

**VIJÑĀNABHAIRAVA
OR
DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS**

JAIDEVA SINGH

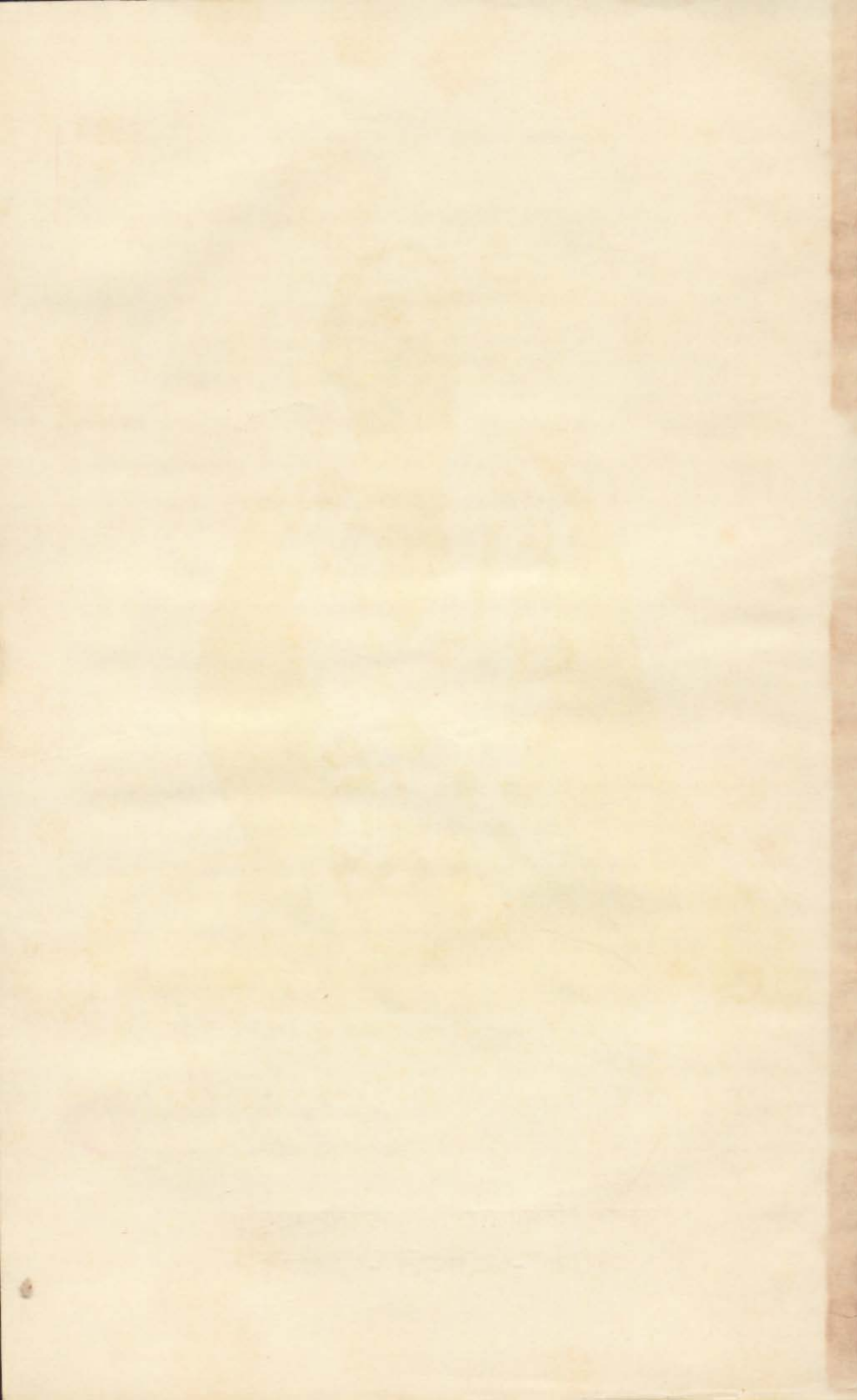


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Divine Consciousness

A Treasury of 112 types of Yoga



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*Sanskrit Text with English Translation, Expository
Notes, Introduction and Glossary of Technical Terms*

JAIDEVA SINGH

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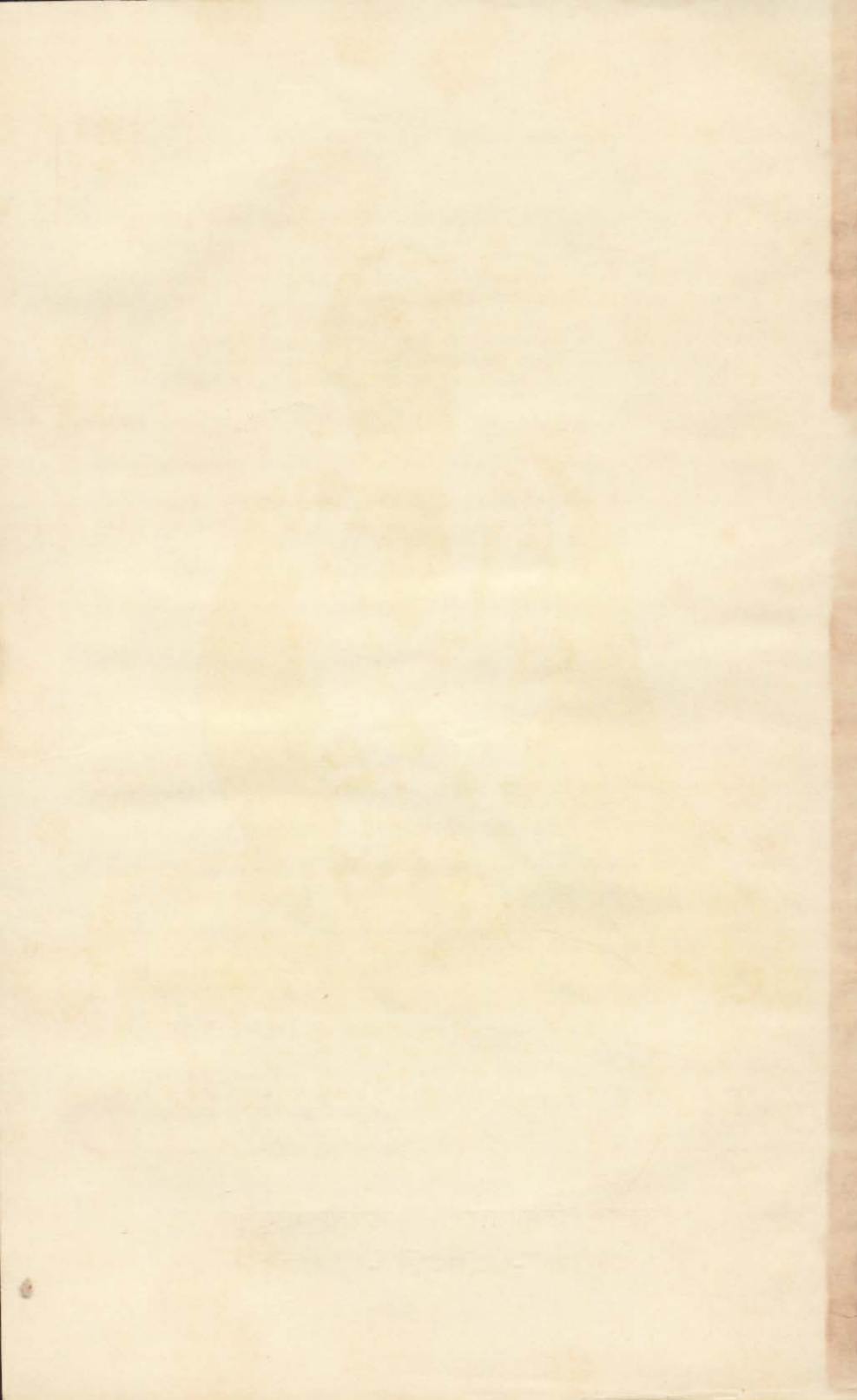
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DEDICATED

*With Profound Respects to
Svāmt Lakṣmaṇa Joo
Who unsealed my eyes.*



PREFACE

Vijñānabhairava is a very ancient book on *Yoga*. It closely follows the basic principles of Śaivāgama. It contains 112 types of *yoga*. There is hardly any other book on *yoga* which has described so many ways of approach to Central Reality that is present in each man as his essential Self. It is both extensive, and intensive in the treatment of the subject of *yoga*.

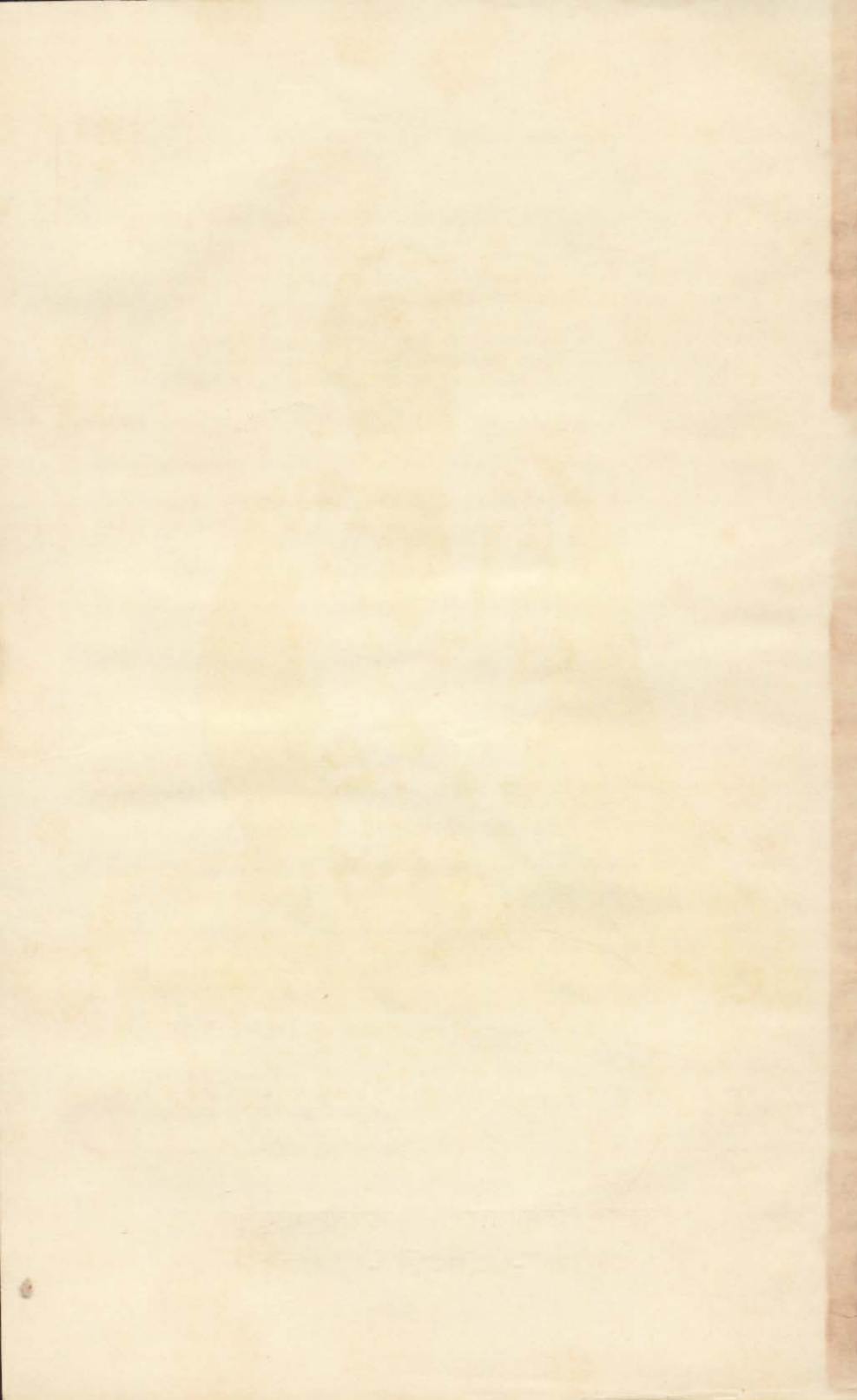
An English translation of this excellent work is being provided for the first time. The text that has been adopted is mainly the one that is published in the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies. At a few places, however, slightly different readings yielding better sense have been incorporated as suggested by Svāmī Lakṣmaṇa Joo.

Each verse of the Sanskrit text has been printed in both Devanāgarī and Roman script. This is followed by an English translation and a number of expository notes which will go a long way in elucidating the main idea of the verse.

A long Introduction explaining the basic principles of the *yogas* described in the text has been provided in the beginning. A glossary of technical terms has also been added at the end.

Since the *yogas* recommended in the book are based on the tenets of the non-dualistic Śaiva Philosophy, the reader will do well to read the author's Introductory Portion of either the Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam or the Śiva-sūtras before taking up the study of the present book.

I express my sincerest gratitude to Svāmī Lakṣmaṇa Joo who has kindly taught this book to me word by word. My thanks are also due to Shri Dinanath Ganj who has kindly helped me in the preparation of the index to important Sanskrit words and the alphabetical index to the verses.



INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF VIJÑĀNABHAIRAVA

There have been, in India, two main ways of approach to Reality or the Essential Nature of Self, viz., Vivekaja mārḡa and Yogaja mārḡa—the path of distinction or discrimination and the path of union or integration. Pātañjala yoga and Śāṅkara Vedānta have adopted the Vivekaja mārḡa by which the Puruṣa or Ātmā (the Self) is isolated from Prakṛti (in the case of Pātañjala Yoga) or from Māyā (in the case of Vedānta). The word Yoga does not mean union in Patañjali's system; it means *samādhi* or intense abstract meditation (as Vyāsa puts it in his commentary, 'yujī samādhau'). Śaivāgama has adopted the Yogaja mārḡa in which the goal is not isolation of the Self from Prakṛti or Māyā but the integration of the individual Self to the Universal Self or Bhairava and the realization of the universe as the expression of His Śakti or spiritual Energy. The ideal of Śaivāgama is not the rejection of the universe but its assimilation to its Source.

Vijñānabhairava is an excellent exposition of the *yogaja mārḡa*. Hence its importance. It has been referred to as Āgama,¹ Śivavijñānopaniṣad,² and Rudrayāmalaśāra³ by Abhinavagupta. Yogarāja has referred to it as Śaivopaniṣad.⁴ Kṣemarāja has referred to it at many places in his commentary on Śiva-sūtras.

It is clear that it has been acknowledged by the great exponents of Śaivāgama as a very authentic work on yoga.

THE TEXT

Vijñānabhairava has been published in the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies with an incomplete commentary of Kṣemarāja, and complete commentaries of Śivopādhyāya and Bhaṭṭa Ānanda.

In the above text, the following remark appears on page 16, after the 23rd verse, "ita uttaram Śri Śivopādhyāyakṛtā vivṛtiḥ"

1. I.P.V.V. I, p. 207.
2. I.P.V.V. II, p. 405.
3. I.P.V.V., p. 285.
4. *Vivṛti Paramārtha-śāra*.

i.e. "after this, the commentary is by Śivopādhyāya. "Even in the life-time of Śivopādhyāya, the full commentary of Kṣemarāja was not available. It is not known whether Kṣemarāja did not live to complete his commentary, or whether his commentary after the above verse has been lost. All that can be said is that it has not been so far traced."

Śivopādhyāya is greatly influenced by Śāṅkara Vedānta. So his commentary is not reliable. Bhaṭṭa Ānanda is even more avowedly a follower of Śāṅkara Vedānta. His commentary is, therefore, even far more removed from the original intention of the text. In the preparation of the present edition, these commentaries have not been translated.

THE DATE OF VIJÑĀNABHAIRAVA AND THE COMMENTARIES

Vijñānabhairava is a part of the ancient Tantras. It is held in high esteem in Śaivāgama. Abhinavagupta calls it Śiva-vijñāna-upaniṣad.

The text of Vijñānabhairava claims to be the quintessence of Rudrayāmala Tantra which means union of Rudra with His Śakti (Spiritual Energy). The authentic text of Rudrayāmala Tantra is not available. So it is not possible to say how far the text of Vijñānabhairava corresponds to that of Rudrayāmala Tantra.

Tantras contain descriptions of ritual practices, sacred formulae (*mantras*), mystical diagrams (*yantras*), gestures (*mudrās*), postures (*āsanas*), initiations (*dikṣā*), *yoga* or mystic practices. Vijñānabhairava is purely a manual of mystic practices in accordance with Śaivāgama.

In the present state of our knowledge, it is impossible to give the exact date of Vijñānabhairava. The earliest reference to it is found in Vāmananāth's Advayasampatti-vārttika. It is likely that Vāmananātha may be the same as Vāmana, the celebrated writer on Poetics who flourished during the reign of King Jayāpīda of Kashmir (779—813 A.D.) If that be so, then it can be easily said that Vijñānabhairava was very well known in the 8th century A.D. Perhaps, it may have been compiled a century earlier.

So far as the commentators are concerned, Kṣemarāja flourished in the 10th century A.D. In the colophon of his commentary, Bhaṭṭa Ānanda mentions the date of the completion of the commentary according to which he flourished in the 17th century A.D.

Śivopādhyāya says in the colophon of his commentary that it was finished during the reign of Sukhajivana. This means that he flourished in the 18th century A.D.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VIJÑĀNABHAIRAVA

Vijñānabhairava consists of two words, *vijñāna* and *bhairava*. We have first of all to understand the esoteric significance of Bhairava. Kṣemarāja in his *Udyota* commentary gives a description of the esoteric meaning of Bhairava. The sum and substance of it is that Bhairava is an acrostic word consisting of the letters, *bha*, *ra*, and *va*; *bha* indicates *bharaṇa* or maintenance of the universe; *ra* indicates *ravaṇa* or withdrawal of the universe; *va* indicates *vamaṇa* or projection i.e., manifestation of the universe. Thus Bhairava indicates all the three aspects of the Divine.

This has been clarified by Abhinavagupta in *Tantrāloka* III, verses 283—285 in which he describes the three aspects of the Divine as *sraṣṭā* (manifestor of the universe), *viśvarūpatā*, Bhairava in His cosmic essence in whose consciousness the entire universe differentiated in six ways (*ṣadadhvā*) is reflected, and Bhairava as *praśamā* in whose flame of *mahābodha* (universal consciousness), everything is dissolved.

While Bhairava has three aspects, He from the point of view of the mystic, is that Ultimate Reality in which *prakāśa* i.e. Light of Consciousness and *vimarśa* or Eternal Awareness of that Light are indistinguishably fused. In other words, Bhairava is parama Śiva in whom *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, *Śiva* and *Śakti*, *Bhairava* and *Bhairavī* are identical. Bhairava or Parama Śiva embraces in Himself transcendence and immanence, Śiva and Śakti. It is this Bhairava that is the goal of the seeker.

The *svarūpa* or essential nature of Bhairava is *vijñāna* or *bodha* or *mahābodha*, *cit* or *caitanya* the main characteristic of which is *svātantrya* or absolute freedom revealing itself in *icchā*, *jñāna*,

and *kriyā*. It is to this Vijñānabhairava that the seeker of spiritual life has to be integrated.

The entire manifestation consisting of subject and object is a mere reflection in this *vijñāna*. Just as a city in a mirror appears as something different from the mirror, though it is nothing different from the mirror, even so the universe though appearing different from *vijñāna* is nothing different from it.

In verses 2 to 6 of *Vijñānabhairava*, the *Devī* mentions certain well known statements about Bhairava and wants to know His *parāvasthā*—highest state or essential nature. Bhairava categorically rejects the various well known opinions about His highest state and pithily but with luminous clarity states in verses 14 and 15 what His essential nature consists in :

“Parāvasthā (the highest state) of Bhairava is free of all notions pertaining to direction (*dik*), time (*Kāla*), nor can that be particularized, by some definite space (*deśa*) or designation (*uddeśa*). In verity that can neither be indicated nor described in words. One can be aware of that only when one is completely free of all thought-constructs (*vikalpas*). One can have an experience of that bliss in his own inmost Self (when one is completely rid of the ego, and is established in *pūrṇāhantā* i.e. in the plenitude of the divine I—consciousness).

That state of Bhairava which is full of the bliss of non-difference from the entire world (*bharitākārā*) is alone *Bhairavī* or *Śakti* of Bhairava.”

That state is *Vijñāna*—a state of consciousness which is *nirvikalpa*, free of all thought-constructs. This Vijñānabhairava is the goal of man.

Parādevī or Bhairavī is only the *Śakti* (Power or energy) of Bhairava. Just as there is no difference between fire and its power of burning, even so there is no difference between Bhairava and Parādevī. Parādevī has been called *Saivī mukha* or means of approach to Śiva.

DHĀRAṆĀS OR YOGA PRACTICES

The *Devī* now enquires, “By what means can this highest state be realized ?” In reply to this, Bhairava describes 112 *dhāraṇās*.

In Patañjali, the word *dhāraṇā* is used in a somewhat limited sense viz; 'fixation of mind on a particular spot.' In Vijñānabhairava it is used in the wide sense of fixation or concentration of mind or *yoga*. The word *yoga* is used both in the sense of communion (with the Divine) and the means (*upāya*) for that communion. So 112 types of *yoga* or means of communion with Bhairava have been described in this text.

Unfortunately, no word has been profaned so much in modern times as *yoga*. Fire-walking, acid-swallowing, stopping the heart-beat, etc. pass for *yoga* when really speaking they have nothing to do with *yoga* as such. Even psychic powers are not *yoga*. *Yoga* is awareness, transformation of the human consciousness into divine consciousness.

Vijñānabhairava mentions 112 *dhāraṇās* or types of *yoga*. It is a book on *yoga*, not on philosophy, but its system of *yoga* can be better understood if one is acquainted with its metaphysical background. The reader would be well advised to go through the author's Introduction either in *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* or *Śiva-sūtras* in order to get an idea of the metaphysics on which the present *yoga* system is based.

The means of communion with Bhairava have been classified under four broad heads in *Śaivāgama*, viz., *anupāya*, *śāmbhava*, *śākta* and *āṇava*. These have been described in detail by the author in the Introduction to the *Śiva Sūtras*. In this book, in the notes under each *dhāraṇā* it has been indicated whether it is *āṇava* or *śākta* or *śāmbhava*. *Anupāya* literally means 'no means', 'without any means' which has, however, been interpreted by Jayaratha as *īṣat upāya* i.e. very little means. Just a casual hint by the *guru* or the spiritual director is enough for the advanced aspirant to enter the mystic state. Such a rare case is known as that of *anupāya*. *Āṇava*, *śākta* and *śāmbhava* are definite techniques. These are, however, not watertight compartments. The aspirant has to pass from the *āṇava* to *śākta* and finally from the *śākta* to the *śāmbhava* state.

Vijñānabhairava has utilized all the traditional techniques of *yoga*-postures, *mudrās* or gestures, development of *prāṇaśakti*, awakening of *kuṇḍalīnī*, *mantra japa* or recital of words of power or sacred formulae, *bhakti* (devotion) *jñāna* (realization through

understanding), meditation, *bhāvanā* (creative contemplation). It even uses certain techniques of very non-formal nature, e.g., looking vacantly at the dark night, high mountains, watching the condition of consciousness in a see-saw movement, the condition of consciousness before falling asleep, intently looking at a vase without partition, etc. It has recommended one hundred and twelve *dhāraṇās ad modum recipientis* (according to the mode of the recipients) keeping in view the fitness or competence of the aspirants so that any technique that may suit a particular aspirant may be adopted by him.

The ultimate goal recommended by the text is identification with Bhairava—undifferentiated universal consciousness which is the heart (*hṛdaya*), nectar (*amṛta*), Reality *par excellence* (*tattva* or *mahāsattā*) essence (*svarūpa*), Self (*ātman*), or void (*śūnyatā*) that is full. This involves the following processes:

(1) Perfect interiorization so that one is absorbed in the heart of the Supreme.

(2) Passing from *vikalpa* or the stage of differentiating, dichotomizing thought-construct to *nirvikalpa* stage of thought-free, non-relational awareness.

(3) Disappearance of the limited pseudo-I or ego which is only a product of *Prakṛti* and the emergence of the Real Universal I (*pūrṇāhantā*) which is divine.

(4) Dissolution of *citta* or the individual mind into *cit* or universal Consciousness.

This is the essence of *yoga* according to *Vijñānabhairava*.

IMPORTANT BASES OF THE DHĀRAṆĀS RECOMMENDED

The important bases of the *dhāraṇās* recommended in the text are the following:

1. *Prāṇa*:

Indian thought believes that between the body and the mind or between the material or physical energy and mental energy, there is *prāṇa* which is an intermediary link between the two. The word *prāṇa* has been variously translated as the vital force,

biological energy, bio-plasma, etc. It has been a moot point in western Philosophy and Psychology as to how mind which is psychic in nature affects the body which is physical or material in nature. According to Indian Philosophy, between the body and *manas* or mind, there is *prāṇa* which serves as a link between the two. *Prāṇa* is not mind; it is insentient, but it is not like gross physical energy. It is subtle biological energy which catches the vibrations of the mind and transmits them to the nerves and plexuses and also physical vibrations to the mind. By controlling the mind one can control the *prāṇa*, and by controlling the *prāṇa*, one can control the mind.

According to Śaivāgama, *prāṇa* is not something alien to *saṁvit* or consciousness, but the first evolute of *saṁvit* (consciousness) *Prāk saṁvit prāṇe pariṇatā*. In the process of creation *saṁvit* or consciousness is at first transformed into *prāṇa*. So *prāṇa* is a phase of consciousness itself.

The word *prāṇa* is used both in the general sense of *prāṇanā* or *prāṇa-śakti* or life-principle or life-force and in the specific sense of various biological functions. This life-force expresses itself in breath. *Prāṇa* or the life-force cannot be contacted directly. It is only through breath that *prāṇa* or life-force can be influenced. So the word *prāṇa* is generally used for breath also though sometimes the word *vāyu* (as *prāṇa-vāyu*) is added to it. In this context the word *prāṇa* is used for the breath that is exhaled, and *apāna* is used for the breath that is inhaled. The word *prāṇa* is thus used in three senses—(1) in a general sense of *prāṇa-śakti* or life-force, (2) in a specific sense according to the various biological functions, and (3) in the sense of breath.

The breath is associated with inhalation and exhalation. The very first *dhāraṇā* (described in verse 24) utilizes the two poles of respiration, viz. 1 *dvādaśānta*—a distance of twelve fingers from the nose in the outer space where *prāṇa* or exhalation ends and *hṛt* or the centre inside the body where *apāna* or inhalation ends. One has to concentrate on these two points. After some practice, he will realize the state of Bhairava.

Similarly, verses 2,3,4,5,6,7 etc. describe how *prāṇa* can be utilized in various ways for realizing the nature of Bhairava.

