PHILOSOPHY OF TĀNTRIK-YOGA SĀDHANĀ

Dr. BASHISHTHA NARAIN TRIPATHI,
M. A. (Double) D. Phil.

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 ‘Sādhanā’. 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. Sādhanā 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. The moral life is the indispensable preliminary discipline to the religious, and this is the central teaching of all forms of Hindu Sādhana. Hindu Sādhanā 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 Čit 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 Sādhanā.

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.” Tāntrik Sādhanā 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 Brahmān is attained; of what use is the palm leaf when the blissful southern wind blows?” 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 Vaiśnavism. 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. Tántrik 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 Tántrik 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. Tántrik Sádhana opens a new door for the uplift of the ordinary Sádhana. The Sádhana goes beyond the ordinary conception of spiritual of Śiva-Sakti. To be more frank on this point it can be expressed that in the Tántrik approach, metaphysics consists of a higher status than religion as ordinarily understood. Thus, we face a clear demarcation line between Tántrik Sádhana 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 Sádhakas 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 Tántrik Sádhana gives impetus to acquire impersonal nature through impersonal will which ends in the silent luminous consciousness which is Śiva. The Sádhakas 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.

Tántrik form of Sádhana is suited to men of all equipments. It contains within it the elements of all the important forms of Sádhana. It promises to award to the Sádhaka not merely liberation (mukti) but also enjoyment (bhūkti), not merely final beatitude (niḥśreyasa) but also progress (abhūyudaya). The individual has in the element of infinitude and absoluteness, otherwise, all Sádhana would have been a myth: but this infinitude has to be realised and actually attained. The Tantra recognises three distinct stages of Sádhana and marks out five sub-divisions of the entire course of discipline. The three stages are Purification (śuddhi), Illumination (Sthitī) and Unification (arpaṇa), corresponding roughly to Karma, Bhakti and Jānā. The five sub-divisions are a ablution (snāna) gratification (tarpaṇa), meditation (sandhyā) worship (pujā) and complete self-abnegation (homa). The process of Bhūta-siddhi also implies the process of purification or purgation. The gross body, the subtle body and the causal 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 Sádhaka 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.

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 citta appears as citta. Of the three well-known impurities or malas this is the first, called ṣaṇava. 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-śārīra. (ii) the subtle or puryaśthaka, i.e., tattva-śārīra. In fact, everything which reveals itself in our experience as knowable and objective comes under māyā-mala. The function of this impurity is to show an object as different from the subject (svārūpa). All the principles from kalā down to prithivi represent the fetters of māyā or pāśas. These give shape to body, senses, bhūvanas, bhāvās etc. for fulfilling the experience of the soul. Hence what is popularly known as saṁsāra extends from Prithivi up to Kalā, and not beyond the latter. These impurities persist always in the worldly soul.” The worldly soul being endowed with body, senses etc., is technically known as sa-kalā, corresponding to the tattva or bhūvana 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 māyā-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 disassembled condition absorbed in māyā. Such souls are called pralayākālas or pralaya kevalins. 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 pāśu known as Vījñānakalā or Vījñāna-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 sūdhā-Vidyā.

Tāntrik Śādhanā as a way to release:

Tāntrik Śādhanā 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.

‘The Kuṇḍalini 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 Śādha 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. The ‘Serpent Power’ or Kuṇḍalini Śakti is the expression used by the Tantras to indicate the Spiritual Power that sleeps; it is awakened or becomes active through śādhanā or regulated effort to arouse and intensify the spiritual energy that is latent in every man. The individual becomes the Absolute, the Jīva becomes Śiva14, 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.

