

Principles of Tantra Volume I and II.

Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon)

The Tantra-Tattva of Śrīyukta Śiva Candra Vidyārṇava Bhattachārya Mahodaya

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Index

General Introduction p. 1_4

Śakti, the Divine Mother p. 4_7

Manifestation p. 7_10

Guru, bondage and liberation p. 11_12

General Introduction

The word Tantra has various meanings, and amongst others Śāstra generally, and therefore does not necessarily denote a religious Śāstra. In the sense, however, in which the term is most widely known and is here used, it denotes that body of religious scriptures (Śāstra) which is stated to have been revealed by Śiva as the specific scripture of the fourth or present Kali age (yuga). (...) The Hindu Śāstras are classed into Śruti, Smṛti, Purāna, and Tantra. The three last all assume the first as their base, and are, in fact, merely special presentments of it for the respective ages. It has been said that the Tantras “are regarded by those who follow them as a fifth Veda as ancient as the others and of superior authority.” No Śāstra is or can be superior to the Veda. That practical application of its teachings, however, which is prescribed in the Tantra is to be followed in preference to the vaidikācāra in the Kaliyuga. Introduction Arthur Avalon Vol.I p. 35

... the Tantra explains what the Veda asserts. Vol.II p. 56

The Tantras are referred to as Āgamas. An Indian author (Dr. V.V. Ramana Śāstrin) ... expresses the opinion that the Āgamas have branched out from the same stem of the Vaidik tree which produced the earlier Upaniṣads, and were at one time as widespread in India as the Upaniṣads themselves; He says: “*The Āgamas contend that they constitute the truest exegesis of the Vedas, and their origins are certainly as ancient as those of some of the classical Upaniṣads.*” (...) According to some, the Vedas, issued from four out of the five mouths of Śiva and the Tantra of the “higher tradition” (ūrdhvāmnāya) for His central or fifth mouth.

Introduction Arthur Avalon Vol.I p. 43

So the Tantra has been said to exist in the Veda as the perfume exist in the flower.

Introduction Arthur Avalon Vol.I p. 48

..., the main subjects of Tantra are Mantra and Sādhana in all its forms.

Introduction Arthur Avalon Vol.I p. 32

The Tantra is called Mantraśāstra, but Mantras are not confined to the Tantra.

Preface Arthur Avalon Vol.II p. 7

... the substance of all Mantras is consciousness, (...) ... in the Yoginī Tantra ... it is said: “*Mantras are proof of the existence of all Jīvas, and are the supreme energy of Brahman and the Supreme Good.*” (...) “*Those Mantras consisting of energy are beyond Māyā. (...) It is, therefore, again said: All Mantras are destroyers of Māyā. (...) Mantras are full of perfect bliss. (...) Mantras are all forms of liberation.*” He who wishes to ascertain the depth down to a particular point of an unfathomable ocean must descend to such a point. Vol. II p. 190-193

“The special virtue of the Tantra lies in its mode of Sādhana. It is neither mere worship (Upāsanā) nor prayer. It is not lamenting or contrition or repentance before

the Deity. It is the Sādhana which is the union of Puruṣa and Prakṛti; the Sādhana which joins the male principle and the mother element within the body, and strives to make the attributed attributeless. (...) It is the object of Tāntrik Sādhana to merge that self-principle (Svarāṭ) into the Universal (Virāṭ). This Sādhana is to be performed through the awakening of the forces within the body. (...) The Tantra repeatedly says that one is to adore the Deity by becoming a Deity (Devatā) himself. The Iṣṭa-devatā is the very self of Ātman, not separate from It; The true Tāntrik worship is the worship in and by the mind. The less subtle form of Tāntrik worship is that of the Yantra. (...)” Preface Arthur Avalon, ref. to Sj. Panchkori Bandyopādhyāyā Vol.II p.18-19

... the compatibility of enjoyment and liberation existing harmoniously, Yoga, which liberates, and Bhoga (enjoyment), which chains down (...) The Tantra Śāstra reconciles the two, not only in theory, but in practice. Vol.II p. 151

