

Śhri Śharada Chatus-Śhatika

'Four hundred verses in praise of Śhrī Śharadā (Saraswatī)'

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SUBMISSION (VIJNAPANA)

This preliminary section submits this work at the Feet of the Goddess, with the hope that the contents thereof will aid the seekers of Brahman. The author's own delusion that he was the body, senses etc was dispelled by the grace of the Mother-Goddess, and how the realization of 'aham' as identical with the Goddess Herself dawned on him. In thirty-three verses the author summarizes the Śhakta view that the Ātman is indeed the supreme Goddess.

INTRODUCTION (AVATARIKA) The supreme Brahman in whom all powers are comprehended, divided himself into two aspects 'pure' (Śhuddha) and 'variegated' (Sabala). The latter, also known as 'sa-guṇa' aspect, has four quarters, three of which consist of the world, the fourth being pure consciousness. The last quarter has again four sub-quarters, each called a 'Kalā' (fragment), giving us sixteen of them. The last sub-quarter which is further sub-divided into four, has the last division identical with the Supreme Spirit. The first Kalā here is called 'pure' knowledge (śhuddha-vidyā), the second the 'Sovereign' (īśhvara) the third 'ever benign' (sadā-śhiva), and the fourth 'pure consciousness' (chin-maya) or the Supreme Mother.

The Goddess manifests Herself in four hundred ways. The primordial Nucleus (Para-bindu), which is the complete, undifferentiated and unitary Mother assumes for the sake of the ignorant folk three forms: pasyanti, madhyama and vaikhari. The highest abode is the para; and the fourth is vaikhari, where ordinary folk reside. The devotee has to ascend in stages to the highest, which is 'turiya' (the fourth). The four kalas in constituting the

highest form (para) have been dealt with here in the four centums –‘Blocks of a Hundred Verses’ (chatus-śhati).

The first centum deals with the problem of 'atma' and 'anatma' (spirit and matter). The second treats of 'inward orientation' (antar-mukhatva). In the third centum, the forms that the Mother-Goddess (matrika) assumes, especially in the mysterious Śhrī-chakra, are explained. And the last centum describes the spiritual attainments of the 'fourth' stage (turya) and the stage beyond that (turyātīta).

THE FIRST CENTUM

From the Lotus-Feet of the Goddess emanate 360 rays of light, which correspond to the 360 days of the year.

These have been grouped into three divisions (maṇḍalas) named after Agni –‘Fire’ (with 108 rays), Sūrya –‘Sun’ (with 116 rays) and Soma –‘Moon’ (with 136 rays). The entire universe and the time principle are comprehended in these 360 rays, which are manifest in the Mother-Goddess Herself. The world in its entirety shines in Her, and She is luminous everywhere. She is of the nature of consciousness-sky (chid-ākāśha), which indeed is the support for all things. She reveals Herself with form as well as without form in all things and at all times.

In the individual, She resides in the Sahasrāra centre (bindu-maṇḍala) as the eternal witness of all that happens in the three states: waking, dreaming and sleeping. All forms are Hers, and yet She is without forms. Her nature is pure consciousness. But it is because of Her mysterious productive power (Māyā) that the world appears real; but when by wisdom, one conquers this web of Māyā, everything is pure consciousness only. Forgetting the Mother, the people are fettered, but once they know, they are freed. She is Herself the form of liberation. All phenomena is really pure consciousness; the world is illumined by consciousness. The world of names and forms is indeed Śharada Herself.

In the heart of Her devotees, She shines as consciousness (buddhi); the pure one shines pervading everything. She is the 'life' of everything, the 'being' in all things. The fool does not know that without Her presence, it is only inertness. The individual wanders about in search of Her in vain, without realizing that She is within himself as his very soul. As long as this realization is not got, involvement in Samsāra does not cease. As soon as one realizes, he becomes freed here and now (jīvan-mukta).

She comprehends all gods, all the mantras, all the ritualistic actions and all the worlds. She has forms, She is also bereft of forms; She has attributes, She is also devoid of attributes. She is beyond names and forms. She is mere existence and pure consciousness. If one leaves behind names and forms and realizes Her existential presence as pure awareness, he becomes immortal and obtains the Brahman. She is the self of all beings, witness of all the three states, and life of all things. No one who does not recognize Her as his own self will wake up in a great length of time; he is deceived by Māyā, and does not perceive the self which perceives everything, the knower that knows everything. The self is the knower of the knower, perceiver of the perceiver, the eternal and immutable witness (Sākshi)

The witness is where the perceiving and the perceived objects cease to operate in the perceiver; it is every one's own nature (sva-svarupa). It is also the nature of the Mother, which enables all knowledge and which supports the entire universe. By understanding ones own nature, one understands the form of pure consciousness.

The self is verily the absolute, and one does not differ from the other. One gets freed from bondage by realization of "I am Brahman". Absence of this realization is bondage. and this is caused by mind. When the mental processes are erased, the mind itself is eliminated, and when mind is eliminated, it is liberation (mukti).

Freedom from mind is liberation; association with mind is bondage. It is by rejecting the resolves (Sankalpa) that mind can be voided. Giving up these mental resolves is really what renunciation is. Giving up everything is the means of realizing Brahman.

By suppressing mind, the one-pointedness of consciousness is achieved, and by relying on this state of consciousness, the bliss of consciousness (chid-ānanda) is experienced. Dualism is a creature of the mind and the voidness of mind is non-dualistic. Mind indeed is māyā, and that is how dualism is an illusion.

The dualism of the world is caused by the dependence upon Māyā (māy'opadhi) even as the one moon appears as many in diverse pools of water which reflect it. Pure consciousness is like the object, and the world is like its reflection. When the falsity of dependence-reflection is understood, Brahman alone remains. For the wise, differences do not exist; it is only the fools that have ideas of difference.

Arising from pure consciousness, the entire world which is false appears as real. There can be no delusion apart from this, or greater than this. The clouds shine in the sky only when the rays of the sun fall on them; but the clouds can hide the sun from our view, and suggest his non-existence.

Not knowing the real nature of an object and imagining the object to be different from what it really is are called 'delusion' (Moha); and is also known as 'Māyā'. Even as a rope is mistaken for a snake, the worldly involvement is projected upon the self; and this false apprehension is the source of all suffering.

By inquiring into the nature of the self and distinguishing it from the non-self, which inquiry is known as discrimination (Viveka), the self is realized before long. This is the only means of attaining to Brahman; and it will eliminate delusion. One who follows this technique will become liberated immediately (Sadyo-mukti).

It is the supreme Mother-Goddess, Śharadā, that bestows on the ignorant folk who wander about with mistaken notions, liberating knowledge.

The desire to enjoy worldly pleasures must be given up, for it is what binds the individual always; the worldly pleasures are short-lived, transient and bring about suffering in the long run. The desires to enjoy them are like the images seen in the mirror; they are unreal.

