

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Consciousness is a gift for humanity. The human being uses it to know the things around him to understand their nature. The nature of the object cannot be easily grasped nor defined in accuracy to its details. Reality, truth, actuality and other such terms are frequently used in philosophical speculations. These denote the object. They convey their sense, which is different from one another while using them. But the difference between them is overlooked so much so that one finds one or two of these terms is used to refer to the object making it impossible to have a correct picture of that object. Reality means what is present before us with its own form. The *nyāya* system would call it as *tattva*, which is defined as *anāropitam rūpam*, that is, a form which does not have another object super-imposed upon it. For instance, shell and silver may both look alike when the shell is exposed to broad daylight. The shell appears like silver

because the brilliance of silver is super-imposed (*āropita*) on the shell, and shell therefore does not have its own form of appearance. It is the knowledge of the brilliance of silver, which is super-imposed on the shell. Thus the knowledge of the shell as having this form is not correct. Truth is of an unerring nature and holds good for all times and places. Actuality is conditioned by time and space. When such terms are used, the real nature of the object cannot be comprehended. These terms can be applied to describe the self, world, God and others. The result in this will not be necessary at all for obtaining correct knowledge.

As the term, reality and others are evasive in their import while they are applied to understand the subject, one is required to use some standard of learning or measuring or ascertaining the limit which these objects could be subjected to so as to arrive at knowing the precise nature of the objects. Ancient Indians hold that the *pramāṇa* are the means to be used here. *pramāṇas* are described as that with which an object whose nature is required to be known is

correctly assessed. Knowledge (*śruti*) is called 'pra' and knowledge that is of eminent kind is called *pramā*. Eminence here lies in the ascertainment of the object as it is. That which leads most efficiently to its (objects) knowledge is called *pramāṇa*¹. An object of knowledge becomes then known through the *pramāṇa*. The *Pāñcarātra Āgama* admits three *pramāṇās* namely, perception, inference and verbal testimony.² The word *pramāṇa* here stands for *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna* and *śabda*³. The *Pāñcarātra Āgama* is theistic in character and so does not reveal any interest in epistemology. The *Yajur veda* is the most important *pramāṇa* and the only one to treat topics on God, soul and others. Hence, texts like *Ahīrbudhnya Saṁhitā* treats verbal knowledge in chapter 11, 12, 13 which comprises of all important *śāstras* and lay stress on the *Vaiṣṇavite* character of many of the topics dealt with in them.

1. AhS vol. I ch.. XIII 5b-6b

Vide the dictum "*mānādīnā meyasiddhiḥ*" – the knowable is established through *pramāṇa*.

2. Vide LT VIII.6a,b. *pramāṇantarayasambadhyam bhāvābhāvāsvalakṣaṇam*.

3. *iṣṭaprāptyanīṣṭa parihārayor alaukikamupāyam yo grantho vedah I* – *veda bhāṣya bhūmikā of Sāyaṇa kṛṣṇauakirvedāntargatyaḥ Taittirīya saṁhitā bhāṣya bhūmikā p.2*

1.1 VEDAS AND ĀGAMAS

The *vedas* contain information on many matters such as God, man, world, and indicate the ways in which what is desired may be attained and the undesirables may be avoided. They are beginningless, impersonal and are valid by themselves. The language used there may appear as classical Sanskrit but their language contain expressions, which do yield their sense only for the vedic topics¹. *Yāska*, the author of *Nirukta*, offers, while explaining some of these words and suggests alternative explanations². It is not proper to hold that the *vedas* are simple and could be explained as they are.

This view is arrived at, because words of classical Sanskrit and some Vedic language appear phonetically similar, but there is a vast difference when these words are sought to be explained. It is a pity that there is no reliable commentary on the *vedas*.

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1. Example: *anakṣ*^ṣblind RV 2:15.7; *upāsak*^ṣto follow closely RV 1:190.2; *heman-* impulse RV 9:97.
 2. Example: *hiraṇyam kasmāt? hriyata ayamyamānam iti vā, hriyate jañajjanamiti vā, hitaramaṇam bhavatīti vā, haryater vā syāt. Nirukta II.iii kūpaḥ kasmāt ? kūpānam bhavati ,kupyater vā. (Nirukta III.iv.p.153). mṛgo na bhīmaḥ kucaro giriṣṭhāḥ .*

For instance, though the sense of the word *mṛga* is understood in the sense of an animal but, what exactly the animal is, is not clear. It is at this juncture the *Tantra* or *Āgama*, steps in. That God is stated to have revealed the *Āgama*, is admitted for holding the validity of the *Āgamas*. The words are of the nature of classical Sanskrit and hence are easily understandable. The fourth class among castes and women are allowed to use the expressions here with the admixture of *tāntric* syllabic words¹ they deal with in the temple and worship of God.

Āgama in its broad sense denotes quintessence of the *vedas* and traditional literature handed down through generations. The word *Āgama* is derived from the root 'gam' and with the preposition 'ā' it means 'to come'. This may also mean moving (mentally) towards

1. " Strī Śūdrāṇām na Sarveṣāmaupanāyanikakriyā |
Dīkṣopanayanam karma kṛtvā samyagyathāvidhi. "||
SKS Brahmarātrā ch.IV.V.70

an object, which is to be obtained. Therefore, the word 'āgama' is taken to imply the handing down of knowledge from teacher to pupil, that is, the traditional (*sampradāya*) knowledge or literature which has been taught and developed by a particular tradition and which is being handed down through generations.

Āgamas are also known as *Tantras*. The word *tantra* suggests two meanings. Thus the word, when it is derived from the root 'tan' (to expand) with its suffix 'ṣṭran'¹ it means the spreading of the cosmic energy to the person practising it. When it is split as 'tan' and 'tra', that is to protect and spread, it means explanation of the highest matter leading to supreme knowledge and also to protect the person from bondage who has an absolute faith in it. This has been explained in the *Kāmikāgama*¹

1. "sarvadhātubhyaḥ ṣṭran" – ASIV 1982 p.10
Vide p.10 *Agamas and South Indian Vaiṣṇavism*.
"Tanoti Vipulānarthāṅ taṅtramaṅtra samanvitān
trānaṁ ca kurute yasmāntantramīyabhidhīyate."

Though the *Vedas* and *Āgamas* are understood by the word *Āgama*, yet the word *Āgama*, in practice is used to convey only a particular literature and not the *Vedas*. The *Vedas*, on the other hand, are denoted by words like *śruti*, *nigama* etc. The reason could be that, the *Vedas*, according to convention, are not of human origin and hence they are *impersonal* (*apauruṣeya*). On the contrary the *Āgamas* though treated on par with the *Vedas*, are not treated as impersonal (*apauruṣeyā*). In order to distinguish this particular aspect, the word *Āgama* has been coined to denote a particular literature while the word *nigama* is used to convey only the *Vedas*. Both *Āgama* and *nigama* are considered to be the most sacred and the most authoritative texts in Hindu scriptures as they enshrine and teach the supreme value of human endeavour.