And so says the Kulārṇava Tantra:

भोगो योगायते सम्यक् दुष्कृतं सुकृतायते ।
मोक्षायते च संसारः कुलधर्मे कुलेश्वरी ॥

bhogo yogāyate samyak duṣkṛtaṃ sukṛtāyate
mokṣāyate ca saṁsāraḥ kuladharme kuleśvarī

“O Mistress of Kula! in Kuladharmā,
Bhoga (enjoyment) becomes complete Yoga (union of Jiva with Brahman)
bad deeds are made good deeds, and the world becomes the seat of Liberation.”
Vol.II p. 153

Tantra Śāstra is not a pleasure-ground for the ease-loving and luxurious. It is the hermitage, in the woods built by Yoga, of Him who is the crest-gem of great Yogis, and the Guru of all mobile and immobile things. Vol.II p. 201

The Tantra is not only the basis of popular Hindu practice, on which account it is known as the Sādhana Śāstra, but it is the repository of esoteric belief and practices, particularly those relating to yoga and mantra-tattva. Introduction Arthur Avalon Vol.I p. 42

The Tantra in some of its aspects is a secret doctrine (guptavidyā) to be gathered, not from the written record, but verbally from those who hold the key to it. So with Eastern allegory it is said: “Verily, verily, and without a doubt the Veda Śāstra and Purānas are like a common woman, free to all, but the doctrine of Śambhu (i.e. the Tantra) is like a secret house bride, to reveal which is death.”

Introduction Arthur Avalon Vol.I p. 24

... esoteric Tantrism is as ancient as the Vedas. (...) It is only old wine in new jars which is presented by Śiva and Bhagavatī to men of the Kali Yuga. An esoteric aspect, however, suitable for the generality of folk was added to the already extant esoteric path, which only a few are competent to pursue.

Introduction Sj. Barada Kanta Majumbar Vol.II p. 30-31

... as the Jīvātma is to the Paramātmā, so is the Veda to the Tantra. (...) Just as in the body of the Jīva Paramātmā is the Śakti of pure consciousness, so in the body of Śāstra Tantra is the Śakti of consciousness consisting of Mantras. (...) Just as the ultimate goal of mind is immersion in the Parabrahman, and the end of the active forces, consisting of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, is to disappear altogether, so the ultimate goal of Veda is to be merged in Tantra through the knowledge of the omnipresence of Brahman. Vol.II p. 167

Brahman-knowledge cannot be attained without self-purification, and for this the Tantra provides the only means in the Kaliyuga. Introduction Arthur Avalon Vol.I p. 82

... Tantra is self-evident. Vol.II p. 169

The Tantra claims to be practical and to be a pratyakṣa Śāstra in that it affords the direct proof of *experience*. It is therefore one of its common sayings that, “*Whereas other Śāstras are concerned with speculation only, the art of medicine and Tantra are practical, self-evident and prove themselves at every step.*”

Introduction Arthur Avalon Vol.I p. 80

The Tantra is ... all-comprehensive and non-sectarian. It enjoins the worship of Śakti – that without which nothing can live and move and have its being. (...) Worship, however, implies a duality. And although essentially the worshipper and the worshipped are the same – and it is the realisation of this Unity which is the end and aim of worship – yet Śakti in manifestation cannot but be the object of worship so long as the Ego has its individuality, which is made of the stuff of Prakṛti. It is, therefore, that in spiritual culture the Tantra postulates two Śaktis: Vācaka Śakti is manifested Cit in Prakṛti, and Vācya Śakti is Cit itself, which is the goal to be attained. It is by realization of Vācaka Śakti that Vācya Śakti can be attained.