Bondage results from ignorance of ones own real nature. The Mother-Goddess Śharadā bestows on us the knowledge that will dispel ignorance.

Involvement with the world (pravṛitti) means orientation which is outward. Withdrawal (nivṛitti) is inward-orientation.

Involvement is dualism while withdrawal is non-duality.

Abandoning the worldly wisdom, one must turn inward.

And while turning inward, one must provide some support for the mind.

Knowing the object that is within oneself is known as inward-orientation.

The gross body is equipped with four-pegs (*arms and legs*), six lotuses (*Chakras*), three maṇḍalas (*Orbs of Fire, Sun Moon*), three knots (*Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra Granthis*), and three divisions (*Bhūr, Bhuvah, Swar*), and is bound to the transcendental channel known as Sushumna. Beginning with the loins and ending with the meeting place of the eyebrows are three divisions. From the eyebrows to the top of the forehead, called Dvadaśhānta –‘*Twelve Destructions*’, is the area which is transcendental (turiya). There is here space which is supreme (param vyoma), and which is the residence of Brahman. The Moon and the Fire meet here (*Spirit and Kundalini*): and in the nucleus area (bindu-sthana), the Moon of Pure Consciousness shines amidst the Sea of Nectar. This is the seat of the witness, and it is here that the Supreme Goddess shines. This is what the scriptures describe as the Supreme Space within the Heart-cave.

One who longs for bliss must abandon the outward orientation, for it leads to bondage. Inward-orientation it is that brings about happiness. The

outward orientation is withdrawn by taking reliance on the Mother-Goddess. She is the support (alambana), and She is luminous like a thousand lightnings and a crore of moons. And She is subtle like the inner tube of a lotus-stalk. By relying on Her the mind gets steadied, like a tired bird in its nest.

Here ends the first centum wherein Pure Knowledge that is known as discrimination between Self and not-Self is expounded.

THE SECOND CENTUM

The supreme vital channel in the human body (viz., the Sushumna) emanates from the centre known as Sahasrāra, the thousand-petalled lotus, and subtle like the inner vein of the lotus stalk, blazes like unto a streak of lightning, but steady. This channel flows downward, and in a curving path assumes the form of fifty letters of the alphabet (from 'a' to 'ha') and reaching the four-petalled Mūlādhāra, rests there.

The Mūlādhāra is so called because it is the primordial support for the world and for all the bodies. It is indeed the foundation of everything. When the transcendental becomes the foundation, and becomes a sleeping serpent, the Goddess involves Herself in the transactional world, and the bondage of Samsāra arises. The transcendental channel, Sushumna, is also known as Brahma-nāḍī, and in it is founded the world, visible and invisible, the other planes of existence, the oceans, the seven islands and all the mountains.

In the space within the top of the head (dvadaśh'ānta-sthana) Sadā-Śhiva abides, like the full moon in the sky. The great power that emanates from here, like a fire, is called 'vimarśhini' (which was, till the moment of emanation, absorbed in him). This transcendental fire-like channel differentiates itself into six psychic centres (ṣhat-chakra) and three knots (granthi-traya).

The centre that functions like the foundation is Mūlādhāra, the four-petalled lotus representing the earth-element; above it is the Maṇḍala of the fire, known as Svādhishṭhāna, where the fire blazes forth and which is the seat of the Goddess.

Next is the ten-petalled Maṇipura, filled with jewels and source of all the gods and stellar bodies. And the Goddess reveals Herself there like a flash of lightning to the practitioners of 'Samay'āchāra'

Anāhata-'unstruck', is the centre where sound arises without being struck, giving rise to air; this is the lotus with twelve petals. This is the lotus of consciousness (samvid kamala), for it is there that the fire of consciousness burns; and the glorious Goddess whose form is pure consciousness rests.

The centre in the region of the neck (or throat) of the Goddess is the sixteen-petalled lotus, where the principle of sky (viyat) takes its birth; and Śhiva is worshipped here in Viśhuddhi with the rays of the moon by the practitioners of internal worship (antaryaga).

Āgñyā is the centre in the shape of a lotus with two petals only, located in between the two eye-brows of the Goddess. It is so called because the knowledge of the transcendental Goddess occurs here slightly (ishan-matra), like a flash of lightning. Inside this centre is the triple-peak (tri-kuta, giving rise to the three vital channels, Iḍa, Piṅgala and Sushumna, and the three sacred streams Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati; and the three maṇḍalas (the realms of Sun, Moon and Fire) unite here. This is the residence of the Goddess as Tripura, and time takes its birth here. Above this centre is the 'turiya', the transcendental. The transcendental centre is the realm of brilliant moon-light, where resides the Moon of consciousness; time is not differentiated here as day and night. Stretching from the middle of the eye-brows till the top of the head (dvadaśh'ānta), it is here that Brahman abides as witness and as pure consciousness. This is the seat of the transcendental nucleus (para-bindu). Once the practitioners

of Tantra dissolve themselves in this centre, there is no more rebirth for them.

This centre is lustrous like a crore of lightnings, bright like the sun, but cool like a crore of moons. It is the moonlight coming out of the moon of consciousness; it is the image of the ocean of ambrosia.

It is only as a result of the merit accumulated in several previous births that an individual gets the desire to liberate himself from the bondage of phenomenal existence, becomes free from passionate interest in the world and develops a dislike for worldly pleasures. Then, he withdraws his mind from the functions of the Prakriti (viz., the three guṇas) and turns his mind inward for obtaining the bliss of Brahman. Mind indeed is the cause of one's bondage as well as freedom; and when that mind is dissolved, that is known as liberation. Involvement in the world and withdrawal are alike the functions of the mind. Involvement leads to bondage and withdrawal to liberation.

The common people are outward-oriented; they shun turning their attention inward. Their mind is full of impressions that are powerful and productive (vasana). Mind is thus of the nature of Māyā. By making the mind rest (cease to function), one gets all benefits, and it is only then that the absolute will manifest in the form of all things.

Mind assumes the form of 'vimarśha', and becomes a process. It is Shakti, while consciousness is Śhiva. Mind and consciousness are always together and are in unison. When mind (which is Śhakti) is dominant, consciousness (which is Śhiva) becomes one with it. If, however, consciousness (as Prakāśha) becomes dominant, mind (as Vimarśha) becomes dissolved in it.

The waking state of the world, and the knowledge of duality is the play of Śhakti (mind); consciousness (Prakāśha) gets dissolved in it. When mind rests, consciousness becomes ascendant, and then people have discrimination (between self and non-self); and this makes for the welfare.

When the Self is understood, then there is withdrawal from the worldly interests; one becomes inward-oriented, and there is attainment of oneself.

The Iḍa-channel (representing sun) flows through the right nostril and Piṅgala channel (representing moon) through the left nostril. The courses of the sun and moon alter in a muhurta; and in the Āgñyā centre, which is the triple seat, the three channels (viz., Iḍa, Pingala and Sushumna) meet. Iḍa and Pingala are the sacred rivers Gaṅga and Yamuna. They unite with the hidden stream Sarasvati, and where the three meet is the sacred place Prayaga, (viz., the Āgñyā centre).