Vide also

*“ājñā vastu samantācca gamyata ityāgamo mataḥ
tanute trāyate nityaṁ tantramitthaṁ vidurbudhāḥ”*

*pingalamata quoted in Tantras,
re-quoted in studies in their Religion and Literature p.2*

Āgamas are the means of self realisation (*sādhanaśāstra*) and to that effect they recommend a particular way of life and teach the practical method and discipline for attaining self-realisation. It is theoretical and practical and this teaching agrees with cosmological and philosophical thought of human life. It also governs the particular method of worship in temples and rituals and religious function celebrated at home.

1.2 CLASSIFICATION OF ĀGAMAS

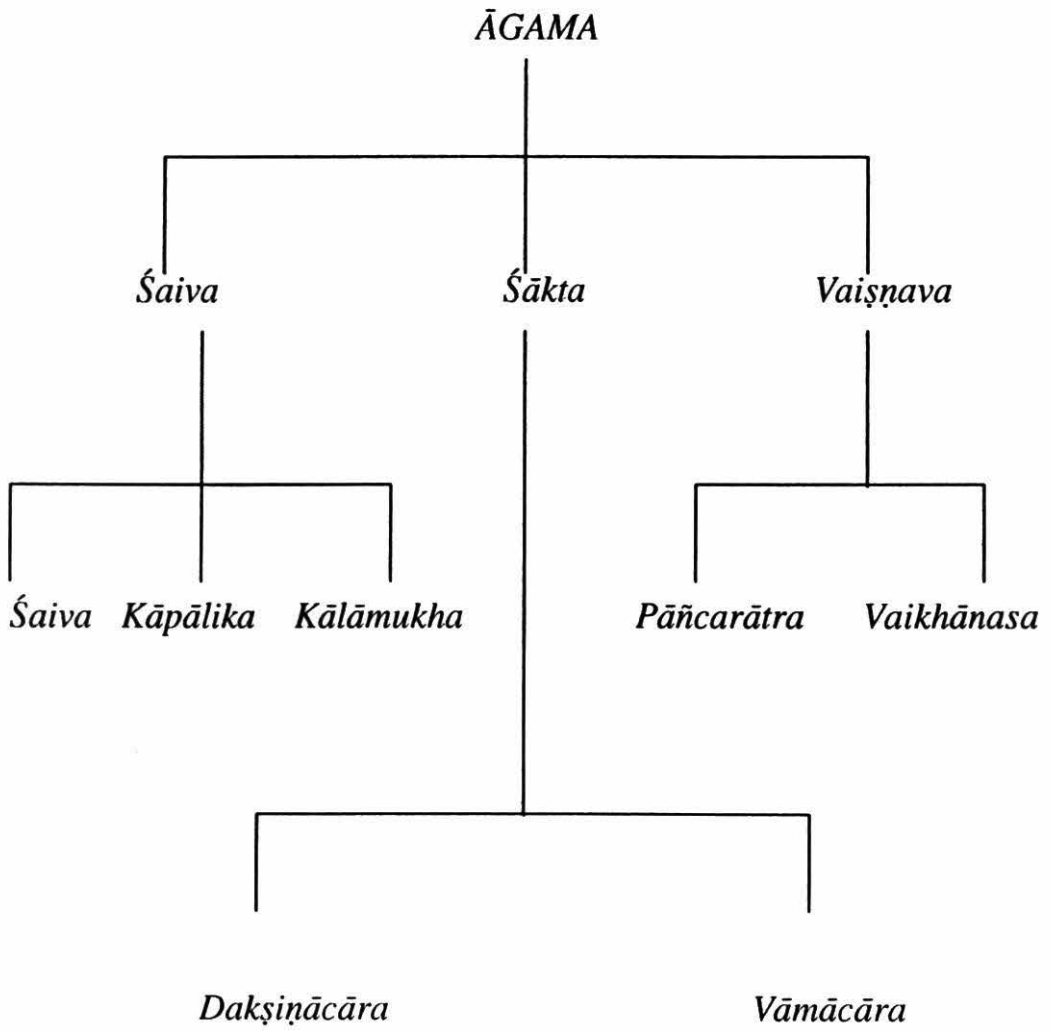
The leading schools of religion are the Śaiva, Śākta and Vaiṣṇava sects. Every religion and its literature has its own sub-division. For instance, the sub-division of Śaivāgamas are: Pāśupata, Kāruṇikasiddhānta and Kāpālika. In another list Kālamukha replaces Kāruṇikasiddhānta.¹ The Śākta Āgama is of two kinds, namely Dakṣiṇācāra and Vāmācāra. The latter enjoys disrespectful position as it treats objectionable practice.

”māheśvarāḥ catvāraḥ - śaivāḥ, pāśupatāḥ, kāruṇikasiddhāntinaḥ kāpālikāś ceti. catvāraḥ apyāmī maheśvara praṇītasiddhānta anuyāyitayā māheśvarāḥ”

Bhāmatai on BSB. II. II 37 p. 488.

Also cf. “patyuh asāmañjasyāt idānim paśupatimatasya vedavirodhasāmañjasyācca anādaraṇīyatā ucyate. tanmatānusāriṇaḥ caturvidhāḥ. kāpālaḥ, kālāmukhāḥ, pāśupatāḥ, śaivāś ca iti” – SB II. ii . 35

The *Vaiṣṇava Āgamas* are *Pāñcarātra* and *Vaikhānasa*.



The general content of the *Āgama* texts are brought under four broad heads.

1. *Jñānapāda* : Knowledge of God as the Creator of the Universe.
2. *Kriyāpāda* : The method adopted to build a temple, preparing image and installing them etc.
3. *Caryāpāda* : Rules for the daily ritual routine of the aspirant; instructions for the worship of the deity in the temple and at home; regulations for the performance of public and private festivals.
4. *Yogapāda* : Using yogic method to do the meditation.

One chief feature of the *Āgamas* is the introduction of *śakti* (power) as an associated being, playing the role of the spouse of God. It is an animate female principle.

Of the two schools of *Vaiṣṇava Āgamas* namely *Pāñcarātra* and *Vaikhānasa*, the latter is believed to be older than the former. This tradition was promulgated by sage *Vikhānasa* who taught it to his disciples. This is the *Vaikhānasa* tradition.

The *Pāñcarātra* system is believed to have evolved from *Viṣṇu*. Tradition believes that it has been preached by the Lord himself¹.

1.3 THE NAME PĀÑCARĀTRA

The name *Pāñcarātra* is explained in many ways. The word appears in the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* of the *Śuklayajurveda*². Here the name *Pāñcarātra* is referred to as a sacrifice. Nārāyaṇa performed this sacrifice and transcended all the other beings and became supreme.

The *Pāñcarātra* texts themselves contain explanation of the name *pāñcarātra*. Most of them are fanciful and do not favour the acceptance of the name *Pāñcarātra* to the system³. (The word meaning five and *rātra* one full day (day and night put together - *ahorātra*). These two parts may be taken to yield *ahorātra*).

"*Pāñcarātrakṛtsnasya vaktā nārāyaṇaḥ svayam*".

MBh. *Śāntiparvan* III 59.68a.

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa XIII-6.1.1.

ViśS II. iii.8

Another explanation is that other systems of thought became dark¹, that is insignificant by the contents of *Pāñcarātra*.) According to *Vihagendra Saṁhitā* the doctrine of this system was taught to five persons *Ananta, Viṣvaksena, Garuḍa, Brahmā* and *Rudra*². Another text mentions that the *Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Buddhism, Jainism* and *Pāśupata* systems are referred³ in the *Pāñcarātra*. The name *tattva, mukti, bhakti, yoga* and *viṣaya* are taught in this system according to *Nārādīya Saṁhitā*. All the above explanations for the name *pāñcarātra* have no real bearing and thus are not acceptable.

