20 Bahūnā janmanāmante śaktijñānam prajñāyate.
Śaktijñāna vinā devi nirvāṇam naiva jāyate.
- sloka, 41.
- 21 See p. 85 of Pañcatattva-vicāra by Nilamani Mukhopadhyaya.
- 22 Sahsrārōpari bindu kuṇḍalyā melanam śive,
Maithunam parmaṁ dravyam yatinām parikīrtitam,
- Chapter VI.
- 23 White like the autumnal moon, Sattva guṇa Kaivalyarūpāprakṛtirūpī.
- Ch. 2. Kāmadhenu Tantra.
- 24 Tantrasāra, 702.
- 25 “Sāmyogaj Jāyate saukhyaṁ paramānandalakṣaṇam”.
- 26 Pustake likhitāvidyā yena sundara japyate,
Siddhirjāyate tasya kalpakoṭi-śatairapi.
- Ibid. 703.
- 27 Deeyati jñāna sadabhāvaḥ kṣeeyate paśuvāsanā,
Dānakṣayaṇasamyukta Dikṣhā teneḥ kīrtitā.
- 28 Sah kāro dhyāyate janturhakāro jāyate dhurvaṁ.
- 29 This extract has been borrowed from the book entitled “Philosophy of Hindu Sādhana”
by N. K. Brahma.
- 30 Śaktijñāna Vinā devī nirvāṇam naiva jāyate.
- Niruttara Tantra.
- 31 Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, XIV, 123 see 124-127.
- 32 Ibid XIV, 135.
- 33 Ibid XIV, 113, 116.
- 34 Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, XIV. 122.
- 35 Antyajā api bhaktā nāmajñānadhikāriṇaḥ,
Striśūdrabrahmadhūnām tantrajñānédhikāritā.
- Vyomasamhitā.
- 36 Mahānirvāṇa Tantra—XI. 50.
- 37 Ye Samastā jagatsratisthitisamhārakāriṇaḥ.
Te pi kāleṣu liyante kālo hi balabattaraḥ.

Quoted in Indian Philosophy by S. Radhakrishnan, Vol. II, page 737.

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