When the restraining of respiration is practised, it will purify the channels for the practitioner. While, however breath is being held in check, one must contemplate upon Brahman. Then the sleeping serpent (viz., Kuṇḍalinī) will wake up stricken with hunger and indignant. United with the fire at the Svadhishthana centre it will enter the Sushumna channel and move upward, wanting to reach Her own place and longing for union with Her consort (viz., Śhiva).

The transcendental channel (viz., Sushumna) is upward-oriented and ascending, it breaks through the three knots and the six centres, finally reaching Her own abode (in the Sahasrāra). The Mūlādhāra and Swādhiṣṭhāna centres are together known as the realm of fire (vahni-maṇḍala); and above the Swādhiṣṭhāna lotus is the knot of Brahma (Brahama-granthi). A knot is where the real and the unreal unite. When the attachment to the gross world is abandoned, it is spoken of as the breaking through of the knot of Brahma.

The Anāhata and Maṇipūra centres are together spoken of as the Realm of the Sun (Saura-maṇḍala), and above the Anāhata centre is the Knot of the Vishṇu (vishṇu-granthi). The appropriation of the self-hood (jīvatva) and the subtle body is this knot, and when the attachment to the subtle body is given up, the knot of Vishnu is broken through.

The Viśuddhi centre in the throat, and the Āgñyā centre in between the eyebrows constitute the realm of the moon (chandra-maṇḍala), and above the Āgñyā centre is the knot of Rudra (Rudra-granthi). The abandonment of the attachment to the causal body is what is known as breaking through the knot of Rudra.

The knot is known as dualism, and breaking through it is non-dualism. Dualism is bondage and non-dualism is freedom.

When thus the Goddess transcends the six lotuses and the three knots, breaking through the three realms, and reaches the world of light, then She is said to abide in the realm of the nucleus (bindu-maṇḍala-ga).

There the great Goddess who is in the form of Fire gets united with the Moon of Consciousness, and showering the rain of Ambrosia will cleanse the vital channels. The transcendental channel is the individual self (jīva), and the moon of consciousness is the Brahman. The union of the two is known as emancipation (moksha).

Uniting with Śhiva who abides in the realm of nucleus (bindu-maṇḍala) within the thousand-petalled lotus (Sahasrāra), the Goddess will obtain the Supreme Bliss of consciousness. The union of Śhiva and Śhakti in this manner is known as advaita (non-dualism), the state of Brahman (Brahma-pada), and liberation while one is still alive (jīvan-mukti). When the practitioner, perceiving the union of Śhiva and Śhakti in the thousand-petalled lotus, dissolves himself. In this union, it is known as kaivalya (supreme one-ness) and immortality. This is also called turīya (transcendental).

When one regards himself as an individual soul, he is indeed the individual soul; if, on the other hand, he looks upon himself as Brahman, he is Brahman. The mind alone is the cause of bondage; giving it up is emancipation. When the mind is dissolved, and the false ascription of

individual-hood is removed, it is emancipation; it is also known as Brahman. Being devoid of mental processes, and being bereft of will is called the dissolution of mind, which is the transcendental state.

It is when the mind is active, questions and answers occur in an endless series. The mind indeed is the source of rebirth, and therefore the destruction of the mind means emancipation. When the mind is blank, everything is blank, for the world is only mind and nothing else. When the mind is dissolved, what remains is pure consciousness, which will be all that presents itself.

Know therefore that all is Brahman, and remain quiet. It is in quietude that Brahman will doubtlessly be achieved.

Brahman is what was there at the beginning; and Brahman will remain at the end. How can another thing come in between? Whatever crops up in the middle is but delusion (Māyā). Ascertain that the ego is after all a false appearance. When consciousness is mixed up with the mind, the world comes into being; when consciousness is pure and isolated, it is Brahman; and it is the supreme Goddess.

Whatever is distinguished from it is Prakṛiti, the realm of Māyā.

From the basal centre (Mūlādhāra) till the centre between the two eyebrows (Āgñyā), three peaks are recognised; and the three peaks represent the three planes: the earth (Bhū), the atmosphere (Bhuvah) and the heavens (Svah). Beyond the three is the transcendental plane (turīya). The three planes (quarters) contain all the worlds; what is beyond the three planes produces the worlds. That is the supreme Energy, the transcendental truth, shining like a nucleus (para-bindu) in the transcendental space (parākāśa). The principle of projection and presentation (Māyā) takes its birth here, and functions like its shadow and becomes the world of names and forms.

The Māyā is thus known as the seed of the world, which is of the nature of mind and nothing else. Pure consciousness is the aspect of Brahman, and

the mind is the aspect of Māyā. When the two combine, the world comes about, and the two remain inseparable. To tear them apart and to dissolve the mind requires great effort. One must understand that the mind is coeval with the trans-migratory existence (Samsāra), which is a web of misery. To get rid of the mind is therefore the bliss of Brahman. Hold fast to pure consciousness (buddhi), and give up the mind; become inward-oriented and remain contemplating upon the witness. When the Pure consciousness (budhi) becomes steadfast, mind naturally vanishes leaving no trace whatever.

Beyond the psychic centre between the eyebrows (Āgñyā) is the plane of existence known as the realm of reality (satya-loka), also called the home of Brahman (brahma-pura) or the world of light (jyotir-loka), which is brilliant by the lustre of Brahman and where sun or moon do not shine.

There is no distinction between day and night there; nor is there any reckoning of time. It is the realm of the unitary nucleus (bindu-maṇḍala) within the thousand-petalled lotus (Sahasrāra). Pure consciousness abides there as a mere witness. It is brilliant like a crore of suns and it is cool like a crore of moons. It is the state before creation, when heat and cold were one, the moon and the fire were united.

The transcendental plane (turiyya) is so called in contradistinction with the three planes of existence stretching from Mūlādhāra till Āgñyā, and comprehending the three worlds, the three peaks, the three bodies and the three states of mundane existence, constituting the three sides of a triangle and the three divinities (Brahma, Viṣṇu and Rudra) and expressed through the three stages of life (celibate student, householder and renunciant). The three aspects, distinguished from the transcendental, produce the whole world, and the three phases of time (past, present and future).

There is nothing higher than the transcendental plane (turiyya); and the divine will (Kāma) takes shape there; the nucleus (bindu) comes into being.

The transcendental is the supreme form of godhead, the form of the highest Brahman. Pure-consciousness and bliss (chid-ānanda) constitute the nature of this phase; it is the stage of pure light, the home of the Great Goddess.