The likely acceptable explanations for the name *pāñcarātra* are

- (i) the division of the daily routine of a *Śrīvaiṣṇava* into five parts as *abhigamana, upādāna, ijjā, svādhyāya* and *yoga* and

1. PādS. I. 72-74

2. *Vihagendra Saṁhitā* Ch. I. 31-34

3. cf Dr.Raghavan 1965, JAOS p.76.

- (ii) *Śāṇḍilya, Aupagāyana, Mauñjyāyana, Kauśika* and *Bharadvāja* were the five sages who were taught the *Pāñcarātra* doctrine by *Viṣṇu* in five nights¹.

1.4 HOME OF PĀÑCARĀTRA

Birch bark was used in Kashmir to draw diagrams and to record mantras. This practice is mentioned in the *LT* and the *Ah.S.*² From the above evidences Kashmir is believed to be the home of *Pāñcarātra*.

The *Pauṣkara Saṁhitā*³ mentions *Sāttvata, Pauṣkara, Jayākhya, Lakṣmī Tantra* and *Ahīrbudhnya Saṁhitā* were compiled in Kashmir. Other texts like the *Īśvara Saṁhitā* (mentioning *Yādavādri* at Melkote in Karnataka), the *Pārameśvara saṁhitā* (glorifying *Śrīraṅgam*) and *Pādma Saṁhitā* which was available to

1. For a more detailed explanation of the word *Pāñcarātra* ref.ASIV pp.119-132.

2. L T. Ch. 73. 8; AhS Ch.XIV . 33 – 38

3. *PauS* 31 . 106b—111d; vide also ASIV p.249

Vedānta Deśika (1300 A.D) must have been written in the South. *Parama Saṁhitā* which *Yāmuna* and *Rāmānuja* quote, was available in South India before 900 A.D

1.5 THE PERIOD OF PĀÑCARĀTRA

Words like *pāñcarātra*, *pañcakāla*, *parāyaṇa* and *pāñcarātrika* occur in the *pāñcarātra* texts. There they are used without any introduction. This indicates that these words must have been in vogue before these texts were composed. People were well aware of what these words denote.

The *Mahābhārata* mentions¹ that there prevailed *ekāntidharma* at the beginning of the *ṛtayuga* and that it disappeared eight times and was revived by Lord *Nārāyaṇa* under the name *sātvata*. This *sātvatadharmā* forms the subject of the *Pāñcarātra* texts.

1. Vide MBh: Ch.358 (Mokṣa Dharma) Śāntiparva.

Nārāyaṇa revealed this under the name *Saṅkarṣaṇa* at the end of *Dvāpara yuga* and at the beginning of *Kali yuga* (3107 B.C)¹.

In his *Aṣṭādhyāyi*, *Pāṇini*² (800 B.C) mentions *Vāsudeva* to be the name of god in the sense of the Bhagavān of Pāñcarātra and is not the name of a *kṣatriya*. There are certain inscriptions, which refer to the shrines where *Vāsudeva*'s image were erected. They are:

1.6 INSCRIPTIONS ON VASUDEVA'S IMAGE

1. The Besnagar inscription dated second century B.C. mentions *Vāsudeva* who is identified with *Kṛṣṇa*. The column with the figure of *Garuḍa* at the top was erected by Heliodoros, a *Bhāgavata*. An inscription dated first century B.C. is found at Ghosundi in Rajasthan. The stone enclosure is stated here as constructed for the image of *Vāsudeva* and *Saṅkarṣaṇa*.

1. From the SS ch I-II the sacred teachings were revealed to Saṅkarṣaṇa by Nārāyaṇa. (St 1-18).

2. *Aṣṭādhyāyi* – IV.i.114

An inscription at Morawell (I Century A.D.) near Mathura was erected by a lady called Toṣa. Five *vīras* (heros) are stated here who are identified with *San̄karṣaṇa*, *Vāsudeva*, *Pradyumna*, *Sāmba* and *Aniruddha* by Lueders and T.N. Banerjee. It is hard to accept this identification as they do not reveal any *Āgama* tradition being followed¹. The Nanaghat cave inscription (I Century A.D.) by *Nāganikā*, a queen of the *Śatavāhana* dynasty, contains the words “*namo sankarṣaṇavāsudevānām.*”²

The Tamil classic *Paripāḍal*³ of the second century A.D. contains six poems in honour of *Vīras* (heros). The third poem refers to *Viṣṇu* as glorified in the *Āgamas*. The four *vyūha* deities *Vāsudeva*, *San̄karṣaṇa*, *Pradyumna* and *Aniruddha* are mentioned and they are identified by their colour⁴.

Temples of *Kṛṣṇa* are referred to in this and in other Tamil classics also such as *Silappatikāram* and *Puranānūru*. The references here to the *Paripāḍal* cause a problem.

1. ASIV pp.185-186.

2. Ibid. p.186

3. Quoted by K.C. Vardachari p.179 ASIV.

4. *Seṅkatkāri karuṅkan Vellai ponkaṭpaccai painkaṇ māl.*

Balarāma and *Kṛṣṇa* are referred to here as having their abodes in Tirumāriruncolai near Madurai. *Balarāma* is identical with *San̄karṣaṇa*, a *vyūha* deity of the *Pāñcarātra*. The temple here now is governed by the *Vaikhānasa Āgama* which does not admit both these deities as the principal ones. It is hard to suggest that this temple which follows originally the *Pāñcarātra* tradition changed later to adopt the *Vaikhānasa* tradition.

The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* (4th century A.D) contains references to *Śrī* and *Vāsudeva* called *Bhagavān*¹. *Śakti* is stated to be identified with *Lakṣmī*². *Kṛṣṇa* is stated to be the Lord of the *Sāttvatas*³, the *vyūha* doctrine⁴, *Śrī*'s⁵ place and Tāntric mode of worship finds place here.

1. *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1-8-299, 2-7-29.

2. BhP. 1-1-14

3. BhP. 1-5-27

4. BhP. 11-11-37.

5. BhP. 11-11-37.

Besides, *Bāṇa*¹, *Śaṅkara*², *Jayanta*³, *Yāmuna*⁴ and *Rāmānuja* cite many passages from the *Pāñcarātra* texts. The *Pāñcarātra* is referred to by *Utpala* (850 A.D) as *pāñcarātraśruti* and *pāñcarātropaniṣad* in his *Spandapradīpikā*⁵. The mentioning of *śruti* and *Upaniṣad* shows that these two formed part of the *Ekāyana Veda* which was available to *Utpala* and is no longer extant now. Among the texts of *Pāñcarātra*, the *Ratnatraya*, namely, *Sāttvata*, *Pauṣkara* and *Jayākhyā* may be assumed to belong to 800 A.D. The *Ahīrbudhnyā Saṁhitā* and the *Lakṣmī Tantra* seem to belong to a slightly later period than the *Jayākhyā*.