Several *dhāraṇās* utilize the awakening of *prāṇa-śakti* in the *suṣumnā* for the realization of spiritual perfection. It is by the efflorescence of *prāṇaśakti* in the *suṣumnā* or the medial channel of *prāṇa* in the interior of the spinal column that *kuṇḍalini* awakens when one has the experience of the union of the individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. Verses 35, 38, 39 etc. refer to such *dhāraṇās*. Notes on these verses should be carefully read.

Uccāra is the natural characteristic of *prāṇa*. *Uccāra* means expression in the form of *nāda* or sound-subtle, inarticulate, or unmanifest and moving upward. The unmanifest, inarticulate sound or *nāda* is known as *varṇa*. Abhinavagupta says:

उक्तो य एष उच्चारस्तत्र योऽसौ स्फुरन् स्थितः ।
अव्यक्तानुकृतिप्रोयो ह्वनिर्वर्णः स कथ्यते ॥

(Tantrāloka V, 131)

“From the *uccāra* of the general *prāṇa*, there vibrates an imperceptible, inarticulate sound which is known as *varṇa*.”

Svacchanda Tantra says:

नास्योच्चारयिता कश्चित्प्रतिहन्ता न विद्यते ।
स्वयमुच्चरते देवः प्राणिनामुरसि स्थितः ॥ (VII, 50)

“There is none who sounds it voluntarily, nor can any one prevent its being sounded. The deity abiding in the heart of living creatures sounds it himself.

Abhinavagupta gives the following description of this *nāda*:

एको नादात्मको वर्णः सर्ववर्णाविभागवान् ।
सोऽनस्तमितरूपत्वाद्नाहत इहोदितः ॥”

(Tantrāloka VI, 217)

“There is one *varṇa* in the form of *nāda* (sound vibration) in which lie all the *varṇas* (letters) latently in an undivided form. As it is ceaseless, it is called *anāhata* i.e. unstruck, natural, spontaneous, uncaused. As all the *varṇas* (letters) originate from this *nāda*, therefore, is it called *varṇa* proleptically. Vide verse 38 of the text.

How are we to know about this inarticulate sound ? In the following verse, Abhinavagupta throws a hint as to how we can form an idea of it.

सृष्टिसंहारबीजं च तस्य मुख्यं वपुर्विदुः ॥

(Tantrāloka V. 132)

“The *śṛṣṭi bija* and *saṃhāra bija* are its main forms”. In the words of Jayaratha main forms mean *pradhānam abhivyakti-sthānam* i.e. the *śṛṣṭi bija* and *saṃhāra bija* are the main spots of its revelation. *sa* is the *śṛṣṭi bija* or the mystic letter denoting expiration and *ha* is the *saṃhāra bija* or the mystic letter denoting inspiration.

In verses 155 and 156 of Vijñānabhairava is given the process by which this *nāda* expresses itself in the breath of every living creature. “The breath is exhaled with the sound *sa* and then inhaled with the sound *ha*. Thus the empirical individual always recites this *mantra haṃsaḥ* (verse 155). Throughout the day and night he (the empirical individual recites this *mantra* 21,600 times. Such a *japa* (recitation) of the goddess is mentioned which is quite easy to accomplish; it is only difficult for the ignorant.” (verse 156).

This *haṃsaḥ mantra* is repeated by every individual automatically in every round of expiration-inspiration. Since the repetition is automatic, it is known as *ajapā japa* i.e. a repetition of the *mantra* that goes on spontaneously without anybody’s effort. This *haṃsaḥ* (I am He i.e. I am Śiva or the Divine) is the *ādi prāṇa* i.e. initial *prāṇa* which is the first evolute or transformation of consciousness.

There are two ways in which this *prāṇic mantra* can be utilized for the awakening or rise of *Kuṇḍalinī*. One is *anusandhāna* or prolonged mental awareness of this automatic process which has been referred to above. Another way is conscious *japa* or recitation or repetition of this *mantra* as *so’ham* or simply *aum* (ॐ). This requires a further elucidation.

In the descending arc of the creative activity from consciousness to inconscient matter or in other words from the conscious creative pulsation of the Divine *Śakti* known as *parāvāk* or *vimarśa* at the highest level down to *vaikhari* or gross speech at the level of the living being, there is a movement downward from the centre of Reality to the periphery in the successive form of *parāvāṇī*, (the spiritual logos in which the creative

process is in the form of *nāda*), *paśyanti* (*vāk-śakti*, going forth as seeing, ready to create in which there is no difference between *vācya* (object) and *vācaka* (word), *madhyamā* (*śabda*) in its subtle form as existing in the *antaḥkaraṇa* prior to its gross manifestation), *vaikhari* (as gross, physical speech). This is the process of *śrṣṭi* or the outward movement or the descending arc. In ordinary *japa* (muttering of *mantra* or sacred formula), the process is just the reverse. In this the sound moves from *vaikhari* through *madhyamā* towards *paśyanti* and *parāvāṇi*.

Ordinarily, *japa* starts in *vaikhari* form (vocal muttering). It depends entirely on the will and activity of the person who does the *japa*. After constant practice of *japa* for some years, an extraordinary thing happens. A time comes when the *japa* does not depend on the will and activity of the reciter any longer. It now goes on automatically inwardly without any effort on the part of the reciter. It becomes an *ajapājapa*. When this proceeds for a long time, the *prāṇa* and *apāna* currents that normally move in a curvilinear way on the *iḍā* and *piṅgalā* channels become equilibrated; the *kuṇḍalini* now awakens; the equilibrated current now flows upward in the *suṣumnā* i.e. in the interior of the spinal column. This upward movement is known as *uccaraṇa*. *Prāṇa* and *manas* are so closely associated that *manas* also acquires upward orientation along with it.

As the *kuṇḍalini* rises, there is the experience of *anāhata nāda*-automatic, unstruck sound. The *kuṇḍalini* passing through the various *cakras* finally joins the *Brahmarandhra*, and then *nāda* ceases; it is then converted into *jyoti* (light).

2. Japa :

This has already been described in connexion with the *sāadhanā* or spiritual praxis of *prāṇa* above. The praxis of *japa* has been mentioned in verses 90, 145, 155, 156, etc. *Praṇava japa* leading to the development of the various *śaktis* or manifestation of spiritual stages is recommended in verse 42. This is explained under a separate head.

3. Bhāvanā :

In Tantrasāra, Abhinavagupta gives an excellent exposition of *bhāvanā*. Man's mind manifests itself in all kinds of *vikalpas*

or thought — constructs. *Vikalpa* is the very nature of mind. If that is so, the aspirant should mentally seize one *śuddha* or pure *vikalpa*, viz. of the highest I-consciousness, of the real Self as being *Śiva*. He has to practise the *bhāvanā* of this pure *vikalpa*. *Bhāvanā* is creative contemplation. Imagination plays a very large part in it. One has to imagine oneself with all the faith and fervour at his command that he is *Śiva*. This *śuddha vikalpa* eliminates all other *vikalpas*, or thoughts and a time comes when the *śuddha vikalpa* also ceases. Then the empirical, psychological self is dissolved, and one is landed in one's real, metempirical, metaphysical Self.

Abhinavagupta traces the following steps to *Bhāvanā*. A *sadguru* or Self-realized spiritual director initiates the aspirant into the mysteries of the *āgama*, into the irrefutable conviction of the essential Self being *Śiva*. The second step consists in *sat-tarka*. *Sat-tarka* in this context does not mean logic-chopping, but training the mind in harmonious consonance with the truth of the essential Self being *Śiva*. This culminates in *Bhāvanā*. *Bhāvanā* is the power of spiritual attention, a total dedication of the mind to one central thought, a nostalgia of the soul, a spiritual thrust towards the source of one's being.

Bhāvanā is finally metamorphosed into *śuddha vidyā* whereby the psychological I is swallowed up into the essential metaphysical I. Verse 49 lays down the *bhāvanā* of the essential Self. In a few other verses also, the verb form of *bhāvanā*, e.g. *bhāvayet*, *bhāvyaḥ*, etc. has been used. The *bhāvanā* of *laya* or dissolution of the various *tattvas* in a regressive order, of the gross into the subtle, of the subtle into the subtler, of the subtler into the subtlest, etc. is recommended in verse 54.

4. *Śūnya* (void) :

Contemplation of *śūnya* or void is another basis of *dhāraṇā* recommended. Verses 39, 40, 45, 58, 122, etc. refer to the contemplation of the void. Contemplation over *śūnya* or the void is explained in some detail under a separate heading.

5. *Experience of Vastness or Extensive Space* :

Experience of a vast, extensive space without any trees, etc. has no definite, concrete object as *ālambanā* or support for the

mind. In such a condition, the *vikalpas* or thought-constructs of the mind come to a dead stop, and supersensuous Reality makes its presence felt. Verse 60 of the text describes this state.

6. *Intensity of Experience:*

Even in the intensity of sensuous experience, one can have the experience of the Divine, provided one is careful to track the joy felt on such occasions to its source. The text gives several examples of the intensity of experience.

The first one is of the joy felt in sexual intercourse mentioned in the verses 69-70. It should be borne in mind that this example is given only to illustrate the intensity of experience in union. From physical union, one's attention has to be directed to spiritual union. This does not advocate sexual indulgence. The notes on these verses should be carefully read. The mystic experience of Tao in Chinese esotericism is described in a similar strain. The following lines will amply bear it out. "Thou knowest not what is love, nor what it is to love. I will tell thee; love is nothing other than the Rhythm of Tao.

I have said it to thee, it is from Tao that thou comest; it is to Tao that thou shalt return. Woman reveals herself to thy eyes and thou thinkest that she is the end towards which the Rhythm leads thee, but even when this woman is thine and thou hast thrilled with her touch, thou feelest still the Rhythm within thee unappeased and thou learnst that to appease it thou must go beyond. Call it love if thou wilt; what matters a name? I call it Tao.

The beauty of woman is only a vague reflection of the formless beauty of Tao. The emotion she awakens in thee, the desire to blot thyself out in her beauty...believe me, it is nothing else than the rhythm of Tao, only thou knowest it not.... Seek not thy happiness in a woman. She is the revelation of Tao offering itself to thee, she is the purest form in Nature by which Tao manifests; she is the Force which awakens in thee the Rhythm of Tao—but by herself she is only a poor creature like thyself. And thou art for her the same revelation as she is for thee. It is the expression of Tao who has no limit nor form, and what thy soul desires in the rapture which the vision of it causes thee,

this strange and ineffable sentiment, is nought else than union with that Beauty and with the source of that Beauty—with Tao.

Thy soul has lost its beloved Tao with whom it was formerly united and it desires reunion with the Beloved. An absolute reunion with Tao—is it not boundless Love ? To be so absolutely one with the Beloved that thou art entirely hers and she entirely thine—a union so complete and so eternal that neither life nor death can ever separate thee, so peaceful and pure that Desire can no longer awake in thee, because the supreme happiness is attained and there is only peace, peace sacred calm and luminous. For Tao is the Infinite of the soul, one, eternal and all-pure.”

(Quoted in Mother India of January, 1979 from Arya, June, 1915).

Sex is an example of the joy of intensive experience derived from *sparsā* or contact.

Verse 71 which describes the intensive experience of joy at the sight of a friend or relative is an example of the pleasure of *rūpa* or visual perception. Verse 72 gives an example of the joy of *rasa* or taste and verse 73 gives an example of the joy of *śabda* or sound.

7. *Mudrās and Āsanas* :

Various *mudrās* are recommended as helpful in *dhāraṇās*. *Mudrā* is a technical term meaning a particular disposition and control of the organs of the body as a help in concentration. Various *mudrās* for this purpose are described in verse 77.

Āsana means posture. Several *āsanas* are helpful in *dhāraṇā*. Such examples are given in verses 78, 79 and 82.

The following concepts have to be clearly grasped in order to be able to understand the *dhāraṇās* recommended in Vijnāna-bhairava.

Kṣobha :

The word *Kṣobha* means mental agitation, disquiet, turmoil, Verse 74 says that wherever there is *tuṣṭi* or mental satisfaction or joy, there the mind should be fixed. In all such joys or intensive experience, it is implied that the fixation of the mind should be without *kṣobha* or mental agitation. When one is deeply

moved by some beautiful object e.g. a beautiful woman, the attitude should be "This beautiful tabernacle houses Śiva who is my own essential Self." It is this attitude which leads to the right *dhāraṇā* based on aesthetic experience. If one's mind is agitated by such experience and he is carried away by sense-pleasure, he cannot have the proper *dhāraṇā*. He will be unable to utilize that experience for yogic purposes. As Spandakārikā puts it : "यदा शोभः प्रलीयेत तदा स्यात् परमं पदम्" (I, 9)

"When the mental turmoil disappears, it is only then that the highest state is attained."

This mental turmoil is caused because of our identification of our Self with the mind-body complex and its claimant and clamorous desires.— When one is convinced that the mind-body complex is not the Self, but rather the Divine presence within the mind-body complex is the Self who is Śiva, then every attractive object is considered to be only the expression of Śiva Himself, then the mental turmoil ceases and the mind is fixed on Śiva whose expression that object happens to be.

Vikalpa :

A *vikalpa* is a thought-construct. *Vikalpas* are various mental counters through which man carries on the business of life. *Vikalpas* may refer to various things of the external world like tree, flower, river, etc. or various images, fancies, etc. of the mind. In *vikalpa* mind sets a limit to one particular thing or idea, and differentiates it from the rest; mind constructs a 'particular' by means of thought which it marks off from the rest of the world, or from other ideas. Each *vikalpa* has two aspects; the positive aspect consists of the idea that is selected, and the negative consists of the rest that are set aside or rejected. *Vikalpas* are concerned with particulars. Secondly, *vikalpas* are relational i.e. there is always a subject-object relationship in *vikalpas*. Reality is non-relational, there is no object outside Reality. Therefore *vikalpas* are unable to grasp Reality.

There is, however, one *śuddha* or pure *vikalpa*, viz., the 'thought that I am Śiva'. By the *bhāvanā* or creative contemplation of this

vikalpa, all other *vikalpas* are eliminated. Finally this *vikalpa* also disappears and one is landed in a *nirvikalpa* or thought free state which denotes the awareness of Reality.

MADHYAVIKĀSA (THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MIDDLE STATE) :

When the *prāṇa* or exhalation arising from the centre of the body does not return from the *dvāśānta* (a distance of 12 fingers in the outer space) for a split second and the *apāna* or inhalation arising from the *dvāśānta* does not return from the centre for a split second, this is known as *madhyadaśā*. By intensive awareness of this *madhyadaśā*, there is *madhya vikāsa* or the development of the middle state.

The *madhya vikāsa* can occur through several means, either by one-pointed awareness of the pauses of *prāṇa* and *apāna* (vide verse 25) or by means of the dissolution of all *vikalpas* (vide verse 26) or by retention of *prāṇa* and *apāna* (vide verse 27) or by *vikalpa-kṣaya*, *Śakti-saṅkoca* and *śakti-vikāsa*, etc. as recommended in the 18th *Sūtra* of *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* or in the gap between two thoughts when one thought ceases and another is about to arise as recommended in *Spandakārikā*. (III, 9).

Sūtra 17 of *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* says: "मध्यविकासान्निदानन्दलाभः" which means "By the development of the *madhya* (middle or centre) is there acquisition of the bliss of *Cit* "

What is this *madhya* (middle or centre)? *Kṣemarāja* explains it in the following way in his commentary on the above *sūtra*.

"*Samvit* or the Universal Consciousness is the centre of every thing, for everything depends on it for its existence. In the empirical order *samvit* is at first transformed into *prāṇa*. Assuming the role of *prāṇaśakti*, resting in the planes of *buddhi*, body etc. it abides principally in the *madhya nāḍī*, in the innermost central channel of *prāṇa* in the spinal column. When the *prāṇaśakti* in the central channel develops or when the central Universal consciousness develops in any other way, one acquires the bliss of universal consciousness and becomes liberated while living."

So *madhya-vikāsa* means the development of the met-empirical or universal consciousness. In such a state *citta* or the

individual empirical consciousness is transformed into *citi* or the the met-empirical consciousness.

ŚŪNYA :

The word *śūnya* means void, a state in which no object is experienced. It has, however, been used in various senses in this system.

Madhyadhāma or the central channel in the interior of the spinal column has generally been called *śūnya* or sometimes even *śūnyātiśūnya* (absolute void). The word *śūnya* occurring in the verse No. 42 of Vijñānabhairava has been interpreted as *unmanā* by Śivopādhyāya. In verse 61 *madhya* has been interpreted as *śūnya* by Śivopādhyāya. Kṣemarāja has interpreted *śūnya* as *māyā* and *śūnyātiśūnya* as *mahāmāyā* in his commentary on VII, 57 in Svacchanda Tantra. At some places, Śiva is said to be *śūnya* or *śūnyāti-śūnya*.

The main philosophical sense of *śūnya*, however, is given in the following verse quoted by Śivopādhyāya in his commentary on verse 127 of Vijñānabhairava :

“सर्वालम्बनधर्मेश्च सर्वतत्त्वैरशेषतः ।
सर्वक्लेशाशयैः शून्यं न शून्यं परमार्थतः” ॥

That which is free of all supports whether external existents like jar or flower or internal existents like pleasure, pain or thought, that which is free of all *tattvas* or constitutive principles, of the residual traces of all *kleśas*, that is *śūnya*. In the highest sense, it is not *śūnya* as such (i.e. as non-existence)”. *Avidyā*, *asmitā*, *rāga*, *dveṣa*, and *abhiniveśa* i.e. primal ignorance, the feeling of I-ness, attraction, repulsion and fear of death are considered to be *kleśas*.

Śivopādhyāya has further given a long quotation from *Vimarśa-dīpikā* which means that Śiva is full and free and fundamental ground of all that is known as void, from whom all the *tattvas* arise and in whom they are all dissolved. Since *Śiva* or the foundational consciousness cannot be described in words or any determination of thought, therefore, is He called *śūnya*.

The most explicit explanation of *śūnya* is given in Svachchanda Tantra in the following verse :

“अशून्यं शून्यमित्युक्तं शून्यं चाभाव उच्यते ।
 अभावः स समुद्दिष्टो यत्र भावाः क्षयं गताः ।
 सत्तामात्रं परं शान्तं तत्पदं किमपि स्थितम्” ॥

(IV. 292—293)

“That which is said to be *śūnya* (void) in this system is not really *śūnya*, for *śūnya* only means absence of objects. That is said to be *abhāva* or absence of existents in which all objective existents have disappeared. It is the absolute Being, that state which abides as transcendent and absolute peace.”

Kṣemarāja in his commentary on the above explains *aśūnya* or non-void as *cidānandaghana—parama—śivatattvam* i.e. *parama Śiva* (absolute Divine Reality) who is a mass of consciousness and bliss, *mahāsattā* as *prakāśātmaiva hi sarveṣām bhāvābhāvānām sattā* i. e. the Light of Universal Consciousness, the Reality which is the source of both existents and non-existents and *abhāva* as *na vidyate bhāvaḥ sarvaḥ prameyādi prapañco yatra* i. e. that in which the manifestation of all objective phenomena ceases. The core of the meaning of the word *śūnya* is that in which there is no objective existent.

ŚŪNYA—ṢAṬKA (THE GROUP OF SIX ŚŪNYAS) :

Svacchanda Tantra recommends contemplation over six voids (IV 288—290). The first *śūnya* which is known as *ūrdhva śūnya* or higher *śūnya* is the stage of *śakti*; the second is the *adhāḥ* or the *śūnya* which is the region of the heart; the third is the *madhya* or the middle *śūnya* which is the region of throat, palate, middle of the eye-brows, forehead and *brahmarandhra*. The fourth *śūnya* is in *vyāpini*, the fifth in *samanā* and the sixth in *unmanā*. These have to be contemplated as void and rejected. Finally the aspirant has to pass over to *Parama Śiva* who is the subtlest and the highest void, free of all conditions (*sarvāvasthā-vivarjitam*), who is *śūnya* only in the sense that he is transcendent to all manifestation and defies all characterization by the mind. The other voids are *sāmaya* i.e. meant to be abandoned. It is only in the highest *śūnya* i.e. *parama śiva* that the mind should finally rest. The other *śūnyas* are means for the

attainment of the highest *śūnya* (*paraśūnya-pada-prāpti-upāyabhūtāḥ*).

Vyāpini, *samanā*, etc. are explained under *praṇava* and its *śaktis*.

PRAṆAVA AND ITS ŚAKTIS :

The word *praṇava* is interpreted in various ways—(1) *praṇūyate*—the Supreme Self that is lauded by all, (2) *prāṇān avati*—that which protects the vital forces, (3) *prakarṣeṇa navtkaroti*—that which renovates every thing, renews the soul as it were. There are various kinds of *praṇava*—*śākta praṇava*, *śaiva praṇava* and Vedic *praṇava*. It is used as *mantra* which means a sacred formula which protects one by reflection (*maṇanāt trāyate iti mantraḥ*).

The Vedic *praṇava* is *aum* which is repeated as a powerful *mantra*. Svachanda Tantra describes in detail the various *śaktis* or energies of *aum*. It tells us how by the recitation of *aum*, there is the upward functioning of *prāṇa* (the life force) and ascension of *Kuṇḍalini*.

In *Sāivāgama*, it is maintained that universal consciousness (*sarṁvid*), in the process of manifestation, is at first transformed into *prāṇa* or life force and that is how life starts. On the arc of ascent, by the proper recitation of *aum*, *prāṇa* again becomes pure consciousness (*sarṁvid*) while the empirical consciousness (*citta*) returns to its essence, the absolute consciousness (*citi*).

Dhāraṇā No. 19 described succinctly in verse 42 and touched upon briefly in verses 154-156 of Vijñānabhairava tells us how the *uccāra* or upward movement of *praṇava*, from gross utterance, to subtle vibration (*spandana*) and finally to mental reflection, leads us on to Śiva-consciousness. A detailed description of this *dhāraṇā* is given below :

By a long practice of true and concentrated *uccāra* of *aum* the energy of breath is introverted in the form of *madhya śakti* or middle energy known as *hamsa* or *kuṇḍalini* which rises in eleven successive movements without the least effort of the will. These movements are given below :

1 to 3 : The first three movements consist in the recitation of

a, u, m—'A' is to be contemplated in the navel, 'u' in the heart, 'm' in the mouth.

A, u, and m are recited in the gross form. The time taken in the recitation of each of these is one *mātrā* or mora.

4. After this appears *bindu* which is nasal resonance indicated by a point in ॐ and which symbolises concentrated energy of the word. The phonemes rest in it in an undivided form. It is a point of intense light. Since there cannot be any gross utterance of the *mantra* after *auṃ*, the *bindu* becomes from this stage an activity which operates by itself. Henceforward, there is no utterance but only the rise of the *prāṇic* energy in a subtle form of vibration (*spandana*) which becomes subtler and subtler as it proceeds onwards. The energy of the *bindu* appears as a point of light in the middle of the eye-brows. The subtlety of the *prāṇic* energy in *bindu* measured in terms of time would be $\frac{1}{2}$ of a *mātrā* or mora. The time occupied in uttering a short vowel is called a *mātrā*. Kṣemarāja in his commentary on the fifth verse of Vijñānabhairava says that *bindu* is a point of light which is identified in an undivided form with all objective phenomena.

5. Now *bindu* is transformed into *nāda* (subtle, inarticulate sound), and the predominance of objectivity inherent in it gradually disappears. It then assumes the form of *ardhacandra* (half-moon) and appears in *lalāṭa* or the forehead. The subtlety of its vibration consists in $\frac{1}{4}$ of a *mātrā* or mora.

6. After this, when objectivity inherent in *bindu* completely disappears, the energy assumes the form of a straight line and appears in the upper part of the forehead. The subtlety of its vibration consists in $\frac{1}{8}$ of a *mātrā*. It is known as *nirodhikā* or *nirodhīni* (lit., that which obstructs). It is so-called, because it prevents the undeserving aspirants from entering the next stage of *nāda* and the deserving ones from slipping into dualism.

7. *Nāda*. It is a mystical resonance and extends from the summit of the head and expands through the *sūṣumnā* i.e. the central channel. It is *anāhata* i.e. spontaneous sound, not produced by percussion and is inarticulate. It never sets i.e. it always goes on sounding in all living creatures.

The subtlety of its vibration consists in $\frac{1}{16}$ of a *mātrā*.

8. *Nādānta*—This is an aspect of energy beyond *nāda*. It is extremely subtle and resides in *brahmarandhra* which is a little above the top of the head. The subtlety of its vibration consists in $1/32$ of a *mātrā*.

After the experience of this station, the sense of identification of the Self with the body disappears.

9. Śakti or Energy in itself. There is a feeling of *ānanda* or bliss in this stage. Its *mātrā* is $1/64$. Śakti is said to reside in the skin.

10. The next stage is that of *vyāpini* or *vyāpikā*. It is all-penetrating energy and fills the cosmos. Kṣemarāja says that in this the limits of the body are dropped and the *yogi* enjoys the experience of all pervasiveness like the sky. It is said it is experienced at the root of the *śikhā* or tuft of hair on the head. Its *mātrā* is $1/128$.

11. *Samanā*—When the *vyāpini* stage is reached, all spatial and temporal limitations have been overcome, and all objectivity has disappeared. Then the stage of *samanā* is reached which is only *bodha* or the energy of illumination which is, as Kṣemarāja puts it, only an activity of thinking without any object of thought. (*mananamātrātmaka—karaṇarūpa-bodhamātrāvaśeṣe samanā* com. on V. 5 of V.B.) *Samanā* resides in the *śikhā* or tuft of hair on the head. Its *mātrā* is $1/256$. It is through this *śakti* that Śiva carries on the five acts of manifestation, maintenance and withdrawal of the universe and veiling of Self and revealing of Self through grace.

If the *yogī* who has reached the stage of *samanā* directs his attention towards the universe, he acquires the supernormal powers of omnipresence, omniscience, etc., but if he is indifferent towards these powers, and directs his attention to still higher realm of existence, he reaches *unmanā śakti* and is then united with *parama Śiva*—Absolute Reality.

The *yogī* who rests contented in *samanā śakti* has only *ātma-vyāpti* which is explained by Kṣemarāja as *śuddhavijñānakevalatā* i.e. the isolation of pure consciousness. (Svacchanda Tantra p. 246). He cannot attain *Śivavyāpti* which is the state of identification with *parama-Śiva*.

13. *Unmanā*. The stage above *samanā* is *unmanā*. It is the ultimate energy beyond all mental process. Kṣemarāja explains

it thus—*unmanam-utkrāntam-utkarṣam ca manaḥ prāptam yatra tadunmanam* i.e. 'unmanā is that state in which *manas* or mental process is transcended and it reaches its highest excellence. *Unmanā* is the highest *śūnya* (void), not *śūnya* in the popular sense, but in the sense of the disappearance of all objectivity. It is *Sattāmātram* which, as Kṣemarāja explains, is the Light of Universal Consciousness which is the fount and source of every thing.

According to some it is to be contemplated in the last part of the tuft of hair on the head, and its *mātrā* is 1/512. According to Svachchanda Tantra, however, it is *amātra*, without any measure, for being outside the province of *manas* (mentation), it is beyond time.