The nucleus is the lunar orb of pure consciousness, and is said to be made up of fire and moon (agnishoma). All energy is located there. The principle of the Absolute (Brahman) is not different from this nucleus. The supreme nucleus (para-bindu) manifests itself as a triangle, when the principle of projection and presentation (Māyā) which is in its womb, becomes active. This triangle represents the three primordial guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas) and is known as the emanatory nucleus (apara-bindu), while the midmost point within this triangle is the non-manifest supreme nucleus (avyakta). The triangle represents the fifty letters of the alphabet, and the nucleus abides in all of them in an unmanifest manner.

The non-manifest (avyakta) is the creature of the will of the Supreme Goddess; and it functions like the reflection of the great Goddess. This is what we call Māyā, the principle of projection and presentation; and it is this which is responsible for the creation and dissolution of the worlds.

Thus there are two aspects of the Goddess: The supreme (para) and non-supreme (apara)

The supreme aspect is the transcendental Brahman while the other aspect is the world. In Her latter aspect, the Goddess is described as the 'Deluder' (mohini). The supreme aspect is the nucleus of pure consciousness (chid-bindu), which is known as purusha, the principle of light (Prakāśha) and the ever-benign (śadaŚhiva). The other aspect is the energy (Śhakti), the principle of reflection (Vimarśha), and the experiential core of the mundane world (pasyanti). The supreme nucleus of pure consciousness (chid-bindu) is the unison of moon and fire. The moon takes the form of light (Prakāśha), and the fire the form of the 'everbenign' (Sadā-Śhiva). The

supreme Goddess, who is of the nature of Vimarśha' is known as the primordial nature (mula-prakṛiiti).

The nucleus of pure-consciousness which is indeed primordial is described as the mixture of white and red; this mixed nature endures in the next stage also (pasyantīr). Śhiva and Śhakti are regarded as the parents of the world; the aspect of pure consciousness (chid-amsa) is the individual soul (jīva) and the energy aspect is the complex of body, sense faculties and mind (kshetra). The psychophysical complex is of the nature of names and forms whereas the seed thereof (the Prakāśha aspect) is mere existence or reality, pure consciousness and bliss (sat-chit-sukha). But the world is a mixture of the real and the unreal; it comprehends the real aspect of the Prakāśha as well as the unreal projections of Māyā.

In all the details of the world, Purusha (the Prakāśha aspect) and Prakṛiiti (the Vimarśha aspect) are manifest; in all the names and forms these two are seen. But the truth behind both of them is not seen. The world is the product of the union of the white nucleus (Śhiva aspect) and the red nucleus (Śhakti aspect). The two principles endure even in the red-nucleus (Śhakti) which is of the nature of names and forms. The form aspect represents the white nucleus, and the name aspect the red nucleus. When the red nucleus crystallizes, the primeval sound (dhvani) emerges as Śhiva, and later the articulate sound (nāda) as the Śhakti.

The entire world is thus a mixture of the real and the unreal; understanding this is really what highest knowledge (gñyāna) means.

THE THIRD CENTUM

When, at the beginning of creation, the 'para bindu' or the transcendental and supreme Nucleus known as Brahman attains the state of 'pasyantī' filled with all energy, it is described as Maya, for the entire world comes out of it; the nucleus assumes the shape of a triangle, the presiding deity of which is the primordial nature, the deluding power of the great Goddess, the reflection of the great Goddess and responsible for creation, preservation and dissolution.

When 'pasyantī' evolves into madhyama, it divides into two aspects: subtle and gross. The subtle aspect consists of seven primary notes, while the gross transforms itself into the eight groups of letters (ashta-varga), and when the 'madhyama' becomes 'vaikhari', the fifty letters of the alphabet. When the supreme nucleus (para-bindu) evolves into the 'all-perceiving' (pasyanti), primal sound (nada) arises, and this makes the 'middle state' (madhyama) possible. The subtle aspect is what occurs in between 'para' and 'pasyanti' and the gross aspect occurs in between 'pasyanti' and 'vaikhari' (explicit or articulate). The former consists of the seven basic notes, which constitute the Vedic corpus as well as the science of music, and the latter all language, in groups of vocables ('a', 'ka', 'cha', 'ta', 'pa', 'ya', and 'sa' groups).

All these emanations are located in the transcendental channel (paranādī or Sushumna), which is bright like the realm of Fire (agni-mandala). Para, pasyantī, madhyama and vaikhari are four stages in the very same channel. Speech therefore is transformation of fire; vital current, of water; and mind, of food (anna-maya). The transcendental channel emerges from the lunar orb of consciousness within the thousand petalled lotus, and finally it assumes the articulate form of vaikhari consisting of fifty letters (from 'a' to 'ha').

The Goddess flows out of the thousand-petalled lotus, descends through the Sushumna, in a crooked path, and when She reaches the middle of the

eyebrows She becomes a serpent within the lotus of two-petals of the Ājñā centre. Further, as She descends into the throat She constitutes the Viśhuddhi centre, a lotus of sixteen petals, and further down the Anāhata centre with twelve petals, the Maṇipūṛaka with ten petals, the Swādhiṣṭhāna with six petals and finally the Mūlādhāra with four petals. The whole phenomena manifests itself from the Mūlādhāra. The Goddess transforms Herself into the fifty primordial letters (varña), which are to be regarded as Her attendant-deities (yoginis). Accompanied by these yoginis, the Goddess sports in the garden of the lotus (padmatavi), viz. Mūlādhāra centre. This is the form of the 'deluder' (mohini), who assures the welfare of the world. She 'deludes' the world, by attracting all things to Herself, even as a magnet draws iron-pieces to itself.

When, owing to the cumulative effect of the meritorious deeds done in prior births, an individual seeks to return 'home', then the serpent-power in the Mūlādhāra centre, Kuṇḍalinī, begins to ascend, and breaking through the three knots and the six lotuses reaches its own abode (in the thousand-petalled lotus). This is known as the 'waking up' of the Kuṇḍalinī. As long as the individual abides in the Mūlādhāra centre, he is known as the 'jiva', fettered with births and deaths and identifying himself with the gross body. When the ascending Kuṇḍalinī reaches the Ājñā centre, the discrimination between self and not self (atm'ānatma-viveka) will dawn. Going beyond this level one reaches the transcendental plane (turlyya-kuta), and when he comes to the thousand-petalled lotus, the 'jiva' gets united with the Brahman. This is the state of liberation (moksha).

The Kuṇḍalinī is of the nature of fire. When it abides in the realm of the nucleus (bindu-maṇḍala) and joins the moon of the pure consciousness, the notion of duality disappears. By the advent of fire in the lunar orb, the nectar of immortality begins to ooze out, and will cause a shower of ambrosia. This signifies the unison of Śhiva and Śhakti (pure consciousness and supreme energy), and the transformation of the individual soul (jīva) to the absolute status (Brahmatva). Then everything will shine as nothing but

Brahman; only the principle of existence (satta-matra) will appear, and the world of names and forms will appear blank and inert.