1.7 VALIDITY OF PĀÑCARĀTRA

The *Vedas and Smṛti* texts are held by the Hindus in great veneration and authority. Most of the people have faith in the *Vedas*

1. Harṣacarita pp. 238-239

2. BSB II.ii.42-45

3. The allegorical drama *Āgamāḍambara* Act III & IV

4. *Āgamaprāmāṇya* passim.

5. *Vide JS*, forward p.7 for the extracts of this works. *Vide also* p.34

and in their infallibility. So, any literature, that preaches against Vedic authority is deceived. It is, therefore, no surprise, that the *Āgamas* are considered to be lacking in authority as they are non-Vedic and are not treated on par with the *Vedas*. Charges are levelled against the admission of Āgamic authority on the ground that the *Āgama* practices violate the vedic precepts and prescribe practice that are not sanctioned in the *vedas*.

In the *Pāñcarātra* women and the fourth class are given initiation and taught the *mantras*, recommending worship of the deities. They are denied *upanayana* and so the study of the *Vedas*. By teaching Tāntric *mantras*, they are declared to be eligible to do worship.

These objections are answered by showing that these classes form the major portion of the society and are to be treated with sympathy and they are denied the use of the vedic *mantras*, instead,

the Tāntric *mantras* are taught to them¹. *Vaidikā* and Tāntric *mantras* are to be used accordingly by the aspirants for worship who are qualified. It must be said here that the *dvadaśākṣara mantra* is a Tāntric *mantra* enjoined for all the people including the *dvijas*.

The second objection is that the followers of *Pāñcarātra* do not use the well-known *sāvitrī mantras* in their *sandhyāvandana* and follow *ekāyanaśāstra* which they claim, supports their doctrines². The answer to this is that such a practice should have been in vogue long ago and they are not being practised in this age. *Āgama* is non-Vedic and so, the *mantras* were not to be practised here. But, instead of these other *mantras* are mentioned.

The contention that the *Pāñcarātra Āgama* is not mentioned in the text of subjects of study is no argument. It is because, these texts do not exhaust all the subjects. *Arthaśāstra*, *Āyurveda* and others

1. *Tantrikā mūla mantrās syuḥ tantra mantrāḥ prakīrtitāḥ* SKS IV.V.71
vide also: “*Tāntrika vaiśya sūdrānām Sarveṣām tāntrikam vā* || SKS IX.V.9
2. “*Viṣṇusca upāsyate*” etc SKS Brahmaratra – Ch.V V.95-96

which are not included in these lists and are cited as authority and on that account, they do not cease to be the subjects of study.

The *Kūrmapurāṇa* mentions *Pāñcarātra* as not authoritative along with *Pāśupata* and other systems. This is a case of sheer antagonism to the *Āgama* tradition. That the Vedic and not any other tradition is to be followed and glorifying the *Vedas* is the basis for this objection.

An interesting objection raised in this context is, God is believed to have revealed the *Vedas* and this being the case how can he be admitted to have revealed the *Pāñcarātra* also which is held to be non-vedic?

In answer to this, attention must be drawn to the word *vaktā* in the statement “*pāñcarātrasya kṛṣṇasya vaktā nārāyaṇaḥ svayam*¹”.

The word *vaktā* under discussion means ‘speaker’ and not author. The word, therefore, means that *Pāñcarātra* is a great

1. Quoted in SBh II.ii.42

upaniṣad and that the *ekāyanaveda* was the source of this *Āgama*, while the *Ṛgveda* and others are only its branches. This shows that the *Pāñcarātra* was considered as an *upaniṣad* of the *ekāyanaveda*.

Viṣṇu is thus the ‘*vaktā*’ of this *veda* and therefore of *Pāñcarātra* too. Therefore, there is no antagonism between the *Vedas* and *Pāñcarātra*.

The *Vedas* do not conceive a deity to possess a physical body and treat it to have only the *mantra* as its body. As against this the *Āgamas* hold that God, though formless, yet assumes a form to please the devotees. The objection to admitting God as having a body therefore does not stand.

Initiation (*dīksā*) is enjoined in the *Pāñcarātra Āgama* for a person who seeks to conduct worship to the deity. The objection here is that a *dvija* (twice born) has the first *dīksā* when he is born and the second one when he gets *upanayana* performed to him¹.

The most important objection against *Pāñcarātra* is based on the *utpattayasambhavādhikaraṇa*, which forms part of the *Brahmasūtra* of *Bādarāyaṇa*. The *adhikaraṇa*² called *utpattayasambhavādhikaraṇa*, is the eighth section in the second quarter of the second chapter of the *Brahmasūtra*.

The second quarter of the second chapter of *Brahmasūtra*, after critically examining the importance of the *Sāṅkhya* system, the four schools of Buddhism namely *Sautrāntika*, *Vaibhāṣika*, *Yogācāra* and *Mādhyamika*, *Jaina*, *Pāśupata* and *Pāñcarātra* finally, rejects the views of all except the last mentioned system. In the *adhikaraṇa* mentioned above, there are four aphorisms. Of these, the first two forms the *prima facie* view and the next two answers the objections there on.

1. Vide: *Manu smṛti*. II. 16

2. An *adhikaraṇa* contains the mention of the subject treated, the doubt about it, the *prima facie* view, the reply and the final decision on the problem raised.

Vide : *viśayo viśayaś caiva pūrvapakṣastatottarami nirṇayaś ca pañcāṅgam śāstreḍdhikaraṇam smṛtam*. - *Śabdakalpadruma*.I.I-37.

The four *sūtras* are:

- 1 *utpatyasambhavāt* II.ii.39
- 2 *na ca kartuḥ karaṇam* II. ii. 40
- 3 *vijñānādibhāve vā tadapraṭiṣedhāt* II.ii. 41
- 4 *vipraṭiṣedhācca* II.ii.42

These mean:

- (1) that the view of the *Pāñcarātra* school cannot be maintained since there is the impossibility of the origination of the *jīva*;
- (2) The instrument does not originate from the agent;
- (3) However, there is no contradiction to the system, because they (*vyūha*) are admitted as of the nature of *Vāsudeva* who is in the form of knowledge and
- (4) There is the negation (of origination) in the *Pāñcarātra* itself.

An objection to the validity of the *Pāñcarātra* system was raised, for the first time, by Śankara in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*. Śankara admits the *vyūha* forms and the worship of the Lord in the five divisions of the day. He raises his objection to the statement in the *Pāñcarātra* text that one soul called *Sankarṣaṇa*, is born out of *Vāsudeva*. But, it is emphatically stated in the *Upaniṣads* that the self is eternal and has no birth. The *Pāñcarātra* statement is, therefore, anti-Vedic and so the portion containing such statements of the *Pāñcarātra Āgama* cannot be admitted as valid. This objection is answered by stating that in the *Mahābhārata* it is said that *Vāsudeva* is the soul of *Sankarṣaṇa*, *Pradyumna* the mind of *Sankarṣaṇa* and *Aniruddha* the ego of *Pradyumna*¹. Here it is not stated that the soul, mind or ego are born out of *Vāsudeva*. *Yāmuna* states that the statement of Śankara, that the soul is born is not found in any of the *Pāñcarātra* works².

1. Vide MBh *sāntiparvan*. 358; 39,40

2. *Āgamaprāmāṇya*, p.109, 10-14

On the other hand the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* mentions that the self is never born nor does it die¹.

