

PŪJĀ

-‘Lalitanadanadha’LalitaPrasad Jammulamadaka.

PŪJĀ: This word is the common term for worship of which there are numerous synonyms in the Sanskrit language Such as arcanā, vandana, saparyyā, aradhanā, namaskāra, arcā, bhajanā, etc. Pūjā is done daily of the Ishta-devatā or the particular Deity worshipped by the Sadhaka—the Devī in the case of a Śākta, Vishnu in the case of a Vaishnava, and so forth.

But though the Ishta-devatā is the principal object of worship, yet in pūjā all worship the Pañca-ayatana, or the Five Devās- Aditya (the Sun), Ganeśa, the Devī, Śiva, and Vishnu or Nārāyana. After worship of the Pañca-ayatana the family Deity (Kula-Devatā), who is generally the same as the Ishta-devatā, is worshipped. Pūjā, which is kāmya, or done to gain a particular end as also Vrata, are preceded by the Samkalpa: “I—of gotra—etc., am about to perform this pūjā (or Vrata) with the object,” etc.

The ritual of worship involves duality of the worshiper (*pujaka*) and the worshipped (*pujya*). The worshiper or the devotee, who has the power of understanding (*jnana-sakti*), the power of resolving (*iccha-sakti*), and the power of performing the rites (*kriyā-sakti*). ‘Upasana’, pre-supposes the will, the aspect of understanding alone becomes relevant here. Thus the worshipper is described as knower (*jnata*), the one who has the power to understand the symbolism of worship, the object of worship (*jneya*, which is both a design (*Yantra/pratima*) and a *mantra*.

There are sixteen Upacāra, used in pūjā; (1) āsana (seat of the image); (2) svāgata (welcome); (3) padya (water for washing the feet); (4) arghya (offering of water, flowers, sandal paste, durva grass,³ etc., to the Devatā) in the kushī, (vessel); (5 and 6) ācamana (water for sipping, which is offered twice); (7) madhuparka (honey, ghee, milk, and curd offered in a silver or brass vessel); (8) snāna (water for bathing); (9) vastra (cloth); (10) ābharana (jewels); (11) gandha (scent and sandal paste is given); (12) pushpa (flowers); (13) dhūpa (incense stick); (14) dīpa (light); (15) Naivedya (food); (16) vandana or namaskāra (prayer).

Other articles are used which vary with the pūjā, such as Tulasī leaf in the Vishnu-pūjā and bael- (bilva) leaf in the Śiva-pūjā. The mantras said also very according to the worship.

The seat (āsana) of the worshipper is purified. Salutation being made to the Śakti of support or the sustaining force (Ādhāra-śakti), the water, flowers, etc., is purified. All obstructive spirits are

driven away (bhūtāpasarpana), and the ten quarters are fenced from their attack by striking the earth three times with the left foot, uttering the Astra-bīja “phaṭ,” and by snapping the fingers (thrice) round the head. Prānāyāma (regulation of breath) is performed and (vide post) the elements of the body are purified (bhūta-śuddhi). There is nyāsa, dhyāna (meditation); offering of the Upacāra; japa prayer and obeisance (pranāma). In the aṣṭa-mūrtī-pūja of Śiva, the Deva is worshipped under the eight forms: Sarva (Earth), Bhava (Water), Rudra (Fire), Ugra (Air), Bhīma (Ether), Paśupati (yajamāna—the Sacrifice man), Īśana (Sun), Mahadeva (Moon).

The Sadhaka approach to divinity assumes following four stages which are progressive in nature:

1. Worshipping God in an external image having a recognizable form – ‘*pratikopasana*’.
2. Worshipping an image with the understanding that the image represents the all-pervasive divinity – ‘*pratirupa-pratimopasana*’.
3. Meditating on the attributes of divinity, which abide in one’s own heart – ‘*bhava-pratimopasana*’. And
4. Worshipping the divinity by symbolic offerings – ‘*nidanopasana*’.

The last stage culminates in the rejection not only of external props like physical image, things of worship like flowers etc., but also the duality between the worshipper and the worshipped.