As has been said above, the *yogī* whose consciousness rises only upto *samanā* has *ātmavyāpti* only i.e. he has an experience of the pure Self completely freed of limitations of *māyā* and *prakṛti*. But this is not the highest goal of man according to Śaivāgama. According to it, the highest goal is *Śiva-vyāpti* or *Śivatva-yojanā*—identification with *Śiva* who is all-inclusive. It is only by rising to the stage of *unmanā* that one can be identified with the *svātantrya-śakti* (absolute freedom) of *parama Śiva*.

Manas (mental process) is characterized by *saṁkalpa*—determinate thought and purpose, and the knowledge obtained by *saṁkalpa* is in a successive order being in time whereas *unmanā* which is above thought-process and is identified with *svātantrya-śakti* knows all things simultaneously (*manaḥ kramato jñānam, unmanam yugapat sthitam, vindate hyatra yugapat sarvajnādi-guṇān parān*. Svacc. Tantra V. 394-395).

CONCLUSION :

Vijñānabhairava gives the quintessence of all the *dhāraṇās* in the following verse :

“भानसं चेतना शक्तिरात्मा चेति चतुष्टयम् ।
यदा प्रिये परिक्षीणं तदा तद् भैरवं वपुः ॥” (838)

Citi, the dynamic universal consciousness in its descent towards manifestation assumes four forms for appearing as a limited individual viz; (1) *Cetanā* which, as Sivopādhyāya

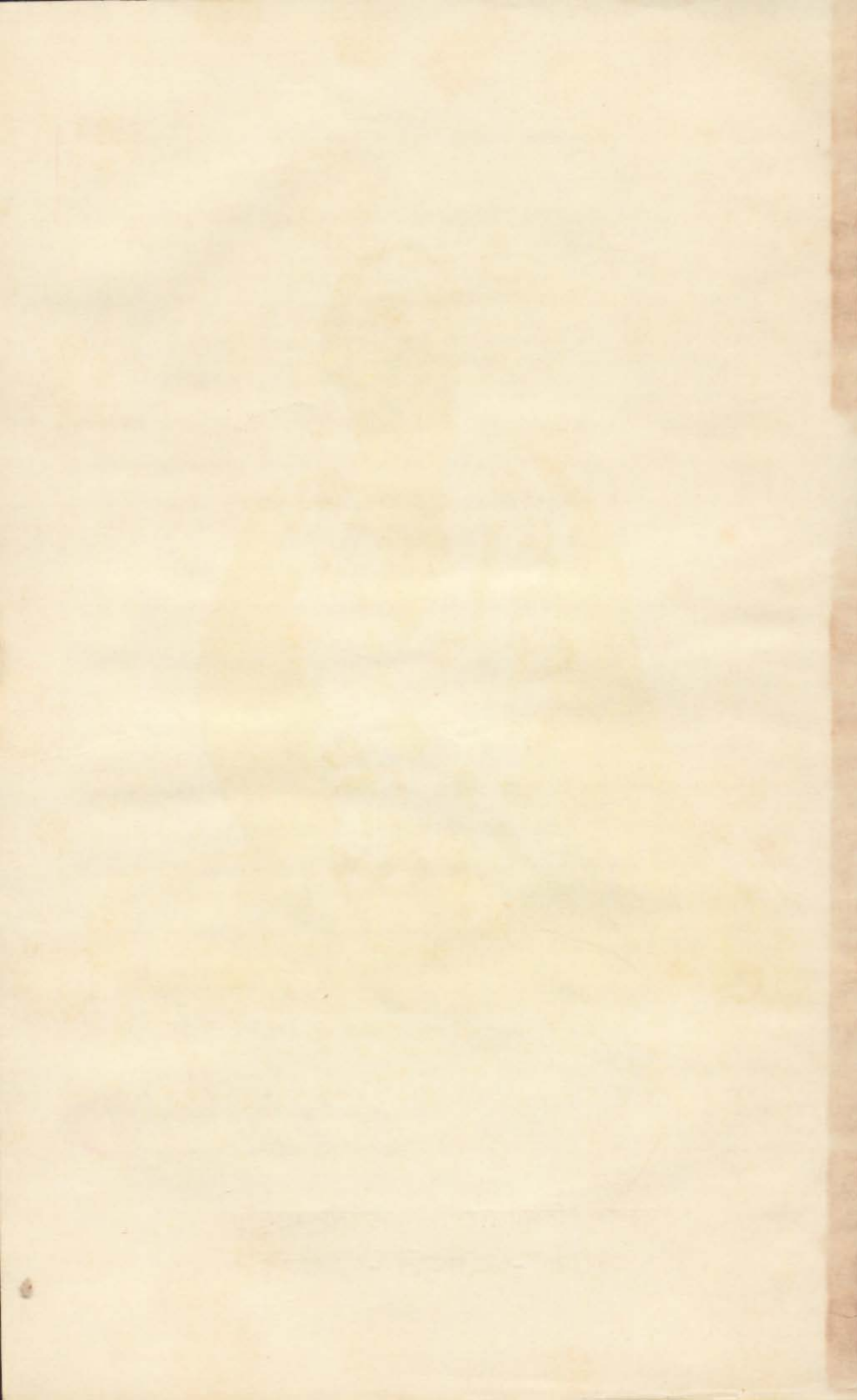
explains in his commentary, means *buddhi* in this context (2) *mānasa*—*manas* with its characteristic activity of *saṃkalpa* or thought-constructs (3) *śakti* which, in this context, means *prāṇaśakti* which constitutes the support of the body and empirical life, and (4) *ātmā* which, in this context, means *jīvātmā*, the ego or the empirical self conditioned by the above three.

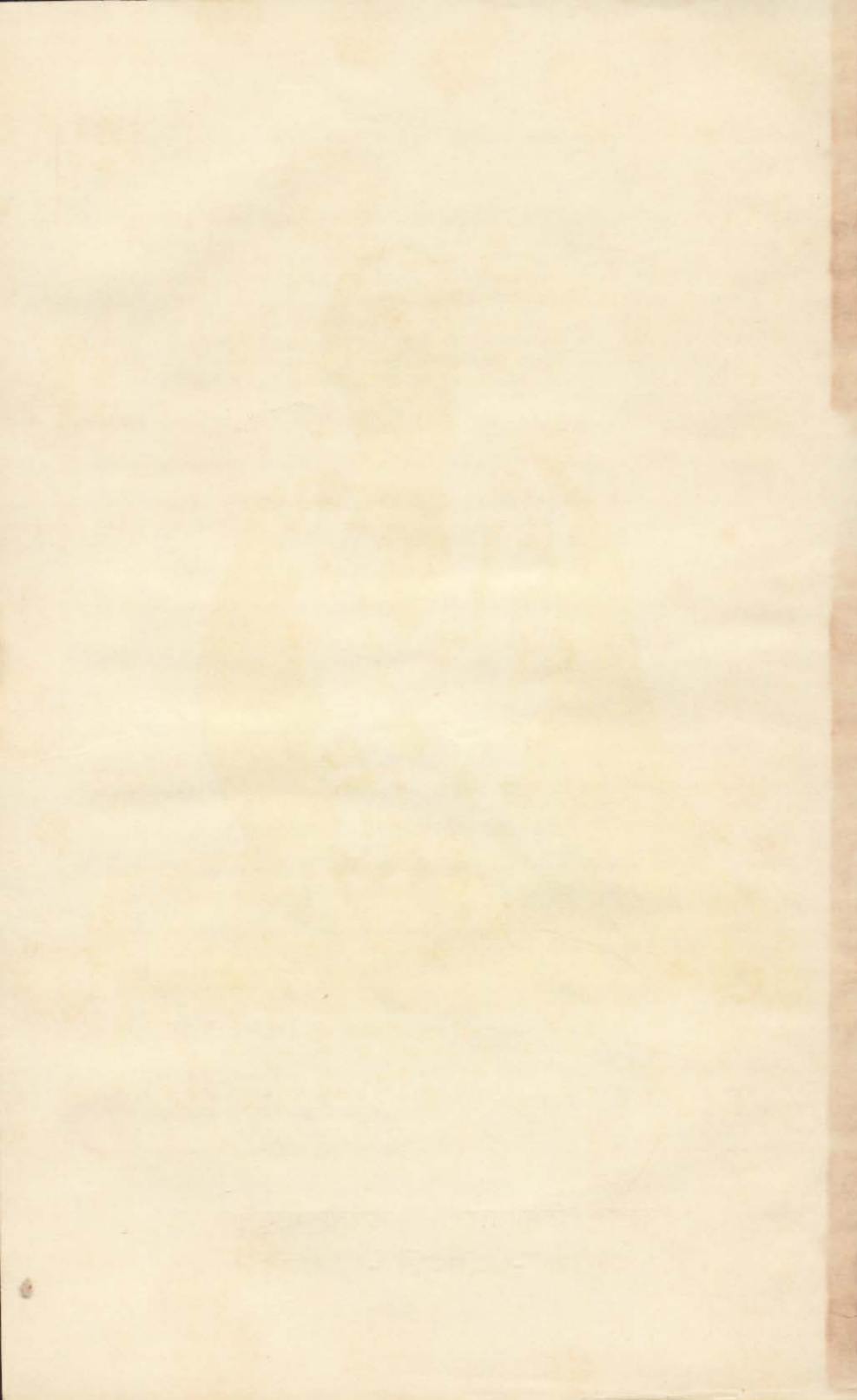
This is the arc of *nimeṣa* or *avaroha*-descent of the dynamic universal consciousness (*citi*) into individual human life. It is only at the human stage that *unmeṣa* or *adhyāroha*—ascent towards the higher life is possible. When the above four are dissolved (*parikṣiṇam*) into *cit* (the Higher Universal Divine Consciousness), it is only then that one attains to *bhairava*—consciousness.

Kṣemarāja in his commentary on 21st *sūtra* of section III of the *Śiva-sūtras* quoting this verse says, *Avikalpakarūpeṇa . . . saṃvedanena . . . samāviśet. Kīdṛk ? magnaḥ śāriraprāṇādipramāṭṛtām tatraiva citcamatkārarase majjanena praśāmayan.*

“One has to enter the divine consciousness by thought-free, non-relational awareness. How? By dissolving the personal self consisting of the body, *prāṇa*, etc. in the savoury sap of the Universal Divine Consciousness.”

The chrysalis of the ego has to split before one can enter the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Divine Presence. In the words of Kaṭhapaniṣad *Yogaḥ prabhavāpyayau* Yoga is both dissolution and emergence—both death and rebirth. One has to die to live. It is a divine filiation and cannot be described in any human language, for it is reality of a different dimension. In the beautiful words of Dr. Anand K. Coomaraswamy, “The condition of deification is an eradication of all otherness.” It is for this consummation that 112 *dhāraṇās* have been described in *Vijñānabhairava*.





VERSE 1

श्रीदेव्युवाच

श्रुतं देव मया सर्वं रुद्रयामलसम्भवम् ।
त्रिकभेदमशेषेण सारात्सारविभागशः ॥१॥
अद्यापि न निवृत्तो मे संशयः परमेश्वर ।

Śrī devy uvāca :

Śrutam deva mayā sarvaṃ rudrayāmalasambhavam /
Trikabhedam aśeṣeṇa sārāt sāravibhāgaśaḥ // 1
Adyāpi na nivṛtto me saṃśayaḥ parameśvara /

TRANSLATION

Bhairavī,¹ the śakti of Bhairava² says (uvāca) O deva³ (divine one) who in manifesting the universe and treating it as your play are my very self, I have heard in toto all the scriptures which have come forth from the union of Rudra⁴ and his pair śakti⁵ or which are the outcome of Rudrayāmala Tantra, including the Trika together with its divisions.⁶ I have heard the Trika which is the quintessence of all the scriptures and also all its further essential ramifications.⁷

But O supreme Lord, even now my doubt has not been removed.

NOTES

1. Bhairava is the word used for Supreme Reality. Its synonym is Parama Śiva. Bhairava means the terrible one who destroys the ego. The word Bhairava consists of three letters *bha*, *ra* and *va*. The hermeneutic etymology of Bhairava gives the following interpretation:

'Bha' indicates *bharaṇa*—maintenance of the universe; 'ra' indicates 'ravaṇa'—withdrawal of the universe; 'va' indicates 'vamaṇa'—projecting or letting go of the universe i.e. manifestation. Thus, Bhairava indicates all the three aspects of the

Divine, viz., *sṛṣṭi* (manifestation), *sthiti* (maintenance) and *saṃhāra* (withdrawal).

Bhairavī is the śakti of Bhairava. The works of Āgama or Tantra are generally written in the form of a dialogue between Bhairava and His śakti Bhairavī or between Śiva and His consort Pārvatī or Śivā. In all these works, Bhairavī or Śakti puts a question in the form of inquiry and Bhairava or Śiva answers the question raised.

This is the Indian way of saying that these scripture are a revelation. A relevant question arises in this connexion, "Bhairavī or Śakti of Bhairava is non-different from Bhairava; then what is the sense in a dialogue between the two? It requires two to enter into a dialogue, but when Bhairava and Bhairavī are non-different, (i.e. are not two), how can there be a dialogue between them?" The answer is that *anugraha* or grace is one of the five aspects of Bhairava (*sṛṣṭi*, *sthiti*, *saṃhāra*, *tirodhāna*, *anugraha*). His *anugraha* is represented by His śakti. In order to extend His grace to humanity, He reveals certain fundamental spiritual truths which may be inapprehensible to man in his present stage of evolution. All these truths lie in a latent form at the *parāvāk* level where object and word, truth and its manifestation, idea and its expression are in an indistinguishable unity. In order that these truths may be available to man, the *anugraha* (grace) aspect of the Supreme Divine assumes the role of Devī or Bhairavī who puts questions from the *paśyantī* level and receives answers at that level. Both the questions and the answers are transmitted in *vaikhari* form (human language) in order that man may be able to comprehend them. The dialogue between Bhairava and Bhairavī is a methodological device for revealing truths existing at the *parāvāk* level in *vaikhari* or human language. A dialogue containing questions and answers is the most realistic and lively form of bringing home to the listener or reader subtle truths which are not easy of comprehension.

2. The word in Sanskrit is *uvāca* which is past tense and means 'said', but as the question is perennial and the answer contains eternal truth, it is taken in the sense of present tense. The *parāvāk* level is beyond the category of time. So the division of past, present, future, month, year, etc. cannot be applied to it.

At the *paśyantī* level, the *parā* level appears anterior. Therefore the truth of *parā* level is expressed at the *paśyantī* level in past tense. Time is relative only to limited beings. To the Divine, there is no division of time. In his case, it is eternal now.

3. The word *deva* is derived from the root *div* which has many meanings, to manifest, to play, etc. Kṣemarāja in his commentary on this word says, “विश्ववद्योतनक्रीडनादिसत्त्व स्वात्मन्” “O my very Self whose nature it is to display His sport in the form of the manifestation of the universe. The *devī* calls *deva* as ‘my very Self’, because the *devī* is not different from the *deva*.”

4. Rudra: Bhairava or Śiva is called Rudra, because *ru* stands for *ruk* (disease), and *dra* stands for *drāvi* (melter, dissolver). As Kṣemarāja puts it *Rudra* is *samastarugdrāvi*. Rudra is one who dissolves all the ills (of life).

5. Yāmala means ‘pair.’ Kṣemarāja says ‘Rudratacchakti-sāmarasyātmano yāmalāt’ i.e. Yāmala connotes the union of Rudra and His Śakti i. e. *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*. It is in this aspect that the highest scripture is revealed. He quotes the following verse in support of his statement:

अदृष्टविग्रहाच्छान्ताच्छिवात्परमकारणात् ।
ध्वनिरूपं विनिष्क्रान्तं शास्त्रं परमदुर्लभम् ॥

“The most inaccessible scripture has come out in the form of word from Śiva who is the supreme source, who is free of all division and agitation and whose form is invisible.

Rudrayāmala is also the name of an ancient Tāntrika work which has not yet been properly edited.

6. *Trikabhedam*: Kṣemarāja explains this in the following words: “त्रिकस्य परादिशक्तित्रयसारनरशक्ति-शिवात्मनस्तत्त्वत्रयस्य भेदो ज्ञान-क्रियाप्राधान्येतरादिप्रतिपादनेन भिद्यमानता यत्र ।”

Trika denotes the triple divisions of Śakti, viz; *parā* (phase of highest identity, transcendent), *parāpara* (identity in difference; intermediate), and *apara* (immanent). This expresses itself in the triple division of Śiva, Śakti and *nara* (*jīva*—living creatures). This division is further complicated by the fact that in *apara* or *nara* level, only *kriyā* (activity) is predominant, in *parāpara* or

Śakti level and in *para* or Śiva level both jñāna and kriyā (knowledge and activity) are predominant.

It should be borne in mind that the sphere of *nara* extends from *prithivi tattva* to *māyā tattva*; the sphere of *śakti* extends from *śuddha vidyā* upto *Sadāśiva* and the sphere of *Śiva* includes only *Śiva* and *Śakti*.

7. *Sārāt-sāravibhāgaśah*: Trika is the *sāra* or quintessence of all the scriptures. In support of this Kṣemarāja quotes the following verse:

वेदादिभ्यः परं शैवं शैवाद्दामं तु दक्षिणम् ।
दक्षिणात्परतः कौलं कौलात्परतरं त्रिकम् ॥

“The (dualistic) Śaiva system is superior to the *vedas* and other scriptures, the system pertaining to the left-handed path is superior to the (dualistic) Śaiva one: the system pertaining to the right-handed path is superior to the left-handed one; the *Kaula* system is superior to the right-handed one and Trika is superior to the *Kaula* system. “Since *Trika* is superior to every other system or scripture, it has been designated as *sāra*, the quintessence of all philosophical systems and spiritual praxis.

The (dualistic) Śaiva system is characterized by external rituals. In *vāma* or left-handed path, the emphasis is laid on Self-consciousness in the midst of sensuous experience of form, sound, touch, taste and smell. In *dakṣiṇa* or right-handed path, emphasis is laid on meditation. In *Kaula* system, the emphasis is laid on the realization of universal consciousness. In *Trika*, the ideal is not only the realization of the essential or divine Self but also *jagadānanda* in which the world is realized as the bliss of the Divine made visible.

What is *sārāt-sāravibhāga* i. e. further essential ramification of the above quintessence? This is what Kṣemarāja has to say on his point.

तत्रापि सिद्धामालिन्युत्तरादिक्रमात् ज्ञानप्रकर्षोपदेशोत्कर्षात् उत्कृष्टम् The correct reading is तत्रापि सिद्धानामकमालिन्युत्तरादिक्रमात् ज्ञानप्रकर्षोपदेशक्रमात् उत्कृष्टम्। Even here (i. e. even in Trika) there is the successive gradation of high, higher and highest on the basis of the teaching of successive pre-eminence of jñāna (gnosis). *Siddhā* emphasizes *Kriyā* (rituals and

active meditation); *Nāmaka* emphasizes *jñāna* (knowledge); *Mālinī* emphasizes both *jñāna* and *Kriyā*. These constitute further division in *Trika*.

THE ORDER OF PRESENTATION OF THE SUBJECT MATTER

From the first verse beginning with 'Śrutam deva' upto the seventh verse, ending with 'chindhi samśayam', the *devī* enumerates her doubts. From 'sādhu, sādhu,' a part of the seventh verse upto the 21st verses ending with *Śivaḥ priyo*, Bhairava briefly answers her questions. Then from the 22nd verse, beginning with *Deva, deva* upto the 23rd verse, ending with *brūhi bhairava*, the *Devī* requests Bhairava to expound to her the means by which one can realize the Highest Reality.

In answer to the above inquiry from 24th upto 138th verse, Bhairava expounds to her 112 *dhāraṇas* or types of yoga by which one can realize the Highest Reality. After this, the *Devī* raises a few more questions, and *Bhairava* answers them. Finally, the *Devī* expresses her satisfaction over the answers and becomes united with *Bhairava*.

VERSES 2-4.

किं रूपं तत्त्वतो देव शब्दराशिकलामयम् ॥ २ ॥

किं वा नवात्मभेदेन भैरवे भैरवाकृतौ ।

त्रिशिरोभेदभिन्नं वा किं वा शक्तित्रयात्मकम् ॥ ३ ॥

नादबिन्दुमयं वापि किं चन्द्रार्धनिरोधिकाः ।

चक्रारूढमनस्कं वा किं वा शक्तिस्वरूपकम् ॥ ४ ॥

Kiṃ rūpaṃ tattvato deva śabdaraśīkalāmayam // 2

Kiṃ vā navātmabhedena bhairave bhairavākṛtau /

Triśirobhedabhinnam vā kiṃ vā śaktitrayātmakam // 3

Nādabindumayaṃ vāpi kiṃ candrārdhanirodhikāḥ /

Cakrārūḍham anackam vā kiṃ vā śaktisvarūpakam // 4

TRANSLATION

Oh God, from the point of view of absolute reality, what exactly is the essential nature of Bhairava ? According to

Bhairava Āgama (Bhairave²), (1) does it consist of the energies of the multitude of letters (*śabdarāśikalāmayam*³) ? or (2) does it consist of nine different forms (*navātmabhedena*)⁴ for the realization of the essential nature of Bhairava (*Bhairavākṛtau*) ? (3) or does it consist of the specific *mantra* that unites in an integral form the three divisions as delineated in Triśirobhairava⁵ (*triśirobhedabhinnam*) (4) or does it consist of three *Śaktis*⁶ (presiding over the previously mentioned three *tattvas*) ? (5) or does it consist of *nāda* (power of *mantra* inseparably present as *vimarśa* in all the words) ? or of *vinḍu* (power of *mantra* inseparably present in all the objects of the universe as *Prakāśa*⁷) (6) or does it consist of *ardhacandra*, *nirodhikā*⁸ etc ? (7) or does it consist of some mysterious power residing in the *Cakras* (energy centres in the body) ? or the vowel-less sound of *ha*?⁹ (8) or does it consist of purely *Śakti* ?¹⁰

NOTES

1. 'Bhairavākṛtau' does not mean 'Śiva of terrible form.' 'Bhairavākṛtau' means *Bhairavasvarūpāya*. It is a locative case in the sense of *nimitta* (purpose). So 'Bhairavākṛtau' means for the realization of the *svarūpa* or essential nature of *Bhairava*.

2. 'Bhairave' here means in Bhairava Āgama, according to Bhairava Āgama.

3. The first question of the *Devī* is: The world consists of objects. Each object is denoted by a word (*Śabda*). *Śabda-rāśi* is the multitude of words which is according to the Sanskrit language, from 'a' (अ) to 'kṣa' (क्ष). *Kalā* means the *vimarśa* or creative energy of the Divine. These energies are *anuttara*, *ānanda*, *icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*. By these are created the various letters from 'a' to 'kṣa'. These letters give rise to the various *tattvas* (constitutive principles) of which the universe is constituted. For detail, see the author's translation of Śiva Sūtras. Note No. 10 under *Sūtra* 7 of the II section.

The letter 'A' indicates *Prakāśa* or *Śiva*, the letter 'Ha' indicates *vimarśa* or *Śakti*. Thus *Ahaṃ* includes all the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. This *Ahaṃ* or 'I' denotes the Highest

Reality in which there is complete union of *Śiva* and *Śakti*, and which includes the entire subjective and the objective world.

The Divine in His aspect of non-manifestation is known as *Parama Śiva* or *Bhairava* or *Parama Brahma*, in His aspect of manifestation, the Divine is known as *Śabda Brahma*. In this first question, the *Devī* wants to know whether *Vijñāna* or *Bodha Bhairava* is *Śabda Brahma*.

4. The second question of the *Devī* is whether the essential nature of the Supreme is of nine forms (*navātma*) of *mantras*. These as described in *Netra Tantra* are the following:

(1) *Śiva*, (2) *Sadāśiva*, (3) *Īśvara*, (4) *Vidyā*, (5) *Māyā*, (6) *Kalā*, (7) *Niyati*, (8) *Puruṣa*, (9) *Prakṛti*. According to others, these are (1) *Śiva*, (2) *Śakti* (3) *Sadāśiva*, (4) *Īśvara* (5) *Śuddha Vidyā*, (6) *Mahāmāyā* (7) *Māyā*, (8) *Puruṣa* (9) *Prakṛti*. These are nine forms from the point of view of *tattvas* (constitutive principles). From the point of view of *mantra*, the nine forms are 1. ह् 2. र् 3. ङ् 4. म् 5. ल् 6. व् 7. य् 8. ष् 9. ऊँ (ॐ)

5. *Triśirobhairava* is the name of a *Tantra* work which is now lost. It summarizes the entire manifestation under three broad categories viz., *Śiva*, *Śakti* and *Nara* (*jīva* or living being). In the third question, the *Devī* wants to know whether the nature of the Supreme consists of the integral combination of these three categories as symbolized by the *mantra sauḥ* (सौः). This specific *mantra* is known as *Parabṛtja*, *Hṛdaya bīja* or *Prāsāda*. *Sa* (स) of this *mantra* symbolizes the *tattvas* from earth to *māyā* (31 *tattvas* of *Śaiva* philosophy); *au* (औ) symbolizes *Śuddha vidyā*, *Īśvara* and *Sadāśiva* and the two dots of the *visarga* (ः) symbolize *Śiva* and *Śakti*. For details, see the author's Note No. 2 under the first *Sūtra* of the Second section of the *Śiva-sūtras*. Now of the three categories of *Nara*, *Śakti* and *Śiva* the 'S' (स्) of the *mantra Sauḥ* (सौः) covers *Nara*, *au* (औ) covers *Śakti*, and the *visarga* (ः) covers *Śiva*. So the 31 *tattvas* of *Śaiva Āgama* are covered by *Nara*; the three *tattvas* viz., *Śuddha vidyā*, *Īśvara* and *Sadāśiva* are covered by *Śakti*, and the other two *tattvas* are covered by *Śiva*.

6. In the fourth question, the *Devī* wants to know whether the nature of the Supreme consists of the three *Śaktis-Parā* (transcendent in which there is no distinction of *Śiva* and *Śakti*), *Aparā*

(immanent) and *Parāparā* (Intermediate between the two) presiding over the categories or principles mentioned above (in Note 5). The *svātantrya śakti* (severeign power) of the Divine is known as *parā* (transcendent), that very *Śakti* wishing to create a universe of successive order is known as *parāparā* (both *para* and *apara*) and appearing as a universe of successive order is known as *aparā* (immanent).

7. *Nāda* in this context means the *vimarśa* present in all the words (*vācaka*) and *vinḍu* means the *prakāśa* present in all the objects (*vācya*).

As Kṣemarāja puts it in his commentary, *Yadi vā sarvamantracakra-sāmānyaviryātmaka-viśvavācyaivibhāga — prakāśarūpavindu aśeṣavācakāvibhāga-vimarśa-parāmarśamayānādātmakam*.

In the fifth question, the *Devī* wants to know whether the essential nature of *Bhairava* is *nāda-vinḍu*—*vinḍu* which symbolizes light or *prakāśa* (*Śiva*) and which is present in an undivided form in all objective phenomena and *nāda* which symbolizes *vimarśa śakti* that is present in an undivided form in all the words (which signify objective phenomena).