The Mother Goddess (Śharadā) is of the nature of the primordial letters (matfka-rupa), and She manifests Herself as the three realms (of the sun, the moon and the Fire). It is I' the supreme spirit (para-Śhakti) that has become the primordial letters in the vaikharl stage; the one spirit differentiates itself into the sixteen vowels and thirty-four consonants, representing the distinction between 'Vimarśha' (Śhakti aspect) and 'Prakāśha' (Śhiva-aspect). All the vowels are regarded as the (sixteen) rays of moon-light (indu-kala); they are the eternal beings (nityas) and constitute the lunar orb.

The consonants beginning with 'ma' and ending with 'la' are the ten aspect-deities (kalā) residing in the realm of Fire (Agni-maṇḍala). From 'ka' to 'bha' are twenty-four (twelve of the moon and twelve of the fire) aspect-deities who reside in the realm of sun (saura-maṇḍala).

The Goddess of primordial articulation (matṛika) is thus manifest in three realms: the fire, the moon and the sun. She further shows Herself in five states of existence: wakefulness (jagrat), dream (svapna), deep sleep (sushupti), beyond (turya) and further than the beyond (turyatiga).

The sixteen vowels (constituting the realm of moon) represent the state of deep sleep (which is inert); the four consonants, beginning with 'ya' (ya, ra, la and va) represent the state of wakefulness. The twenty-four consonants from 'ka' to 'bha' represent the state of dream, which is an admixture of the principles of moon and fire, or the states of wakefulness and deep sleep. The letter 'ksha' is further than the beyond. The remaining letter (out of the fifty) is the unified body of Śhiva (para-Śhiva), which is devoid of attributes.

The five groups of letters 'ka', 'cha', 'ta', 'ta' and 'pa' stand for the five groups of fundamental elements 'akasa', 'vayu' (air), 'agni' (fire), 'apa'

(water) and 'prthvi' (earth) respectively. And the five letters beginning with 'pa' (in the inverse order) represent the five constituents of the internal organ (antah-karaṇa-panchaka); 'ma' is soul (ātmā), 'bha', is mind (manas), 'ba' is consciousness (buddhi), 'pha' - retentive faculty (chitta) and 'pa' ego (ahamkāra).

The five letters beginning with the letter 'la' represent the sense faculties of cognition (jnanendriya): touch (tvak), vision (chakshus), hearing (srotra), taste (jihva), and smell (ghraṇa), respectively. The five letters beginning with 'ta' are the sense faculties of action (karmendriya): speech (vāk), hands (paṇi) feet (pada); excretion (payu), and reproduction (upastha).

The five letters beginning with 'cha' represent the objects of the cognitive faculties: touch (sparśha), form (rupa), sound (śhabda), taste (rasa) and smell (gandha). The five letters beginning with 'ka' represent the objects of the faculties of action: speech (vachana), object to be held (adana), place to be covered by going (gamana), the waste to be eliminated (visarga) and enjoyment of sex (ānanda).

The twenty-four categories (the five faculties of action, and the five faculties of cognition, the five objects of the former and the five objects of the latter, the four internal instruments have the soul (Ātmā) as the twenty-fifth. Thus the Mother-Goddess manifests Herself as the microcosm (pind'āṇḍa). When considered deeply, there is really no difference between the microcosm and the macrocosm (brahm'āṇḍa). In both, Śhiva (Prakāśha) and Śhakti (Vimarśha) are involved. The names and forms are the Śhakti aspect; the complex of being (asti), manifesting (bhāti) and enticing (priya) is the Śhiva aspect. The name is śhabda-brahma, and is of the nature of maṭṛika (primordial letters). The form is the whole group of categories.

The Mother-Goddess (Śharadā), who bestows benefits on Her devotees, transforms Herself as the 'maṭṛika-chakra' (the cosmogram of primordial letters), and this takes the form of 'Śhrī-chakra' (the cosmogram of the great Goddess).

At the beginning was only the transcendental, nucleus (para-bindu) which is composed of Śhiva and Śhakti. The nucleus evolves into a triangle (pasyantī); later into the primordial sound (madhyama), and still later into the letters (vaikharī). It is the last stage (vaikharī) that is represented in Śhrī-chakra. It is implied that Śhrī-chakra also has these four aspects para, pasyanti, madhyama and vaikhari.

Śhrī-chakra is the material body of the Goddess, it has three divisions (tri-khaṇḍa), moon, sun and fire. The mantra and matrka are also in these three divisions. The mantra of the fifteen letters is equivalent to the form of Śhrī-chakra, which is the concrete form the Goddess takes. The two can be conjoined.

Śhrī-chakrais of the form of the transcendental (para) unison of Śhiva and Śhakti; it has three divisions, four foci (bindus, the three angles and the central point), five principal elements (pañcha-bhuta), six 'paths' (varṇa, pada, and mantra constituting the three mantrādva, kalā, tattva and bhuvana constituting the tattvādhvā), seven oceans (and islands) from the bridge to the square Bhū-pura are the seven islands, and the meeting-spots are the oceans), eight icomic forms (ashta-murti) (the five bhutas and the three maṇḍalas) and the nine chakras (from the central bindu till the outermost Bhū-pura, five triangles which face downward and four triangles which face upwards).

The design has nine yonis, and has nine presiding Goddesses (nava-Śhakti); indeed it comprehends all divinities. The four yonis that face upward have will (icchha), knowledge (jnana), action (kriya) and tranquility (santa) as the presiding spirits. The five yonis that face downward have Vama, Jyeshtha, Raudri, Pasyanti and Ambika as their presiding Goddesses. All told nine Goddesses are counted. But all divinities are represented here. And the Śhrī-chakra is the materialization of the union of Śhiva and Śhakti.

The Mother-Goddess (Śharadā) resides in the mid most point of the design (bindu-maṇḍala). She is here surrounded by the fifteen attendant-

Goddesses (Kamesvarī to Chitra). The design has six parts (siras, sikha, etc.); and nine enclosures (avarāṇa); and the maṇḍala of the gurus. It has the point (bindu), triangle (trikoṇa), eight-angled figure (ashta-koṇa), two ten-angled figures-(dasara-dvaya), one inner called antar-dasara and the other outer called bahir-dasara), fourteen-sided figure (chatur-dasara), eightpetalled lotus (ashta-dala), sixteen-petalled lotus (sho-daśha-dala); three circles (vṛiitta-traya) and a square enclosure with four doors (Bhū-pura). These nine chakras are evolved from the triangle, which in turn has evolved from the point (bindu). The nada arises only there. The point is of the nature of Prakāśha' while the triangle is the 'Vimarśha'.