The latter form of worship falls into two stages: ‘*sadhara*’ – with external props, ‘*niradhara*’ – without such props. The *Sadhaka* understands the symbolisms involved in the ritual sequence, he also knows that the props are only incidental and are dispensable, and however, depend upon them until the wisdom or truth dawns on him, and finally dispense with them.

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In ‘*Setu bandha vyakhya*’, Sri Bhaskararaya speaks of three stages : in the first stage the *Sadhaka* looks upon the divinity as having a human form ‘*stula*’, in the second stage, the form of the Goddess is subtle ‘*sukhma*’ in the form of powerful sounds of ‘*mantra*’, which the tongue

can utter and the ear hear and the third transcendental '*para*' form that can only be visualized by the mind, for it consists of accumulated impressions '*vasana*' left in the mind of the devotee who has dedicated his whole life to the worship of mother – goddess. The spirit of the *Sadhaka* is invigorated by directed mental processes ('*vasayati, karma yojayati jiva- manamsi*'). The objects of his search and adoration can now be recognized in his own self and appear before him in the form of his own consciousness, '*vasana* or *chaitanya*'. Then the external rites have no meaning for the devotee any longer. The *saadhaka*'s consciousness undergoes a transformation or '*bhavana*' that he has made of the divinity in his own being.

The Worship of the *God* is in two forms 1.*baahyapooja* (external worship), 2. *Antahpooja* (inner worship).

In *baahya pooja*, the *Sadhaka* or the practitioner worships the deity with a feeling that he and the Goddess are two different entities and they are performed for fulfilling a desire or *kaamyasaadhana*.

'Baahya poojaa nakartavyaa kartavyaa baahyaajaatibhi

Saakshudraphalada nrunam ihikardhika saadhanaath

Baahyapoojaarathah koulah kshpanasha kapaalikah

Digambaaschitihaasah vaamakaastantra vaadinah'

---- *Sanatkumara samhita*.

Antararadhana or intimate deification, involves in slowly reducing the rajas and Tamo gunas in the *Sādhaka*'s body and trying to increase satva guna. 'Bhavanopanishad' described the details of 'Antararadhana' in detail.

Antar-yaga (intimate deification) worshipping the *Brahman* within our self. *Tripura sundari tatva, kularnava, jnanarnava, svacchanda tantra, parananda tantra, mantra maharnava*, and others have exclusively discussed the aspect of *Bahir-yaga*. *Vamakeswara tantra* has explained the intriguing methodology in the philosophy of intimate deification (*Antar-yaga*).

The consummate intention of the *abhyasi* is to become conscious of that unthinkable, unmanifest, of endless forms, the good, the peaceful, immortal, the origin of the worlds, without beginning, middle, and end, the only one, all-pervading, the formless and the wonderful, *consciousness* and *bliss*. The world for him is a postulation, as good as non-existent, in the *one reality* that is immutable, formless, unqualified; and devoid of distinctions like the percipient, perception, and the perceived. The *energy* that is fondly aspired is free and beyond the contents of the limited human consciousness in its three categories: *satva-rajas-tamas*; that transcends all mental attitudes and emotions; that *one* which is completely awake always; that which is without any contamination from the divisive and contradictory embodied consciousness; that which is extremely still and tranquil; that which is *Nitya*, without a beginning and also without an end. That *energy* has been pointed out in the *Vedic maha-vaakyas*.

This *energy* characterizes emptiness, wholeness, and holiness; and remarkably is beyond all dualities, divisions, disintegrations, opposites, splits, bifurcations, separations, fragmentations, conflicts, contradictions, in spite of the wonderful and mysterious diversities of creation. Personification of this *energy* in a human body without let, in the form of *guru*, indeed brings supreme happiness and most profound divine ecstasy. All the sages, saints, prophets, world teachers, incarnations, great men have had their own *gurus*', however great they might have been.