As sacrifices occupy the foremost place in the vedic method and hymns in the Pāurānic,
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 Rṣī or the adept sādhnaka in the hour of his profound illumination. Mantra literally signifies something which saves (trāyate) through reflection (mana) on it.11 The Tāntrik Sādhaka is, therefore warned against that ignorance, which takes Mantras to be mere words or letters of the alphabets.18 “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 Kūṇḍalinī 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, Kūṇḍalinī enters the great road to liberation (mukti)—that is the Suśumnā nerve and penetrating the centre one by one, ascends to the Sahāsrāra, 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 sādhnaka drinks it and becomes supremely happy and satisfied. This is the wine called Mulānīya, which is drunk by the Sādhaka of the spiritual plane. There are three planes of the Sādhaka, according to the three planes of the consciousness in which the manifested Divinity is realised—viz., the Adhibhautika (subtle physical) plane, the Adhidaivika (psychic) plane, and the Adhyātmika (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 Prāṇatōṣiṇī Kulakūṇḍalinī, 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 symbologies. ‘Wine’ is the lunar ambrosia flowing from the Soma Cakra. ‘Woman’ is the Kūṇḍalinī 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 Śādhanā 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’
(Māṁsa) is not any fleshing thing, but the act whereby the sādhaka 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. ‘Mudra’ 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 Sādhaka’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. 

According to the Āgamaśāstra, ‘Wine’ is the Somādhāra or lunar ambrosia which drops from the sahasrāra. ‘Meat’ (Māṁsa) is the tongue (Mā) of which its parts (amāśa) is speech. The Sādhaka 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 Pingalā, 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 “Ra” is in the Kuṇḍa (ordinarily the seed-mantra Rām is in Maṇipūra but perhaps here the Kuṇḍa in the Mulādhāra is meant). The letter Ma 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 Haṁsa (the bird which is pair Śiva-Śakti as Jīva) in the form of A (A-kāra) united with R(R-kāra) then the knowledge of Brahman (Brahmājñāna) which is the source of supreme bliss is gained by the Sādhaka who is then called Ātmārāma (enjoyer of 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 described as true Yoga “Śivasaktisamayoga yoga eva na saṁsayaḥ, “from which as the Yāmala says, arises that Joy which is known as the Supreme Bliss.

Dīkṣā (Initiation)

The significance of Guru is paramount in Tantrik 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 Sādhanā and Yoga are learnt and not (as it is commonly said) from a thousand Śastras. As the Śāktamadhipikā says, mere book-knowledge is useless. “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.” Dīkṣā is defined in the following lines thus: “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 Dīkṣā. 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 Dīkṣā (initiation). Dīkṣā which is imparted to the aspirant, has been placed into three heads: viz., Sabija, Nirbija and Sadyonirvāṇāyinī.

Haṁsocāra : Varnocāra

The Bodhatūpā-Śakti of Parameśvara, embozing the universe in its lap, passing through Parākūḍalinī and being Vimarṣātmika in nature, vibrates ultimately in Varna Kuṇḍalinirūpa. Again, suppressing this type of Vārṇa Kuṇḍalinirūpa, 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 Vimarṣa-rūpa. In this movement (“Hakāra”).
Hakär means taking off or abandoning and ("Sakär") Sakär means taking up or accepting. This word Haṁśa symbolises a bird of this name, which serves the purposes of uttering words. Even by remembering or uttering this word "Haṁśa" Haṁśa represents the most highly elevated word in speech. This Vargocāra (uttering words) is realised by the Yogis in the form of Bindurāpa 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 Susupti represent three famous mantras ‘On’ (A), (U), (M). When these three are mixed together, it creates undifferentiated luminous knowledge (Avibhake jyotirmaya jāna) 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 (Arḍha-candra) the knowledge itself dominates in its discriminative form. Hence, it reaches to the state of Nirodhikivasthā. 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 Nādaṇṭa-Bhūmi. It is the place of God. Here the sense of difference merges into harmony. It should be remembered that Abheda of Vācchya lies in Bindu, while Abheda-Nāda of Vācakas are found in the Nādaṇṭa. After this, the Prāṇa, remaining in Brahmanandha, i.e.; Śaktisthāna (the place of energy) enjoys a kind of divine bliss. He crosses Urdhva-Pradeśa and culminates in Vyāpini (it is a considerably expensive energy). Again residing in Samanā-pada, enjoys the bliss of "Viśuddha-manarūpa". But Prāṇātmaka-Haṁsa appears in “Suddha-Ātma-rūpa” after crossing “Viśuddha-mana.” The nature of Prāṇātmaka Haṁsa is to cross the limit of “Mano”. 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 “Śvabhāva (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 Paramēśvarāvästha. 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.