Introduction Sj. Barada Kanta Majumbar Vol.II p. 41-42

Duality in unity is the root principle of the Tantra. Vol.II p. 48

Duality in unity is the characteristic of the Tāntrik doctrine, and all its methods of worship are based upon this truth. The Kulārṇava Tantra says:

अद्वैतं केचिदिच्छन्ति द्वैतमिच्छन्ति चापरे ।
मम तत्त्वं विजानन्तो द्वैताद्वैतविवजिताः ॥

“Some wish (me to be) Advaita (non-dual), and others wish (me to be) Dvaita (dual). He who knows me in essence is free from both Dvaita and Advaita.” Vol.II p. 127

Śiva has therefore said: “*In the world some desire non-dualistic, others dualistic, knowledge, but those who have known My truth have passed beyond Dualism and non-Dualism.*” Introduction Arthur Avalon Vol.I p. 85

The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says:

“*The highest state is that in which the presence of Brahman is perceived in all things. The middle state is that of meditation. The lowest state is that of hymn and Japa, and*

the state lower than the lowest is that of external worship. Yoga is realization or the accomplishment of Unity between Jīva and Paramātmā. Worship is based on the twofold knowledge that He is Īśvara, and I am His servant, but for him who has known that everything is Brahman there is neither Yoga nor worship.” Vol.II p. 341

The worship of the Divinity as Mother, ... principal characteristic of the Tantras, had prevailed long before the advent of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Introduction Sj. Barada Kanta Majumbar Vol.II p. 32

“The great subject of discussion between the Tantra and the Veda is the Mother.”

Vol.I p. 174 (last song in the first part of Gitānjali, a volume of poems by the author)

Śakti, the Divine Mother

There is no word in the English language which conveys the exact meaning of the word Śakti as it is used in the Hindu Spiritual Science. It is neither force nor energy of physical science. The word Power may be used to designate it.

Power or Śakti is the root of all existence. It is from Śakti that universes are evolved; it is by Śakti that they are sustained; and it is into Śakti that they are finally resolved. It is the same as Parabrahman. Parabrahman is Existence (Sat), Consciousness (Cit), and Bliss (Ānanda). By Śakti is denoted exactly these three aspects in the One without a second. (...) Śakti, ... is essentially absolute Satcitānanda.

Within, so to say, the womb of Śakti, is Māyā or Prakṛti, the matrix of the universe which, during cosmic inaction or Mahāpralaya is potential and latent, even as fire is latent within wood. Māyā or Prakṛti is not a non-reality, nor a state of equilibrium of certain things; nor it is a something-nothing, It is as immutable and permanent as the triple aspects already mentioned. It enfolds, ... a triad of Guṇas or Realms which, mutating and combining, make up the appearance of the ever-changing world, and which, in Mahāpralaya, are withdrawn within the bosom from whence they emerged. Māyā or Prakṛti ... is ever in association with Cit, be it in Mahāpralaya or in evolution; for there is only One without a second, and Prakṛti must be an inseparable part or power of It. (...) ... Śakti (is) a Unity having the characteristic of a duality when viewed through the veil of Prakṛti. This duality is neither Jīva nor Ātma, nor matter and spirit, but a polarity. (...) Śakti is, ... both centrifugal and centripetal Power. It is male-female, and therefore expressed by the word Brahman, in the neuter gender. (...) Prakṛti, the matrix of the universe of names and forms, is the veil through which alone it is possible to approach the Sat-cit-ānanda Brahman by the human consciousness. It is the destiny of human consciousness, which is relative, to merge itself into the one true Consciousness, which is absolute, and thus to fulfil the end and aim of life. The Tantra, therefore, along with all other spiritual sciences, worships the Absolute through that in which It is manifested. (...)

Prakṛti, therefore, is not a “Veil”, but, on the other hand, is Śakti itself in Evolution. (...) It is the Kāraṇa Deha (causal body) of Cit-śakti. It is impersonal, all-pervading, immutable, and Cit itself. It is the God of all Gods; the object of the highest form of human worship – nay the object of the worship of all the Gods, including Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. It is symbolized in the Tantra by a bindu or dot (.), and expressed in human language by the word “Ciṅghana”¹ (चिङ्घन). Bindu or Śakti is neither male nor female, but partakes of the characteristics of both. (...) ... Śakti ... is life, intelligence, and consciousness. No state of existence can be superior to it. (...) ... from Śakti (Power) everything emanates, first in the spiritual, then in the celestial, and then in the terrestrial Cosmogogenesis.