Saadhaka sequentially should develop various virtues like straightforwardness, service to *guru*, the sick and old persons, *ahimsa*, *brahma-charya*, spontaneous generosity, *titiksha*, *sama-drishti*, *samata*, spirit of service, selflessness, tolerance, limited ingestion of food, humility, honesty, etc. Those who are addicted to sensual pleasures or those who are arrogant and proud, dishonest, untruthful, diplomatic, cunning and treacherous, and who disrespect the *guru*, and take pleasure in vain controversies and worldly actions can never attain success in *upaasana*. *Kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, and *matsara*, should by necessity be completely annihilated.

'Ahamkaram balam darpam

Kamam krodham parigraham;

Vimuchya nirmamah santo

Brahmabhuyaya kalpate'

Having cast aside egoism, violence, arrogance, desire, wrath, covetousness, being selfless and peaceful, one is fit to become *eternal*.

The idol worship can lead to the fulfillment of worldly desires, for those who want Mukti (freedom from birth and death) worship of the inner soul is prescribed.

All the external objects are embodiment of worldly desires; hence the saadhaka has to leave them.

Of the *tri-gunas* (*satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*), the saadhaka should try to inculcate satva guna and leave the other two gunas. This is the essence of Antararadhana. This is explained in detail in 'Bhavanopanishad'.

Upasana is objective meditation, a willful and determined focusing of consciousness on an external object, or form, or a perception like love, compassion, strength, etc. ***Nididhyāsanam*** is a subjective meditation (*atma vicara*), in which the *abhyasi* withdraws his *ego* to its original source, instead of allowing it to chase the surrounding world. As withdrawal of *ego* is complicated, the aspirant by observance of continence, and with the help of an adept *guru*, motivates and prepares his intellect through *upaasana* initially, and rises to *Nididhyasana* level of contemplation. *Vidyaranya muni* too ratified this distinction by describing *upaasana* as *vastu-tantra* (object-oriented) and *Nididhyāsanam* as *kartri-tantra* (subject-oriented), and that both are not contradictory, but complementary to one another. A distinct awareness of the *higher self* is common to both *upaasana* and *Nididhyasana*. It is more correct to call *Nididhyāsanam* as *self-inquiry*, and the path of knowledge (*jnaana marga*). It is better, nay even necessary to combine *self-inquiry* with *upaasana*. *Upaasana* increases one's power of concentration but does not necessarily increase one's power of self-control to an equal degree. *Nididhyāsanam* enables the aspirant to abide in the real abode within and remain calm and unaffected by the environment

As Śaṅkara says, Spirit (Ātmā) never comes and never goes. That which in fact moves is the mind of the Sadhaka in which, if pure, Spirit manifests itself. That Spirit is in all places, and when the Sādhaka's mind fully realizes its presence in the Image, the latter as the manifestation of that Spirit is a fitting object of worship. Some knowledge of Vedanta is needful for the understanding and performance of image-worship. Yantra worship is however higher and is fitter for those who have reached a more advanced

stage in Sādhana. In Upāsana it is that instrument by which the mind is fixed upon the Devatā of worship. It is, as drawn, a diagram consisting of lines, angles and curves, varying with the Devatā worshipped as also, to some extent, according as it is a Pūjā or Dhāranā Yantra, the whole being included in a common Bhūpura. A Yantra is three-dimensional, though it is very generally represented by a drawing on the flat. The Yantra and each part of it, as representing certain Śaktis, have a significance which is known to the Sadhaka. On the great Śrī Yantra with its Baindava and other Cakras there is an entire literature. It is neglected now-a day

In ordinary worship there is the offer of flowers, light, incense and the like Upacāra. In the subtle inner or mental worship (Antahpūjā) these are but symbols. Thus the Jñāneśvara Samhitā cited in the Mantrayoga rahasya nirnaya speaks of the offering of “flowers of feeling” (Bhāvapuśpa) to the Divinity—namely, the virtue of selflessness (Anahamkāra), desirelessness (Arāga), guilelessness (Adambha), freedom from malice and envy (Adveśa, Amātsaryya), and infatuation and delusion (Amada and Amoha), and control over the feelings and mind (Aksobhaka, Amanaska).