8. In the sixth question, the *Devī* wants to know whether the essential nature of *Bhairava* consists of *ardhacandra nirodhikā* etc. which are a further proliferation of *nāda-vinḍu*. *Nirodhikā* in the plural (*nirodhikāḥ*) is meant to express 'et cetera'. The 'et cetera' refers to *nādānta*, *śakti*, *vyāpintī*, *samanā*, and finally *unmanā*.

Vinḍu (a point) which is present as undivided light in all objective phenomena (*vācya*) is transformed into *nāda* (interior sound). As has been said above, *Vinḍu* is concerned with objective phenomena (*vācya*). When it is transformed into *nāda*, the predominance of objectivity is slightly diminished, then arises the stage of *ardhacandra* where *śakti* appears in a curved form like demimoon. After that when the curved nature of all objectivity ceases completely, then arises *nirodhikā*, of the form of a straight line. *Nirodhikā* means obstruciter. This energy is so called because she obstructs undeserving aspirants from entering into *nāda*, and prevents the deserving ones from straying away into the state of difference. When the pervasion of *nāda* by letter begins to abate, then the next stage of energy is known as

nādānta which is characterized by extremely subtle sound and which means the termination of the stage of *nāda*. When the stage of *nāda* ceases completely, then the next stage is that of *Śakti* which is characterized by a sensation of spiritual delight. When that sensation of delight is not confined within the limit of the body, but expands all round like the sky, then that stage is known as *Vyāpini* (i. e. all-pervasive).

When the idea of all positive and negative existents ceases completely and only *manana* or the faculty of mentation remains, then the stage of *samanā* is achieved.

Finally appears the *unmanā* stage which transcends all mentation, which achieves Śiva-consciousness and is characterized by the consciousness of unity of the entire cosmos. Here there is the unison of *Śiva* and *Śakti*. This is the stage of *Parama Śiva* who is *niṣkala* or transcendent.

The first question is concerned with *mātṛkā*, the second and third are concerned with *mantra*, the fifth and sixth are concerned with *mantra-vīrya* or power of *mantra*. The fourth is concerned with the three *Śaktis* of the Divine.

9. In the seventh question, the *Devī* wants to know whether the essential nature of Bhairava is some mysterious power present in the *cakras* (energy-centres) in the form of letters or is it *anacka* i. e. vibrating as vowel-less *ha* in the form of *prāṇakuṇḍalini*. *Prāṇāśakti* present in *Suṣumnā* ceaselessly and spontaneously goes on vibrating as *ha* in a vowel-less form. This is known as *anacka kalā* of *prāṇāśakti*. It is known as *anāhata nāda* i. e. a vibration without any stroke or blow. It goes on vibrating spontaneously. No body produces it and nobody can prevent it from vibrating. It is known as *haṃsa* or *prāṇakuṇḍalini*.

10. In the eighth question, the *Devī* wants to know whether the essential nature of the Supreme is pure changeless Energy (*Śakti*).

Cakrārūḍha may also mean "Is it Kuṇḍalini situated in the *mūlādhāra cakra*" or "Is it the *Aham* or the divine I-consciousness resting on the collective whole (*cakra*) of letters beginning with 'a' and ending with 'ha'?"

VERSES 5-6

परापरायाः सकलम् अपरायाश्च वा पुनः ।
 पराया यदि तद्वत्स्यात् परत्वं तद्विरुध्यते ॥ ५ ॥
 नहि वर्ण-विभेदेन देहभेदेन वा भवेत् ।
 परत्वं, निष्कलत्वेन, सकलत्वे न तद्भवेत् ॥ ६ ॥
 प्रसादं कुरु मे नाथ निःशेषं छिन्धि संशयम् ।

Parāparāyāḥ sakalam aparāyāśca vā punaḥ/
 Parāyā yadi tadvāt syāt paratvaṃ tad virudhyate// 5
 Nahi varṇavibhedena dehabhedena vā bhavet/
 Paratvaṃ, niṣkalatvena, sakalatve na tad bhavet// 6
 Prasādam kuru me nātha niḥśeṣaṃ chindhi saṃśayam//

TRANSLATION

(The Devī puts a further question)

Is the nature of *parāparā śakti* (transcendent-cum-immanent Energy) and *aparā śakti* (immanent Energy) *sakala* i.e. consisting of parts or is the nature of *parā śakti* (transcendent Energy) also *sakala* ? If the nature of *parā śakti* (transcendent Energy) is also *sakala*, then it would be incompatible with transcendence.¹

Paratva or transcendence cannot be consistent with the division of letters and colour or of bodies (*na hi varṇavibhedena, dehabhedena vā bhavet paratvam*) ; *paratva* or transcendence consists only in indivisibility (*niṣkalatvena*); it (transcendence) cannot co-exist with *sakala* (a composite of parts) (*sakalatve na tad-bhavet*).² Oh Lord bestow your favour on me, and remove my doubt completely.

NOTES

1. *Parā, parāparā, aparā.*

Svātantrya śakti, the Absolute Sovereign power of Parama Śiva is *parā* i. e. transcendent. Every thing at that level is in the form of *saṃvit* or consciousness. This is the level of absolute non-dualism (*abheda*). This is *parama Śiva's parā śakti*.

Where there is *bhedābheda* i. e. both identity and difference or identity in difference that is known as *parāparā śakti*. Just as an elephant or a city seen in a mirror is both identical and different from the mirror, even so is the position of *parāparā*

śakti, Where everything appears as different from each other, that is the level of *aparā śakti*.

2. There can be *Sakalatva* or aspect of division in *parāparā* and *aparā*. If *sakalatva* or divisibility is assumed to be an aspect of *parā* also, then that would be incompatible with the very nature of *parā* which is completely transcendent to division. In *Parātrimśikā*, etc (p. 124) does the *sakala* aspect which has been described for the meditation of certain *mantras* concern only *aparā devī* and *parāparā devī* or also *parā devī*? If it concerns *parā devī* also, then it would be flagrant contradiction in terms, for by its very definition *parā* is *niṣkala* or transcendent to division or parts. How can *sakala* go with *niṣkala*? This is what the *Devī* wants to know.

VERSES—7-10

भैरव उवाच

साधु साधु त्वया पृष्टं तन्त्रसारमिदं प्रिये ॥ ७ ॥
 गूहनीयतमं भद्रे तथापि कथयामि ते ।
 यत्किञ्चित्सकलं रूपं भैरवस्य प्रकीर्तितम् ॥ ८ ॥
 तदसारतया देवि विज्ञेयं शक्रजालवत् ।
 मायास्वप्नोपमं चैव गन्धर्वनगरभ्रमम् ॥ ९ ॥
 ध्यानार्थं भ्रान्तबुद्धीनां क्रियाडम्बरवर्तिनाम् ।
 केवलं वर्णितं पुंसां विकल्पनिहतात्मनाम् ॥ १० ॥

Bhairava uvāca

Sādhu sādhu tvayā pṛṣṭaṃ tantrasāram idam priye// 7
 Gūhaniyatamam bhadre tathāpi kathayāmi te/
 Yatkiñcit saklaṃ rūpam bhairavasya prakīrtitam// 8
 Tad asāratayā devi vijñeyam śakrajālavat/
 Māyāsvapnopamaṃ caiva gandharvanagarabhramam// 9
 Dhyānārtham bhrāntabuddhīnāṃ kriyāḍambaravartinām/
 Kevalaṃ varṇitam puṃsāṃ vikalpanihatātmanām// 10

TRANSLATION

Bhairava said

Good! Good! Dear one, you have put questions which pertain to the very quintessence of Tantra. Though, the matter is

most esoteric, oh auspicious one, yet shall I explain it to you. Whatever has been declared to be the composite form (*Sakala*)¹ of Bhairava, that oh goddess should be considered as insubstantial (*asāratayā*), as phantasmagoria (lit. as the net of Indra), as magical illusion (*māyā*), as dream, as the mirage of a town of *Gandharvas*² in the sky. The *sakala* aspect of Bhairava is taught, as a prop for meditation, to those who are of deluded intellect, who are interested in ostentatious performance of rituals, it has been declared for those people who are a prey to dichotomising thought-constructs (*vikalpanihatātmanām*).³

NOTES

1. All manifestation from gods down to the mineral is known as *sakala*. *Sakala* is the sphere of *māyā tattva*. It consists of *bheda*—difference or division. The essential nature of Bhairava cannot be known by means of *sakala* which consists of difference and division.

2. *Gandharvas* are said to be celestial musicians who are believed to have their town in the sky which is entirely imaginary even so is the *sakala* form of *Bhairava*.

3. If the reading is taken as *vikalpanihitātmanām* it would mean 'who are established in dichotomising thought-constructs'.

VERSE 11-13

तत्त्वतो न नवात्मसौ शब्दराशिर्न भैरवः ।
 न चासौ त्रिशिरा देवो न च शक्तित्रयात्मकः ॥ ११ ॥
 नादबिन्दुमयो वापि न चन्द्रार्धनिरोधिकाः ।
 न चक्रक्रमसंभिन्नो न च शक्तिस्वरूपकः ॥ १२ ॥
 अप्रबुद्धमतीनां हि एता बालविभीषिकाः ।
 मातृमोदकवत्सर्वं प्रवृत्त्यथमुदाहृतम् ॥ १३ ॥

Tattvato na navātmāsau śabdārāśir na bhairavaḥ/
 Na cāsau trīśirā devo na ca śaktitrayātmakaḥ// 11
 Nādabindumayo vāpi na candrārdhnirodhikāḥ/
 Na cakrakramasambhinno na ca śaktisvarūpakaḥ// 12
 Aprabuddhamatīnāḥ hi etā bālavibhīṣikāḥ/
 Mātṛmodakavatsarvaṃ pravṛttyartham udāhṛtam// 13

TRANSLATION

In reality, Bhairava is neither of the form of nine (*navātma*), nor a multitude of letters (*śabdārāśī*) nor of the three heads (*triśirā*) nor of three *śaktis*, nor consisting of *nāda* and *bindu*, nor of *ardhacandra*, *nirodhikā*, etc., nor is His essence concerned with the piercing of the (six) *cakras*, nor does *śakti* or Energy constitute His essence.¹

(Then why have these been described by the scriptures as Bhairava's essence at various places ?)

The above concepts are used for those whose intellect is not yet mature enough to grasp Reality (in its highest aspect), Just as a bogy is used to frighten away children from their obstinacy for getting some worthless or undesirable thing. These concepts play the same role as the bonbon of the mother. They are meant to induce the aspirants to tread the path of righteousness and spiritual practices in order that they may ultimately realize the nature of *Bhairava* which is non-different from their essential Self.²

NOTES

1. For the explanation of the various alternatives given above see the notes under the verses 2-4.

2. As a bogy is used to frighten away children from their obstinacy for getting a worthless and undesirable thing, even so these concepts are used for dissuading men from sense-pleasures. As mothers offer a bonbon to children to induce them to pursue a right course, even so these concepts are used to induce men, to tread the path of righteousness.

VERSES 14-17

दिव्कालकलनोन्मुक्ता देशोद्देशाविशेषिणी ।
 व्यपदेष्टुमशक्यासावकथ्या परमार्थतः ॥ १४ ॥
 अन्तः स्वानुभवानन्दा विकल्पोन्मुक्तगोचरा ।
 यावस्था भरिताकारा भैरवी भैरवात्मनः ॥ १५ ॥

तद्वपुस्तत्त्वतो ज्ञेयं विमलं विश्वपूरणम् ।
 एवंविधे परे तत्त्वे कः पूज्यः कश्च तृप्यति ॥ १६ ॥
 एवंविधा भैरवस्य यावस्था परिगीयते ।
 सा परा, पररूपेण परादेवी प्रकीर्तिता ॥ १७ ॥

Dikkālakalanonmuktā deśoddeśāviśeṣiṇī/
 Vyapadeṣṭum aśakyāsav akathyā paramārthataḥ// 14
 Antaḥ svānubhavanānandā vikalponmuktagocarā/
 Yāvasthā bharitākārā bhairavī bhairavātmanaḥ// 15
 Tad vapus tattvato jñeyaṃ vimalaṃ viśvapūraṇam/
 Evaṃvidhe pare tattve kaḥ pūjyaḥ kaśca tṛpyati// 16
 Evaṃvidhā bhairavasya yāvasthā parigīyate/
 Sā parā, pararūpeṇa parā devī prakirtitā// 17

TRANSLATION

[If the *sakala* aspect of Bhairava does not reveal His essential nature, then what is His *niṣkala* aspect by knowing which one may have an idea of His *parāvasthā* (the highest state).

Bhairava now describes the *niṣkala* (transcendent) aspect of the Supreme in the above four verses].

Parāvasthā (the highest state) of *Bhairava* is free (*unmukta*) of all notions pertaining to direction (*dik*), time (*kāla*), nor can that be particularized (*aviśeṣiṇī*) by some definite space (*deśa*) or designation (*uddeśa*). In verity (*paramārthataḥ*) that can neither be indicated (*vyapadeṣṭum aśakyā*) nor described in words (*akathyā*)^{1,14}

[Then is it impossible to have any experience of her? Bhairava anticipates this question and answers that in the following verse].

One can be aware of that only when one is completely free of all thought-constructs (*vikalponmukta-gocarā*). One can have an experience of that bliss in his own inmost self (when one is completely rid of the ego, and is established in *pūrṇāhantā* i.e. in the plenitude of the divine I-consciousness).²

That state of *Bhairava* which is full of the bliss of non-difference from the entire universe (*bharitākārā*)³ is alone *Bhairavī* or *Śakti* of *Bhairava*. 15

That should, in verity, be known as His essential nature, immaculate (*vimalaṃ*)⁴ and inclusive of the entire universe (*viśvapūraṇam*). Such being the state of the highest Reality, who can be the object of worship, who is to be satisfied with worship.⁵16.

That *niṣkala* state of *Bhairava* which is celebrated in this way is alone the highest state. That is declared as *parā devī*, the highest goddess, *parā* or highest not only in name, but because that is actually her highest form (*pararūpeṇa*).¹⁷

NOTES

1. Kṣemarāja in his commentary (*vivṛti*) says that *vyapadeṣṭum aśakyā* (cannot be indicated) hints at the fact that she cannot be talked about even in *madhyamā* (subtle) speech (*madhyamājalpā-viśayā*), and *akathyā* (indescribable in words) hints at the fact that she can far less be described in ordinary human language (*vaikharyāpyavyāvāṛṇīyā*).

2. The 14th verse hints at the highest state of *Bhairava* in a negative way. It transcends direction, time, space and designation. It cannot be characterized or described in any human language.

The 15th verse hints at that state in a positive way. It says that though it is beyond description, it is not beyond experience (*anubhava*). There are two indispensable conditions (both of which are interconnected) under which one can have an experience of it. (1) It can be within the range of experience if one can rid oneself of all thought-constructs (*vikalponmuktagocarā*). The activity of mind consists in all kinds of thought-constructs. When one can get rid of thought-constructs, the mind is stilled. In that hour of silence emerges the essential Reality from behind the veil. It is the mind that acts as a veil, a barrier, a screen. Mind is the slayer of the Real. Truly has it been said "Be still, my heart, and know." (2) If one can get rid of the ego, the false, artificial 'I' and take a plunge in his inmost essential Self, he will have the experience of a delight which beggars description, a peace that passeth all understanding (*antaḥ svānubhavānandā*). Truly has it been said "He saveth life who loseth it."

This is *śāmbhava yoga*. Though the *parāvasthā* (highest state) of Bhairava cannot be described, it can be experienced.

3. That state of Bhairava is plenary state, a universal, all pervasive delight of creativity (*bharitākārā*). It is this which is His *śakti* or *Bhairavi* which is not exclusive of the universe but inclusive of it. It is only when we miss the whole and cling to the part, the *sakala* aspect of *Bhairava* that we stumble.

4. Kṣemarāja says in his commentary that *Bhairava's* essential nature has been characterized as *vimala* (immaculate) because though it manifests the universe on its own screen, it is not veiled by it (*svabhityābhāṣita-jagadanācchāditam*).

5. When the essential nature of Bhairava is recognized as our own inmost self, the distinction between the worshipper and the worshipped disappears and there dawns a sense of non-dualism.

VERSES 18-19

शक्तिशक्तिमतोर्यद्वत् अभेदः सर्वदा स्थितः ॥
 अतस्तद्धर्मधर्मित्वात् पराशक्तिः परात्मनः ॥ १८ ॥
 न वह्नेर्दाहिका शक्तिः व्यतिरिक्ता विभाव्यते ।
 केवलं ज्ञानसत्तायां प्रारम्भोज्यं प्रवेशने ॥ १९ ॥

Śakti-śaktimatoṛyadvat abhedaḥ sarvadā sthitaḥ/
 Atas taddharmadharmitvāt parā śaktiḥ parātmanah// 18
 Na vahner dāhikā śaktiḥ vyatiriktā vibhāvyaṭe/
 Kevalam jñānasattāyām prārambho'yam praveśane// 19

TRANSLATION

Since there is always non-difference between *Śakti*¹ and possessor of *śakti* (*śaktimān*) therefore being endowed with His (i.e. *Śaktiman's*) attributes *Śakti* becomes the bearer of the same attributes.² Therefore being non-different from *para* (the highest i.e. *Bhairava*) she is known as *parā* (the highest i.e. *Bhairavi*). 18

The burning power of fire is not accepted as separate from fire even after full consideration (even so the *parāśakti* is not separate from *Bhairava*). Only it is described in a distinct way as a preliminary step for the listener towards its knowledge (lit., towards entry into its knowledge)³ 19

NOTES

1. Śakti means power, capacity to effect something.
2. Just as Bhairava has the attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, etc., even so His Śakti Bhairavī has the same attributes.
3. The power of burning of fire is not anything separate from fire. Only it is described separately so that one may get acquaintance with fire after which one can find out its other attributes. Even so *parāśakti* is not anything separate from *para* (the supreme). Parāśakti is described separately so that she may prove as a first step towards the realization of *para* or *Bhairava*.

VERSES 20-21

शक्त्यवस्थाप्रविष्टस्य निर्विभागेन भावना ।
 तदासौ शिवरूपी स्यात् शैवी मुखमिहोच्यते ॥ २० ॥
 यथालोकेन दीपस्य किरणैर्भास्करस्य च ।
 ज्ञायते दिग्विभागादि तद्वच्छक्त्या शिवः प्रिये ॥ २१ ॥

Śaktyavasthāpraviṣṭasya nirvibhāgena bhāvanā /
 Tadāsau Śivarūpī syāt śaivī mukham ihocyate // 20
 Yathālokena dipasya kiraṇair bhāskarasya ca /
 Jñāyate digvibhāgādi tadvac chaktyā Śivaḥ priye // 21

TRANSLATION

When in one who enters the state of Śakti (i.e. who is identified with Śakti), there ensues the feeling of non-distinction (between Śakti and Śiva), then he acquires the state of Śiva, (for) in the āgamas (iha), she (śakti) is declared as the door of entrance (into Śiva) (Lit., Śakti is like Śiva's face)¹ 20. Just as by means of the light of a lamp, and the rays of the Sun, portions of space, etc.² are known³ even so, Oh dear one, by means of Śakti is Śiva (who is one's own essential Self) cognized (i.e. re-cognized). 21

NOTES

1. Just as one recognizes a person by his face, even so one recognizes Śiva by His Śakti who is like His face.

2. Et cetera included forms, figures.

3. There are three points suggested by this simile (1) Just as the flame of the lamp is not different from its light; just as the rays of the sun are not different from the sun, even so *śakti* is not different from *Śiva*. (2) Just as through the lamp or the sun, objects of the world are perceived, even so through *Śakti* the universe is known. (3) Just as to perceive the light of the lamp, another lamp is not required; just as to perceive the sun, another sun is not required; they are known by their own light. Even so, *Śiva* is known by His *Śakti* who is not different from him.

VERSES 22-23

श्रीदेव्युवाच

देवदेव त्रिशूलाङ्क, कपालकृतभूषण ।

दिग्देशकालशून्या च व्यपदेशविवर्जिता ॥ २२ ॥

यावस्था भरिताकारा भैरवस्योपलभ्यते ।

कंरुपायैर्मुखं तस्य परादेवी कथं भवेत् ॥ २३ ॥

यथा सम्यगहं वेद्मि तथा मे ब्रूहि भैरव ।

Śrī Devī uvāca

Devadeva triśūlāṅka kapālakṛtabhūṣaṇa /

Digdeśakālaśūnyā ca vyapadeśavivarjitā // 22

Yāvasthā bharitākārā bhairavasyopalabhyate /

Kair upāyair mukhaṃ tasya parā devī katham bhavet // 23

Yathā samyag ahaṃ vedmi tathā me brūhi Bhairava /

TRANSLATION

[Now that the essential nature of *parādevī* (Supreme goddess or *Śakti*) has been hinted at, Bhairavī wants to know how that essential nature can be realized.]

O God of all gods, bearing the emblem of the trident,¹ and having cranium as your ornament,² how can that Supreme goddess (the Highest *Śakti*) who transcends all notions of direction, space and time and all manner of description be known? By what means can that complete state of *Bhairava* which is full of the bliss of non-difference from the universe (*bharitākārā*) be realized? In what way is the *parādevī* (the Highest *Śakti*) said to be the door of entrance into *Bhairava*? Please tell me in the *Vaikharī* form (in human language) that which I know fully

well at the *parā* level³ or please instruct me in such a manner that I may understand it fully.

NOTES

1. Bearing the emblem of the trident (*triśūla*). Bhairava is said to be bearing the trident, because the three spikes of the trident represent *icchā* (will), *jñāna* (knowledge) and *kriyā* (activity) which are the main characteristics of *Bhairava*.

2. Bhairava is generally represented as having a cranium bowl in his hand. This *kapāla* or cranium-bowl symbolizes the universe consisting of words and objects which betoken *Bhairava's svātantrya* (absolute freedom) and *caitanya* (supreme consciousness).

3. Being the *parā śakti* (Highest *Śakti*) of *Śiva*, she already knows the truth at the *parā* (highest) level, but she wants *Bhairava* to tell it to her in the *Vaikhart* form (gross speech, human language). *Vedmi*—I know is present tense. If she knows, why does she request Bhairava to tell it to her? The explanation is that she knows it at the *parā* level, at the transcendental level, now she wants its exposition at the empirical level.

[Dhāraṇā 1]

VERSE 24

श्रीभैरव उवाच

ऊर्ध्वे प्राणो ह्यधो जीवो विसर्गात्मा परोच्चरेत् ।
उत्पत्तिद्वितयस्थाने, भरणाद्भरिता स्थितिः ॥ २४ ॥

Ūrdhve prāṇo hy adho jīvo visargātmā paroccaret /
Utpattidvitayasthāne bharaṇād bharitā sthitiḥ // 24

TRANSLATION

Bhairava says:

Parā devī or Highest *Śakti* who is of the nature of *visarga*¹ goes on (ceaselessly) expressing herself upward (*ūrdhve*) (from the centre of the body to *dvādaśānta*² or a distance of twelve fingers) in the form of exhalation (*prāṇa*) and downward (*adhah*) (from *dvādaśānta* to the centre of the body) in the form of inhalation (*jīva* or *apāna*).³ By steady fixation of the mind

(*bharaṇāt*)⁴ at the two places of their origin (viz., centre of the body in the case of *prāṇa* and *dvādaśānta* in the case of *apāna*), there is the situation of plenitude (*bharitāsthitiḥ* which is the state of *parāśakti* or nature of *Bhairava*).⁵

NOTES

1. *Visargātmā*—who is of the nature of *visarga*. The word *visarga* means letting go, projection or creation, i.e. who is creative. The creative function of the Divine includes two movements—outward and inward or centrifugal and centripetal. In living beings, the outward or centrifugal movement is represented by expiration or exhalation; the inward or centripetal movement is represented by inspiration or inhalation. *Parā* or *parā devī* or *Parā śakti* is designated as *Visargātmā*, because it is by this rhythm of centrifugal and centripetal movement that she carries on the play of life whether in the macrocosm or the microcosm. This movement is known as *uccāra* or *spandana* or ceaseless throb of *Parādevī*.

In Sanskrit, *visarga* is represented by two points or dots one above the other. One point in this case is *dvādaśānta* where *prāṇa* ends and the other is the *hṛt* or centre of the body where *apāna* ends. It is because of these two points also that *Parāśakti* is known as *visargātmā*.

2. *Dvādaśānta*—literally meaning 'end of twelve' indicates the point at a distance of 12 fingers from the tip of the nose in the outer space where expiration arising from the centre of the human body, and passing through the throat and the nose ends. This is known as *bāhya dvādaśānta* or the external *dvādaśānta*.

3. The *apāna* or inhalation is called *jīva*, because it is the inhalation or return movement of the breath that is responsible for life.

4. *Bharaṇāt* here means by close observation or one-pointed awareness. Awareness of what? Śivopādhyāya in his commentary clears this point in the following way:

“*Bharaṇāditi — nityonmiśadādyasphurattātmabhairaviyaśakti-upalaksanāt.* i.e. *bharaṇāt* here means by an intent awareness of that who by implication is the ever-risen initial flash of the *śakti* of *Bhairava*.”

5. The dhāraṇā or the yogic practice referred to in this verse is the following:

There are two points or poles between which respiration goes on constantly. One of these is *dvādaśānta* in the outer space where *prāṇa* or exhalation ends and the other *hṛt* or the centre inside the body where *apāna* or inhalation ends. At each of these points, there is *viśrānti* or rest for a split second. The breath does not actually stop there totally but remains in the form of a throb of *śakti* in suspended animation and then again the breathing process starts. One should contemplate over the *śakti* that appears in the period of rest and should remain mindful of it even while the breathing process starts. By constant practice of this *dhāraṇā*, he will realize the state of plenitude of *Bhairava* (*bharitā sthitiḥ*).

As this practice is without any support of *vikalpa*, it is *Śāmbhava upāya*.

There is another important interpretation of this *dhāraṇā*. In inhalation, the sound of *ha* is produced; in exhalation, the sound *saḥ* is produced; at the junction point in the centre the sound of *ṃ* is added. So the whole formula becomes 'Haṃsaḥ'. The *parādevī* goes on sounding this formula or *mantra* ceaselessly in every living being. *Hṛdaya* or the centre is the starting point of the sound *ha* and *dvādaśānta* is the starting point of the sound *saḥ*. By contemplating over these two points, one acquires the nature of *Bhairava*. This would be an *āṇava upāya*. *Śaḥ* represents *Śiva*; *ha* represents *Śakti*; *ṃ* represents *nara*. So in this practice, all the three main elements of Trika philosophy, viz, *Śiva*, *Śakti* and *Nara* are included.

