CHAPTER - VI
CHAPTER VI

DISTINCTION BETWEEN VIJÑAÑABHAIRAVA AND TANTRASĀRA:

The question of difference between these two texts of the school of Monistic Śaivāgamas needs to be discussed with deep outlook and subtlety. Since both the texts are aimed as disseminating the monistic thought of Kashmir Śaivism, therefore, in external sense appears some distinction, but in reality both propagate the attainment of the same Ultimate Reality and the Appeased state of Lord Bhairava.

The text of the Viññānabhairava which represents the yoga mārga of the tantras for the achievement of the Highest beatitude of the Lord Siva teaches the true essence of the Āgamas. The Tantrasāra of Abhinavagupta, which is an epitome of the Tantrāloka, and the essence of the information of the Māлинī Vijaya Tantra is also dedicated to
the welfare of the individual self, which is the supreme self, but with the difference of being enwrapped with the veils of ignorance resulting from mala. In this text it is advised for the benefit of the sadhaka that he should realize his self as being universal, the All powerful self of Lord. It sets forth the divine knowledge of the āgamas, which if obtained, can cut the malas and dawn the divine light. The Tantrasāra, by the author himself, has been described as reliever from the bondage and impurities.

It is true that these both texts have been revealed by the free will of the Lord, and from the same fountainhead of the knowledge, but in practical reference, the text of Vijnānabhairava tantra teaches the true yoga, as explained in the monistic āgamas.

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1. बशान्तः किव वन्देम् शुरुरादित: शास्त्रं मन्त तत्त्वमु: पूर्णाज्ञानरूप्ये
   तदार्थं निलितां: गण्यति।
   अवस्ताश्चामकार्त्तस्तुत्वेश्वरवै पाचारव तैनात्वन।

   TS;P.5

2. सुश्रुषाश्चामकार्त
   विश्वास्वरूपं सारात्सारविभागः।

   VB;V.1
In Vijnanabhairava tantra there are 112 adharaṇas, each of which had been as valuable as a gem, delineating the mystic approach to the divine. To this purpose full use of all human aspects of life as prāṇa, manas, imagination and intuition has been made. The external rites as performance of worship, offering of flowers in worship and other observances have been eliminated. It does not recommend the external objects to be offered to the Universal, for they all are the offshoots of His glory. It approves that the essential self may be offered to the Highest deity. It deals with the direct approach to the divine consciousness. The text of yoga tantra does not discuss the dhāraṇas in theoretical way, rather adopts the way of integration whereas other schools of yoga adopts the vivekaja marga.

Here the path of integrity is explained, and the puruṣa or even māyā is not isolated from the supreme, but integrated with the universal, and this universe has been ascertained as the expression of his spiritual

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1. निन्त्यसंदेशाद्वानी आत्मां समासत।
   ब्रह्माण्डायामयेऽपि देवि कवः त्वा आनविन्दन।।
   
   VB;V.139

2. पुष्करा नाम के श्रवण: या मति: क्रियात्मकः ॥
   
   VB;V.147
energy. The idea is not to reject the universe, but to its assimilation to its source.

The text of Tantrasāra, however, is an theoretical approach. It does not deal with the yogaja mārga as its chief aspect, but adopts many more ways, processes ranging from the most gross element to the subtlest one. In Tantrāloka, which has been described as encyclopaedia of Kashmir Śaivism, all the branches of monism, have been dealt exhaustively, asserts that there are some preliminary steps to the sādhaka, so as to enter in the domain of the Śaivāgamas. The Tantrasāra, in oppose to its contemporary, the Vijnānabhairava, prescribes different levels of practices and performances. In Vijnānabhairava the sādhaka is asked to maintain the constant awareness, whereas in the Tantrasāra, the processes are in succession and performed with various rites and rituals.¹ In Vijnānabhairava the attainment

¹ This is the general conclusion of all the chapters of the Tantrasāra and the text of Vijnānabhairava.
is spontaneous, and attained through only one way, but in the Tantrasāra, the attainment is in succession and through various modes of initiation and practices bestowed on the sādhaka.

In the Vijñānabhairava all kinds of worship and offerings, external as well as internal japa, sādhanās have been forbidden, whereby Tantrasāra emphasise all such observances in the practice to receive grace. Various modes of worships and the offerings have been an essential aspect of the Śaiva yāga, without which the objective will be incomplete and imperfect.