The Śaktarahasya summarizes the stages of progress in a short verse, thus:—“By images, ceremonies, mind, identification, and knowing the Self, a mortal attains Liberation (Kaivalya).”

She is the ultimate unified Sakti, the paramesvari, Tripura, the very self of Brahma, Vishnu and maheswara, the being who is jnaana sakti, kriya sakti and iccha sakti. -Vamakeswara tantra 4.10.11

Tantra tradition classifies worship as internal (Antaryaga) and external (bahiryaga). External worship is only a stepping stone, a preliminary procedure; a means and not an end. One must go beyond that in due course. With or without props (sadhara or niradhara) bahiryaga is in two ways. Sadhara way of Antaryaga initially takes the help of certain extraneous images, or gestures, or sounds. The motif is to evolve into niradhara antaryaga, and in progression the saadhaka gradually sheds all symbolism that was motivating and supporting him in worship. In intense contemplation and visualization saadhaka dissolves his mind and transcends into deeper experience of super consciousness. Such transformation is termed bhavana, a mental process that transforms an idea into reality. In an extended sense it means contemplation or meditation, comprehending the abstract as real and tangible. Bhavana is regarded as the sublime form of worship for attaining liberation, even while one is alive (jeevan mukthi). Sadhaka ultimately comprehends unequivocally the legitimacy that unity is the basis of multiplicity and upholds the multiplicity and that the Supreme is both being, and becoming, the one essence and the manifold phenomena of the universe.

Yas tu sarva.i bhutany atmany evanupasyati sarvabhute.u catmana. tato na vijugupsate yasmin sarva.i bhutany atmaivabhud vijanata. tatra ko moha. ka. soka ekatvam anupasyata. -Isa up. 6, 7

And he who beholds all beings in the Self, and the Self in all beings, he never turns away from it. He does not feel any revulsion by reason of such a view.

When, to one who knows, all beings have, verily, become one with his own self, then what delusion and what sorrow can come to him who has seen the oneness! -Isa up. 6, 7

Samaya system of worship contemplates the consequential union between the power of the aspirant's dynamic will (chidrupa), also called as Lalita kameswari (svatmaiva paradevata Lalita – Bhavanopanishad), and kameswara, the complete crystallized state of truth and bliss. Antaryaga, as prescribed in Vamakeswara tantra, Rudrayamala, Bhavanopanishad, involve Kundalini yoga, and different identification procedures with srimata – srividya -sricakra and the deities of nine avaranas' of sricakra. It also involves internal sricakra nyāsa in the light of the avaranas' and the ascent of Kundalini Sakti to Sahasrara and back. Bhavanopanishad is a seminal Upanishad of the srividya tradition. This Upanishad has lot of similarities with Tantra-raja-tantra, another major tantric text of the most orthodox kadi srividya tradition, which insists on virtue, discipline and purity of rituals. It is also portrayed as samaya para vidya (transcendental knowledge) as the worship is internal, and purely Satvic. The foremost contention of Bhavanopanishad is to ascertain a relation between foundation of the human body and sricakra, which is regarded as a prototype symbolic projection of the universe. In this there is a sincere effort to harmonize (Sāmarasya) the micro and the macro features of human and universal bodies, and collimation of both with sricakra. It lays greater emphasis on symbolic representation and contemplation, than on rituals.

VRATA: Vrata is a part of Naimittika, or voluntary karma.

It is that which is the cause of virtue (punya), and is done to achieve its fruit. Vratas are of various kinds. Others may be performed at any time, such as the Sāvitrī-vrata by women only, (To attain good wifehood, long life for the husband in this world and life with him in the next.) And the Kārtikeya-pūjā by men only. (To secure children). While each Vrata has its peculiarities, certain features are common to Vratas of differing kinds. There is both in preparation and performance samyama, such as sexual continence, eating of particular food such as havisyānnā, fasting, bathing. The mind is concentrated to its purposes, and the vow or resolution (Niyama) is

taken. Before the Vrata the Sun, Planets, and Kula-Devatā are worshipped, and by the “*sūryah-somo-yamah-kāla*” mantra all Devas and Beings are invoked to the side of the worshipper. In the Vaidika Vrata the Samkalpa is made in the morning, and the Vrata is done before midday.