Vol. II Introduction Sj. Barada Kanta Majumbar p. 39-43

The Divine Mother (call Her Father or Father-Mother as you choose) is in every molecule, in every atom, in all things which constitute the world. In fact, She is the causeless Cause of whatever is; She is the manifested Brahman. The world is the playground (Līlakṣetra) of the All blissful Ānandamayī. The world is neither an illusion nor a non-reality; (...) ... the Sādhaka, far from finding the world to be a vale of tears, of sorrow, and of suffering, views it as the very Kashmir of subjective and objective beauty. Every man and woman – nay, all living things – are glowing with Divinity. This state of mind not only quenches the thirst of his lower nature, but spiritualizes its animal tendencies; not only does it buoy him up with fresh energy to pursue the Path, but he attains liberation (Mukti), eating the sweet fruit of the world, of which the Sādhakas of other schools are deprived.

Vol. II Introduction Sj. Barada Kanta Majumbar p. 35-36

As Creator Her vehicle is Rājasik, as Preserver it is Sāttvik, as Withdrawer of the universe it is Tṛiguṇa Māyā, the Tāmasik Guṇa predominating. The creative energy is volition (icchāśakti), the preservative energy is action (kriyāśakti), and the destructive energy is cognition (jñānaśakti). These three phases of the all-pervading Śakti must be contemplated on day by day in order that the Sādhaka may realize what the object of his worship is in manifestation. Vol. II p. 91

The Tāntrik Sādhaka is enjoined to feel the Supreme as Divine Mother and Father, not only within himself, but within every being. (...) The nature of the Supreme as the True Self, the real doer and the real feeler being realized, he can place his Kārmik self completely at Her disposal in all his acts with a devout heart and inflexible will; he can worship his thoughts, feelings, and propensities, whatsoever they may be and realize what he recites every morning. Vol. II p. 138

प्रातरुत्थाय सायाह्नं सायाह्नात् प्रातरेव तु ।
यत्करोमि जगन्मातस्तदेव तव पूजनम् ॥

prātarutthāya sāyāhnam sāyāhnāt prātareva tu

¹ That is, a thickened mass of cit or consciousness.

yatkaromi jaganmātastadeva tava pūjanam

From the time I rise in the morning till evening, and from evening till morning, whatsoever I do, O Mother of the Universe! That is surely Thy worship. Vol. II p. 138

From dawn to dusk, from dusk to dawn, all that I do, O Mother of the universe! it is really only your worship.
Translation Sanskrit > Spanish > English: n

The Mother is mine, I am the Mother's, and I call Her my own. Vol. II Digambara p. 325

*O brother! what karma can there be which I can call my own?
karma is Hers, whose I am. I am the Mother and the Mother is mine.
The glory of Karma with me lies no longer in its being Karma,
but in the fact of its being the Mother's Karma. So long as the relation
of Mother and son will not end for me, this joy of Karma also will not so end.
(...) ... Karma is Her worship* Vol. II p. 402-403

Śri Rāmaprasāda says:

*“The Mother dwells in all bodies. O blinded eye! see,
the Mother is in darkness the dispeller of darkness.”* Vol. II p. 346

She is Māyā, because Māyā is a part of Her nature;

She is Avidyā because She binds;

She is Mahāmāyā because She dominates Māyā;

She is Vidyā because She holds the torch which illuminates the Path of return,

She is Mahāvidyā because She is the Mother in whose sweet and

soothing bosom the way worn pilgrim finds its eternal rest.

The Divine Mother is thus the cause both of bondage as well as liberation.

She is in all things, and all things are in Her.