[Dhāraṇā 2]

VERSE 25

मरुतोऽन्तर्बहिर्वापि वियद्युग्मानिवर्तनात् ।

भैरव्या भैरवस्येत्थं भैरवि व्यज्यते वपुः ॥ २५ ॥

Maruto'ntar bahir vāpi viyadyugmānivartanāt /

Bhairavyā bhairavasyettham bhairavi vyajyate vapuḥ // 25

TRANSLATION

Of the breath (exhalation or *prāṇa*) arising from the inner i.e. the centre of the body (*hṛt*) there is non-return for a split second from the *dvādaśānta* (a distance of twelve fingers from the nose in the outer space), and of the breath (inhalation or *apāna*) arising from *dvādaśānta* i. e. the outer space, there is non-return for a split second from the centre of the body (*hṛt*).¹ If one fixes his mind steadily at these two points of pause, one will find that Bhairavī the essential form of Bhairava is manifested at those two points.²

NOTES

1. The pause of *prāṇa* in the *dvādaśānta* is known as *bahih kumbhaka* or external pause. The pause of the *apāna* in the internal centre of the body is known as *antaḥ kumbhaka* or internal pause. By the *anusandhāna* or one-pointed awareness of these two pauses, the mind becomes introverted, and the activity of both *prāṇa* and *apāna* ceases, and there is the upsurge of *madhya daśā* i. e. the path of the *madhya nāḍī* or *suṣumnā* becomes open.

2. If one mentally observes the above two pauses, he realizes the nature of Bhairava. This is *āṇava upāya* inasmuch as this process involves the *dhyāna* or meditation on the two *kumbhakas* or pauses of *prāṇa* and *apāna*.

[Dhāraṇā 3]

VERSE 26

न द्रजेन्न विशेच्छक्ति-मंरुद्रूपा विकसिते ।
निर्विकल्पतया मध्ये तया भैरवरूपता ॥ २६ ॥

Na vrajen na viśec chaktir marudrūpā vikāsite /
Nirvikalpakatayā madhye tayā Bhairavarūpatā // 26

TRANSLATION

When the middle state develops by means of the dissolution of all dichotomising thought-constructs¹ the *prāṇa-śakti* in the

form of exhalation (*prāṇa*) does not go out from the centre (of the body) to *dvādaśānta*,² nor does that *śakti* in the form of inhalation (*apāna*) enter into the centre from *dvādaśānta*. In this way by means of Bhairavī who expresses herself in the form of the cessation of *prāṇa* (exhalation) and *apāna* (inhalation), there supervenes the state of Bhairava.³

NOTES

1. In this *dhāraṇā*, *prāṇa* (exhalation) and *apāna* (inhalation) cease and *madhya daśā* develops i.e. the *prāṇaśakti* in the *suṣumnā* develops by means of *nirvikalpabhāva* i. e. by the cessation of all thought-constructs; then the nature of Bhairava is revealed.

Śivopādhyāya in his commentary says that the *nirvikalpa bhāva* comes about by *Bhairavī mudrā* in which even when the senses are open outwards, the attention is turned inwards towards inner *spanda* or throb of creative consciousness which is the basis and support of all mental and sensuous activity, then all *vikalpas* or thought-constructs cease. The breath neither goes out, nor does it come in, and the essential nature of Bhairava is revealed.

2. *Dvādaśānta* means a distance of 12 fingers in the outer space measured from the tip of the nose.

3. The difference between the previous *dhāraṇā* and this one lies in the fact that whereas in the previous *dhāraṇā*, the *madhya daśā* develops by one-pointed awareness of the pauses of *prāṇa* and *apāna*, in the present *dhāraṇā*, the *madhya daśā* develops by means of *nirvikalpa-bhāva*.

Abhinavagupta has quoted this *dhāraṇā* in *Tantrāloka* v.22 p. 333 and there also he emphasizes *nirvikalpa-bhāva*. He says that one should fix one's mind with pointed awareness on the junction of *prāṇa*, *apāna* and *udāna* in the centre, then *prāṇa* and *apāna* will be suspended; the mind will be freed of all *vikalpas*, *madhya daśā* will develop, and the aspirant will have the realization of his essential Self which is the nature of Bhairava.

Śivopādhyāya says that since this *dhāraṇā* takes the help of *madhyadaśā*, it may be considered to be an *āṇava upāya*. But the development of *madhyadaśā* is brought about by *nirvikalpa-*

bhāva in this *dhāraṇā*. From this point of view, it may be considered to be *śāmbhava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 4]

VERSE 27

कुम्भिता रेचिता वापि पूरिता या यदा भवेत् ।
तदन्ते शान्तनामासौ शक्त्या शान्तः प्रकाशते ॥ २७ ॥

Kumbhitā recitā vāpi pūrītā vā yadā bhavet /
Tadante śāntanāmāsau śaktyā śāntaḥ prakāśate // 27

TRANSLATION

When the *Śakti* in the form of exhalation (*recitā*) is retained outside (at *dvādaśānta*), and in the form of inhalation (*pūrītā*) is retained inside (at the *hṛt* or centre), then at the end of this practice,¹ the *Śakti* is known as *Śāntā*² or tranquillized and through *Śakti Śānta Bhairava*³ is revealed.

NOTES

1. By means of continuous practice of *kumbhaka* or retention of breath in the above way, physical and mental tranquillity is experienced, and *madhya daśā* is developed. The sense of *bheda* or difference between *prāṇa* and *apāna* disappears. That is why this *prāṇa śakti* is known as *śāntā*.

2. On account of the disappearance of *bheda* or difference between *prāṇa* and *apāna* the *Śakti* is known as *Śāntā* or which in this context means 'subsided', 'ceased'.

3. *Bhairava* (the divine self) is called *Śānta* (peaceful) because He transcends all the limits of name and form and in Him there is no trace of difference or duality.

This *dhāraṇā* is a variety of *Aṇava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 5]

VERSE 28

आ मूलात्किरणाभासां सूक्ष्मात् सूक्ष्मतरात्मिकाम् ।
चिन्तयेत्तां द्विषट्कान्ते शाम्यन्ती भैरवोदयः ॥ २८ ॥

Āmūlāt kiraṇābhāsāṃ sūkṣmātsūkṣmatarātmikām/
Cintayet tāṃ dviṣaṭkānte śyāmyantīm Bhairavodayaḥ// 28.

TRANSLATION

Meditate on the Śakti¹ arising from the *mūlādhāra cakra*², scintillating like rays (of the sun), and getting subtler and subtler till at last she dissolves in *dvādaśānta*.³ Thus does *Bhairava* become manifest.⁴

NOTES

1. Śakti here refers to *prāṇaśakti* that abides as *prāṇakuṇḍalini* in the interior of the body. *Kuṇḍalini* lies folded up in $3\frac{1}{2}$ folds in *Mūlādhāra*.

2. *Mūlādhāra cakra* is situated in the spinal region below the genitals. A *cakra* is a centre of *prāṇic* energy located in the *prāṇamaya kośa* in the interior of the body. This *dhāraṇā* refers to the rise of *Kuṇḍalini* which goes in a flash into *dvādaśānta* or *Brahmarandhra* (the *cakra* at the top of the head) and dissolves in it. This is known as *cit-kuṇḍalini* or *akrama kuṇḍalini* i.e. *kuṇḍalini* that does not pass successively through the *cakras* but goes directly to *Brahmarandhra*.

3. *Dviṣaṭkānte* (twice six) means *dvādaśānta* at the end of 12 fingers. This *dvādaśānta* refers to *Brahmarandhra* which is at a distance of 12 fingers from the middle of the eye-brows (*bhrūmadhya*).

4. In *dvādaśānta* or *Brahmarandhra*, *Kuṇḍalini* gets dissolved in *prakāśa* or light of consciousness abiding in *Brahmarandhra*. In that *prakāśa* is revealed the nature of *Bhairava*.

Inasmuch as this *dhāraṇā* depends on the *bhāvanā* of *prāṇaśakti*, this is *āṇava upāya*. *Netra Tantra*, however, takes it a *Śāmbhava upāya*. (VIII, p. 200).

[Dhāraṇā 6]

VERSE 29

उद्गच्छन्तीं तडिद्रूपं प्रतिचक्रं क्रमात्क्रमम् ।
ऊर्ध्वं मुष्टिन्नयं यावत् तावदन्ते महोदयः ॥ २९ ॥

Udgacchantiṃ taḍṭrūpām praticakram kramāt kramam/
Ūrdhvam muṣṭitrayaṃ yāvat tāvad ante mahodayaḥ// 29

TRANSLATION

Meditate on that very lightning-like *śakti* (i.e. *Kuṇḍalinī*), moving upwards successively from one centre of energy (*cakra*) to another upto three fists i.e. *dvādaśānta*.¹ At the end, one can experience the magnificent rise of *Bhairava*.²

NOTES

1. This *dvādaśānta* also refers to *Brahmarandhra*.

2. This refers to the rise of *kuṇḍalinī* piercing successively through all the *cakras* or centres of energy till at last, it dissolves in *Brahmarandhra*. This is known as *prāṇa-kuṇḍalinī*. The difference between this *dhāraṇā* and the previous one consists in the fact that, in this *dhāraṇā* the *kuṇḍalinī* moves successively through the *cakras* and then finally dissolves in *Brahmarandhra*, whereas in the previous *dhāraṇā*, the *Kuṇḍalinī* shoots forth from *mūlādhāra* directly in *Brahmarandhra* and gets dissolved in it without passing through the intervening *cakras*. Jayaratha quotes it in his commentary on *Tantrāloka* (v.88). This is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 7]

VERSE 30

क्रमद्वादशकं सम्यग् द्वादशाक्षरभेदितम् ।

स्थूलसूक्ष्मपरस्थित्या मुक्त्वा मुक्त्वान्ततः शिवः ॥ ३० ॥

Kramadvādaśakam samyag dvādaśākṣarabheditam /

Sthūlasūkṣmaparasthityā muktva muktvāntataḥ Śivaḥ // 30

TRANSLATION

Twelve successively higher centres of energy¹ associated with twelve successive letters² should be properly meditated on. Each of them should at first be meditated on in a gross phase, then leaving that in a subtle phase and then leaving that also in the

supreme phase till finally the meditator becomes identified with Śiva. 30

NOTES

1. The twelve successively higher centres of energy (*krama-dvādaśakam*) are: 1. *janmāgra*, 2. *mūla*, 3. *Kanda*, 5. *nābhi*, 5. *hṛdaya*, 6. *Kaṇṭha*, 7. *tālu*, 8. *bhrūmadhya*, 9. *lalāṭa*, 10. *brahmarandhra*, 11. *śakti*, 12. *vyāpini*.

These are known as *dvādaśasthāna* or twelve stations.

These are stages of the rising *kuṇḍalini*. They are correlatives of twelve vowels. The first four stages or stations or centres of energy are lower (*apara*) and concern *bheda* or difference.

i. *Janmāgra* is at the level of the generative organ. Since the generative organ is concerned with *janma* or birth of individuals, therefore the centre of energy at this level is known as *janma*, or *janmādhāra* (basis of generation) or *janmasthāna* (the station which is involved in generation) or *janmāgra* (*janmāgra* means the point or head of the generative organ.)

ii. *Mūla*, generally known as *mūlādhāra* or the root centre. This is in the spinal centre of region below the genitals.

iii. *Kanda*, a bulbous or tuberous root, so called, because it is a tangle of many nerves.

iv. *Nābhi* or navel. The *Maṇipūra cakra* is situated near it.

After this, the following five are concerned with subtler energies known as *bhedābheda* or *parāpara*.

v. *Hṛd* or heart.

vi. *Kaṇṭha*—the cavity at the base of the throat.

vii. *Tālu*—palate

viii. *Bhrūmadhya*—centre between the eye-brows.

ix. *Lalāṭa*—Forehead.

In the following three stages, the energy is of the form of *para* or *abheda*.

x. *Brahmarandhra*—The apex of the cranium.

xi. *Śakti*—pure energy which is not a constituent of the body.

xii. *Vyāpini*—the energy which appears when *Kuṇḍalini* finishes its journey.

2. The twelve successive letters are the following twelve vowels;

1. a, 2. ā, 3. i, 4. ī, 5. u, 6. ū, 7. e, 8. ai, 9. o, 10. au, 11. am, 12. aḥ. These vowels have to be meditated on in the above twelve stages of the kuṇḍalīnī.

This *dhāraṇā* in the gross form consists of *āṇava upāya*, and in the subtle and supreme form, it consists of *śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 8]

VERSE 31

तयापूर्याशु मूर्धान्तं भङ्क्त्वा भ्रूक्षेपसेतुना ।

निर्विकल्पं मनः कृत्वा सर्वोर्ध्वे सर्वगोद्गमः ॥ ३१ ॥

Tayāpūryāśu mūrdhāntaṃ bhaṅktvā bhrūkṣepasetunā /
Nirvikalpaṃ manaḥ kṛtvā sarvordhve sarvagodgamaḥ // 31

TRANSLATION

Having filled the *mūrdhānta*¹ with the same *prāṇic* energy quickly and having crossed it with the help of the bridge-like contraction of the eye-brows², one should free one's mind of all dichotomizing thought-constructs. His consciousness will then rise higher than *dvādaśānta* and then there will appear the sense of omnipresence.

NOTES

1. *Mūrdhānta* here means *dvādaśānta* i.e. *Brahmarandhra*, a space covered by twelve fingers from the middle of eye-brows.

2. Just as a river is crossed by means of a bridge, even so the *prāṇic* energy has to be crossed over by an esoteric technique of *bhrūkṣepa*. Then that *prāṇic* energy will be converted into *cit-śakti*, and the aspirant's consciousness will rise higher than that of the *Brahmarandhra* and he will have a feeling of omnipresence. The esoteric technique of *bhrūkṣepa* was a closely guarded secret among the mystics and is now practically lost.

This is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 9]

VERSE 32

शिखिपक्षैश्चित्ररूपैर्मण्डलैः शून्यपञ्चकम् ।

ध्यायतोऽनुत्तरे शून्ये प्रवेशो हृदये भवेत् ॥ ३२ ॥

Śikhipakṣaiś citrarūpair maṇḍalaiḥ śūnyapañcakam /
Dhyāyato' nuttare śūnye praveśo hṛdaye bhavet // 32

TRANSLATION

The *yogī* should meditate in his heart on the five voids¹ of the five senses which are like the five voids appearing in the circles² of motley feathers of peacocks. Thus will he be absorbed in the Absolute void.³

NOTES

1. Five voids or *śūnya-pañcakam*. This means that the *yogī* should meditate on the five ultimate sources of the five senses, i.e. the five *tanmātras*, sound as such, form as such, etc. which have no concrete appearance and are mere voids.

There is also a *double entendre* in *śūnyapañcakam*. Just as there are five holes in the circles of the feathers of the peacocks—one above, one below, one in the middle, and one on each side, even so the *yogī* should meditate on the five ultimate sources of the sense i.e. the five *tanmātras* as five voids.

2. Circles—*maṇḍalas*. There is a *double entendre* in the word *maṇḍala* also. In the case of the peacock, it means the circles in the feather; in the case of the *yogī*, it means the senses. (*maṇḍaṃ rāsasāraṃ lānti iti maṇḍalāni*—those that carry the quintessence of the five objects of sense are *maṇḍalas*, i.e. the five senses).

3. The Absolute void is *Bhairava* who is beyond the senses and the mind, beyond all the categories of these instruments. From the point of view of the human mind, He is most void. From the point of view of Reality, He is most full, for He is the source of all manifestation.

[Dhāraṇā-10]

VERSE-33

ईदृशेन क्रमेणैव यत्र कुत्रापि चिन्तना ।

शून्ये कुड्ये परे पात्रे स्वयं लीना वरप्रदा ॥ ३३ ॥

Īdṛśena krameṇaiva yatrakutrāpi cintanā /

Śūnye kuḍye pare pātre svayaṃ linā varapradā // 33

TRANSLATION

In this way, successively,¹ wherever there is mindfulness on whether void, on wall, or on some excellent person², that mindfulness is absorbed by itself in the supreme and offers the highest benefaction.³

NOTES

1. Just as there is concentration in successive steps on *gudā-dhāra* (*mūlādhāra*), *janma*, *kanda*, *nābhi*, *hṛdaya*, *kaṅṭha*, *tālu*, *bhrūmadhya*, *lalāṭa*, *brahmarandhra*, *śakti* and *vyāpini* in one's own body, so concentration in successive steps may be practised outside one's body also e.g. on some vast empty space, on some high wall, etc.

2. *Parepātre* – *pātre* here means fit, competent person, *pare pātre* means on some excellent competent person, e.g. on a pureminded competent pupil.

3. The highest spiritual experience is here said to be the highest benefaction.

The above *dhāraṇā* begins with *Aṅava upāya* and finally merges in *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 11]

VERSE 34

कपालान्तर्मनो न्यस्य तिष्ठन्मीलितलोचनः ।

क्रमेण मनसो दाढ्यात् लक्षयेल्लक्ष्यमुत्तमम् ॥ ३४ ॥

Kapālāntarmano nyasya tiṣṭhan mīlitalocanaḥ /
Krameṇa manaso dārḍhyāt lakṣayet lakṣyam uttamam // 34

TRANSLATION

Fixing one's attention on the interior¹ of the cranium (kapāla) and seated with eyes closed,² with the stability of the mind,³ one gradually discerns that which is most eminently discernible.⁴

The word *kapāla* means 'cranium.' There is also an esoteric meaning of his word. Śivopādhyāya quotes the following verse from Tantrakośa in this connexion.

“Kaśabdena parāśaktiḥ pālakaḥ Śivasamjñayā /
Śiva-Śakti-samāyogaḥ kapālaḥ paripaṭhyate” //

“The word *ka* signifies *parāśakti* or the supreme divine Energy, and the word *pāla* meaning ‘protector’ signifies *Śiva*. The whole word *kapāla* is therefore, used in the sense of union between *Śiva* and *Śakti*.” *Śiva* and *Śakti* in other words, stand for *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* i.e. Light of Consciousness and its awareness. According to this interpretation the translation of the above verse would stand thus:

“Having fixed one's mind inwardly on the union of *Śiva* and *Śakti*,⁵ and seated with eyes closed, gradually with the stability of the mind, one discerns what is most eminently discernible.”

NOTES

1. ‘On the interior means ‘on the Light that is ever present inside’.

2. ‘With eyes closed’ means ‘detached from the external world and completely introverted.’

3. The mind is, at first, very fickle, but by constant practice, it acquires stability and then one can concentrate with steadiness.

4. This means that one becomes aware of the Highest spiritual Reality.

By this practice, the sense of difference gradually diminishes; and one begins to view the entire universe as an expression of *Śiva*.

This *dhāraṇā* comes under *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 12]

VERSE 35

मध्यनाडी मध्यसंस्था बिससूत्राभरूपया ।
 ध्यातान्तर्व्योमया देव्या तया देवः प्रकाशते ॥ ३५ ॥

Madhyānāḍī madhyasaṁsthā bisasūtrābharūpayā |
Dhyātāntarvīyomayā devyā tayā devaḥ prakāśate || 35

TRANSLATION

The medial *nāḍī*¹ is situated in the middle. It is as slender as the stem of a lotus. If one meditates on the inner vacuity of this *nāḍī*, it helps in revealing the Divine.²

NOTES

1. *Nāḍī* here means the 'prāṇic channel'.

2. *Prāṇaśakti* exists in *Suṣumnā* or the medial *nāḍī*. If one meditates on the inner vacuity existing in this medial *nāḍī* the *prāṇa* and *apāna* currents get dissolved in the *Suṣumnā*, the *udāna* current becomes active. Thus the *kuṇḍalīnī* rises, passes through *suṣumnā*, and piercing the various centres of energy (*cakras*), finally merges in *Sahasrāra*. There the *yogī* experiences spiritual light with which he feels identified. This is what is meant by saying that the Divine is revealed by the aid of the interior *prāṇic* force residing in *Suṣumnā*. The same idea has been expressed in the following verse of *Spandakārikā*:

Tadā tasmin mahāvīyomni pralīnaśāśibhāskare.
Sausuptapadavanmūḍhaḥ prabuddhaḥ syādanāvṛtaḥ.
 (Verse 25)

When the moon (*apāna* current of vital energy) and sun (*prāṇa* current of vital energy) get dissolved and the *yogī* enters the *Suṣumnā*, the *yogī* who is after supernormal powers becomes befuddled like one who is fast asleep, but the one who is not under such an influence is wide awake and experiences spiritual Light.

This begins with *Āṇava upāya* and ends in *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 13]

VERSE 36

कररुद्धदृग्गस्त्रेण भ्रूमेवाद् द्वाररोघनात् ।
 वृष्टे बिन्दौ क्रमाल्लीने तन्मध्ये परमा स्थितिः ॥ ३६ ॥

Kararuddhadṛggastraṇa bhrūbhedād dvārarodhanāt /
 Dṛṣṭe bindau kramālīne tanmadhye paramā sthitiḥ //36

TRANSLATION

By stopping the openings (of the senses) with the weapon (*astra*),¹ by which are blocked the eyes (and other openings in the face) and thus by breaking open (the knot in the centre of the eye-brows)² the *bindu* is perceived³ which (on the development of one-pointedness) gradually disappears (in the ether of consciousness)⁴. Then (in the centre of the ether of consciousness), the *yogī* is established in the highest (spiritual) state.

NOTES

1. 'Kararuddhadṛggastra' is a kind of *karaṇa* used in *āṇava upāya*. *Karaṇa* is thus defined *Karaṇam dehasanniveśa-viśeṣ-ātma mudrādivyāpārah*, i.e. 'disposition of the limbs of the body in a particular way, usually known as *mudrā* i.e. control of certain organs and senses that helps in concentration'. Here the *karaṇa* specified is by means of the hands. The ten fingers of the two hands are used in this *mudrā*. The ears are closed with the two thumbs: the eyes are closed with the index fingers: the two nostrils are closed with the two middle fingers; the mouth is closed with the ring-fingers and the little fingers. This is what is meant by saying "By stopping (the openings of the sense) with the weapon in the form of the hands." The openings of all the *jñānendriyas* or organs of sense are closed.

By this device consciousness is closed to all exterior influences. and the vital energy is confined within.

2. The vital energy, by closing the various openings of the senses, rises up towards the centre of the eye-brows and reach-

ing there ruptures the knot or tangle of nerves in which a very significant energy is locked up.

3. When the centre of the eye-brows is ruptured by the vital energy that rises up from within, a point of brilliant light is perceived. This is the *bindu* or *vindu* which means a dot, a globule, a drop, a point. It is written both as *bindu* and *vindu*.

4. As soon as the *bindu* is perceived, the *yogī* has to concentrate on it. When the concentration develops, the *bindu* begins to disappear gradually and finally vanishes in the ether of universal consciousness (*cidākāśa*). This is said to be *paramā sthitiḥ*, the highest state of the *yogī*.

There are five stages in this *dhāraṇā*, viz. (1) *dvāra-rodhanam* or stopping the openings of the senses with the fingers of the two hands, (2) *bhrūbhedah*—by closing the openings of the senses, the vital energy that is pent up within rises to the centre of the eye-brows, and ruptures the tangle of nerves situated in that centre; (3) *bindudarśanam*—when the centre of the eye-brows is pierced by the vital energy, then a *bindu* or point of light that is imprisoned within it is released and the *yogī* perceives it mentally (4) *Kramāt-ekāgratāprakarṣāt line samvidgagane* i.e. when the *bindu* is concentrated upon, it gradually begins to disappear and finally vanishes in the ether of consciousness, (5) *tanmadhye yoginaḥ paramā sthitiḥ-bhairavābhivyaktiḥ*—in that ether of consciousness, the *yogī* realizes the highest state, that is to say, in that is revealed the essential nature of *Bhairava*.

Svāmī Lakṣmaṇa Joo, however, gives a different interpretation of this *dhāraṇā*. He maintains that *bhrūbhedāt* is *lyablope pañcamī* which means 'after having ruptured the tangle of nerves in the middle of the eye-brows'. This is to be achieved by concentration on the central spot of the eye-brows. When this is effected, a drop of light will be visible there. After achieving this result, the openings of the senses have to be blocked by the above *mudrā*, then *prāṇa śakti* will arise in the *suṣumnā* which will mount up towards *Brahmarandhra*. This will hasten the dissolution of the drop of light in *Brahmarandhra* and in that state the *yogī* will realize his essential Self. This is an *āṇava upāya* ending in *śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 14]

VERSE 37

धामान्तःक्षोभसंभूतसूक्ष्माग्नितिलकाकृतिम् ।

बिन्दुं शिखान्ते हृदये लयान्ते ध्यायतो लयः ॥ ३७ ॥

Dhāmāntaḥ-kṣobhasambhūtasūkṣmāgnitilakākṛtim /
Binduṃ śikhānte hṛdaye layānte dhyāyato layaḥ // 37.

TRANSLATION

The *yogī* should meditate either in the heart or in *dvādaśānta*¹ on the *bindu* which is a subtle spark of fire resembling a *tilaka*² produced by pressure on the *dhāma* or *teja* (light existing in the eyes).³ By such practice the discursive thought (*vikalpa*) of the *yogī* disappears, and on its disappearance, the *yogī* is absorbed in the light of supreme consciousness.

NOTES

1. The word *śikhānta* (end of the tuft of hair on the head) here means *dvādaśānta* or *brahmarandhra*.

2. *Tilaka*—a small round dot of sandalwood paste applied on the forehead by the Hindus as a mark of devotion to a deity.

3. When the eyes are pressed, certain sparks appear. The *yogī* should mentally seize the *bindu* (point) which is one of the sparks appearing in the eye by pressure, and should meditate on that *bindu* either in the heart or *dvādaśānta*. By this practice, his habit of dichotomising thought (*vikalpa*) will disappear, and when that disappears, he will be established in the essential nature of *Bhairava*.

The word *dhāma* in this context means the light in the eye, or the word *dhāma* may be interpreted as the subtle sparks of light of a lamp that appear at the time of the extinction of its light.

This is an *Āṇava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 15]

VERSE 38

अनाहते पात्रकर्णेऽभग्नशब्दे सरिद्द्रुते ।
शब्दब्रह्मणि निष्णातः परं ब्रह्माधिगच्छति ॥ ३८ ॥

Anāhate pātrakarṇe' bhagnaśabde sariddrute /
Śabdabrahmaṇi niṣṇātaḥ param brahmādhigacchati //38

TRANSLATION

One who is deeply versed and deeply bathed¹ or steeped in *Nāda* which is *Brahman* in the form of sound (*śabdabrahmaṇi niṣṇātaḥ*), which is vibrating inside without any impact (*anāhate*),² which can be heard only by the ear that becomes competent by *yoga* (*pātrakarṇe*),³ which goes on sounding uninterruptedly (*abhagnaśabde*) and which is rushing headlong like a river (*sariddrute*) attains to Brahman (*brahmādhigacchati*).