MANTRA: Any set of words or letters is not a Mantra. Only that Mantra in which the Devatā has revealed His or Her particular aspects can reveal that aspect, and is therefore the Mantra of that one of His or Her particular aspects. **The relations of the letters (Varna), whether vowel or consonant, Nāda and Bindu, in a Mantra indicate the appearance of Devatā in different forms.** Certain Vibhūti or aspects of the Devatā are inherent in certain Varna, but perfect Śakti does not appear in any but a whole Mantra. A Mantra consists of certain letters arranged in definite sequence of sounds of which the letters are the representative signs. To produce the designed effect, the Mantra must be intoned in the proper way, according to both sound (Varna) and rhythm (Svara).

The textual source of Mantras is to be found in the Vedas (see in particular the Mantra portion of the Artharvaveda so associated with the Tantra Śāstra), the Purānas and Tantras. The latter scripture is essentially the MantraŚāstra.

The common understanding is that a mantra is an invocation, containing a sacred syllable or set of syllables. When a mantra is uttered with specific rhythm, with sincerity of devotion and purity of thought and action, and with phonetic and grammatical accuracy, in a manner prescribed by the scriptural injunctions of the Vedas or some authoritative scripture, it is believed to invoke a particular deity and compel the deity to assist the invoker to achieve a desired end. *It is interesting to note that according to Hindu beliefs, if a mantra is pronounced correctly the deity to whom it is addressed has no choice but to respond to the invoker automatically and help him.* Their chanting creates the necessary vibrations in the atmosphere to awaken the deities and facilitates their descent to the place of worship.

The sound that is generated by the chanting of the mantras is very important, but is not the only requirement for the pooja to be successful.

It is believed that hidden in each mantra is the energy of a particular deity which remains normally latent, but becomes active the moment the mantra is pronounced accurately in the manner prescribed by the shastras. The divinity awakens only if the vibrations generated by the chanting matches with its basic frequency.

The primary Mantra of a Devatā is called Mūla-mantra. Mantras are solar (Saura) and masculine, and lunar (Saumya) and feminine, as also neuter. If it be asked why things of mind are given sex, the answer is for the sake of the requirements of the worshipper. The masculine and neuter forms are called specifically Mantra and the feminine Vidyā, though the first term may be used for both.

Neuter Mantras end with Namah. Hum, Phat are masculine terminations, and “Tham” or Svāhā, feminine (see Śāradsātilaka II. Nāradapañcaratra VII, Prayogasāra, Prānatosini 70).

The Nityā Tantra gives various names to Mantra according to the number of the syllables such as Pinda, Kartarī, Bīja, Mantra, Mālā. Commonly however the term Bīja is applied to monosyllabic Mantras. When the Sadhaka knows the meaning of the Mantra he makes an advance. But this is not enough. He must, through his consciousness, realize that Consciousness which appears in the form of the Mantra, and thus attain Mantra-Caitanya.

Śabda, or sound, which is of the Brahman, and as such the cause of the Brahmānda, is the manifestation of the Cit-śakti itself. The Viśva-sāra-Tantra says that the Para-Brahman, as Śabda-Brahman, whose substance is all mantra, exists in the body of the jīvātmā. It is either unlettered (dhvani) or lettered (Varna). The former, which produces the latter, is the subtle aspect of the jīva’s vital śakti. As the Prapāñca-sāra tantra states, the Brahmānda is pervaded by śakti, consisting of dhvani also called nāda, Prāna, and the like. The manifestation of the gross form (Sthūla) of Śabda is not possible unless Śabda exists in a subtle (Sūksma) form. Mantras are all aspects of the Brahman and manifestations of Kulakundalinī. Philosophically, Śabda is the guna of ākāśa, or ethereal space. It is not, however, produced by ākāśa, but manifests in it. Śabda is itself the Brahman. In the same way, however, as in outer space, waves of sound are produced by movements of air (vāyu); so in the space within the jīva’s body waves of sound are produced according to the movements of the vital air (Prāna-vāyu) and the process of inhalation and exhalation. Śabda first appears at the mūlādhāra and that which is known to us as such is, in fact, the śakti which gives life to the jīva. She it is who, in the mūlādhāra, is the cause of the sweet indistinct and murmuring dhvani, which sounds like the humming of a bee.