The former is Śhiva, and the latter Śhakti. The two are the parents of the names, and forms that make the transactional world. From the two chakras (bindu and trikoṇa), the eightangled design takes shape. In the same manner, the successive enclosures come into being, like 'one lamp being lit by another' The supreme Goddess (par~) after transforming Herself into pasyanti, madhyama and vaikhari and getting tired, rests in the outermost enclosure, viz., Bhū-pura, which comprises of all the fifty primordial letters (sarva-matrka). This is how the primordial letters represent the Śhrī-chakra. The sixteen vowels assume the form of yoginīs (beginning with Kamesvari and ending with Chitra) or nitya Goddesses (corresponding to the lunar phases, tithi-nityas) and become the lotus with sixteen petals (sho-daśha-dala-kamala). The yoginīs are stationed around the Goddess in the circumambulatory order (pradakshinya-krama) beginning with the apex of the triangle.

The short vowels, eight in number, become the eight-petalled lotus, and are located in the petals in the same order (as above). These yoginis bestow all benefits when worshipped. The fourteen letters (kalas) beginning with 'ka' and ending with 'dha' also assume the form of yognis and serve the Goddess being stationed in the fourteen-angled figure in their places according to left-ward order (vamavarta).

The ten letters 'beginning with 'na' and ending with 'bha' become the outer ten-sided figure (bahir-daśhara), and the ten letters beginning with 'ma' and ending with 'la' become the inner ten-sided figure (antar~dasara'. The beginning letters of the 'eight groups 'a', 'ka', 'cha', 'ṭa'. 'ta' 'pa', 'ya' and 'sa' evolve into the eight-angled figure (ashta-kona). The three seed-letters of the Bālā constitute the triangle (tryasra) and the final letter 'ksha' :becomes the 'bindu'. In the enclosure formed by the triangle all the sixteen vowels, and the fifteen Nityā deities are stationed around the Goddess in the leftward orientation (vamavarta).

One must contemplate on the bindu as the 'pranava' (Om) along with the fourth letter twice repeated (īm), followed by 'namah' (two seed letters 'na' and 'mah'. These five seed-letters (Om īm īm na-mah) shine like a streak of lightning. In this manner., all the primordial sound-units (matṛika) are comprehended within the Śhrī-chakra dlesign.

Śhrī Chakra is the abode of the Goddess. The 'Prakāśha' aspect constituted by the categories is the Śhiva-part thereof. The lotuses along the channel Sushumna (Mūlādhāra and others) are the Vimarśha aspect of the Shakti-part. The outer-most enclosure 'Bhūpura' stands for the Mūlādhāra, the sixteen-sided figure (dvyashta-dala) for the Swādhishṭhāna; the eight-petalled figure (ashta-dala) for the Maṇipūra; the fourteen-angled figure (manvasra) for the anāhata, the two ten-angled figures (daśha-kona-dvaya) for the Viśhuddha, the eight-angled figure (ashta-kona) for the lambikāgra, the triangle (trikona) for the centre between the eyebrows, viz. Āgñyā, the mid-modt point (bindu) for the realm of the nucleus (bindu-maṇḍala) situate in the Sahasrāra (thousand-petalled lotus of the nature of Śhiva where the Goddess sports with Kāmeśhwara)

Thus the design of Śhrī Chakra represents the body of the Goddess or Śhakti, while the midmost point is Śhiva.

(I) The first enclosure (bhūura) or Mūlādhāra is called Trailokya-mohinī with three lines skirting the square enclosure with gateways on each direction.

here the eight accomplishment details (siddhis), Anima, Mahima, Garima, Laghima, Prapti, prakamyā, Īsitva and Vāsītva, assume the shape of yoginis and wait upon the Goddess. As yoginis, they are all of them four-armed, and have the ornaments and garments similar to the Goddess. They are stationed on the first line (outermost) facing the Goddess. The second line (the middle one) is inhabited by the eight Mother Goddesses (matrkas) 'Brahmī, 'Mahesvarī, Kaumarī, Vaiṣṇavī, Varahī, Mahendrī, Oha,;,qtika and Mahalakshmī. The third line (innermost) of Bhūpara is represented by the ten feminine guards (mudra-Śhakti): Kshobinī Dravaṇī, Sarvakarshinī; Vaśham-karī Unmādinī, Sarv`āñkuśhā Khecharī, Sarva-bija, Sarva-yoni and Tri-khaṇḍā.

These are all known as manifest attendant-aides of the Goddess (prakaṭa-yoginis).

II. The second enclosure (sho-daśha-dala) or Svadhishthana is called Sarvaśha-paripūraka. Sixteen energy aspects that reside here are all ākarshinīs or controlling powers over the faculties and factors: desire (kama) , intelledt (buddhi)., ego (ahamkara), sound (śhabda), touch (sparśha), form (rupa), taste (rasa), smell (gandha), thoughts (chitta), fortitude (dhairya), recollection (smṛiti) name (nama), seeds of phenomena (bija) , selfhood (atma), immortality (amṛita) and body (śharīra).

These are all known as 'hidden' attendant-aides of the Goddess (gupta-yoginīs).

III. The third enclosure (ashta-dala) or maṇipura is known as Sarva-samkshobhinī, Eight attendant-aides that are located here are Anañga-kusuma, Anañga-mekhala, Anañga-madana, Anañga-madanatua, Anañga-rekha, Anañga-vegini, Anañg`ānkusa, and Anañga-mālinī. .

These are described as "more hidden" (gupta-tara-yoginī) They are eight 'groups of letters' (ashta-varga), and they represent the five basic elements (panchabhuta) conjoined with the three realms (maṇḍala-traya).

IV. The fourth enclosure (chatur-dasara) or Anāhata centre is known as Sarva-saubhagya-da. The attendant aids (yoginīs) who serve the Goddess from this enclosure are fourteen in number: Sarva-samkshobhinī, Sarva-vidraviinī, Sarva-karshiinī, Sarva-hladiṇī, Sarva-sammohinī, Sarva-sthambhinī, Sarva-jṛimbhaṇī, Sarva-loka-vaśham-karī, Sarva-rañjanī, Sarva-on-madinī, Sarva-ārtha-sadhanī, Sarva-sampatti-purainī, Sarva-mantra-mayi and Sarva-dvandva-kshayam-karī,

These are yoginīs bound by "tradition" (sampradaya-yoginī).

V. The fifth enclosure (bahir-dasara) or Visuddha centre is called Sarva-ārtha-sādhakā. The attendant deities (yoginīs) that abound in this enclosure are Sarva-siddhi-prada, Sarva-sampat-prada, Sarva-priyañ-karī, Sarva-mañgala-karinī, Sarva-kama-prada, Sarva-dukhya-vimochani, Sarva-mrtyu-praśhamanī, Sarva-vighna-nivāriṇī, Sarva-āṅga-sundarī and Sarva-saubhagya-dāyinī.

These are described as "beyond the reach of sensory apprehension (kul'ottirna-yogini).