NOTES

1. There is a *double entendre* in *niṣṇāta*. It means both well-versed and well bathed (*ni-snāta*) i.e. deeply steeped.
2. *Anāhata nāda* literally means unstruck sound. It is a sound that goes on vibrating within spontaneously without any impact. About ten such kinds of *nāda* (sound) that vibrate within growing subtler and subtler are referred to in books on *Yoga*. Here the reference is to the subtlest *nāda* that vibrates in *prāṇaśakti* present in *suṣumnā*. *Prāṇaśakti* is, in the universe, representative of *parāśakti*, the *śakti* of *Parama Śiva*. It is the eternal energy of consciousness, the spiritual *spanda*.

When *Kuṇḍalinī* rises, one is able to hear this. The *yogī* has to concentrate on this sound which is at first like that of a hand-bell, then subtler like that of a flute, then subtler still like that of *vīṇā*, and then subtler like that of the buzz of a bee. When the *yogī* concentrates on this *nāda*, he forgets everything of the external world, is gradually lost in the internal sound and is finally absorbed in *cidākāśa* i.e. in the vast expanse of consciousness. This is what is meant by saying that he attains to *Brahman*. This kind of *yoga* is known as *varṇa* in *Āṇava upāya* of *Śaiva yoga*,

as *nādānusandhāna* in some of the older *upaniṣads* and *Nātha* tradition, and *surati śabda yoga* in Kabira and other mediaeval saints.

3. *Pātrakarṇe* means that this inner spontaneous sound is not audible to every ear but only to the ear that is made competent to hear it under the guidance of a *guru*.

This is an *Āṇava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 16]

VERSE 39

प्रणवादिसमुच्चारात् प्लुतान्ते शून्यभावनात् ।

शून्यया परया शक्त्या शून्यतामेति भैरवि ॥ ३९ ॥

Praṇavādisamuccārāt plutānte śūnyabhāvanāt/

Śūnyayā parayā śaktyā śūnyatām eti bhairavi, 39//

TRANSLATION

O Bhairavi, by perfect recitation of *praṇava* or the sacred syllable *Aum*, etc and by contemplating over the void at the end of the protracted phase² of it and by the most eminent energy of the void,³ the *yogī* attains the void.⁴

NOTES

1. Et cetera refers to other *praṇavas*. There are chiefly three *praṇavas*—(1) the Vedic *praṇava*, *Aum*. (2) the *Śaiva praṇava*, *Hūm* and (3) the *Śākta praṇava*, *Hrīm*.

2. *Pluta* or the protracted form is an utterance of three *mātrās* or moras. Just as the crow of the cock is at first short, then long and then protracted, even so there are three phases of the recitation of *Aum*—short (*hrasva*), then long (*dirgha*) and then protracted (*pluta*).

The usual practice in the recitation of *Aum* is contemplation of *ardhacandra*, *bindu*, etc. upto *unmanā* after the protracted phase. In the present verse, *Bhairava* is referring to a different practice. He says that at the end of the protracted phase of the recitation, do not contemplate over *ardhacandra*, *bindu*, etc., but

over *śūnya* or void. *Śūnya* or void here means free of all external or internal objective support, of all *tattvas*, and of all residual traces of *kleśas*. Gross objects like jar, cloth etc. are external support of the mind, pleasure, pain, etc. are the internal support of the mind, and residual traces are the *vāsanās* of *avidyā*, *asmitā*, *rāga*, *dveṣa* and *abhiniveśa*.

Śūnya or void means that which is free of the above conditions. In other words, the mind has to be made *nirvikalpa*, free of all *vikalpas*, of all thoughts.

3. The most eminent energy of the void is the energy of the *parāśakti*.

4. Attaining the void means attaining the nature of Bhairava, which is free of difference, duality and *vikalpa*.

This begins with *Āṇava upāya* and ends in *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 17]

VERSE 40

यस्य कस्यापि वर्णस्य पूर्वान्तावनुभावयेत् ।

शून्यया शून्यभूतोऽसौ शून्याकारः पुमान्भवेत् ॥ ४० ॥

Yasya kasyāpi varṇasya pūrvāntāvānubhāvayet /

Śūnyayā śūnyabhūto' sau śūnyākāraḥ pumān bhavet // 40

TRANSLATION

The *Yogi* should contemplate over the previous condition of any letter whatsoever before its utterance and its final condition after its utterance as mere void. He will, then with the help of the power of the void,¹ become of the nature and form of the void.²

NOTES

1. Power of the void is the power of *parāśakti*.
2. Of the nature and form of the void means that the *yogi* will become completely freed from identification with the *prāṇa*, body, etc. as the Self.

This is *Śāktopāya* ending in *Sāmbhava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 18]

VERSE 41

तन्व्यादिवाद्यशब्देषु दीर्घेषु क्रमसंस्थितेः ।
अनन्यचेताः प्रत्यन्ते परव्योमवपुर्भवेत् ॥ ४१ ॥

Tantryādīvādyāśabdeṣu dīrghēṣu kramasamsthiteḥ/
Ananyacetāḥ pratyante paravyomavapur bhavet // 41

TRANSLATION

If one listens with undivided attention to sounds of stringed and other musical instruments which on account of their (uninterrupted) succession are prolonged,¹ he will, at the end,² be absorbed in the ether of consciousness (and thus attain the nature of *Bhairava*).

NOTES

1. The resonance of musical notes lasts for a long time and being melodious it attracts the attention of the listener. Even when it stops, it still reverberates in the mind of the listener. The listener becomes greatly engrossed in it. A musical note, if properly produced, appears to arise out of eternity and finally to disappear in it.

2. When the music stops, it still vibrates in the memory. If the *yogī* does not allow his mind to wander to something else, but concentrate on the echo of the music, he will be absorbed in the source of all sound, viz; *parāvāk* and thus will acquire the nature of *Bhairava*.

[Dhāraṇā 19]

VERSE 42

पिण्डमन्त्रस्य सर्वस्य स्थूलवर्णक्रमेण तु ।
अर्धेन्दुबिन्दुनादान्तःशून्योच्चारद्भवेच्छिवः ॥ ४२ ॥

Piṇḍamantrasya sarvasya sthūlavarṇakrameṇa tu /
Ardhendubindunādāntaḥśūnyocchārād bhavec chivaḥ // 42.

TRANSLATION

By the *uccāra*¹ of all *piṇḍamantras*² which are arranged in an order of gross letters and which go on vibrating in subtle forms beginning from *bindu*, *ardhacandra*, *nādānta*, etc. and ending in *śūnya* or *unmanā* one verily becomes *Śiva* or it may mean that by *parāmarśa* or reflection on the *piṇḍamantras* which are arranged in the order of gross letters as *Śūnya* or void up to *samanā*, one attains *unmanā* state i.e. *Śiva*.

NOTES

1. *Uccāra* here does not mean uttering or muttering but moving upward from gross utterance, to subtle *spandana* (vibration) and finally to mental reflection.

2. *Piṇḍamantra* is that in which each letter is separately arranged and in which usually there is a connecting vowel at the end. *Aum̐* is *piṇḍamantra*, *Navātma* or the following mantra consisting of nine letters is a *piṇḍamantra*.

H, R, Kṣ, M, L, V, Y, N, Ūm̐ (ह, र, क्ष, म, ल, व, य, ण, ऊँ(ण))

3. In a *piṇḍamantra*, there is first the muttering of the gross letters, e.g. *aum̐* (in case of *praṇava*), and 'h' to *ṇūm̐* in case of *navātma mantra*, then reflection on the subtle *spandana* in the form of *bindu*, *ardhacandra*, etc. and finally contemplation on *śūnya* or *unmanā*. When by this process the *yogī*'s mind finally attains to *unmanā*, he becomes identified with *Śiva*.

Taking the *mantra aum̐* for example, Śivopādhyāya in his commentary shows how its recitation points to the mounting of *prāṇaśakti* step by step from the navel up to *dvādaśānta*.

'A' (अ) of *Aum̐* has to be contemplated on in the navel, 'U' (उ) in the heart i.e. the centre, 'ṃ' (म्) in the mouth (or according to some in the palate or roof of the mouth), *bindu* in the centre of the eye-brows, *ardhacandra* in the forehead, *nirodhīnī* in the upper part of the forehead, *nāḍā* in the head, *nādānta* in *Brahmarandhra*, *śakti* in the skin, *vyāpīnī* in the root of the *śikhā* (tuft of hair on the top of the head), *samanā* in the *śikhā*, and *unmanā* in the top of the *śikhā*. Beyond this, there is the vast expanse of consciousness which is *Bhairava*. The *yogī* is now identified with *Bhairava*.

In the navel, centre and mouth, a, u, ṃ, are recited in their gross form. The time taken in the recitation of each of these is one *mātrā* or mora (time occupied in uttering one short syllable). From *bindu* upto *samanā*, the time occupied is *ardhamātrā* or half a mora. *Unmanā* is beyond time.

This is *Āṇava upāya* leading to *Śāmbhava state*.

[Dhāraṇā 20]

VERSE 43

निजदेहे सर्वदिक्कं युगपद्भावयेद्वियत् ।
निर्विकल्पमनास्तस्य वियत्सर्वं प्रवर्तते ॥ ४३ ॥

Nijadehe sarvadikkam yugapat bhāvayed viyat /
Nirvikalpamanās tasya viyat sarvam pravartate // 43.

TRANSLATION

If in one's body, one contemplates over *śūnya* (spatial vacuity) in all directions simultaneously (i.e. without succession) without any thought-construct, he experiences vacuity all round (and is identified with the vast expanse of consciousness).

NOTES

Two conditions are laid down for this contemplation, viz. (1) *yugapat* and (2) *nirvikalpamanāḥ*. The contemplation on the void in all directions has to be done simultaneously and the mind has to be stilled completely. If the Yogī succeeds in fulfilling these two conditions, he will attain to the *śūnyātiśūnya* plane, to the plane of absolute void in which all differences and distinctions are totally absent.

This is *Śākta upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 21]

VERSE 44

पृष्ठशून्यं मूलशून्यं युगपद्भावयेच्च यः ।
शरीरनिरपेक्षिष्या शक्त्या शून्यमना भवेत् ॥ ४४ ॥

Pr̥ṣṭhaśūnyam¹ mūlaśūnyam yugapad bhāvayec ca yaḥ /
 Śarīranirapekṣiṇyā śaktyā² śūnyamanā bhavet // 44

TRANSLATION

He who contemplates simultaneously on the void above and the void at the base becomes, with the aid of the energy that is independent of the body, void-minded (i.e. completely free of all *vikalpas* or thought-constructs).

NOTES

1. *Pr̥ṣṭhaśūnyam* here means the void above.
2. *Śarīranirapekṣiṇyā śaktyā* means with the aid of *prāṇa-śakti*.

This *dhāraṇā* is *Śāktopāya*.

[*Dhāraṇā* 22]

VERSE 45

पृष्ठशून्यं मूलशून्यं हृच्छून्यं भावयेत्स्थिरम् ।
 युगपन्निर्विकल्पत्वान्निर्विकल्पोदयस्ततः ॥ ४५ ॥

Pr̥ṣṭhaśūnyam mūlaśūnyam hṛcchūnyam bhāvayet sthiram/
 Yugapan nirvikalpatvānnirvikalpodayas tataḥ †/ 45.

TRANSLATION

In him who firmly contemplates over the void above, the void at the base and the void in the heart, there arises at the same time, because of his being free of all *vikalpas*, the state of *Śiva* who is above all *vikalpas* (*nirvikalpodayaḥ*).

NOTES

In his commentary on the verse 45, Śivopādhyāya says that *pr̥ṣṭhaśūnyam* suggests that the *yogī* should contemplate over the *pramātā* or the subject as void, *mūlaśūnyam* suggests that he should contemplate over the *prameyas* or objects as void, and *hṛc-chūnyam* suggests that he should contemplate over *pramāṇa* or knowledge as void.

This *dhāraṇā* is also *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 23]

VERSE 46

तनूदेशे शून्यतेव क्षणमात्रं विभावयेत् ।
निर्विकल्पं निर्विकल्पो निर्विकल्पस्वरूपभाक् ॥ ४६ ॥

Tanūdeśe śūnyataiva kṣaṇamātraṁ vibhāvayet /
Nirvikalpaṁ nirvikalpo nirvikalpasvarūpabhāk // 46

TRANSLATION

If a yogi contemplates over his body believed to be the limited empirical subject as void even for a while with an attention freed of all *vikalpas* (thought-constructs), he becomes liberated from *vikalpas* and finally acquires the state of *Bhairava* who is above all *vikalpas*.

NOTES

This verse points to three stages of the *yogī*. Firstly, he contemplates over his body in a *vikalpa*-free way, secondly, by this practice he develops the tendency of being usually free of *vikalpas* (*nirvikalpaḥ*). Lastly, if this tendency is prolonged, he enters the state of *Bhairava* who is above all *vikalpas*, whose very nature is *nirvikalpa* (*nirvikalpasvarūpabhāk*).

This is *Śākta upāya* leading to *Śāmbhava state*.

[Dhāraṇā 24]

VERSE 47

सर्वं देहगतं द्रव्यं वियद्व्याप्तं मृगेक्षणे ।
विभावयेत्ततस्तस्य भावना सा स्थिरा भवेत् ॥ ४७ ॥

Sarvaṁ dehagataṁ dravyaṁ viyadvyāptaṁ mṛgekṣaṇe /
Vibhāvayet tatas tasya bhāvanā sā sthīrā bhavet // 47

TRANSLATION

O gazelle-eyed one, (if the aspirant is incapable of *śūnyabhāva* immediately), let him contemplate over the constituents of his

body like bone, flesh, etc. as pervaded with mere vacuity. (After this practice), his *bhāvanā* (contemplation) of vacuity will become steady, (and at last he will experience the light of consciousness).

NOTES

This contemplation is also *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 25]

VERSE 48

देहान्तरे त्वग्विभागं भित्तिभूतं विचिन्तयेत् ।
न किञ्चिदन्तरे तस्य ध्यायन्नध्येयभागभवेत् ॥ ४८ ॥

Dehāntare tvagvibhāgam bhittibhūtaṁ vicintayet /
Na kiñcid antare tasya dhyāyann adhyeyabhāg bhavet // 48

TRANSLATION

The *yogī* should contemplate over the skin-part in his body like (an outer, inconscient) wall. "There is nothing substantial inside it (i.e. the skin)"¹; meditating like this, he reaches a state which transcends all things meditable.²

NOTES

1. Every man is habitually identified with his body. When the *yogī* develops the practice of detaching his consciousness from the limits of the body, he develops a sense of all-pervasiveness.

2. When by the above practice, the *yogī* attains cosmic consciousness, then he experiences *Śiva-Vyāpti*; he is completely identified with *Śiva*. The sense of a separate limited experient disappears. Now there is no object for him to meditate on. The very distinction between subject and object disappears. In the words of *Bhairava* Himself *Evaṁvidhe pare tattve kaḥ pūjyaḥ kaśca tṛpyati* (Verse 16) "When the Highest Reality is realized, who is the object of worship; who is to be satisfied with worship."

This is *Śāktopāya* leading to the state of *Śiva*, leading from *śūnya* (void) to *mahāśūnya* (the vast void).

[Dhāraṇā 26]

VERSE 49

हृद्याकाशे निलीनाक्षः पद्मसम्पुटमध्यगः ।
अनन्यचेताः सुभगे परं सौभाग्यमाप्नुयात् ॥ ४९ ॥

Hṛdyākāśe nilīnākṣaḥ padmasamputamadyagaḥ /
Ananyacetāḥ subhage paraṁ saubhāgyam āpnuyāt // 49.

TRANSLATION

He whose mind together with the other senses is merged in the interior space of the heart,¹ who has entered mentally into the centre of the two bowls of the heartlotus,² who has excluded everything else from consciousness³ acquires the highest fortune⁴, O beautiful one.

NOTES

1. The word *hṛt* or heart does not mean the physical heart. It means the central spot in the body above the diaphragm. It is an etheric structure resembling lotus, just as the physical heart resembles a lotus. In the centre of this etheric heart resides *cit* — the consciousness which is always a *pramātā* or subject, never a *prameya* or object. It is this centre which is the essential Self of man and macrocosmically the centre of all manifestation. The word used in the original is *hṛdya* which means both 'pertaining to the heart', and 'pleasant'.

2. The lotus is like two hemispherical bowls blended into one. Śivopādhyāya says in his commentary that the upper bowl of the heart lotus represents *pramāṇa* or knowledge and the lower bowl represents *prameya* or object. The *madhya* or centre of this heart-lotus represents the *pramātā* or knower, the Self. It is in this centre or the Self into which the *yogi* has to plunge mentally.

3. This means who is one-pointed.

4. Śivopādhyāya explains *paraṃ saubhāgyam* (highest fortune) as *viśveśvaratā - svarūpam paramānandam* which means the highest bliss consisting in the lordship of the universe'. Kṣemārāja has quoted this verse in his commentary on *sūtra* 15 of Section I of *Śiva-sūtras*. He also explains *saubhagyam* as *viśvesvaratāpattiḥ* or acquisition of the lordship of the universe.

This is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 27]

VERSE 50

सर्वतः स्वशरीरस्य द्वादशान्ते मनो लयात् ।

दृढबुद्धेर्दृढीभूतं तत्त्वलक्ष्यं प्रवर्तते ॥ ५० ॥

Sarvataḥ svaśarīrasya dvādaśānte manolayāt /

Dṛḍhabuddher dṛḍhībhutaṃ tattvalakṣyam pravartate // 50

TRANSLATION

When the body of the *yogī* is penetrated by consciousness in all parts and his mind which has become firm by one-pointedness (*dṛḍhībhūtām*) is dissolved in the *dvādaśānta* situated in the body, then that *yogī* whose intellect has become firm experiences the characteristic of Reality.

NOTES

It is not quite clear what exactly is meant by the *dvādaśānta* of the body. In the body the *dvādaśāntas* (a distance of 12 fingers) are from the navel to the heart, from the heart to the throat, from the throat to the forehead and from the forehead to the top of the cranium. Probably, it refers to *Brahmarandhra*, the *dvādaśānta* from the forehead to the top of the cranium.

Ānandabhaṭṭa says in his commentary *Vijñānakaumudī* that 'dvādaśānta' may mean *śūnyātīśūnya* or the cosmic void or it may mean the *madhya nāḍī* of the body i.e. *suṣumnā*.

The *dhāraṇā* is one of *āṇavopāya* leading to *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 28]

VERSE 51

यथा तथा यत्र तत्र द्वादशान्ते मनः क्षिपेत् ।
 प्रतिक्षणं क्षीणवृत्तेर्वैलक्षण्यं दिनैर्भवेत् ॥ ५१ ॥

Yathā tathā yatra tatra dvādaśānte manaḥ kṣipet /
 Pratikṣaṇaṃ kṣīṇavṛtter vilakṣaṇyam dinair bhavet // 51

TRANSLATION

If one fixes one's mind at *dvādaśānta*¹ again and again (pratikṣaṇam) howsoever and wheresoever, the fluctuation of his mind will diminish and in a few days, he will acquire an extraordinary status.²

NOTES

1. The mind has to be fixed at any *dvādaśānta* from the body whether it is the superior or *ūrdhva dvādaśānta* or *Brahmarandhra* or *bāhya dvādaśānta* i.e. in exterior space at a distance of 12 fingers from the nose, or *āntara dvādaśānta* i. e. the interior *dvādaśānta* in the centre of the body, etc.

2. Śivopādhyāya explains this as *asāmānyaparabhairavarūpatā* i.e. the incomparable and ineffable state of Bhairava. This is *Āṇavopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 29.]

VERSE 52

कालाग्निना कालपदादुत्थितेन स्वकं पुरम् ।
 प्लुष्टं विचिन्तयेदन्ते शान्ताभासस्तदा भवेत् ॥ ५२ ॥

Kālāgninā kālapadād utthitena svakam puram /
 Pluṣṭam vicintayed ante śāntābhāsas tadā bhavet // 52.

TRANSLATION

(Uttering the formula *auṃ ra-kṣa-ra-ya-ūṃ tanuṃ dāhayāmi namaḥ*), one should contemplate in the following way "My

body has been burnt by the fire of *kālāgni*¹ rising from the toe of my right foot."² He will then experience his (real) nature which is all peace.³

1. *Kālāgni* Rudra is the universal destroyer. The aspirant should imagine that his whole body is being burnt by the flames of *Kālāgni* Rudra. The idea is that all the impurities that are due to the limitation of the body have to be destroyed by *Kālāgni* Rudra who destroys all impurities, sins, etc.

2. *Kālapada* is a technical term for the toe of the right foot.

3. By this practice, the aspirant feels that his impurities have been burnt away and thus he experiences his essential Self which is all peace and joy.

This is an *Āṇava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 30]

VERSE 53

एवमेव जगत्सर्वं दग्धं ध्यात्वा विकल्पतः ।
अनन्यचेतसः पुंसः पुंभावः परमो भवेत् ॥ ५३ ॥

Evam eva jagat sarvaṃ dagdhaṃ dhyātvā vikalpataḥ /
Ananyacetasaḥ puṃsaḥ puṃbhāvaḥ paramo bhavet // 53.

TRANSLATION

In this way, if the aspirant imagines that the entire world is being burnt by the fire of *Kālāgni*¹ and does not allow his mind to wander away to anything else, then in such a person, the highest state of man appears.²

NOTES

1. In the previous *dhāraṇā*, it was one's own body that had to be imagined as being burnt by *kālāgni*; in the present *dhāraṇā*, it is the entire world that has to be imagined as being burnt by *Kālāgni*.

2. The highest state of man is as Śivopādhyāya puts it in his commentary, *aparimitapramāṭṛbhairavatā*—'the nature of Bhairava that is the Infinite Subject.' It is this nature that the aspirant will acquire by this *dhāraṇā*.

This *dhāraṇā* is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 31]

VERSE 54

स्वदेहे जगतो वापि सूक्ष्मसूक्ष्मतराणि च ।
तत्त्वानि यानि निलयं ध्यात्वान्ते व्यज्यते परा ॥ ५४ ॥

Svadehe jagato vāpi sūkṣmasūkṣmatarāṇi ca /
Tattvāni yāni nilayaṃ dhyātvānte vyajyate parā //54

TRANSLATION

If the *yogī* thinks deeply that the subtle and subtler constitutive principles of one's own body or of the world are being absorbed in their own respective causes,¹ then at the end, *parā devī* or the supreme goddess is revealed.²

NOTES

1. This verse refers to the technique of *vyāpti* or fusion by which the gross *tattva* (constitutive principle of manifestation) is reabsorbed into the subtle, the subtle into the subtler, the subtler into the subtlest, e.g. the *pañca-mahābhūtas*—the five gross material principles are to be contemplated as being absorbed into the *tanmātrās* (primary subtle elements of perception), the *tanmātrās* into *ahaṃkāra* (the I or ego-making principle), this into *buddhi*, this again into *prakṛti* and so on till all are finally reabsorbed into *Sadāśiva*. Then *Śakti* or what has been designated as *parā devī* (the supreme goddess) is revealed. This kind of *vyāpti* or fusion which has been described in this verse is known as *ātmavyāpti*.

There is another stage of *vyāpti*, known as *Śivavyāpti* which will be described in verse 57.

2. At the appearance of *parā devī*, the entire cosmos appears as nothing but the expression of that universal Divine Energy. Everything is surrendered unto Her and the sense of difference disappears.

This verse refers to *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 32]

VERSE 55

पीनां च दुर्बलां शक्तिं ध्यात्वा द्वादशगोचरे ।
प्रविश्य हृदये ध्यायन् मुक्तः स्वतन्त्र्यमाप्नुयात् ॥ ५५ ॥

Pinām ca durbalām śaktiṃ dhyātvā dvādaśagocare /
Praviśya hṛdaye dhyāyanmuktaḥ svātantryam āpnuyāt //55

TRANSLATION

If *prāṇaśakti* which is gross and thick, is made frail and subtle (by *yogic* discipline, particularly *prāṇāyāma*) and if a *yogī* meditates on such *śakti* either in *dvādaśānta* or in the heart (i.e. the centre of the body) by entering mentally into it, he is liberated and he gains his (natural) sovereign power.

NOTES

The reading of the last line as given by Abhinavagupta in *Tantrāloka* (Ā XV, verses 480-81) is different. It is *suptaḥ svācchandyam āpnuyāt*. Kṣemarāja reads the last line in *Spandanirṇaya* (p. 56) as *svapnasvātantryam āpnuyāt* which is practically the same as Abhinavagupta's.

According to Svāmi Lakṣmaṇa Joo, the traditional interpretation of this verse is the following:

Pīnām indicates that the breath has to be inhaled or exhaled in a gross way i. e. with sound and *durbalām* indicates that the inhalation or exhalation has to be done slowly. According to the above reading the meaning of the verse would be "If the *yogī* practises breathing (both inhalation and exhalation) with sound and slowly meditating in *dvādaśānta* and in the heart (centre), goes to sleep, he will acquire the freedom to control his dream i.e. he will have only the dream that he desires to have."

This is *Āṇava upāya* leading to *Śāmbhava* state.

[Dhāraṇā 33]

VERSE 56

भुवनाष्ट्वाविरूपेण चिन्तयेत्क्रमशोऽखिलम् ।
स्थूलसूक्ष्मपरस्थित्या यावदन्ते मनोलयः ॥ ५६ ॥

Bhuvanādhvādirupeṇa cintayet kramaśo'khilam /
Sthūlasūkṣmaparasthityā yāvadante manolayaḥ //56.

TRANSLATION

One should contemplate step by step on the whole universe under the form of *bhuvana* and other *adhvas*¹ (courses) as being dissolved successively from the gross state into the subtle and from the subtle state into the supreme state till finally one's mind is dissolved in *Cinmātra* (pure consciousness).²

NOTES

1. According to Trika philosophy the whole universe consisting of subjective and objective aspects is a proliferation of the *svātantrya śakti* or *parāvāk* under six forms known as *ṣaḍadhvā* which means six routes or courses (ṣaṭ=six) *adhvā* = route, course). Three of them are under the *vācaka* (indicator) side which is the subjective or *grāhaka* aspect of manifestation ; the other three are under the *vācya*, the indicated or objective side.

At the level of *parāvāk*, *vācaka* and *vācya*, *śabda* and *artha*, word and object are in a state of indistinguishable unity. In manifestation, these begin to differentiate. The first *adhvā* or step of this differentiation is the polarity of *varṇa* and *kalā*. *Varṇa* at this stage, does not mean letter, or colour, or class. It means a measure index of the function-form associated with the object, and *kalā* means an aspect of creativity. *Varṇa* is the function-form and *kalā* is predicable. This is the first *adhvā* of the polarisation of *parāvāk*. This *adhvā* is known as *para* (supreme) or *abheda*, for at this stage, there is no difference between *varṇa* or *kalā*, the creative aspect.

The next *adhvā* or step in the creative descent is the polarity of *mantra* and *tattva*. This level of creativity is known as *parāpara* or *bhedābheda* (identity in difference) or *sūkṣma* (subtle). *Mantra* is the basic formula of *tattva* : *tattva* is the principle or source and origin of the subtle structural forms.

The third and final polarity is that of *pada* and *bhuvana*. This level of manifestation is known as that of *apara* (inferior) or

bheda (total difference between the *vācaka* and *vācya*) or *sthūla* (gross). *Bhuvana* is the universe as it appears to apprehending centres like ourselves. *Pada* is the actual formulation of that universe by mind reaction and speech.