The extremely subtle aspect of sound which first appears in the Mūlādhāra is called Parā; less subtle when it has reached the heart, it is known as Paśhyantī.

When connected with Buddhi it becomes grosser, and is called Madhyamā. Lastly, in its fully gross form, it issues from the mouth as Vaikharī. As Kula-Kundalinī, whose substance is all Varna and dhvani is but the manifestation of, and Herself the Paramātmā, so the substance of all mantra is cit, notwithstanding their external manifestation as sound, letters, or words; in fact, the letters of the alphabet, which are known as akshara, are nothing but the Yantra of the akshara, or imperishable Brahman. This, however, is only realized by the Sadhaka when his śakti, generated by Sādhanā, is united with the mantraśakti.

It is the Sthūla or gross form of Kulakundalinī, appearing in different aspects as different Devatās, which is the presiding Devatā (adhiṣṭhātri) of all mantra, though it is the subtle or Sūksma form at which all Sādhanā’s aim. When the mantraśakti is awakened by the Sādhanā the presiding Devatā appears, and when perfect mantra-siddhi is acquired, the Devatā, who is Saccidānanda, is revealed. The relations of Varna, nāda, bindu, vowel and consonant in a mantra, indicate the appearance of Devatā in different forms. Certain Vibhūti, or aspects, of the Devatā are inherent in certain varnas, but perfect Śakti does not appear in any but a whole mantra. Any word or letter of the mantra cannot be a mantra. Only that mantra in which the

playful Devatā has revealed any of Her particular aspects can reveal that aspect, and is therefore called the individual mantra of that one of Her particular aspects. The form of a particular Devatā, therefore, appears out of the particular mantra of which that Devatā, is the adhiṣṭhātri-Devatā. To produce the designed effect mantra must be intoned in the proper way, according to Svara (rhythm), and Varna (sound). The latter is essentially the mantra-śāstra, and so it is said of the embodied śāstra, that Tantra, which consists of mantra, is the Paramātmā, the Vedas are the jīvātmā, Darśana (systems of philosophy) are the senses, Purānas are the body, and Smṛti are the limbs. Tantra is thus the śakti of consciousness, consisting of mantra. A mantra is not the same thing as prayer or self-dedication (ātmā-nivedana). Prayer is conveyed in what words the worshipper chooses, and bears its meaning on its face. It is only ignorance of śāstrik principles which supposes that mantra is merely the name for the words in which one expresses what one has to say to the Divinity.

A mantra may, or may not, convey on its face its meaning. Bīja (seed) mantra, such as Aim, Klim, Hrim, have no meaning, according to the ordinary use of language. The initiate, however, knows that their meaning is the own form (svarūpa) of the particular Devatā, whose mantra they are, and that they are the dhvani which makes all letters sound and which exists in all which we say or hear. Every mantra is, then, a form (rūpa) of the Brahman.

From manana, or thinking, arises the real understanding of the monistic truth, that the substance of the Brahman and the Brahmānda are one and the same.