Introduction Sj. Barada Kanta Majumbar Vol. II p. 44

*“She exists as Tejas (The luminous energy of the universal consciousness) in vehicles,
stones, and minerals. O Mistress of Devās! after this what need be said
about Her presence in living beings?*

Nothing exists where Mahāmāyā does not exist. “ Vol. II p. 451

The three aspects of Śakti, which constitute the Trinity of the Hindus, are Volition (icchāśakti), Administration (kṛyāśakti) and Cognition (jñāśakti). These are the three Powers which direct the evolution, the sustentation, and the involution of the Universe. (...) Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva are quite powerless to discharge their respective function without the Śakti or Power.

The Devībhāgavata (Skandha III. Chap. vi) relates that Brahmā having asked Ādyāśakti as to whether She was male or female, the Divine Mother thus explained Herself:

*“That Male (Puruṣa) and Myself are ever the same.
There is no difference between Him and Me.
The Puruṣa is what I am; I am what the Puruṣa is.
Differences arises only from ignorance.
He who is intelligent and is free from the bondage of the world
can know our subtle difference; The one without a second,
perennial Brahman becomes dual at the time of creation. (...)
At the time of final dissolution I am neither male nor female nor neuter.
The difference (male and female) is imagined only at the time of creation.”*

Introduction Sj. Barada Kanta Majumbar Vol. II p. 45-46

शक्तिज्ञानं विना देवि मुक्तिः हास्याय कल्पते ।

śaktijñānaṃ vinā devi muktiḥ hāsyāya kalpate

“O Devi! without a knowledge of Śakti, Mukti (liberation) is mere mockery.”

Manifestation

The first manifestation of Śakti in the spiritual plane is “Sound”, which is undifferentiated intelligent Ākāśa², the Cidākāśa³ of philosophy, the Saguṇa Brahman of religion. This sound, the causeless cause of manifold universes, must not be confused with the sound with which we are familiar It is not the Kāryākāśa or atomic Ākāśa, which is integrated and limited and evolved from Tāmasik Ahamkāra. It is Cit Śakti vehicled by undifferentiated Prakṛti – the manifested Godhead, uncreate, unborn, and eternal. Śabdabrahman is consciousness and intelligence, both cosmic and individual. It is the dual Śakti in unity, inseparately associated, though functioning in different ways. Vol. II p. 47-48

... the Verbum, the Śabdabrahman – the immense, all-pervasive, all-comprehensive, unbroken, undifferentiated Sound Spiritual. One aspect of Śabdabrahman is Nāda, and another aspect is Bindu. As Nāda She is the Mother, and as Bindu He is the father, of the universe. They are an inseparable twain, ever in association in cosmic evolution. Śabdabrahman is the God, the Lord, the Mother, the Word, the object of worship of all sentient beings. Vol. II p. 47

² “Ether”, the quality of which is sound, but, as hereafter explained, not the ether of the elements (mahābhūta).

³ Literally, “ether consciousness”.

From the Sound Spiritual proceed two lines of Evolution. The first line is by Saḍriṣa pariṇāma – that is, the resolution of like to like – and consist of three female Powers and their male Counterparts:

Raudri-Rudra	fire	Tamas	Power of Cognition
Jyeṣṭhā-Brahmā	Moon	Rajas	Power of Volition
Vāmā-Viṣṇu	Sun	Sattva	Power of Causation (action)

These three male and female Powers are the first triplication of the One Śabdabrahman, possessing within itself the three Powers ..., the three guṇas ...; and Its duplex Constitution. This line of creation is called Sound Creation (Śabdasṛṣṭi).

The second line of evolution is called Form-creation (Arthasṛṣṭi). It is subdivided into two. The first subdivision embraces the Lords, and the second the Tattvas.⁴ This are the Lords of our universe, having Paraśiva as their Overlord. There are seven cosmic centres (Lokas) of Power, over each one of which each of these Lords presides in association with ... His guiding Power [or Śakti].