The word *jāyate* which is used by *Śaṅkara* in the sense intended by him cannot be admitted for, the word *jnani* means manifestation or emanation. A passage from the *Vedas* where this root must be taken to mean manifestation reads thus. "It (Brahman) which is not born is manifested"².

The second objection is that the statement mind and ego are born of *Saṅkarṣana* and *Pradyumna* is not correct, for these are the instruments and are stated to have come out of Brahman³. Nowhere it is observed that an instrument (*karana*), evolves out of an agent (*kartā*).

The third objection is that *Saṅkarṣana*, *Anirudda* and *Pradyumna* are *Vāsudeva* himself and all the three are associated

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1. "na jāyate, mriyate vā" *kaṭhōp* Ch. II. 18
 2. "ajāyamāno bahudhā vijāyate" TĀ III. xiii. 1
 3. *etas mājjāyate prāṇa manassarvendriyāṇīca – Munda.up.III .i 3*

with the qualities of knowledge etc¹ . Then, in that case, there is no need for the three deities, as they are not discriminated from *Vāsudeva*.²

To this, the followers of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* contend that this is only a divine descent (*avatāra*) of the Supreme out of His free will and serve a definite purpose.

The four *vyūha* forms (*cāturāturya*) are to be worshipped² by certain aspirants. The *Brahmasūtra vipratīṣedhācca* [II.ii.42], does not mean, as Śaṅkara holds, that the *Pāñcarātra* system is denied validity. It is because, according to *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, the birth of

1. *Īśvarā evaite sarve jñānaiśvaryaśaktibalavīryatejobhir aiśvaraiḥ dharmaiḥ anvitā abhśābhyupagamyante vāsudevā eva* . BSB. II.ii.44

2. Vide SBh p.331,5-7 and BS2.2.41 : *vāsudevākhyāni paraṁ brahmaivāśritavatsalaṁ svāśritasamāśrayaṇiyatvāya svecchayā caturdhāvatiṣṭhata iti hi tatprakriyā. Yathā pauṣkarasaṁhitāyām kartavyatvena vai yatra cāturātmyamupāsyate. Yāmuna* offers three explanations for the sūtra “*vijñānādibhāve vā tadapratīṣedhāt* “. See *Āgama prāmāṇya* pp.118-121.

the soul is denied in the *Pāñcarātra* itself as is evident from the passage from the *Parama Saṁhita*¹.

*vyāptirūpeṇa sambandhas tasyāś ca puruṣasya ca
sa hy anādinanantaśca paramārthena niścitaḥ.*

Among the four *Sūtras* the first two contain the objection and the last two the *Siddhānta*. *Puṣkarākṣa*, an eminent recluse, wrote that this is the way in which the four *sūtras* are to be understood and interpreted accordingly.²

Jayantabhaṭṭa, the author of *Nyāyamañjarī* defends the authenticity of the *Pāñcarātra* on the ground that this *āgama* is like the *upaniṣad* which supports Vedic authority³.

There are some more objections against the validity of *Pāñcarātra*. It is stated that sage *Śāṅḍilya* studied the *Vedas*, epics, *Purāṇas*

1. *PaS II.19*

2. *Iti tatprakriyā.Yathā pauṣkarasamhitāyām.
Nyāya Manjari-Grantha bhanga p 112.*

3. *Nyāyamanjarī* part I p 242

and many other works but could not get his doubts clarified about the ultimate reality and the means of final release. Finally, he studied the *Pāñcarātraśāstra* through the grace of God¹. It is held that this statement is anti-Vedic since the authority of the *Vedas* is questioned². But this objection is to be considered by treating that *Śāṇḍilya's* attempt does not question the validity of the *Vedas* but expresses his inability to get his doubts solved. This explanation is analogous to the statement of *Nārada* mentioned in the *Chāndogya* text³ that he has studied all the *Vedas* but has not realized the self. This statement is only to glorify the *bhūma vidyā*, that is going to be mentioned later in that context.

The *Pāñcarātra* tradition is also known as *Sāttvata* system. The word *sāttvata*, it appears, seems to have been used in a despicable sense. But this point is to be proved, beyond doubt.

1. *sāṅgeṣu vedeṣu niśṭhāmlabhamānaḥ śāṇḍilyaḥ pāñcarātra śāstram adhiḡgataṅvān – quoted.*

2. See BSB p.497 4-5: “*catursu vedeṣu paraṁ śreyo labdhvā śāṇḍilya idaṁ śāstram adhiḡgataṅvān ityādivedanindādarśanāt*”.

3. *Ch U VII. 1-2*

Later on, the word has come to mean a respectable clan. This word is derived by *Parāśarabhaṭṭa*, while commenting on the word *sāttvata* thus: “ *Sat* is the supreme Brahman or the quality of the *sattva*..... *Sattvān* is a person who has realized Brahman or one who is associated with the quality of *sattva*.. *Sāttvata* is the act of the person or the *śāstra* that is followed by him..... *Sāttvatas* are *Bhāgavatas*”.¹

Perhaps, the term *pāñcarātra* became prominent or glorified at the time of *Mahābhārata*. It is observed in the commentary by *Śaṅkara* on the *BS II.ii.42* that the *Pāñcarātra* contains certain objectionable or contradictory statements.² It must be admitted that the *Pāñcarātra* recommends certain rites such as killing (*marāṇa*), subjugation of another (*vaśīkarāṇa*) and drawing a person to one’s proximity (*ākarṣaṇa*) for vanquishing enemies and other such rites *śāntika* and *puṣṭika*.

1. Vide *Viṣṇusahasranāmabhāṣya*, p.140, 7-12:

”*satvavān brahmavit sāttviko vā, tasyedaṁ karma śāstraṁ vā sāttvatam sāttvataḥ bhāgavatāḥ*”.

2. See BSB p.497.1

These are objectionable practices, but on this ground *Pāñcarātra* cannot be treated as anti-Vedic. Such practices, it should be observed, are not abundant in all the texts of *Pāñcarātra*. The *Jayākhyasamhitā* and the *Sāttvatasamhitā* are the texts where such practices are mentioned¹.

The Buddhist work *Sāadhanamālā* seems to have influenced the *Pāñcarātra* texts with regard to these topics. The reason could be that these texts, being written around the 4th century B.C., might have come from the same place in North India and contains the treatment of the means of defence and offence as in other Buddhist works.

1.8 VAIKHĀNĀSA AND PĀÑCARĀTRA

The *Vaiikhānasa Āgamas* contain certain derogatory remarks on *Pāñcarātra*. The passage (under expiatory rites) are found invariably, in the works of Atri, Bhṛgu and Marīci.

1. See SS Ch. XVII for śānti and *Puṣṭika vidhis* and JS. Ch.XIV p.131

On the contrary the *Pāñcarātra* system seems to have a reverential regard for the *Vaikhānasa* tradition¹. The critical passages containing such remarks were written later than the early *Pāñcarātra* text. In reality, there is no contradiction between the concepts of either of the two.

Vedāntadesīka observes that *Vaikhānasa Āgama* is as much authoritative as the *Pāñcarātra*, only the deeds enjoined in the *Vaikhānasa* system may be different from those presented in the *Pāñcarātra*.