Man- of mantra comes from the first syllable of manana, and **-tra** from trāna, or liberation from the bondage of the samsara or phenomenal world. By the combination of man- and -tra, that is called mantra which calls forth (āmantrana), the Chaturvarga or four aims of sentient being. Whilst, mere prayer often ends in nothing but physical sound, mantra is a potent compelling force, a word of power (the fruit of which is mantra-siddhi), and is thus effective to produce Chaturvarga, advaitic perception, and Mukti. Thus it is said that Siddhi is the certain result of japa

By mantra the sought-for (sādhya) Devatā is attained and compelled. By Siddhi in mantra is opened the vision of the three worlds. Though the purpose of worship (pūjā), reading (pāṭha), hymn (stava), sacrifice (homa), dhyāna, dhāranā, and Samādhi, and that of the Dīksā-mantra are the same, yet the latter is far more powerful, and this for the reason that, in the first, the Sādhaka's Sāadhanā-śakti works, in conjunction with mantra-śakti which has the revelation and force of fire, and then which nothing is more powerful. The special mantra which is received at initiation (dīksha) is the bīja or seed mantra, sown in the field of the Sādhaka's heart, and the Tāntrik Sandhyā, nyāsa, pūjā and the like are the stem and branches upon which hymns of praise (Stuti) and prayer and homage (vandana) are the leaves and flower, and the kavaca, consisting of mantra, the fruit.

It is also said that the word Mūla- in the mantra denotes the subtle body of the Devata called Kāma-Kalā. The utterance of a mantra without knowledge of its meaning or of the mantra method is a mere movement of the lips and nothing more. The mantra sleeps. There are various

processes preliminary to and involved in, its right utterance, which processes again consist of mantra, such as:

For purification of the mouth - (Mukha-śodhana) (Śāradā-Tilaka), purification of the tongue (Jihva-śodhana), the mantra Aśauca-bhanga, Kulluka, (Sārada -Tilaka.), nirvana, Setu, Nidrabhanga, mantra-caitanya, Meditating on the Mūla-mantra in the Sahasrāra, Anāhata, Mūlādhārā, and again in Sahasrāra. The Mūla is the principal mantra, such as the pañcadaśī. Mantrārthabhāvana, forming of mental image of the Divinity

There are also ten Samskāras of the mantra: *-Dīpanī*. The mantra itself is Devatā. The worshipper awakens and vitalizes it by cit-śakti, putting away all thought of the letter, piercing the six Cakras, and contemplating the spotless One. The śakti of the mantra is the vācaka-śakti, or the means by which the Vācya-śakti or object of the mantra is attained. The mantra lives by the energy of the former. The Saguna-śakti is awakened by Sādhanā and worshipped, and she it is who opens the portals whereby the Vācya-śakti is reached. Thus the Mother in Her Saguna form is the presiding deity (adhīsthātri-Devatā) of the Gāyatrī mantra. As the Nirguna (formless) One, She is its Vācya-śakti. Both are in reality one and the same; but the jīva, by the laws of his nature and its three Gunas, must first meditate on the gross (Sthūla) form before he can realize the subtle (Sūkṣma) form, which is his liberator.

The mantra of a Devata is the Devata. The rhythmical vibrations of its sounds not merely regulate the unsteady vibrations of the sheaths of the worshipper, thus transforming him, but from it arises the form of the Devatā which it is.

*(Śrnu devī pravakṣyāmi bījānām deva-rūpatām Mantroccārana mātrena,
deva-rūpam prajayate.*

— (*Brhad-Gandharva-Tantra, chap. v.*)

Mantra-Siddhi is the ability to make a mantra efficacious and to gather its fruit

(Yam Yam prāthayate kāmam Tam tamāpnoti niścitam)

(Whatever the Sadhaka desires that he surely obtains) —Prānatosinī, 619.) Which case the mantra is called Mantrasiddha. Mantras are classified as siddha, sādhyā, Susiddha, and ari, according as they are friends, servers, supporters, or destroyers—a matter which is determined for each Sadhaka by means of cakra calculations.

JAPA: is defined as “Vidhanena mantroccaranam,” or the repeated utterance or recitation of mantra according to certain rules. (Mere book knowledge is, according to the Satkarmadīpikā, useless.)

Pustake likitā vidyā yena sundari japyate,

Siddhir na jāyate devi kalpa-koti-śatair api.