<i>Loka</i>	<i>Male Power</i>	<i>Female Power</i>
Satyam	Paraśiva or Mahāviṣṇu	Ādyāśakti Mahākālī
Tapah	Śambhu	Siddhakālī
Janah	Sadaśiva (called Ardhanārīśvara)	Mahāgaury
Mahan	Īśa	Bhuvaneśvarī
Svah	Rudra	Bhadrakālī
Bhuvah	Viṣṇu	Rādhā
Bhūh	Brahmā	Sāvitrī

These seven centres are also seven planes of consciousness. Philosophy generalizes these seven planes of consciousness into three – viz., Jāgrat (waking), Svapna (dreaming), and Suṣupti (slumbering, or dreamless sleep). p. 50-51

... the seven Lokas are not states of existence, but worlds made up of different modifications of matter, and peopled by beings on different planes of consciousness. Vol. II p. 71

The play of guṇas.

He as Śiva is sweet of form with infinite Guṇas, notwithstanding that He is the immutable Being above Guṇas; the only Lord and Controller of the Tamas Guṇa, though that is of His substance; self-manifest and luminously white, like a silver mountain, though seated on the throne of (the dark) Tamas Guṇa; the Supreme Guru of spiritual knowledge, though His substance is of the Tamas Guṇa; found in great

⁴ The Tattva also called Buddhi.

cremation grounds, notwithstanding that He is the Lord of inconceivable wealth; an untraversable, calm, and solemn ocean, though He is the Mahārudra of the great dissolution; dependent on the bliss of his own Sādhana, notwithstanding that He is all joy itself; merciful and loving in appearance, in spite of being wrong-eyed; the guide in the path of worship of Himself, though He is the worshipped of the three worlds; the owner of half of the body of the Daughter of Mountain (Pārvati), even though He is the one eternal unity; the seeker of the company of Her who is His eternal companion notwithstanding that He is companionless; the destroyer of the passion of desire, though He eternally appears in the coupled form of husband and wife; the grantor unasked of eternal liberation to all Jivas in the city of Kāśī, despite his being the Dispenser of all fruits of action to the whole Universe; easily appeased, even though he is also formidable and wrathful; blue-throated, though he is also white; the Saviour of the three worlds through his drinking deadly poison, yet also their Destroyer; taking pleasure in adorning Himself with serpents, despite his being the Director, grey with ashes, to the path of everlasting dispassion; crested with the crescent moon, though His head is covered with matted hair; the carrier of trident and axe, though He grants blessing and dispels fear; prostrate under the feet of the Devī with dishevelled hair, notwithstanding that He is Himself the grantor of liberation to devotees; the Mahābhairava, who drinks the wine of joy, in spite of being perfect joy Himself; the crier of “Fear not”, though He is Himself a Bhairava; five-faced, in spite of being thousand-headed; three-eyed, even though He has eyes which turn towards all things in the Universe; clad in space, notwithstanding that He is Himself space; of infinite forms, though of eight forms; the Preceptor of knowledge, though knowledge itself; he who brings us liberation, and yet attainable through liberation; the Lord of Kailāsa and Kāśī, though He is the Lord of the world; the Lord of all creatures, though also the Master of the Spirit world; the Lord of creatures, though the destroyer of the bonds of the Paśu; He who upholds Gangā in His plaited hair, though fire is in the eye on His forehead; the Destroyer of Dakṣas’ sacrifice, though He is the Supreme Lord of all Yajñas; sorely grieved at sight of the play of the Devī’s death, though Himself above all delusion; the son-in-law of the King of Mountains, notwithstanding that He is beyond all relationship; the father of young Heramba (Gaṇeśa), though He is Himself Parabrahma; the Linga, which is the source of the origin of the entire Universe; the eternal cause of Yoganidrā, though attainable by Karma, Jñāna and Yoga; the sole saviour of the world of devotees, though also the Destroyer of the three worlds; the constant companion of devotees, and yet also attainable by Jñānīs, friend of the poor, and yet omnipresent; the Lord of the helpless, and yet also loving towards the whole Universe; the sole Lord of Tāntrik Mantras, though being the object of worship in all Mantras and Yantras; the eternal King of Kings on the throne of the devotee’s heart, notwithstanding that He is the one Īśvara (Lord) in the infinite world. Vol. II p. 301-303