Such a difference should be viewed as in the case of the difference from one *Kalpasūtra* to another. For this reason, a system cannot be held to be invalid. As both the systems hold Nārāyaṇa as the supreme being, there is no contradiction between them and hence both of them are equally valid.²

1. "Samyam Vaikhānasam proktamāgneyam pāñcarātrakam" SA
Ch. LXXVIII.56

2. Vide: Sāraṇagati dipikā

The *Pāñcarātra Āgama*, even if it is admitted to have been developed out of the *ekānti-dharma*, should be considered to have been promulgated in the Vedic atmosphere. The *Pāñcarātra* is thus pro-Vedic rather than non-Vedic. Many expressions and technical terms of the Vedic texts are found in the *Pāñcarātra* conveying the same sense. As they are too many, it may not be possible to enlist all of them. Some of the common terms are: *haviḥ* (oblation), *yāga iyyā* (worship offered to a deity), *utsava* (festival), *dhvajārohaṇa* (raising the flag at the commencement of the festival), *avabhṛta* (ceremonial bath in a tank or river at the conclusion of the festival), *pratiṣṭhā* (consecration), *jīrṇoddhāra* (conducting repair to the broken parts), *praṇītā* (a vessel to hold water), *vedi* (altar), *idhma* (fuel used in the sacred fire), *āvāhana* (invocation), *visarjana* (sending off), *prāyaścittahoma* (expiatory rites in the sacred life), *arghya*, *pādyā ācamanīya* (water offered to a guest for refreshing) etc.

1.9 ON REALITY

In the *Pāñcarātra* the supreme being is 'param brahman' as in the *Vedānta* system. It has the six qualities (*ṣāḍguṇya*) as its body and is depicted as described at the beginning of the *Puruṣasūkta*¹. It is formless and has no limbs. It is called by the name *Vāsudeva*, *Bhagavān*, *Kṣetrajña*, *Parama*, *Viṣṇu*, *Nārāyaṇa*, *Viśva* and *Viśvarūpa*.² It is defectless, having nothing to support it and is ever existing. This Supreme Brahman is characterized by the experience of bliss, which is free from pain and is limitless. It has neither a beginning nor an end. It has non-material qualities. It is the imperishable syllable *praṇava*. The *Pādmasaṃhitā* mentions the supreme reality as black in complexion and as possessing hands. The concept of *ṣāḍguṇya* is an important concept in the *Āgama* theology. This word means the aggregate of six qualities. The six qualities are: *Jñāna* (knowledge), *bala* (strength), *vīrya aiśvarya* (sovereignty),

LT. II 35a
LT. II 56-6a

śakti (power), (virility) and *tejas* (lustrous mite). *Jñāna* is non-inert, self revealing and eternal. *Aiśvarya* is lordship of anything external. *Śakti* is of the nature of the world. *Bala* is loss of exertion. *Vīrya* is that which does not change under any circumstances. *Tejas* is that which does not need any assistance.

The *Pāñcarātra Āgama* like other *Āgamas* has introduced *śakti*, an animate female principle which is ever associated with *brahman*. She is denoted by names like *Lakṣmī*, *Śrī* etc. She is the spouse of *Viṣṇu* and is distinct from *brahman*, but the two are ever united, so that they are said to be a single reality. The *śakti* is of two kinds, namely, *krīyā* and *bhūti*. The former is represented by *Sudarśana*, *Viṣṇu*'s weapon discus and the latter by *Śrī*.

1.10 VYŪHA AND VYŪHĀNTARA

The Supreme Reality manifests Himself in five forms as *parā* (transcendental), *vyūha* (divisions), *vibhava* (divine descents),

antaryāmin (inner controller) and *ārcyā* (icon or image). The *para* form is also called *parabrahman*, *paramātman*, *paramatattva* etc. He has a form made of the six qualities. He takes a form for the sake of blessing the devotee¹. He has a gross and subtle body. The gross body is taken by him to create and protect the world. His form is also said to be partless and having parts². The partless form is known as *niṣkala* and is called *sadāviṣṇu*³.

The *Upaniṣads* speak of him as being lustrous as the sun. He is said to be a golden hue. The *Pāñcarātra* texts seem to agree with this description of the Supreme in the *Upaniṣads*. His place is called *paramavyoma*⁴. The *Āgamas* do not say much about the nature of this place, but the *Śrīvaiṣṇava* theology attaches much importance to it. *Rāmanuja's* description of this abode, especially in the *Śrivaikunṭhagadya*, is based on the Upaniṣadic account.

1. SS II.70a, b.

2. JS IV 30-33.

3. SKS Rṣirātra III. 93a

4. See Introduction to the *Pāñcarātra* and the AhS otto Schrader p.57

The reason for the *Āgamas* not treating the subject in detail could be that the *Āgamas* are more interested in the construction of temple and its related matters.

The next form of the supreme, namely *vyūha*, is the division or manifestation of himself based on the six qualities¹. There are a number of *vyūhas* assumed by *Para Vāsudeva*. Four are prominent among them. The names of the divided four are: *Vāsudeva* (*vyūha*; *this Vāsudeva* is distinct from *Para Vāsudeva*), *Saṅkarṣaṇa*, *Pradyumna* and *Aniruddha* respectively². These four are carrying out the following cosmic activities. Creation, sustenance and destruction are under the control of *Aniruddha*, *Pradyumna* and *Saṅkarṣaṇa* respectively. Creation is carried out with *śakti* and *tejas* by *Aniruddha*, *aiśvarya* and *vīrya* by *Pradyumna* and *jñāna* and *bala* by *Saṅkarṣaṇa*. These three deities contribute to the ethical aspect of the *Pāñcarātrāgama*. *Saṅkarṣaṇa* teaches the theoretical aspect,

1. SS I-23a

2. Pādma I.12-35

while *Pradyumna* helps in the practice of the theories.¹ *Aniruddha* offers the fruit of the acts to the individual soul.

Each of the four *vyūha* deities has a concrete, individual form marked by ornaments, weapons and others. These forms are constituted on non-material matter².

The four *vyūha* deities together constitute an aggregate called *cāturātmya*. Four kinds of *cāturātmyas* are treated in the *Pāñcarāta* texts³. Those who worship this *cāturātmya* remain in four stages called *jāgrat* (waking), *svapna* (dream), *suṣupti* (deep sleep) and *turīya* (transcendental). The activity of the *vyūha* deities is of four kinds namely, *śānta* (in-active), *udita* (active), *śāntodita* (spasmodically active) and *nityodita* (ever active). *Para Vāsudeva* is said to be in the first stage; *Vyūha* marks the active stage; *śāntodita* is the stage of *vyūha Vāsudeva*, and *Saṅkarṣaṇa*, *Pradyumna* and *Aniruddha* represent the ever active stage. All these, namely, the

1. See Schrader p.39,

2. SS.V.82-86b; LT X.27-39

3. LT X.22-42

wakeful state etc. and the activities, such as *sānta*, etc. play an important role in the concept of *cāturātmya*.