The *trika* or triad on the *vācaka* side is known as *kālādhvā* i.e. of temporal order, and the *trika* or triad on *vācya* side is known as *deśādhvā* or of spatial order.

The *ṣaḍadhvā* may be arranged in the following tabular form :—

| VĀCAKA OR ŚABDA | | VĀCYA OR ARTHA |
|---|--------|---|
| The subjective order; the temporal order, phonematic manifestation. | | The objective order; the spatial order; cosmogonic manifestation. |
| Para or <i>abheda</i> level. | Varṇa | kalā |
| Parāpara or <i>bhedābheda</i> or <i>sūkṣma</i> level. | Mantra | tattva |
| <i>Apara</i> or <i>bheda</i> or <i>sthūla</i> level. | pada | bhuvana |

Of these, each preceding *adhvā* is *vyāpaka* i.e., pervasive, inhering (in the succeeding one) and each succeeding *adhvā* is *vyāpya* i.e. capable of being pervaded by the preceding one. So there is *vyāpyavyāpaka* relationship among these.

2. The *dhāraṇā* or the yogic practice recommended here is that the *yogī* should practise the *bhāvanā* or imaginative contemplation of the succeeding gross (*sthūla*) *adhvā* being dissolved in the preceding subtle (*sūkṣma*) *adhvā*. The gross (*sthūla*) manifestation, viz., *pada* and *bhuvana* should be earnestly imagined as being dissolved in their preceding subtle (*sūkṣma*) origins, viz., *mantra* and *tattva*; *mantra* and *tattva*, the subtle *adhvā*, should in turn, be earnestly imagined as being dissolved in their preceding supreme (*para*) origin *varṇa* and *kalā*. Finally these should be imagined as being dissolved in *parāvāka* or *parāśakti*, and *parāvāk* in *Śiva* i.e. *cinmātra* or *vijñāna* (pure consciousness) which alone is *Bhairava* or the ultimate Divine principle.

Kramaśāḥ in the verse means step by step, i.e. the first step should consist of the practice of the *bhāvanā* of the *sthūla* or gross manifestation being dissolved into the subtle (*sūkṣma*) one. When by sufficient practice of this *bhāvanā*, the *yogī* is fully convinced that this solid seeming world (*bhuvana*) and gross speech (*pada*) are only an appearance of a much subtler process of *mantra* and *tattva*, he should take the next step which would consist of the *bhāvanā* of the subtle (*sūkṣma*) *mantra* and *tattva* as being dissolved into the supreme (*para*) aspects of *varṇa*, *kalā*, and so on.

When the *yogī* has sufficiently practised the *bhāvanā* of the dissolution of the entire manifestation into *cit* or *vijñāna*, he will attain to the plane of *Bhairava* and his *manas* or *citta* will be automatically dissolved into *cit* (pure consciousness). This is known as *laya bhāvanā* (creative contemplation pertaining to dissolution). This ascent to the Divine is known as *āroha* or *adhyāroha krama*, the process of ascent. The 13th *sūtra* of *Pratyabhijñāḥṛdayam* expressly says that *citta* finally becomes *citi*. This is known as *cittapralaya* or the dissolution of the empirical individual mind into the Divine.

The difference between this *dhāraṇā* and *dhāraṇā* No. 30 in verse 54 consists in the fact that the *dhāraṇā* described in verse 54 leads the *yogī* only upto the subtle *śakti* where *parā devī* reveals Herself, but this leads the *yogī* upto the utmost plane of Śiva where the individual mind completely dissolves into the universal consciousness. In verse 54, the aim was the realization of the Supreme Power that is the source of the gross manifestation of the universe. In verse 56, the emphasis is on the transformation of the individual consciousness by its dissolution into the universal Divine Consciousness (*Manolaya* or *cittapralaya*). So, this is *Śāktopāya* leading to *Śāmbhava* state.

[Dhāraṇā 34]

VERSE 57

अस्य सर्वस्य विश्वस्य पर्यन्तेषु समन्ततः ।

अध्वप्रक्रियया तत्त्वं शैवं ध्यात्वा महोदयः ॥ ५७ ॥

Asya sarvasya viśvasya paryanteṣu samantataḥ |
Adhvapraṅkriyā tattvaṃ śaivaṃ dhyātvā mahodayaḥ ||57

TRANSLATION

If one meditates on the Śaiva tattva¹ (which is the quintessence) of this entire universe on all sides and to its last limits by the technique of ṣaḍadhvā² he will experience great awakening.³

NOTES

1. Śiva is both *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, both the light of Consciousness and the consciousness or awareness of that consciousness. Śaiva tattva is the *svarūpa* or essential nature of Śiva. Meditating on Śaiva tattva means meditating on the *svarūpa* (own form, essential nature) of Śiva who is both *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*.

2. The ṣaḍadhvā has two sides— *Vācaka* and *vācya*. The *vācaka* side—*varṇa*, *mantra* and *pada* are an expression of *prakāśa*, the *vācya* side—*kalā tattva*, and *bhuvana* are an expression of *vimarśa*.

In the previous *dhāraṇā* No. 32 in verse 56, the technique of the ṣaḍadhvā was used for tracing back the entire universe of subjects and objects to its source, the Central Reality. Here the technique of ṣaḍadhvā is to be used for realizing the *svarūpa* or essential nature of this Central Reality. The technique of ṣaḍadhvā is incomplete if it simply ends in re-integrating the universe to its source. It has still to realize the *śaiva tattva*, the nature of the Central Reality which is both *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* in one and the source of both the *vācaka* and *vācya* of the ṣaḍadhvā.

Again in *dhāraṇā* No. 30 (verse 54), the technique of tracing back the constitutive principles was used for *ātmavyāpti*, for the fusion of manifestation into the essential Self which, according to the Trika system, is a lower ideal. *Ātmavyāpti* emphasizes *prakāśa* which does not necessarily include the universe. In verse 57, the ideal of realization that is emphasized is *Śiva-vyāpti*, fusion into Śiva who is both *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*. It is the Reality that is inclusive of the universe. In this realization, the universe is not negated but seen *sub specie eternitatis*, under the

form of the Eternal, as an expression of the *vimarśa* aspect of *Śiva*.

3. This great awakening is the realization of the *svarūpa* or essential nature of *Śiva* who is both *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*.

The difference between the previous *dhāraṇā* (in verse 56) and this one (verse 57) lies in the fact that in the previous *dhāraṇā* the dissolution of both the objective and subjective order was to be contemplated one by one successively (*kramaśaḥ*) i.e. first the dissolution of the gross into the subtle, and then of the subtle into the supreme, whereas in the present *dhāraṇā* (verse 57) the dissolution of the entire world (*asya sarvasya viśvasya*) has to be contemplated simultaneously and integrally into *Śiva tattva*. As *Śivopādhyāya* puts it, *Bhuvanādiadhvaparyanteṣu jagataḥ Śivāt vinā na kiñcit iti jagad rūpam tyaktvā, śivameva dhyāyato mahodayaḥ syāt*. The reality of this world is nothing apart from *Śiva*. Therefore this world should be viewed not as the world (i.e. as something different from *Śiva*) but as the modality of *Śiva*. Therefore it is *Śiva* alone who has to be contemplated on. Thus there will be *mahodaya* i.e. great spiritual Awakening. This *dhāraṇā* is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 35]

VERSE 58

विश्वमेतन्महादेवि शून्यभूतं विचिन्तयेत् ।

तत्रैव च मनो लीनं ततस्तल्लयभाजनम् ॥ ५८ ॥

Viśvam etan mahādevi śūnyabhūtaṃ vicintayet /

Tatraiva ca mano līnaṃ tatas tallayabhājanam //58

TRANSLATION

O great goddess, the *yogi* should concentrate intensely on the idea that this universe is totally void. In that void; his mind would become absorbed. Then he becomes highly qualified for absorption i.e. his mind is absorbed in *śūnyātiśūnya*, the absolute void i.e. *Śiva*.

NOTES

This *dhāraṇā* is the first of a number of *dhāraṇās* on *sūnya* (void) which will come later on in the book. This is *Śāktopāya* leading to *Śāmbhava* state.

[Dhāraṇā 36]

VERSE 59

घटादिभाजने दृष्टिं भित्तीस्त्यक्त्वा विनिक्षिपेत् ।
तल्लयं तत्क्षणाद्गत्वा तल्लयात्तन्मयो भवेत् ॥ ५९ ॥

Ghaṭādibhājane dr̥ṣṭim bhittis tyaktvā vinikṣipet /
Tallayaṃ tatkṣaṇād gatvā tallayāt tanmayo bhavet //59

TRANSLATION

A *yogī* should cast his eyes in the empty space inside a jar or any other object leaving aside the enclosing partitions. His mind will in an instant get absorbed in the empty space (inside the jar) When his mind is absorbed in that empty space, he should imagine that his mind is absorbed in a total void. He will then realize his identification with the Supreme.

NOTES

Casting one's gaze into the empty space inside a jar is a device for preparing the mind for getting absorbed in total void. When the mind is absorbed in the empty space of the jar, the aspirant should imagine that the empty space has extended into a total void. Thus his mind will be absorbed in the absolute void i.e. *Śiva*.

This is *Śāmbhava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 37]

VERSE 60

निर्वृक्षगिरिभित्त्यादि-देशे दृष्टिं विनिक्षिपेत् ।
विलीने मानसे भावे वृत्तिक्षीणः प्रजायते ॥ ६० ॥

Nirvr̥kṣagiribhittiyādideśe dr̥ṣṭim vinikṣipet /
Vilīne mānase bhāve Vṛttikṣiṇaḥ prajāyate //60

TRANSLATION

One should cast his gaze on a region in which there are no trees, on mountain, on high defensive wall¹ His mental state being without any support will then dissolve and the fluctuations of his mind will cease.²

NOTES

1. The idea is that when the mind dwells on a vast vacant space, then being without the support of any definite concrete object; the mind gets absorbed in that void.

2. When the mind is absorbed in a vast open space, its *vikalpas* or thought-constructs come to a dead stop. That is the moment when the Light within makes its presence felt and the aspirant realizes that there is a deeper Reality than what is open to the senses.

Abhinavagupta quotes the first line of this verse in his *Parātriṃśikā* (on p. 136) and confirms that, in such a moment, there is *Bhairavabodhānupraveśa* (entry into Bhairava-consciousness).

This type of fixed gaze into vast vacant space without any thought-construct or objective support for the mind is known as *dr̥ṣṭibandhanabhāvanā*. As there is neither meditation nor *japa* (recitation of *mantra*), nor any meditation involved in this *dhāraṇā*, this is *Sāmbhava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 38]

VERSE 61

उभयोर्भावयोज्जनि ध्यात्वा मध्यं समाश्रयेत् ।

युगपच्च द्वयं त्यक्त्वा मध्ये तत्त्वं प्रकाशते ॥ ६१ ॥

Ubhayor bhāvayor jñāne dhyātvā madhyaṃ samāśrayet /
Yugapac ca dvayaṃ tyaktvā madhye tattvaṃ prakāśate //61

TRANSLATION

At the moment when one has perception or knowledge of two objects or ideas, one should simultaneously banish both perceptions or ideas and apprehending the gap or interval between the two, should mentally stick to it (i.e. the gap). In that gap will Reality flash forth suddenly.

NOTES

The reading *jñātvā* instead of *dhyātvā* has been adopted by Jayaratha in *Tantrāloka* I, p. 127. This reading gives better sense.

The above is *Śākta upāya*. Our mind is always caught up in perceptions or ideas. We are prisoners of our own ideas. Behind all the activities of the mind lies Reality which gives life to our mental activity. That Reality cannot be viewed as an object, for it is the Eternal Subject and ground of all experience. If we do not allow our mind to be carried away by the perceptions or ideas succeeding each other incessantly but rather let our mind dip in the gap between the two perceptions or ideas without thinking of any thing, we will, to our surprise, be bathed in that Reality which can never be an object of thought.

This is known as *nirālamba bhāvanā* or creative contemplation without any object as support for the mind. This verse has been quoted as an example of *nirālamba bhāvanā* in *Netra Tantra* (pt.I.p.201). This is also *Śūnya bhāvanā*—an example of the mind sounding its plummet in the depth of the void.

The sudden flash of Reality by this practice has been designated *unmeṣa* or opening out in *Spanda-Kārikā*. Abandonment of the two perceptions or ideas that precede and succeed the gap is known as *anālocana* or non-observation. The two ideas have not to be pushed aside by effort but have to be abandoned by a smooth, gentle non-observation. This is a very important and unfailing *dhāraṇā* for the grasp of Reality or nature of Bhairava.

[Dhāraṇā 39]

VERSE 62

भावे त्यक्ते निरुद्धा चिन् नैव भावान्तरं व्रजेत् ।
तदा तन्मध्यभावेन विकसत्यति-भावना ॥ ६२ ॥

Bhāve' tyakte niruddhā cin naiva bhāvāntaram vrajet /
Tadā tanmadhyabhāvena vikasatyati bhāvanā //62

TRANSLATION

When the mind of the aspirant that comes to quit one object is firmly restrained (*niruddha*) and does not move towards any other object, it comes to rest in a middle position between the two and through it (i.e. the middle position) is unfolded intensely the realization of pure consciousness in all its intensity.

NOTES

The previous *dhāraṇā* advises the aspirant to reject two positive objects, perceptions or thoughts (*ubhayor bhāvayoh*) and contemplate on the middle i.e. the gap between the two. In the present *dhāraṇā*, the aspirant is advised to contemplate on the middle or gap between one positive *bhāva* or object and another negative *bhāva* i.e. another *bhāva* which the aspirant has not allowed to arise in the mind. This is the main difference between the two *dhāraṇās*. The result is the same, viz.; the emergence of the essential Self or the nature of *Bhairava*.

Abhinavagupta refers to this in verse No. 84 in *Tantrāloka* pt. I

आत्मैव धर्मः इत्युक्तः शिवामृतपरिप्लुतः ।

प्रकाशावस्थितं ज्ञानं भावाभावादिमध्यतः ॥

It is *ātmā* (self) alone who is the essential nature, full of the ambrosia of *Śiva*. The knowledge that one derives by contemplation on the middle between two objects or between one positive and another negative object abides in the light of the self.

The following commentary of Jayaratha leaves no room for doubt that the above verse of Abhinavagupta refers to the two *dhāraṇās* mentioned in Verse No. 61 and 62 of Vijñānabhairava.

“भावद्वयस्ये भावाभाषयोर्वा प्रतीतिकाले मध्यं तद्द्वयावच्छेदहेतुं
शून्यमुपलभ्य तद्भावाभावादि युगपत्त्यक्त्वा तत्रैव सावधानस्य
परमोपेये शिवामृतपरिप्लुते परमात्मनि वृत्तिर्जायते इति” ॥

“The middle state i.e. the gap between two positive objects or between one positive and another negative object is *śūnya* or void which is the ground of the determination of both. In him who apprehends that void and abandoning simultaneously both positive perceptions or positive and negative perceptions fixes his attention on that alone arises that stability in the Highest Self (*paramātmāni*) who is the highest objective and who is full of the ambrosia of *Śiva*. In confirmation of the above explanation Jayaratha quotes the verses 61 and 62 of Vijñānabhairava.

Like the previous one, this *dhāraṇā* is also *Śāktopāya*.

The reading adopted by the text printed in the Kashmir Series is *bhāve nyakte*, which means ‘when the mind is fixed on an object which was never seen previously like *Śiva* with three eyes, *Viṣṇu* with four arms’. *Bhāve tyakte* is, however, a better and more authentic reading as is evident from Jayaratha’s commentary quoted above.

[Dhāraṇā 40]

VERSE 63

सर्वं देहं चिन्मयं हि जगद्वा परिभावयेत् ।
युगपन्निरविकल्पेन मनसा परमोदयः ॥ ६३ ॥

Sarvaṃ dehaṃ cinmayam hi jagad vā paribhāvayet /
Yugapan nirvikalpena manasā paramodayaḥ //63.

TRANSLATION

When an aspirant contemplates with mind unwavering and free from all alternatives his whole body or the entire universe

simultaneously as of the nature of consciousness, he experiences Supreme Awakening.

NOTES

There are two important conditions in this contemplation. Firstly, it should be done *nirvikalpena manasā*, with an unhesitating, unwavering mind free from all doubts and alternatives. Secondly, it should be *yugapat* i.e. simultaneously, in one sweep, not in succession, not in bits.

Paramodayaḥ or the Supreme Awakening referred to means that he realizes that the entire universe is enveloped in Divine Light.

This is a *Śākta upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 41]

VERSE 64

वायुद्वयस्य संघट्टादन्तर्वा बहिरन्ततः ।
योगी समत्वविज्ञानसमुद्गमनभाजनम् ॥ ६४ ॥

Vāyudvayasya saṅghaṭṭād antarvā bahir antataḥ /
Yogī samatvavijñānaśamudgamanabhājanam // 64

TRANSLATION

By the fusion (*saṅghaṭṭa*) of the two breaths, viz., *prāṇa* (expiration) rising inwardly in the centre and *apāna* (inspiration) rising externally in *dvādaśānta*, there arises finally a condition in which there is complete cessation of both whether in the centre or in the *dvādaśānta*. By meditating over that condition of void in which there is no feeling of either *prāṇa* or *apāna*, the *yogī* becomes so competent that there arises in him the intuitive experience of Equality (*samatva-vijñāna-samudgamana*)

NOTES

This is an *Āṇava upāya* leading to *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 42]

VERSE 65

सर्वं जगत्स्वदेहं वा स्वानन्दभरितं स्मरेत् ।
युगपन्स्वामृतेनैव परानन्दमयो भवेत् ॥ ६५ ॥

Sarvaṃ jagat svadehaṃ vā svānandabharitaṃ smaret /
Yugapat svāmṛtenaiva parānandamayo bhavet // 65.

TRANSLATION

The *yogī* should contemplate the entire universe or his own body simultaneously¹ in its totality as filled with his (essential, spiritual) bliss.² Then through his own ambrosia-like bliss,³ he will become identified with the supreme bliss.

NOTES

1. Simultaneously (*yugapat*) means 'with totality of attention,' in one sweep of attention, not in bits.

2. 'His own bliss' means 'his own essential spiritual or divine bliss' (*cidānanda*), not the pleasure derived from sense-objects.

3. The word *mṛtena* or ambrosia points to the fact that there is no change in this bliss. It is eternal.

Kṣemarāja has quoted this verse in Śiva-Sūtra vimarśinī at two places, in I, 18, and III, 39.

According to Svāmī Lakṣmaṇa Joo, the word 'vā' occurring in this verse should not be taken in the sense 'or' but in the sense of 'ca' i.e. 'and' (*samuccaya*). So the first line of the verse would mean 'The yogi should contemplate the entire universe and his body simultaneously in totality as filled with his spiritual bliss'.

This *dhāraṇā* is also *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 43]

VERSE 66

कुहनेन प्रयोगेण सद्य एव मृगक्षणे ।
समुदेति महानन्दो येन तत्त्वं प्रकाशते ॥ ६६ ॥

Kuhanena prayogeṇa sadya eva mṛgekṣaṇe /
Samudeti mahānando yena tattvaṃ prakāśate // 66.

TRANSLATION

O gazelle-eyed one, by the employment of magic, supreme delight arises (in the heart of the spectator) instantaneously. (In this condition of the mind), Reality manifests itself.

NOTES

When a spectator beholds some wonderful magical performance, his ordinary normal consciousness is raised to a plane where there is no distinction between subject and object, where it is freed of all thought-constructs and is filled with reverential awe, with mute wonder and ineffable joy. At that plane of consciousness is revealed the essential nature of *Bhairava*. This is only one example. When by contemplating on any scene—vast, awe-inspiring, deeply moving, the mind is thrown into ecstasy and mute wonder, it passes into *nirvikalpa* state, then that is the moment when suddenly and instantaneously Supreme Reality reveals itself.

This is an example of *Śākta upāya*.

According to Svāmī Lakṣmaṇa Joo, this verse can have another meaning also. The word 'kuhana' also means 'tickling the arm-pit'. So the verse would mean, "O gazelle-eyed one, by tickling the arm-pit, there occurs instantaneously a great joy. If one contemplates over the essential nature of joy, Reality manifests itself."

[Dhāraṇā 44]

VERSE 67

सर्वस्रोतोनिबन्धन प्राणशक्त्योर्ध्वया शनैः ।

पिपीलस्पर्शवेलायां प्रथते परमं सुखम् ॥ ६७ ॥

Sarvasrotonibandhena prāṇaśaktyordhvayā śanaiḥ /
Pipilasparśavelāyāṃ prathate paramaṃ sukham // 67

TRANSLATION

When by stopping the opening of all the senses the current of all sensory activity is stopped, the *prāṇaśakti* moves slowly upward (in the middle *nāḍī* or *suṣumnā* from *mūlādhāra* towards *Brahmarandhra*), then in the upward movement of *prāṇaśakti*, there is felt a tingling sensation (at the various stations in the middle *nāḍī*) like the one created by the movement of an ant (over the body). At the moment of that sensation, there ensues supreme delight.

NOTES

The main point in this *dhāraṇā* is that when *prāṇaśakti* moves upward, there is the awakening of *Kuṇḍalinī* which moves upward towards *dvādaśānta* i.e. towards *Brahmarandhra*. This slow and gradual movement of *prāṇaśakti* or of *kuṇḍalinī* gives a sensation like that of the movement of an ant over the body. This sensation at the time of the ant-like movement of *prāṇaśakti* is very pleasant.

Śivopādhyāya says that the upward movement of *prāṇaśakti* can be achieved by *kumbhaka prāṇāyāma*. He quotes Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtras* (II, 49-50) which say that *prāṇa* can be made *dirgha-sūkṣma* (prolonged and subtle) by *kumbhaka prāṇāyāma* (restraint of breath). This would be *āṇava upāya*. But Patañjali does not refer to *Kuṇḍalinī* yoga. Śivopādhyā's quotation from Patañjali in this context is irrelevant.

What the *dhāraṇā* actually means to say is that when the openings of all the senses are stopped and the mind is kept free of all thought-constructs (*nirvikalpa*) the *prāṇaśakti*, becomes active in the *suṣumnā*, and as the *kuṇḍalinī* rises slowly towards *Brahmarandhra*, one feels like the sensation of an ant creeping over the body. At that time, the *yogī* experiences the movement of *kuṇḍalinī* from one station to another and is overjoyed.

[Dhāraṇā 45]

VERSE 68

वहनेर्विषयस्य मध्ये तु चित्तं सुखमयं क्षिपेत् ।
केवलं वायुपूर्णं वा स्मरानन्देन युज्यते ॥ ६८ ॥

Vahner viṣasya madhye tu cittaṃ sukhamayaṃ kṣipet /
Kevalaṃ vāyupūrṇaṃ vā smarānandena yujyate // 68

TRANSLATION

One should throw (i.e. concentrate) the delightful *citta* in the middle of *vahni* and *viṣa* bothways whether by itself or permeated by *vāyu* (*prāṇic breath*), one would then be joined to the bliss of sexual union.

NOTES

Vahni and *viṣa* are technical terms of this *yoga*. *Vahni* stands for *saṅkoca* (contraction) by the entrance of *prāṇa* (in *meḍhra-kanda* which is near the root of the rectum), *Viṣa* connotes *vikāsa* or expansion. *Vahni* refers to *adhah kuṇḍalini*, and *viṣa* to *ūrdhvakūṇḍalini*. *Ūrdhva kuṇḍalini* is the condition when the *prāṇa* and *apāna* enter the *suṣumnā* and the *kuṇḍalini* rises up. *Kuṇḍalini* is a distinct *śakti* that lies folded up in three and a half *valayas* or folds in *Mūlādhāra*. When she rises from one-three-fourths of the folds, goes up through *suṣumnā*, crosses *Lambika* and pierces *Brahmarandhra*, she is known as *Ūrdhva kuṇḍalini*, and this pervasion of hers is known as *vikāsa* or *viṣa*.

Adhah kuṇḍalini—Its field is from *Lambika* down to one-three-fourth of the folds of *kuṇḍalini* lying folded in the *mūlādhāra*. *Prāṇa* goes down in *adhah kuṇḍalini* from *Lambika* towards *mūlādhāra*.

The entrance of *prāṇa* into *adhah kuṇḍalini* is *saṅkoca* or *vahni*; rising into *ūrdhva kuṇḍalini* is *vikāsa* or *viṣa*. *Vahni* is symbolic of *prāṇa vāyu* and *viṣa* of *apāna vāyu*. Entering into the root, middle and tip of *adhah kuṇḍalini* is known as *vahni* or *saṅkoca*. *Vahni* is derived from the root *vah*—to carry. Since *prāṇa* is carried down up to *mūlādhāra* in this state, it is called *vahni*.

The word *viṣa* does not mean poison here. It is derived from the root *viṣ* 'to pervade.' *Viṣa*, therefore, refers to *prasara* or *vikāsa* (expansion).

When the *prāṇa* and *apāna* enter the *suṣumnā*, the *citta* or the individual consciousness should be stopped or suspended

between the *vahni* and *viṣa* or in other words between the *adhaḥ kuṇḍalini* and the *ūrdhva kuṇḍalini*.

Vāyupūrṇa or full of *vāyu* means that the *citta* should be restrained in such a way that *vāyu* may neither pass out through the nostrils nor through the male organ and the anus. *Citta* and *vāyu* are inter-connected. Restraint of the one brings about the restraint of the other.

Smarānanda or bliss of sexual union : When the *citta* can be restrained between the *adhaḥ* and *ūrdhva kuṇḍalini*, one has the joy of sexual union. This is inverted union. Sexual union is external; this union is internal.

This *dhāraṇā* is *Āṇava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 46]

VERSE 69

शक्तिसङ्गमसंशुद्ध-शक्त्यावेशावसानिकम् ।

यत्सुखं ब्रह्मतत्त्वस्य तत्सुखं स्वाक्यमुच्यते ॥ ६९ ॥

Śaktisaṅgamasanṣubdhaśaktyāveśāvasānikam /

Yat sukham brahmatattvasya tat sukhaṃ svākyam
ucyate // 69

TRANSLATION

At the time of sexual intercourse with a woman, an absorption into her¹ is brought about by excitement, and the final delight that ensues at orgasm betokens the delight of Brahman. This delight is (in reality) that of one's own Self.

NOTES

1. This absorption is only symbolic of the absorption in the Divine Energy. This illustration has been given only to show that the highest delight ensues only at the disappearance of duality. Śivopādhyāya quotes a verse which clarifies the esoteric meaning of this union.

जायया संपरिष्वक्तो न बाह्यं वेद नान्तरम् ।

निदर्शनं श्रुतिः प्राह मूर्खस्तं मन्यते विधिम् ॥

“Just as being locked in embrace with a woman, one is totally dissolved in the feeling of one-ness (unity) and one loses all sense of anything external or internal, even so when the mind is dissolved in the Divine Energy, one loses all sense of duality and experiences the delight of unity-consciousness. The *Śruti* (scripture) speaks of the union with a woman only to illustrate the union with the Divine. It is only a fool who takes this illustration as an injunction for carnal pleasure.