VI. The sixth enclosure (antar-dasara) or the throat-centre (Kaṇṭha) is called Sarva-raksha-kara. The attendant-aides of the Goddess (yoginīs) here are also ten in number: Sarva-ājna, Sarva-śhakti, Sarva-aisvarya-prada, Sarva-jñāna-mayi, Sarva-vyadhi-vināśhini, Sarva-ādhāra-svarūpa, Sarva-pāpa-hara, Sarva-ānanda-mayi, Sarva-raksha-svarūpiṇi, and Sarva-epsita-datrī

These are all described as "womb-deities" (ni-garbha-yogini).

VII The seventh enclosure (ashta-kona) or the lambikāgra-centre is called Sarva-roga-hara. The attendant aids in this enclosure are Vaśhini,

Kāmesvari, Sarvesvari, Aruṇa, Jayini, Modini, Vimalā, and Kaulinī. These are known as Vāg-devatas.

These are described as "secret" (rahasya) yoginīs.

(VIII) The eighth enclosure (triangle in the centre) or the Āgñyā centre called Sarva-siddhi-prada. The supreme Nucleus (para-bindu) has evolved into this enclosure.

Three forms of the Goddess preside over this area: Kamesvarī at the apex, Vajresvarī on the right side and Bhaga-mālinī on the left. They are all four-armed, carrying noose (pasa), goad (añkusa), sugar-cane bow (ikshu-chapa) and flower-darts (pushpeshu). They are of white, rosy and yellow complexion respectively. They are well-bedecked with all ornaments.

They are described as 'extremely secret' (ati-rahasya)

(IX) The ninth enclosure (the midmost point, bindu) or the thousand-petalled lotus centre (Sahasrāra or dvadaśh`ānta-bindu) is called Sarvananda-maya. The location of this centre is the cot with the four Brahmas as its legs (pancha-brahm`asana) in the Jewel island (maṇi-dvipa) in the midst of the ocean of ambrosia (sudha-sindhu). She, as Lalita Paramesvari, is seated upon the cot, on the lap of Kāmesvara (viz. Śhiva), bedecked with all ornaments and surrounded by all energies. She is of the nature of all mantras, and She comprehends all the gods. She is four-armed, carrying in Her hands sugar-cane bow, flower-arrows, noose and goad. There is a slight smile on Her lotus-like face, and there is compassion in Her eyes. Her garments are silken, and Her talk is sweet like that of parrots and cuckoos. Her feet are brilliant and rosy-coloured. Lakshmī and Sarasvatī stand on Her sides, waving fly-whisks for the Goddess. At Her feet are seated the gods like Brahma, Indra and others.

She is both transcendental and immanent (parapara); She is of the nature of pure consciousness (chinamaya) and She is indeed the Brahman. She has form (sakara) and has no form (nirakara). She is the supreme Śhakti (para-

Śhakti). She is Raja-rajesvari, the Goddess abiding in the realm of the Nucleus (bindu-maṇḍala). She bestows all the gifts that one seeks, and She resides in the realm of bliss.

Śhrī-chakra has nine enclosures, in which the primordial sound-units (matrkas) take the form of attendant-aides (yoginrs) of the Goddess. Their form is very similar to that of the Goddess, and they are all well-decorated. They exhibit the symbols (mudras) peculiar to each of them.

The devotee must contemplate on the identity of the body of the Goddess with the Śhrī-chakra, of the yogini s with the categories (tattvas), and sense-faculties and of ones own self with the Goddess. One who succeeds in this is the knower of the Brahman; he is freed from trans-migratory processes even while he is alive (jīvan-mukta).

Even a look at him will serve to banish all sins and to secure the liberating wisdom.

THE FOURTH CENTUM

External worship (bahir-yaga) is not to be resorted to by the elite folk, for it is designed only for mean benefits and it pertains only to things of this world. The tantriks will engage themselves in internal worship (antar-yaga), which involves identification which is four-fold and six-fold (to be explained shortly). This is really the worship prescribed for those who have pledged themselves to tantrik practice (samay'āchāra). Those who are earnest must give up material hankerings and practice the 'beyond' (turīyya). They will then attain the highest.

The three significant understandings in the internal worship are (1) the symbolism of the chakra; (2) the symbolism of the mantra; and (3) the symbolism of worship (puja). After understanding these three, one must give them up and reach the fourth practice, in which everything gets dissolved.

The four-fold identification (ekatva) is in terms of (1) the identity between the mantra and the deity (devata); (2) the identity between the mantra and the matrkas; (3) the identification of the primordial sound-units (matfka) and the Śhrīchakra; and (4) the correspondence between the aspects of Śhrī-chakra with the psychic centres (Mūlādhāra etc) of the body. Adding to these four, two other identifications, we get six of them: (5) the identification of the preceptor (guru) with the deity (devata); and (6) the identification of ones own self (svatma) with the deity (devata).

By understanding the identity, the illusion of duality is got rid of. When duality is lost, mind becomes tranquiī, and that will pave the way for absolute-bliss.

Contemplation upon Śhrī-chakra can be of three types:

- (1) gross (when the details of Śhrī-chakra are identified with the psychic centres, from Mūlādhāra to Sahasrāra);
- (2) subtle (when the nine subtle centres, bindu, ardha-chandra, rodhini, nada, nadanta, Śhakti, vyapika, samana and unmana, which are all located in the region between the eyebrows and dvadasanta, are identified with the nine psychic centres, Mūlādhāra to Sahasrāra);
- (3) even more subtle (when the entire Śhrī-chakra from Mūlādhāra to Sahasrāra is identified with the realm of the Nucleus or bindu-mandala which is within the dvadaśhanta). . .

Sada-Śhiva is of the nature of all the realms undifferentiated and in their entirety; he is Prakāśha. On his lap sits the Devī, who is Vimarśha. The two are located in the realm of Nucleus or bindu-maQc;lala. The rays of light that emanate from the body of the Devl get differentiated into the eight enclosures of Śhrī-chakra. Śhrī-chakra therefore is the union of Śhiva and Śhakti, of Moon and Fire.

At the beginning of creation, the form of the undifferentiated and the entire realm which pervades the universe in all its details, was only pure

consciousness (chin-matra), only of the nature of existence-awareness-bliss (sac-chid-ananda). The creation of the phenomena is a result of the Absolute's will (icchha), and it is because of this will that the bindu evolves into a triangle. The reflection of the Goddess on the Absolute manifests itself as divine will. Therefore the Goddess is called the primordial nature - I (mūla-prakṛiti) .

The mid most point is Prakāśha and the triangle is Vimarsha; a fragment of this union of Śhiva and Śhakti is the world of names and forms. The midmost point is Śhiva, and its evolution into the triangle is Śhakti, the home of the three guṇas.

The three gunas are personified as Brahma, Vishnu and Śhiva, the three deities responsible for creation, preservation and dissolution respectively. The triangle is thus the triad (triputī) and the midmost point is transcendental (turīyya). The three points at the three corners of the triangle are styled as tripura; the three aspects are 'saguṇa', while the midmost point is nirguṇa, being transcendental.