Next emanate the *vyūhāntaras*. *Keśava*, *Nārāyaṇa* and *Mādhava* rise from *Vāsudeva*, *Govinda*, *Viṣṇu* and *Madhusūdana* from *Saṅkarṣaṇa*, *Trivikrama*, *Vāmana* and *Śrīdhara* from *Pradyumna* and *Hṛṣīkeśa*, *Padmanābha* and *Dāmodara* from *Aniruddha*¹. *Sanaka*, *Sananda*, *Śuka* and others are treated as *Vibhavāntara*.

For the benefit of the worshippers, as in the case of *Brahmavidyas*, the *vyuha* manifestation is represented in a divine lustrous pillar called *viśākhayūpa*² or *brahmayūpa*.³ This *viśākhayūpā* is intended to be meditated upon by the devotees according to their capabilities. The pillar has four faces, each one turned to one of the four directions *Vāsudeva* faces the east, *Saṅkarṣaṇa* the south, *Pradyumna* the west and *Aniruddha* the north. Each face has four divisions beginning from the bottom. Each face in its every part has the form of *Vāsudeva*, *Saṅkarṣaṇa*, *Pradyumna* and *Aniruddha*.

1. LT IV 27

2. LT II 12

3. *brahmayūpasvarūpeṇatvākramya svaṁ mahāmate* |
Saumya mūrticatuṣkaṁ tu sarvadikprasṛtaṁ ca yat || SS IV.7

The face directed to the east represents the waking state, that in the south the dream state, the west the *suṣupti* state and that towards the north the transcendental state. Though each face has the figure of all the deities of the *vyūha*, these faces turned to the east and others give prominence to *Aniruddha*, *Pradyumna*, *Saṅkarṣaṇa* and *Vāsudeva*. These have weapons, vehicles and other marked features. These are in the face towards the east and are to be worshipped by devotees in the waking state. Those in the south, west and north represent *Pradyumna*, *Saṅkarṣaṇa* and *Vāsudeva* in the stages of dream, deep sleep and transcendence. The face to the south has the marks not presented clearly and are in the stage of dream. The next face has the marks visible in the form of lines and are to be worshipped by those in the state of deep sleep. The last face has the marks, which are totally invisible and are to be worshipped by those in the transcendental stage. A meditator is required to contemplate at four stages starting with that of *Aniruddha* and the other three as depicted in the north face, and gradually passing through to *Pradyumna*, *Saṅkarṣaṇa* and *Vāsudeva*, keeping all the other three in each. Each stage corresponds to another stage in the other set, that is, waking, dream, deep sleep and transcendental. The meditator has to raise himself to that state of consciousness which is represented by the stage concerned. This kind of meditation is called *Cāturātmya Upāsanā*.

The stages of deep sleep, dream and waking stage are described in detail and are given the names of first, second and third *caturātmya*, *śrī*, *puruṣa* are ever with each *vyūha* deity *Lakṣmī*, *Kīrti*, *Jayā* and *Māyā* are the consorts *Vyūha* Gods in the order of enumeration from *Vāsudeva*¹ and her body is also non-materialistic².

1.11 VIBHAVA

Vibhava means the divine descents of *Vāsudeva*. This is known as *avatārās*. The word *avatāra*, literally means coming down from a higher plane to a lower plane. Though *Vāsudeva*'s form is knowledge, in order to bestow his blessings on the devotees, he descends down to earth with an incomparable splendour.

His form, when it descends, is of three kinds; gross, subtle and transcendental. They are at the junction of each of the four *yugas*.

1. Introduction to LT., p.25; AhS . V. 20b – 28a

2. LT.XI. 9-18;

Thirty-eight deities of *Vibhava* kind are enumerated as follows:¹

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) <i>Padmanābha</i> | (2) <i>Dhruva,</i> | (3) <i>Ananta,</i> |
| (4) <i>Śaktīśa,</i> | (5) <i>Madhusūdana,</i> | (6) <i>Vidyādhideva,</i> |
| (7) <i>Kapila,</i> | (8) <i>Viśvarūpa,</i> | (9) <i>Vihaṅgama,</i> |
| (10) <i>Krodhātmā,</i> | (11) <i>Baḍabāvakra,</i> | (12) <i>Dharma,</i> |
| (13) <i>Vāgiśvara,</i> | (14) <i>Ekārṇavaśāyīn,</i> | (15) <i>Kamaṭha,</i> |
| (16) <i>Yajñavarāha,</i> | (17) <i>Nṛsiṃha</i> | (18) <i>Amṛtahaṛaṇa,</i> |
| (19) <i>Śrīpati,</i> | (20) <i>Kāntātman,</i> | (21) <i>Rāhujit,</i> |
| (22) <i>Kālanemighna,</i> | (23) <i>Pārijātahara,</i> | (24) <i>Lokanātha,</i> |
| (25) <i>Dattātreyā,</i> | (26) <i>Nyagrodhaśāyīn,</i> | (27) <i>Ekaśṛṅgatanu,</i> |
| (28) <i>Vāmana,</i> | (29) <i>Trivikrama,</i> | (30) <i>Nara,</i> |
| (31) <i>Nārāyaṇa,</i> | (32) <i>Hari</i> | (33) <i>Kṛṣṇa,</i> |
| (34) <i>Paraśurāma,</i> | (35) <i>Śrīrāma,</i> | (36) <i>Vedavit,</i> |
| (37) <i>Kalki and</i> | (38) <i>Pātālaśāyana.</i> | |

These thirty eight deities are held to be *prādurbhāva* (earliest manifestation). Here, *Kṛṣṇa* is the son of *Brahmā* and not the son of *Vasudeva*.¹ The number of these deities is stated to be 39 in *Ahīrbudhnya Saṁhitā*.² There is discrepancy between the accounts among the *Pāñcarātra* texts. *Viśākhayūpa* is considered to be a *Vibhāva* and leaving off the thirty eight deities as enumerated. *Viśākhayūpa* is not separately mentioned and is referred to by the word *Padmanābha*.

There are divergent views in regard to the descents. *Aniruddha*, *Matsya*, *Kūrma* and *Varāha*, spring from *Vāsudeva*, *Nṛsiṁha*, *Vāmana*, *Paraśurāma* and *Rāma* from *Sankarṣana*, *Balarāma* from *Pradyumna* and *Kṛṣṇa* and *Kalki* from *Aniruddha*.³

The *Sanatkumāra saṁhitā* mentions the descent of *Kūrma* and *Nṛsiṁha* from *Samkarṣana*.⁴

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1. SS IX 77-84b
 2. AhS 5.50 – 56.
 3. Is this AhS
 4. SKS *Indra rātra* III.38, 67

1.12 ANTARYĀMIN AND ARCA

The fourth form is that of the in dweller (*Antaryāmin*). The three gems, the *Sāttvata*, the *Pauṣkara* and the *Jayākhya saṁhitā* do not mention this fourth form. The *Lakṣmī Tantra* mentions this form¹ and the *Ahīrbudhnya Saṁhitā* contains a similar reference. This form is referred to as *antarātman* in *Lakṣmī Tantra*. Probably the *Lakṣmī Tantra* and the *Ahīrbudhnya Saṁhitā* are earlier *Pāñcarātra* texts and thus include this form of *antaryāmin* in the list of the forms of *Viṣṇu*. Perhaps, a *śloka* from the *Saṁhitā* suggests the name *pāñcarātra* to stand for *para*, *vyūha*, *vibhava* and *svabhāva* to account for the name *Pāñcarātra*².