2. The delight is that of one's own Self. It does not come from any external source. The woman is only an occasion for the manifestation of that delight.

This *dhāraṇā* is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 47]

VERSE 70

लेहनामन्थनाकोटैः स्त्रीसुखस्य भरात्स्मृतेः ।
शक्त्यभावेऽपि देवेशि भवेदानन्दसंप्लवः ॥ ७० ॥

Lehanāmanthanākoṭaiḥ strisukhasya bharāt smṛteḥ /
Śaktyabhāve'pi deveśi bhaved ānandasamplavaḥ // 70

TRANSLATION

O goddess, even in the absence of a woman, there is a flood of delight, simply by the intensity of the memory of sexual pleasure in the form of kissing, embracing, pressing, etc.

NOTES

Since the sexual pleasure is obtained simply by memory even in the absence of a woman, it is evident that the delight is inherent within. It is this delight apart from any woman that one should meditate on in order to realize the bliss of the divine consciousness.

This *dhāraṇā* is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 48]

VERSE 71

आनन्दे महति प्राप्ते वृष्टे वा बान्धवे चिरात् ।
आनन्दमुद्गतं ध्यात्वा तल्लयस्तन्मना भवेत्-॥ ७१ ॥

Ānande mahati prāpte dṛṣṭe vā bāndhave cirāt /
 Ānandam udgatam dhyātvā tallayas tanmanā bhavet // 71

TRANSLATION

On the occasion of a great delight being obtained, or on the occasion of delight arising from seeing a friend or relative after a long time, one should meditate on the delight itself and become absorbed in it, then his mind will become identified with it.

NOTES

On the occasion of such great delight or intensive experience, one should lay hold of the source of such experience, viz, the *spanda* or the pure spiritual throb and meditate on it till his mind is deeply steeped in it. He will then become identified with the Spiritual Principle. Such an experience vanishes quickly, therefore, one should seize it mentally as soon as the experience occurs.

This *dhāraṇā* is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 49]

VERSE 72

जग्धिपानकृतोल्लास-रसानन्दविजृम्भणात् ।
 भावेयद्भरितावस्थां महानन्दस्ततो भवेत् ॥ ७२ ॥

Jagdhipānakṛtollāśarasānandavijṛmbhaṇāt /
 Bhāvayed bharitāvasthām mahānandas tato bhavet // 72

TRANSLATION

When one experiences the expansion of joy of savour arising from the pleasure of eating and drinking, one should meditate on the perfect condition of this joy, then there will be supreme delight.

NOTES

If the *yogī* meditates on the perfect condition of the joy that arises even from the satisfaction of physical needs, he will feel

that the source of this joy is also the divine *spanda*, and being absorbed in it, he will experience supreme spiritual bliss.

This *dhāraṇā* is also *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 50]

VERSE 73

गीतादिविषयास्वादा-समसौख्यैकतात्मनः ।

योगिनस्तन्मयत्वेन मनोरूढेस्तदात्मता ॥ ७३ ॥

Gītādiviṣayāsvādāsamasaukhyaikatātmanaḥ /

Yoginas tanmayatvena manorūḍhes tadātmatā // 73

TRANSLATION

When the *yogī* mentally becomes one with the incomparable joy of song and other objects, then of such a *yogī*, there is, because of the expansion of his mind, identity with that (i.e. with the incomparable joy) because he becomes one with it.

NOTES

In verses 69-73, Bhairava says that one can turn even a sensuous joy into a means of *yoga*. In the above verses examples of all sorts of sensuous joy have been given. Joy of sexual intercourse is an example of the pleasure of *sparśa* (contact); joy at the sight of a friend is an example of the pleasure of *rūpa* (visual perception); joy of delicious food is an example of *rasa* (taste); joy derived from song is an example of the pleasure of sound (*śabda*).

In each of these, the emphasis is on the meditation of the source of the joy which is spiritual. Leaving aside the various sensuous media, the aspirant should meditate on that fountain of all joy which only trickles in small drops in all the joys of life.

In verses 69-72, the examples given are only those of physical delight. In verses 73, the main example is of aesthetic rapture that one feels in listening to a melodious song. According to *Śaiva* aesthetics, there can be aesthetic rapture only when the

person experiencing that rapture has *samid-viśrānti* i.e. when his mind is withdrawn from everything around him and reposes in his essential Self. Aesthetic delight is, therefore, a greater source of the experience of the spiritual Self.

This is *Śāktopāya* leading to *Śāmbhava* state.

[Dhāraṇā 51]

VERSE 74

यत्र यत्र मनस्तुष्टिर्मनस्तत्रैव धारयेत् ।
तत्र तत्र परानन्दस्वरूपं सम्प्रवर्तते ॥ ७४ ॥

Yatra yatra manas tuṣṭir manas tatraiva dhārayet /
Tatra tatra parānandasvarūpaṃ sampravartate // 74

TRANSLATION

Wherever the mind of the individual finds satisfaction¹ (without agitation), let it be concentrated on that. In every such case the true nature of the highest bliss will manifest itself.²

NOTES

1. *Tuṣṭi*, lit., satisfaction indicates deep, moving joy, not agitation of the mind. *Tuṣṭi* refers to that deep delight in which (1) one forgets every thing external, in which all thought-constructs (*vikalpas*) disappear (2) and in which there is no agitation (*kṣobha*) in the mind.

2. One has to plunge in the source of the delight. One will then find that it is the Divine, the Essential Self of all.

This is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 52]

VERSE 75

अनागतयां निद्रायां प्रणष्टे बाह्य गोचरे ।
सावस्था मनसा गम्या परा देवी प्रकाशते ॥ ७५ ॥

Anāgatāyāṃ nidrāyāṃ praṇaṣṭe bāhyagocare /
Sāvasthā manasā gamyā parā devī prakāśate // 75

TRANSLATION

When sleep has not yet fully appeared i.e. when one is about to fall asleep, and all the external objects (though present) have faded out of sight¹ then the state (between sleep and waking) is one on which one should concentrate. In that state the Supreme Goddess will reveal Herself.²

NOTES

1. The intermediate state between sleep and waking is the *nirvikalpa* state, i. e. a state in which all thought-constructs have disappeared. This is the *turiya* or transcendental state of consciousness.

2. By concentrating on this thought-free state of consciousness, one will have an experience of the essential nature of Self which transcends all thought-constructs. Thus one will have an experience of the divine nature. It is this Divine nature which has been called *parā devī*, the Supreme Goddess.

This is also *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 53]

VERSE 76

तेजसा सूर्यदीपादेराकाशे शबलीकृते ।
दृष्टिनिवेशया तत्रैव स्वात्मरूपं प्रकाशते ॥ ७६ ॥

Tejasā sūryadīpāderākāśe śabalikṛte /
Dṛṣṭir niveshyā tatraiva svātmarūpam prakāśate // 76

TRANSLATION

One should fix one's gaze on a portion of the space that appears variegated with the rays of the sun, lamp, etc. At that very place, the nature of one's essential Self will manifest itself.²

NOTES

1. Etcetera includes moon with whose light the sky appears variegated at night.

2. Under such circumstances, the *yogī* casts off the limitation of the objective consciousness and experiences the infinity of the spiritual consciousness.

This is *Aṅava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 54]

VERSE 77

करङ्किण्या क्रोधनया भैरव्या लेलिहानया ।
खेचर्या दृष्टिकाले च परावाप्तिः प्रकाशते ॥ ७७ ॥

Karaṅkiṅyā krodhanayā bhairavyā lelihānayā /
Khecaryā dṛṣṭikāle ca parāvāptiḥ prakāśate // 77

TRANSLATION

At the moment of the (intuitive) perception (of the universe), there is manifested the supreme attainment through the *Karaṅkiṅī*, *Krodhanā*, *Bhairavi*, *Lelihānā* and *Khecarī mudrās*.

NOTES

Dṛṣṭi-kāle is explained by Svāmī Lakṣmaṇa Joo as 'on the occasion of the *yogic practice*.' *Mudrā* (posture) is a technical term meaning a particular disposition and control of the organs of the body as a help in concentration. It is called *mudrā* because it gives the joy of spiritual consciousness.

Karaṅkiṅī mudrā is so-called, because by it the *yogī* views the world as mere *karaṅka* or skeleton. It views the physical body as dissolved in the highest ether. It is the *mudrā* of *jñāna-siddhas* i.e. of those who have become perfect in *jñāna* or spiritual insight.

Krodhanā is a *mudrā* expressive of *krodha* or anger. It assumes a tense, tight posture. It gathers up all the twentyfour *tattvas* from the earth upto *prakṛti* into the corpus of *mantra*. It is the *mudrā* of *mantra-siddhas* i.e. of those who have become perfect in *mantra*.

Bhairavi mudrā consists in keeping the eyes fixed externally without blinking but making the gaze turned towards the inner Reality.

It withdraws everything into the inner Self, and is the *mudrā* of the *melāpasiddhas*. *Melāpa* means the 'supernatural power of the union of the energies of the various organs'. It also means the meeting of the *siddhas* and *Yoginis*. Those who have become perfect in this matter are known as *Melāpa-siddhas*.

Lelihānā is the *mudrā* in which the *yogī* tastes the entire universe in his nature of essential I-consciousness. It is the *mudrā* of the *Śākta-siddhas*.

Khecarī literally means that which moves in the sky or empty space. *Kha* or 'empty-space' is a symbol of consciousness. There are four kinds of *Khecarī mudrā*. One kind is the *mudrā* referred to in *Haṭha-yoga-pradīpikā*. It consists in turning the tongue backward towards the palate inside the cranium. The second kind is the one described by Kṣemarāja in *Śiva-Śūtra-vimarśinī* under *sūtra* 5 of the 2nd section.

"A *yogī* should be seated in the *padmāsana* (lotus posture) erect like a stick and should then fix his mind on the navel and should lead the mind upto *kha-trayas* or the three *śaktis* (*śakti*, *vyāpinī*, and *samanā*), situated in the space in the head. Holding the mind in that state, he should move it forward with the above triad. Putting himself in this condition, the great *yogī* acquires movement in the head."

The third kind of *khecarī* is as described in *Viveka-mārtaṇḍa*. 'The tongue should be turned back inside the cranium. The gaze should be directed towards the centre in between the eye-brows'.

The fourth or the highest kind of *Khecarī mudrā* is that state in which the *yogī* remains in Śiva-consciousness all the while, in which his consciousness moves in all beings.

This is the *mudrā* of the *Śāmbhava-siddhas*.

This *dhāraṇā* is *Śāmbhava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 55]

VERSE 78

मृदासने स्फिजकेन हस्तपादौ निराश्रयम् ।

निधाय तत्प्रसङ्गेन परा पूर्णा मतिर्भवेत् ॥ ७८ ॥

Mṛdvāsane sphijaikena hastapādau nirāśrayam /
Nidhāya tatprasaṅgena parā pūrṇā matirbhavet // 78

TRANSLATION

The aspirant should seat himself on a soft (cushioned) seat, placing only one of the buttocks on the seat and leaving the hands and the feet without any support.¹ By maintaining himself in this position, his intelligence will become highly *sāttvika* and endowed with plenitude.²

NOTES

1. He should sit in a very relaxed position.
2. His mind will acquire perfect ease in this position and therefore *rajas* (agitation of the mind) and *tamas* (cloth) will disappear. His mind will experience perfect equilibrium (*sattva*). This is an *Āṇava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 56]

VERSE 79

उपविश्यासने सम्यक् बाहू कृत्वार्धकुञ्चितौ ।
कक्षव्योम्नि मनः कुर्वन् शममायाति तल्लयात् ॥ ७९ ॥

Upaviśyāsane samyag bālū kṛtvārdhakuñcitau /
Kakṣavyomni manaḥ kurvan śamam āyāti tallayāt // 79

TRANSLATION

Sitting comfortably on his seat and placing the two arms in the form of an arch overhead, the aspirant should fix his gaze in the arm-pits. As the mind gets absorbed in that posture of repose, it will experience great peace.

NOTES

This posture has been recommended for making the mind at ease. In this posture, one feels great peace. This is an *Āṇava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 57]

VERSE 80

स्थूलरूपस्य भावस्य स्तब्धां वृष्टिं निपात्य च ।
अचिरेण निराधारं मनः कृत्वा शिवं व्रजेत् ॥ ८० ॥

Sthūlarūpasya bhāvasya¹ stabdhāṃ vṛṣṭiṃ nipātya ca /
Acireṇa nirādhāram manaḥ kṛtvā śivaṃ vrajet // 80

TRANSLATION

Having fixed his gaze without blinking on a gross object, (and directing his attention inward), and thus making his mind free of all prop² of thought-constructs, the aspirant acquires the state of *Śiva* without delay.

NOTES

1. The word *upari* meaning 'on' is understood after *bhāv-asya*. So this means fixing one's gaze on a gross object.
2. *Nirādhāra* or without a prop means free of all thought constructs (*vikalpas*). It is these *vikalpas* that serve as a prop for the mind.

This is *Bhairavī mudrā* and the upāya is *Śāmbhava*.

[Dhāraṇā 58]

VERSE 81

मध्यजिह्वे स्फारितास्ये मध्ये निक्षिप्य चेतनाम् ।
होच्चारं मनसा कुर्वस्ततः शान्ते प्रलीयते ॥ ८१ ॥

Madhyajihve sphāritāsye madhye niṣṭipya cetanām /
Hocchāram manasā kurvams tataḥ śānte praliyate // 81

TRANSLATION

If one maintains the mouth widely open, keeping the inverted tongue at the centre¹ and fixing the mind in the middle of the open mouth, and voices vowel-less *ha* mentally, he will be dissolved in peace.

NOTES

1. This refers to *Khecarī mudrā* which is described in the following way in Vivekamārtaṇḍa:

कपालकुहरे जिह्वा प्रविष्टा विपरीतगा ।
भ्रुवोरन्तर्गता दृष्टिर्मुद्रा भवति खेचरी ॥

When the inverted tongue is made to enter the cavity of the cranium touching the palate and the gaze is fixed between the eye-brows, it is *khecarī mudrā*.

2. After effecting this *mudrā*, one should keep his mind fixed on the middle of the open mouth.

Prāṇa goes on sounding *hamsaḥ* inwardly automatically without cessation. When the tongue is inverted and stuck to the palate, the palatal *sa* cannot be pronounced: *ha* alone of the formula 'hamsa' remains. This *ha* has to be voiced in a vowel-less manner. Since it is not possible to utter vowel-less (*anacka*) *ha* physically, the *dhāraṇā* says that it should be uttered mentally. As the vowel-less *ha* symbolizes *prāṇaśakti*, its mental repetition develops *prāṇa śakti* or *madhya daśā* and thus one attains the state of his essential Self and experiences peace.

This is *Āṇava upāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 59]

VERSE 82

आसने शयने स्थित्वा निराधारं विभावयन् ।
स्वदेहं मनसि क्षीणे, क्षणात् क्षीणाशयो भवेत् ॥ ८२ ॥

Āsane śayane sthitvā nirādhāraṃ vibhāvayan /
Svadeham, manasi kṣiṇe, kṣaṇāt kṣiṇāśayo bhavet // 82.

TRANSLATION

Seated on a (soft) seat or bed, one should contemplate one's body as without support. By this contemplation when all props of one's thought vanish i.e. when one's mind becomes free of thought-constructs, then in an instant, all his old (undesirable) mental dispositions (lying in the unconscious) will also vanish.

NOTES

Though seated on a soft seat or bed, the aspirant should contemplate with firm belief that his body is without the support of any seat or bed whatsoever. In this way his mind will become free of thought-constructs which act like props, and when his mind becomes thought-free, then his habitual tendencies of thought (*vāsanās*) lying in the unconscious will also vanish.

This is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 60]

VERSE 83

चलासने स्थितस्याथ शनैर्वा देहचालनात् ।
प्रशान्ते मानसे भावे देवि दिव्यौघमाप्नुयात् ॥ ८३ ॥

Calāsane sthitasyaṭha śanair vā dehacālanāt /
praśānte mānase bhāve devi divyaughamāpnuyāt // 83

TRANSLATION

O goddess, owing to the swinging of the body of a person seated on a moving vehicle or owing to self-caused swinging of his body slowly,¹ his mental state becomes calmed. Then he attains *divyaugha*² and enjoys the bliss of supernal consciousness.

NOTES

1. If one is seated in a cart or on horse-back, or an elephant or in any other moving vehicle, then owing to the movement of the vehicle, his body begins to swing to and fro, or he may himself make his body swing. In such a condition, he experiences a peculiar kind of joy, and his mind becomes introverted. Owing to the introversion of the mind, he experiences great peace which may give him a taste of divine bliss.

2. The word *augha* literally means flood, stream. In the context of *yoga*, it means 'continuous tradition of wisdom'. Three kinds of *augha* are mentioned in the tantras—

Mānavaugha *siddhaugha* *divyaugha*.

The traditional *jñāna* (spiritual insight) obtained through human *gurus* (spiritual directors) is known as *mānavaugha*, that obtained through *siddhas* (perfect masters who have gone beyond human condition) is known as *siddhaugha*, and that obtained through *devas* (gods) is known as *divyaugha*.

This again is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 61]

VERSE 84

आकाशं विमलं पश्यन् कृत्वा दृष्टिं निरन्तराम् ।
स्तब्धात्मा तत्क्षणाद्देवि भैरवं वपुराप्नुयात् ॥ ८४ ॥

Ākāśam vimalam paśyan kṛtvā dṛṣṭim nirantarām /
Stabhātmā tatkṣaṇād devi bhairavaṃ vapur āpnuyāt // 84

TRANSLATION

If one making himself thoroughly immobile¹ beholds the pure (cloudless) sky² with fixed eyes,³ at that very moment, O goddess, he will acquire the nature of Bhairava.

NOTES

1. This means that the sense of the body should vanish and all thoughts and emotions should be completely arrested.
2. Looking at the sky has been recommended, because on account of the vastness of the sky, the beholder is apt to be lost in a sense of infinity.
3. With fixed eyes means without blinking.
This is *Śāmbhavopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 62]

VERSE 85

लीनं मूर्ध्नि वियत्सर्वं भैरवत्वेन भावयेत् ।
तत्सर्वं भैरवाकार-तेजस्तत्त्वं समाविशेत् ॥ ८५ ॥

Linam mūrdhni viyat sarvam bhairavatvena bhāvayet /
Tat sarvaṃ bhairavākāratejastattvaṃ samāviśeṭ // 85

TRANSLATION

The *yogī* should contemplate the entire open space (or sky) under the form of the essence of Bhairava and as dissolved in his head. Then the entire universe will be absorbed in the light of Bhairava.

NOTES

If the *yogī* by *bhāvanā* (creative contemplation) imagines the vast sky as expression of Bhairava and as being dissolved in the space inside his head, the space in his head will become the symbol of the infinity of Bhairava and he will feel that the entire universe is bathed in the Light of Bhairava.

This is *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 63]

VERSE 86

किञ्चिज्ज्ञातं द्वैतदायि बाह्यालोकस्तमः पुनः ।
विश्वदि, शैरवं रूपं ज्ञात्वानन्तप्रकाशमृत् ॥ ८६ ॥

Kiñcij jñātaṃ dvaitadāyi bāhyālokaṣ tamaḥ punaḥ /
Viśvādi bhairavaṃ rūpaṃ jñātvānantaparakāśabhṛt // 86

TRANSLATION

When the *yogī* knows the three states of consciousness, viz. *viśva* (waking) in which there is limited knowledge productive of duality, (2) *taijas* (dream) in which there is perception of the impressions of the exterior, (3) *prājña* (deep sleep) in which it is all darkness as (only) the form of Bhairava¹ (*bhairavaṃ rūpaṃ*), he is then filled with the splendour of infinite consciousness.²

NOTES

1. As (only) the form of Bhairava means as the expression of the *turiya* or the fourth state of consciousness which is Bhairava.

2. In ordinary life, there is always subject-object duality. In the *turiya* or the fourth state of consciousness, the sense of duality disappears. It is the Light of the Essential Self or Bhairava. That is why it is said to be the splendour of infinite consciousness.

When the *yogī* knows all the three states as only the expression of the fourth state which is the state of Bhairava, he is filled with the Infinite Light of Bhairava.

This is *Āṇava upāya* leading to *Śāmbhava* state.

[Dhāraṇā 64]

VERSE 87

एवमेव दुर्निशायां कृष्णपक्षागमे चिरम् ।
तैमिरं भावयन् रूपं भैरवं रूपमेष्यति ॥ ८७ ॥

Evam eva durniśāyāṃ kṛṣṇapakṣāgame ciram /
Taimiram bhāvayan rūpaṃ bhairavaṃ rūpam eṣyati // 87

TRANSLATION

In the same way, at (completely) dark night in the dark fortnight, by contemplating for long over the (terrible) circumambient darkness, the *yogī* will attain the nature of Bhairava.

NOTES

Contemplation over darkness at dark night in the dark fortnight has been recommended, because in such darkness, distinct objects are not visible. So there is nothing to distract the attention.

When one contemplates over darkness for long, one is filled with a sense of awe and uncanny mystery and easily slips into the mystic consciousness. It is at such an hour that the Light of Bhairava makes its appearance and one acquires the nature of Bhairava.

This is *bāhya timirabhāvanā* or contemplation over external darkness with open eyes. This *dhāraṇā* pertains to *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 65]

VERSE 88

एवमेव निमील्यादौ नेत्रे कृष्णाभमग्रतः ।
 प्रसार्य भैरवं रूपं भावयंस्तन्मयो भवेत् ॥ ८८ ॥

Evam eva nimīlyādaṁ netre kṛṣṇābham agrataḥ /
 Prasārya bhairavaṁ rūpam bhāvayaṁs tanmayo bhavet //88

TRANSLATION

Similarly, (even during the absence of dark fortnight), the aspirant should at first contemplate over terrible darkness in front of him by closing his eyes, then later should contemplate over the dark, terrible form of Bhairava in front with eyes wide open. Thus will he become identified with Him.

NOTES

This verse points to the transition from *nimīlana* to *unmīlana samādhi*. If after the *nimīlana samādhi*, the aspirant goes into *unmīlana samādhi* i.e. contemplates over the form of Bhairava with eyes wide open, he will find his mind swallowed up in the nature of *Bhairava* and will realize his identity with Him.

This is *Śāktopāya* again.

[Dhāraṇā 66]

VERSE 89

यस्य कस्येन्द्रियस्यापि व्याघातान्च निरोधतः ।
 प्रविष्टस्याद्वये शून्ये तत्रैवात्मा प्रकाशते ॥ ८९ ॥

Yasya kasyendriyasyāpi vyāghātāc ca nirodhataḥ /
 Praviṣṭasyādvaye śūnye tatraivātmā prakāśate // 89

TRANSLATION

When some organ of sense is obstructed in its function by some external cause or in the natural course or by self-imposed device, then the aspirant becomes introverted, his mind is absorbed in

a void that transcends all duality and there itself his essential Self is revealed.

NOTES

As the particular organ of sense is unable to establish contact with the external world, there arises a feeling of vacuity in that organ. Then the aspirant becomes introverted. He gets absorbed in that void where the duality of subject and object does not exist, and forthwith the essential Self of the aspirant is revealed.

This *dhāraṇā* pertains to *Śāktopāya*.

[Dhāraṇā 67]

VERSE 90

अबिन्दुमविसर्गं च अकारं जपतो महान् ।
उदेति देवि सहसा ज्ञानौघः परमेश्वरः ॥ ९० ॥

Abindum avisargaṃ ca akāraṃ japato mahān /
Udēti devī sahasā jñānaughaḥ parameśvaraḥ // 90

TRANSLATION

If one recites the letter *a* without *bindu* or *visarga* then, O goddess, *Parameśvara*—a magnificent torrent of wisdom appears suddenly.

NOTES

Bindu in this context indicates the *anusvāra* or dot on a letter which is the symbol of nasal pronunciation. *Visarga* indicates two dots placed one upon the other immediately after a letter which symbolize the articulation of a letter with *ḥ* sound. Thus अ (a) with *bindu* would be अं (aṃ), and अ (a) with *visarga* would be अः (aḥ).

In sounding 'a' with *anusvāra* i. e. as *aṃ* there will be inhalation (*pūraka*) and in sounding 'a' with *visarga* i. e. as *aḥ* there will be exhalation (*recaka*). The above *dhāraṇā* says that the letter अ 'a' should be recited without a *bindu* i. e. without an *anusvāra*, and also without a *visarga* (without the *ḥ* sound) i. e. neither

with inhalation nor with exhalation (neither with *pūṛaka* nor with *recaka*). This implies that the letter 'a' (अ) should be recited in a *kumbhaka* state i.e. in a state of the retention of the breath as 'a' (अ).

Svāmī Lakṣmaṇa Joo interprets *kumbhakasthasya* occurring in the commentary in a different way. According to him *kumbhakasthasya* here means *cakitamudrāyām sthitasya* i.e. in the posture of *cakitamudrā*. In this posture, the mouth is wide open and the tongue is held back. In this posture 'a' (अ) can neither be recited with *anusvāra* nor with *visarga*. The aspirant will be automatically compelled to contemplate over 'a' only mentally.

In sounding 'a' with *anusvāra* i.e. as *aṃ* there will be inhalation (*pūṛaka*, and in sounding 'a' with *visarga* i.e. as 'aḥ', there will be exhalation (*recaka*). The above *dhāraṇā* says that the letter अ (a) should be recited without a *bindu* i.e. without an *anusvāra*, and also without a *visarga* (without the *h* sound) i.e. neither with inhalation nor with exhalation (neither with *pūṛaka*, nor with *recaka*). This implies that the letter 'a' (अ) should be recited in a *kumbhaka* state i.e. in a state of the retention of the breath as 'a' (अ).

Why of all letters has particularly 'a' (अ) been selected for recitation? The reason is firstly that the letter 'a' (अ) is the initial letter of the alphabet; it is the source and origin of all other letters; it is neither generated out of any other letter, nor is it dissolved in any other letter. Secondly, it symbolizes *anuttara* the absolute, the state which is beyond description, the state in which *Śiva* and *Śakti* are in indistinguishable unity. The recitation of 'a' (अ), therefore, betokens the longing of the soul for *Śiva-śakti-sāmarasya* (the state of the harmonious fusion of *Śiva-śakti*) a nostalgia for its ultimate source.

Thirdly 'a' (अ) represents *aham*, the perfect I-consciousness of the Absolute. Therefore, the contemplation of *a* establishes one in the absolute I-consciousness of *Śiva*.

Lastly the recitation of 'a' (अ) without *anusvāra* or *visarga* in a *kumbhaka* state or in *cakita mudrā* makes the mind *nirvikalpaka* i.e. freed of all dichotomizing thought-constructs and suddenly in this state appears *Paramēśvara* (the highest Lord), the flood of divine wisdom.

This is *Āṇava upāya*.