Again, as Śakti She possesses infinite Guṇas, notwithstanding that She is the sum of all Śaktis above Guṇas; She is the establisher of concordance between mutually conflicting masses of Guṇas in the dualistic world, though Herself without a second; the dispeller of the devotee’s fears, yet revelling Herself in battle; the delight of the heart of Śiva, though also the Mother of the trinity of Devas; the beloved daughter of

the great Mountain (Himālaya), notwithstanding that She is the Brahman who is existence, consciousness and bliss; possessed of eternally fresh youth and the reach of speech and mind, though omnipresent in the three worlds; partial towards Dharma, though She is above all contraries; the Destroyer of the Daitya race (Enemies of Devas), despite Her being the Mother of the Universe; again, the Deliverer of the Dānava race (Sons of Danu, enemies of Devas), though also its destroyer; the Dweller in the sea of milk, yet moving in all the seven seas; the Dweller in the Isle of Gems, though also the Mistress of the seven Islands; the Dweller in the house of Chintāmani (the stone which grants all desires), and yet also above all name and form; attached to the Pārijāta forest, though She is equally at home as in the forest; seated under the Kalpa tree (Desire-gratifying tree), though being the eternal Kalpa creeper bearing the four-fold fruit of Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa; seated on a jewelled throne, though to Her both ashes and jewels are the same; lying on the lotus seat of Sadāśiva, the great Preta⁵, though She is the Śkati, the container of the infinite Universe; deeply black like black clouds, yet the giver of light to infinite millions of suns, moon, and others fires; blue like a mass of crushed collyrium, though full of light and self-manifest; dark of colour, and yet the Dispeller glowing with existence, consciousness and bliss of the inner darkness in the world of innumerable devotees; garlanded with fifty heads, whilst rejoicing in the sounds of fifty letters, and of the lute; the dweller in the Tripañcāra (A Yantra with three times five corners), despite the fact that She is above all Prapañcas (that which is made of the five elements); crested with a crescent moon, yet averse to display; learned in the merriments of Kāla (time), though the expert baffler of Kāla (death); the dweller in the great cremation grounds, notwithstanding that She is Mistress of the entire Universe; whose hair is ever dishevelled for the removal of the bonds which bind devotees, despite the fact that She is Herself the Author of the bonds of existence; the Conqueror of the right side by putting forth the right foot, in spite of Her assuming the form of a woman whose place is the left side; with fearful moving red eyes rolling with intoxication, and yet above all delusion; smiling sweetly, though having a terrible countenance; the giver of blessings and of assurance of safety, yet at the same time bearing a sword and a severed head; the most shameless of women, and yet Herself the author of the feeling of shame; clad in space, though pervading in infinite space; mad after the delights of Yoga, despite of Her being all delight Herself; the beloved of Mahākāla (Śiva, the great destroyer), though the Mother of all things both moving and unmoving. Vol. II p. 306-308

“All men in the Brahmāṇḍa are Thy image, and all women are My image.

O Mahādeva, practice this yoga day by day!”

(...) Though He is Himself the Creator of the world, He must worship the world before the Truth of Śakti can bloom in his heart. It is only when it has fully bloomed that the dualistic universe will disappear in the knowledge which draws no distinction between Śiva and Śakti. This disappearance of the Brahmāṇḍa will lead to the knowledge of the true substance of Brahmāyī. The Sādhaka will now understand how the truth as to Brahman may be reached through Its universe. Vol. I p. 171

⁵ Preta: literally is the spirit of a person before the obsequial rites. In this connection it is used in the sense of corpse – that is, Śiva is inert, and can do nothing without Her vivifying Śakti.)

Guru, bondage and liberation

The Yāmala Tantra says:

“There is only one Guru, who undoubtedly is Myself; Thou too, O Devī! and Mantra, too, is Guru. Therefore Guru, Devatā, and Mantra, are the same. He is always to be contemplated in the Thousand-petalled Lotus, sometimes in the Heart-Lotus, and sometimes as existing before the eyes – that is, in human form.”