Japa according to the *Tantrasāra* is of three kinds: *Vācaka* or verbal japa, in which the mantra is audibly recited, the fifty maṭrkas being sounded nasally with bindu; *Upāmsū-japa*, which is

superior to the last kind, and in which the tongue and lips are moved, but no sound, or only a slight whisper, is heard; and, lastly, the highest form which is called *manasajapa*, or mental utterance. In this there is neither sound nor movement of the external organs, but a repetition in the mind which is fixed on the meaning of the mantra.

One reason given for the differing values attributed to the several forms is that where there is audible utterance the mind thinks of the words and the process of correct utterance, and is therefore to a greater (as in the case of *vācaka-Japa*), or to a less degree (as in the case of *Upāmsū-japa*), distracted from a fixed attention to the meaning of the mantra. The Japa of different kinds have also the relative values, attachable to thought and its materialization in sound and word. Certain conditions are prescribed as those under which japa should be done, relating to physical cleanliness, the dressing of the hair, and wearing of silk garments, the seat (*asana*), the avoidance of certain conditions of mind and actions, and the nature of the recitation. The japa is useless unless done a specified number of times. The counting is done either with a *Mālā* or rosary (*mala-japa*), or with the thumb of the right hand upon the joints of the fingers of that hand (*kara-japa*).

PURAŚCARANA: consists in the repetition (after certain preparations and under certain conditions) of a mantra a large number of times in a specific number of days, i.e. a Mandala (40days) or 20 days or ten days. Usually a lac times of each Bija of the mantra; if a mantra is having nine Bijakhara, it will be nine lac times, followed by a specific number of times doing tarpana and homa of the mantra. The ritual deals with the time and place of performance, the measurements like, the number of times the mantra is recited will be the same on all days. There are certain rules as to food both prior to, and during, its performance. The Sadhaka should eat havisyānnā, or alternatively boiled milk (*kshīra*), fruits, or Indian vegetables, or anything obtained by begging, and avoid all food calculated to influence the passions. Certain conditions and practices are enjoined for the destruction of sin, such as continence, bathing, japa. Three days before pūjā there is worship of Ganeśa and Kshetrapāla, Lord of the Place. Pañca-gavya prasana, or the five products of the cow, are eaten. The Sun, Moon, and Devas, are invoked. Then follows the Samkalpa for Purascharana.

NYĀSA: This word, which comes from the root “to place,” means placing the tips of the fingers and palm of the right hand on various parts of the body, accompanied by particular mantras. The

Nyāsas are of various kinds. Nyasa is also of use in effecting the proper distribution of the śakti of the human frame in their proper positions so as to avoid the production of discord and distraction in worship. Nyāsa as well as Āsana are necessary for the production of the desired state of mind and of Cittaśuddhi (its purification). Transformation of thought is Transformation of being. This is the essential principle and rational basis of all this and similar Tāntrik sādhanas. Nyāsas is a very important and powerful Tantric rite. The word comes from the root, “to place,” and means the placing of the tips of the fingers and palm of the right hand on various parts of the body, accompanied by Mantra. There are four general divisions of Nyāsas, viz., inner (Antar), outer (Bahir), according to the creative (Sṛṣṭi) and dissolving (Samhāra) order (Krama). Nyāsas is of many kinds such as Jīva-nyāsa, Mātrkā or Lipi-nyāsa, Rasi-nyāsa, Shadanganyāsa on the body (Hridayādi-shadanga-nyāsa) and with the hands (Angushthādi-shadanga-nyāsa), Pīthanyāsa and so on.

The external disposition is as follows:—The vowels are placed on the forehead, face, right and left eye, right and left ear, right and left nostril, right and left cheek, upper and lower lip, upper and lower teeth, head and hollow of the mouth. The consonants, Ka to Va, are placed on the base of the right arm and the elbow, wrist base and tips of fingers, left arm, and right and left leg, right and left side, back navel, belly, heart, right and left shoulder, and space between the shoulders (Kakudi). Then, from the heart to the right palm, Śa; from the heart to the left palm, S a; from the heart to the right foot, Sa; from the heart to the left foot, Ha; and lastly from the heart to the belly and the heart to the mouth, Ksha. This Mātrkā-nyāsa is of several kinds.