The tantras, Vijñānabhairava etc. stress and strictly asserts to integrate externity with the internity. All the external actions such as tapasyā, vrata and homa etc. have been excluded, and it is maintained that when all the four, manas, buddhi, prāpa and ātman are dissolved and controlled over,

1. VB;Vs.147,30
2. TB;P.201
the nature of Bhairava shines. According to it, the awareness is also to, in the end be offered in the fire of consciousness. The complete mergence of the individuality of self in the bliss of consciousness of Bhairava is real bath, not as what counts for the cleaning of empirical body.

In the Tantrasāra, however, as primary applications, the external worship, bath and other offerings have been recommended to be performed by the aspirant. The complete assimilation of the sādhaka in the supreme being is the final attainment. It begins with rituals and ends with the complete immersion of the individual in the supreme. In this text various ways of bath, worship and treading have been adopted. The main difference between the two texts is that the former had only one aspect of the tantras, the yoga, whereas the latter, the Tantrasāra

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vb;v.138
has different ways to tread on.\(^1\) In the Tantrasāra all the important ways leading to the state of Bhaṣrava have been explained. The text is divided into parts, according to its subjects, discussed under different heads. It begins with the real knowledge, the reliever of the bondage and pains. The basic concept of the real knowledge, in the above mentioned texts is the same, it is, however, noted that this concept of jñāna has developed in these texts in a slightly varied way.\(^2\)

According to the Tantrasāra, the empirical soul can realize the supreme as one with his self, provided the stability of meditation is maintained on the significance of all important and powerful mantra 'aham'. In tantras it is maintained that the stability of the meditation is contemplated as

\begin{itemize}
  \item 1. TS;PP.156,166,171
  \item 2. TS;PP.1-7
\end{itemize}
dydhabuddhi or kṣipavṛtti, that is attained with the stability of meditation.¹

In the Tantrasāra all the upāyas have been described with their complete dissemination. In the Viśnunabhairava, however, the exposition of these upāyas is not given, yet all the dhāraṇās have been explained and categorised under these means. In the Tantrasāra a number of verses have been dedicated to explain the functioning of the praṇa in the vital body. The explanation puts a great stress on the form of recitation of mantras, whereas in the Viśnunabhairava, the practical aspect of these aspects has been provided.

The different aspects of Śaivagamas, as shine in the absolute reality, the adhvāns, tattvas have been explained in detail in the Tantrasāra. It maintains that there are various modes of grace, that the individual receives through various processes? 

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1. fesrft Tr^r
ffxprfrtrr: sfflTq?r n
VB;V.60
2. TS;ahs.l-19

1. 1

VB;V.60

2. TS;ahs.1-19
In the Tantrasāra the initiation has been dealt with very delineately covering several chapters. All kinds of initiation have been explained. A great emphasis has been laid down on the contemplation and bhāvanā and the firmness of such practice on the body and the mind. In this text different aspects of yoga such as contemplation, postures, realization of God consciousness have been described. The rise of middle state has been said to be the source of all bliss. There are various ways of its rise. The joy derived from various acts, such as eating, seeing and touching have been put forth in manyfold forms. In the Tantrasāra no stress has been laid down on such remembrance etc.

1. TS;ahs.10-20
2. VB;Vs.61,68,81
3. VB;Vrs.65,66,70,72,73
The difference which occurs in the Tantrasāra and the Vījñānabhārava do not matter so much. One deals in practical way with the subject matter on which one has to contemplate upon, whereas the other, having not wasted the time in dealing with the details of the explanations, directly aims at the highest goal.

Both the texts arrive at this conclusion that the real self or the essence of the true knowledge can liberate the individual from the pains and the bondage of this world. The dawning of the pure knowledge is the only means to take the sādhaka to that path which can relieve from the veils. In the Vījñānabhārava tantm the yogī has been advised to dissolve his externity into the internity, and attain the complete control over the vitality of prāṇa, so that it turns into the energy of the Lord Bhairava. In the Tantrasāra the process is different, for it brings about the desired fruit by way of knowing the adhvaṇa, tattvas and receiving saktipātas from the Lord with

1. VB; Vs. 79, 65, 72, 155
the grace of master in initiation. The latter ascertains the initiation as the highest means to achieve the final inberation, which may be achieved even when one is dead or away from the place if initiation. The significance of such observances is highlighted very well in this text.

1. TS;PP.61,65,162,166,171