Ajāpa-Rahasya

It has been admitted by the Yogis that there are nine types of main distractions in the way of Yoga-Sādhanā. They lie deep-rooted in the mind of Śadhaka. They are nine, viz.; Vyādhi, styāna or inactivity of the mind, Samājaya (suspicion), Pramāḍa (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-jāna, or Mithyājāna, 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, pulsitation in the body—the process of taking breath, and throwing off,—these are the main and sub-clauses of the above scheme.

Ajāpa is known as the Prāṇādhāriṇī-prāṇa-Vidyā, produced by Kuṇḍalini-Śakti. Just as the ṣyena (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 ḷīva bound by the activities of Prāṇa and Aṇāna, goes on running upward and downward. Some learned scholars observe that Paramātmā, who is described by the word “Tat” (that) stands for the Paramēśvara of of Haṁsavādyā, and God who is described the “Tvam” (thou) has been used for Khechari-bija, and describes the second letter
"Aśī" Akāśa, which is present in all the living beings is accompanied with Liṅga-Śarīra. Hāmsa 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 indentical to Parmātma. It is the state of 'Sohām' 'That, I am.' Those Sādhakas, who worship their souls in the form of Hāmsa, attain the highest state of Godhood easily. Secondly the Hāmsa is used for "Pratyakṣa-ātmā" or Vyaṣṭi-turiya" i.e., for the sake of Ātmā (self) and the word "Paramahāṁsa" denotes Godhood. It represents "Samaṣṭi-turiya" (for the whole). Hāmsa-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 Ajapa-Tattva in brief.

**Mysticism in Tāntrik Śādhanā**

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 Śwāhā" "Śiva Tattvāya Śwāhā" and Śakti Tattvāya Śwāhā." This mantra is no less significant that 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 Sunya 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, "Mrutunjaya", 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 Yogaśvara, is serene in his attitude and solemnly abstracted in his self. The Tāntric calls it the Ādyā Kāli or Mahāmāyā. The Śādha is to worship this Śakti as Mother. The Śādha 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 "Kāmākṣyā" the Goddess from where arise all desires and Her counterpart Śiva is Kāmeśvara in whom all desires are fulfilled. The Śādha 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 Ānandamaya, 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 Śādhanā in the following lines. He observes, "The Jīva, under the influence of Mayā looks upon itself as an independent agent and enjoyer until release is gained. Knowledge of Śakti is the road to salvation, 40 which is dissolution in the bliss effulgence of the Supreme. It is said that for him who realises that all things are Brahman, there is neither Yoga nor worship." 41 Jīvamukti, or liberation in this life, is admitted. 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. 42 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. 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.” 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. The subordinate deities are however, subject to the force of karma and time.

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

References:

1. Anubhavāsantāt
2. Nāvīra-to duscaritānuganto nāsamāhitaḥ,
Nāśāntānasaṃ vāpi prajñānenaśīnaṃ bhaṅguyāt.
4. Samprāpte ājñāvijñāne jāye ca hṛdi saṃsthite,
Labdhē śāntipade devi na yoga naiva dhāraṇā,
Pare brahmaṇi viññāte samatairnıyamairalam,
Tālavṛntena kiṃ kāryam labdhē malemārute.

Also, “Akrīyaiva para pūja mananāmeva paro japaḥ”.
5. Japa bhuktiśca muktīśca labhate nātra saṃsāyah.
6. Yathādhyānasya sāmarthathāḥ kīts’ pi bhramarāyate,
Tathā saṃādhhisāmarthāḥ brahmabhūto bhavennaraḥ.