In initiating and instructing a disciple, the human Guru undertakes a vicarious duty, the magnitude of which he should fully realize. He must fill himself with the Divine Presence, that his Śiṣya may be born to the spiritual life. He must also, impart to his disciple that sure knowledge which will lead him without error on the onward path of Sādhana. Henceforward the life of the disciple becomes a part of the Guru’s life. The Guru becomes responsible for the sins of his disciple. p. 73

The Kāmākhyā Tantra says:

“A Guru exists to impart Jñānas (different forms of knowledge). Jñāna leads one to Mokṣa (liberation). Hence Jñāna is the supreme good. Therefore the Guru who is incapable of imparting Jñāna should be abandoned, as one who is desirous of food abandons the person who has no food to give. One in whom Jñāna shines is Guru; he is Śiva.” p. 77

Unless one is ignorant, there is no necessity to take a Guru. p. 246

Knowledge of the human ego’s real condition arises first mediately from a proper study of the Śāstras, and then directly by self-illumination. But the study of the Śāstras as a mere intellectual exercise is fraught with mischief. Vol. II p. 66-67

“As the darkness of a house can never be dispelled by uttering the word “lamp”, even so is the word-meaning of Śāstra impotent to dispel the māyik darkness of the Ego. The study of Śāstra by people possessed of Prajñā – that is, the inner light – is as though a blind man opened his eyes to see. The Śāstra gives Divine knowledge (Tattvajñāna) to those who have Prajñā.” Kulārṇava Tantra

अज्ञातज्ञापत्रं हि शास्त्रं

“The object of Śāstra is to impart such knowledge as cannot be gained through the senses.” Vol. II p. 67

... of the perfected (siddha) Tāntrika kaula, who has passed through all preliminary ācāras, it is said: *“The wise man who through study of the Scriptures has realized the Truth discards them all as he who gathers paddy throws away the husk and straw.”*

Jñāna derived from the Āgamas leads to the Śabdabrahman. That which issues from viveka (discrimination) is the Parabrahman. There is no realization (tattvajñāna) with attachment to Vaidik and Āgamic rites, however much these may be necessary as the preliminary means to its attainment. Introduction Arthur Avalon Vol. I p. 82

It is only so long as Śakti is not fully communicated to the disciple's body from that of the Guru that there subsist the relation of Guru and disciple. One is disciple only so long as one is a Sādhaka. On attainment of Siddhi, this dualism is surpassed. Siddhi and liberation are existence as attributeless Brahman. p. 206

*As he who has been satisfied by a drink of nectar no longer cares for food,
so one who has known the Spirit has no longer need of the Śāstras. (18)*

*... liberation comes from knowledge alone; liberation cannot be had from
anything else, neither from a study of the Vedas nor from reading of the Śāstras.*

(...) Knowledge alone is the cause of liberation. Kulārṇava Tantra / p. 262

In fact, the mind alone causes man's bondage, as well as liberation. (11)

Vol. II p. 388 Yoginī Tantra 2nd part Chap. 8

"The Tattva of Śiva and Śakti is the cause of Tattvajñāna (Spiritual knowledge).

O Devī! Nirvāṇa can never be attained without knowledge of Śakti." Vol. II p. 451

When direct knowledge of the truth of Śakti is gained, the Sādhaka will perceive that the entire Samsāra is nothing but the wealth of the Śakti of Viśveśvarī (Mistress of the Universe). The dualistic world will then no longer appear to be inimical to Sādhana. On the contrary, this Samsāra will then be recognized to be a most spacious and sacred field full of materials of Sādhana. Vol. I p. 172

*"To know that there is no distinction between Iṣṭadevatā and Mantra,
between Mantra and Guru, and between Guru and Ātmā." Vol. II p. 270 Gandharva Tantra*

In the Guptasādhana Tantra it is said:

"Guru is Brahmā. Guru is Viṣṇu. Guru is Deva Maheśvara Himself.

Guru is the place of pilgrimage. Guru is the sacrifice. Guru is charity.

Guru is devotion and austerities. Guru is fire. Guru is Sūrya.

The entire Universe is Guru." p. 211