From the unmanifest (avyakta) to mind, the stage is Pasyanti; the five basic elements are Madhyama; the gross elements signify the Vaikhari. The entire creation made up of names and forms are under the influence of Māyā, being dependent upon Vaikhari and Madhyama. How do the common folk ever understand the transcendental?

People are always outward-oriented, and are devoid of any inclination to turn inward. They revel in differences, and have forgotten their own true nature. The world of names and forms appear to be real, although what is real is pure consciousness and nothing else. People do not realize -that pure consciousness it is that is all-pervasive. It is by attending to the sacred feet of the Goddess that one can attain to the transcendental wisdom. Mean people can never reach it, even in a million births.

Tattirīya declares that the place of Brahman characterized by truth and knowledge is in the supreme sky within the heart-cave. What is hidden

within the five Sheaths is called the cave; it is distinct from the three bodies (gross, subtle and causal). It is the transcendental. The sky is beyond the head, in the Dvadasanta, which is two Añgulas above the forehead, in the place of Śhikha.

Whatever is the spiritual content (chaitanya), the focus of the subtle body, the foundation for ones being and a reflection of pure consciousness (chit-chhaya), and a complex of different bodies and organs is called the individual soul (jīva). It is essentially a reflection (pratibimba), and therefore its activities are unreal (like moon's reflection in water).

When the individual self-hood ceases, the five Sheaths, the five primary elements, the three bodies and the twenty-four categories of existence all get dissolved in it. The illusion that is occasioned by not carefully examining will be eliminated by correct knowledge. Likewise, the self that is within will appear as Brahman Himself and not as jiva, upon the dawn of perfect knowledge. When one has an understanding of jīva , it is bondage; when the understanding of Brahman is obtained, it is liberation. Mind it is that makes for bondage or liberation.

Therefore, the wise man should give up the three quarters that constitute the individual self-hood, and resort to the fourth, the transcendental, which is really the source of the other three. The three dots of the triangle (on the angles) must be given up, and attention must be focussed on the midmost point which is pure consciousness.

The triangle constitutes the body of the Goddess, it is described as Kāma-kala, the reflection of the supreme Reality. The mixed nucleus (Misra-bindu), which is lustrous like the sun, is the face of the Goddess; the two nuclei below it, the white one (representing Moon) and the red one (Fire) are the breasts; the consciousness-nucleus (samvid-bindu) below them are the loins. The triangle accommodates all these four nuclei.

It is because of the consciousness-nucleus that there is the cause of all emanations. It is there that the formless supreme Goddess assumes forms and guṇas. The three nuclei are together spoken of as Tripura, the one beyond them is the supreme Goddess. One who does not appreciate the symbolism of the nucleus (Bindu) wallows in the mire of delusions. One must know that where the triad takes its birth, it is the transcendental (turīyya).

The Brahman has four quarters, three of them are Saguṇa, and the other one beyond them is Nirguṇa.

In order to drive home this wisdom to the devotee's mind, the description of the transcendental state is resorted to. The world is covered by three states of existence; waking, dream and deep sleep. And no one has an understanding of the state beyond them. Dream is purely a mental construct or is unreal, and it is a unison of the other two states (sleep and wakefulness); and it arises on the basis of the impressions of the waking condition. It is not an independent occurrence. When one wakes up, he knows that the dream is unreal. But while one is dreaming, he does not look upon it as unreal.

Even so, when one reaches the transcendental state, one will realize that the world is an illusion; even wakefulness will be realized as unreal, when wisdom dawns. The witness-consciousness is distinct from whatever is experienced in the three states, from whoever experiences them, and whatever the objects experienced in them. One must therefore seek to understand the state beyond the three states. All people know that dream is unreal, and that the two real conditions are wakefulness and deep sleep. The nature of Brahman, therefore, comprehends both these states which are experienced as real. When the individual soul is wakeful, it is called 'visva'. When dreaming, it is taijasa; and when asleep it is prāgñyā. The state beyond (turīyya) is the witness (sakshi). When dream is abandoned, there are only two states that are experienced (wakefulness and sleep). The fourth state (of witness) is in between these two.

In wakefulness, all happiness and stress are experienced, and it is Samsāra; in deep sleep, nothing is experienced, and it is an inert condition. The condition between these two ends is the fourth state. The internal organs are mind (manas) and intellect (buddhi). And from these two all the five states arise. Mind is construction and apprehension; intellect is right ascertainment. In the eyes, wakefulness is located; in the throat, dream; in the heart, deep sleep; and in the head, the fourth state. One who seeks to attain the fourth state must make the mind vacant, and make the intellect settle in the consciousness which is located in the head, in the realm of the Nucleus (bindu maṇḍala).

One must become inward-oriented, and rely only on pure awareness. Internal attention must be practised, and the mind must gradually be denuded of all processes. The witness (the fourth state) is stationed in the thousand-petalled lotus, in the dvadaśh`ānta and in the middle of the realm of the Nucleus; it is of the nature of the lunar orb of pure consciousness.' This is the Atman, and this is ones own nature. Knowing this, one must dissolve oneself in it.

To attain this, one must give up coarse and physical exercise like praṇayama, and stop confabulations of the mind. He must sit-quietly in the lotus-posture and enter into deep contemplation. As the ego gradually gets lost by practice, the intuition develops and causes happiness. This condition is not sleep, because in sleep both mind and intellect cease to function, whereas here only mind ceases to function. Nor is it tantamount to death, for the vital functions to go on.

When the mind does not function, there is no sense of duality; but it is not wakefulness or sleep. The happiness that is present in this condition is known as the Absolute bliss (Brahmānanda). It is in between wakefulness and sleep; and is known as the fourth state (Turiyya). Mind must be emptied and dissolved, and the condition of going beyond mind (unmani) is the characteristic of this condition.

Where mental processes abound, it is waking; when the intellect has no support and dissolves in utter ignorance, it is deep sleep. When the mental processes are removed, and the intellect supports itself upon consciousness, it is the fourth state. It is neither wakefulness nor sleep. The condition that is in between them is the state of Brahman.

This state is easy enough to attain with steadfast practice. One must look within, abandon the mental constructions, and settle down in one's own pure consciousness.

No religious gifts, no austerities, no pilgrimages can help one attain this state. Mind must be emptied, and that is the only way.

During practice, however, the intellect has to support itself on consciousness (chidalamba), but as a result of practice the intellect becomes one with consciousness and gives up the duality. Then it becomes support-less (niralamba), and consciousness alone becomes luminous and evident.

Mind is the seed of births, and when it is destroyed, emancipation is at hand. Mind is the bondage, and one must free himself from it. If gaining oneself is the best of all gains, and if there is nothing higher to seek, then the self is Brahman; and this is spoken of as the transcendental state. Therefore, by all means and with all energy, one must attempt to reach this state, understanding that the round of births and deaths is filled with misery and that the world is an illusion. One in whom the witness (in the transcendental state) does not lapse in wakefulness, dream or sleep, is really emancipated.