—Kulārṇava Tantra III, 96.
—Kulārṇava Tantra IX.16.

7. The above extract has been taken in fragments from the book entitled “The Philosophy of Hindu Sādhanā” by N. K. Brahma.
10. Advaitam mecidechchanti dvaitamicchchanti cāpare ||
Māma tattvam no jānanti dvaitadvaitavivarjitaṁ ||

—Kulārṇava Tantra IX-16.
—Śiva Sarāhita.

11. Suptā guruśūrdādena yadā jāgarītī kuṇḍalinī,
Tāḍa sarvāṇi padmāṇi bhidyante granthyo pi ca,
Tasmāt sarvaprayatnena prabhodhyutumāvaram,
Brahmarandhramukhe suptām mudrābhīṣṣam saṃācaret.

12. Jīvaḥ Śivaḥ śivo jīvaḥ kevalaḥ śivaḥ.
14. Mananaṁ viśavijñānām trāṇasām saṃsārabandhanat,
Ytaḥ karoti samsiddham mantra ityucya tataḥ.

—Piṅgala Tantra quoted in Sāradātilaka.
15. Garo mānusa budhi ca mantre cakṣarabhavanam,
Pratimāyam shilajñām kurvano narkaṁ brajeta.

16. Suptāgururasādene yaḍā jāgrṭi kuṇḍalini,
Tadāsarvāṇi padmāṇi bhidyante granthyo pi ca,
Tasmāt sarve prayatnen prabodhitumāśwaram,
Brahmarandhramukhe suptām mudrabhyāsam samācaret.

—Śiva samhītā.

17. Peetvā Peetvā Punah peetvā, Peetvā patati Bhootale.
Utthāya ca punah peetvā punarjanma na vidyate.

18. Vāyuroopamoolambujsthitam.

19. Utpattimāyatim asthānam vibhutvam caiva Pañchddhā,
Adhyātma chaiva Prāṇasya viṣṇuṣyāṃ tamaṇute.

20. Bahūnā janmanāmante ṣaktijñānam prajñāyate.
Ṣaktijñāna vinā devi nirvāṇam naiva jāyate.

—sloka, 41.


22. Sahsārāpari bindu kuṇḍalā melanāṁ śive,
Maithunaṁ parmaṁ dravyāṁ yatinnām parikīrtitaṁ,

—Chapter VI.

23. White like the autumnal moon, Sattva guṇa Kaivalyārūpāprakṛtirūpī.

—Ch. 2. Kāmadhenu Tantra.

24. Tantrasāra, 702.

25. “Saṃyogaj Jāyate saukhyām paramānandaśalakṣaṇam”.

26. Pustake likhitāvidyā yena sundara japyate,
Siddhirjāyate tasya kalpakoṭi-satairapi.

27. Decyati jāna saḍabhāvaḥ kṣeevyate paśuvāsaṁ,
Dānakṣayaṇasāmyukta Dikdāh teneḥ kīrtitā.

28. Sah kāro dhyāyate jantarukkaro jāyate dhurvaṁ.

29. This extract has been borrowed from the book entitled “Philosophy of Hindu Śādhanā”
by N. K. Brahma.

30. Ṣaktijñāna Vinā devi nirvāṇam naiva jāyate.

31. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, XIV, 123 see 124-127.

32. Ibid XIV, 135.


34. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, XIV. 122.

35. Antyajī api bhaktā nāmaajñānadhipiśivāṁ,
Strīśūrabrahmadhūṇānām tantrajñānādhipākāritā.

—Vyomasamhitā.

36. Mahānirvāṇa Tantra—XI. 50.

37. Ye Samasta jagatsraṣṭhitidesamābhārakārīnaḥ.
Te pi kāleṣu iliyante kālo hi balabattaraḥ.

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

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