Thus, it seems that the concept of *antaryāmin* came to be included under the influence of the passage in

1. *antaryāmi niyantā ca LT. L7b Ch.50*

2. *Vide: "tat para vyūha vibhava svabhāvādi nirūpaṇam pāñcarātrīyam tantram - AhS. XI.63b - 64a.*

✍

↳ *Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad* where Brahman is stated to be immortal and inner controller of many things of *ātman* and also as knowledge.¹

Arcā is the fifth form of *Viṣṇu* and it is that form which is installed in temples. It is called *arcā*,² *pratimā*,³ *vigraha*,⁴ *mūrti*,⁵ *bimba* and *bera*.⁶

The *Para* form is like water around the universe, the *vyūha* form is like the milky ocean, the *vibhava* form is like water in the floods of the rivers, the *antaryāmi* form is like the water deep inside the earth, and the *arcā* form is like the water that oozes in the small puddles on river banks or on the sea shore.

1. *Bṛhadāranyaka upaniṣad*. “*yaḥ ātmani tiṣṭhan ātmano antara yasya ātmā śarīram*”.

2. LT II.59a

3. SS XXIV 14, 15

4. SS. IX.89

5. SS IX 119A

6. SS XXIV.4a

1.13 *KRIYĀ*

The *Pāñcarātra āgama* is also concerned with temple construction, making icons, consecration of icons in the temples, conduct of festivals and daily worship. Hence, all the texts are to some extent devoted to *kriyā* and *caryā*. However, the early texts, particularly the *Ratnatraya*, the *Lakṣmī Tantrā*, the *Ahīrbudhnya Saṁhita* and the *Parama Saṁhitā* are devoted to occultism, *japa* and *dhyāna*.

The idol form whose worship assumed much importance in the later texts and is mentioned along with the consecration of the temples. The materials recommended for making the icons are gems, metal, stone, mud, wood and crystal. They should be used only after examining them thoroughly. The icon could be in standing, seated or reclining posture, depending upon the incarnation of the lord that is to be represented.

Normally, the icons are of seven kinds, namely *mūla* or *dhruvabera*, *kautuka* or *karmabera*, *utsavabera*, *balibera*, *snapanābera*, and or *irthabera*, *Svāpabera* and *Utthāvabera*. Of these, the *dhruvabera* is the primary one that receives consecration and by this ritual the power of the supreme lord manifests in it. The other *beras* have to receive the power from the *dhruvabera*. The *Dhruvabera* is normally made out of stone and is black in color. Black colour is to be the main color among various colors.

The *karmārca* is the form that receives the power from the *Dhruvabera* and infuses or distributes it to the other *beras*. This form is not available in many shrines nowadays. Any other *bera* that is available there is used to serve the purpose of *karmabera*. The *utsavabera* is used for these occasions. The *balibera* is taken out of the temple to offer *bali* to certain deities kept at fixed places. *Snānārca* is used in giving ceremonial baths on occasions and is also used for daily bath in the sanctum sanctorum. The *utsava* idol too receives bath on special occasions. The *Tīrthabera* is used for offering bath on the *avabhṛta* day, that is the last day of the festival.

The small idol is used for sleep and waking up in the sanctum sanctorum. This *bera* is put to sleep in a swing kept there. In some temples, there are only three or four forms including the *dhruvabera*. One or two of them is used to serve the purpose of the non-available form.

1.14 MANTRAS

This iconic (*arcā*) form of the lord is to be worshipped with *mantras*. The *mantras* vary according to the form of the lord.

The active aspect of *śakti* rises and assumes the form of *Nāda Nārāyaṇa* who is in the state of tranquility (*śānta*). This stage is known as subtle (*sūkṣma*). Then *nādanārāyaṇa* assumes the form called *śabda* which is also called *śabdabrahman*. This stage is called *paśyantī*. The next stage is *madhyamā*, when it occupies the region of the throat. It is experienced by trained *yogins*. The next stage in the development of sound is known as *vaikharī*, when the letters are formed together with their meanings. It is then heard by the speaker and listener¹.

1. Cf. *Vākyapadīya* 1.144

The *mantras* are made up of letters that become audible. The *mantras* are represented in *maṇḍalas* which are formed out of these letters. A pedestal is to be made on the ground near the *maṇḍala* and is prepared with colour powder in the form of a concentric circle. At the center is the axle (*akṣa*) which is *praṇava*. Around the axle is the circle (*cakra*) containing the six words.¹ The spokes of the wheel are formed around it, are marked by consonants from *ka* to *ma* and are to be written on the rim. The outer wheel is marked by *kṣa*. The *Āgama* text explains the rules for making out the *mantra* to form the position of the *mantra*. For instance, the forming of a *mantra*'s letters are given in *Īśvara saṁhitā* XXIII 105—10.

1. See appendix. See Diagram IV

“*Yat jñātvā na punarjanma bhavatyārādhakasya ca |
 ādāyākṣasva madhyastham nābhipūrvamataḥparam ||
 pūrvam nemes tu tasyaiva yojyaṃ nābhitrayodaśam |
 dvitīyād aparaṃ varṇaṃ sarvaśaktyātmanepadam ||
 dvitīyaṃ dvādaśād varṇam dvitīyāt prathamam tataḥ |
 pañcamam ca bahiṣṭhebhyaḥ trīnetān viddhi kevalān ||
 nābhyekādaśambhinam dvitīyam cāṣṭamāt tataḥ |
 namonamaḥ padayuto mantras cāstādaśāksarah ||
 asyaikārnānam padam pūrvam tryakṣaram tad anantaram |
 ṣaḍakṣaram tṛtīyam tu caturtham caturakṣaram ||
 dvitīyam dvyakṣaram cānyat padāḥ samprakirtitam |
 tṛtīyam atha vakṣyāmi mantram mantravidhāṃ vara! ||”*

The *Pāñcarātra Āgama* divides a sentence which forms a *mantra* into four parts called *bīja*, *piṇḍa*, *pada* and *saṃjñā* and each one of these is in itself effective as a *mantra*. The first, that is *bīja*, is used independently and also forms the essential part of the *mantra*. It may be formed from one or two vowels or from a vowel and consonants to become a *mantra*. Many vowels, letters like *praṇava*, *hrīm*, *aim*, *klīm*, *gam* and so on represent the *bījamantra*. The consonants which run between the *bīja* and the other parts of the sentence are called *piṇḍamantra*. The *piṇḍamantra* has the vowel and all case suffixes and is in the form of praise to the deity and addresses it (example *sahasrajvālāya*). *Samjñā mantras* consists in the name of a particular deity addressed in the mantra along with the

words, *namas* and *praṇava*(eg *Om ṅamo viṣṇave*). These are recited with respect to the four states, i.e. the transcendental state, deep sleep, dream and waking.¹ Each one among these four parts could be there without the other three. However, all the four together could be effective when the *mantra* is addressed to God. The first letter of the sentence with *anusvāra* could be the *bīja mantra* of it, if it does not have one. It is indicated that the fourth class and women are eligible to use these *mantras*.

The *mantras* are divided into three groups *vaidika*, *tāntrika* and *vaidika tāntrika*. The fourth class and women, who could not have *upanayana* cannot use the *vaidika mantra* and require to have a person for using these *mantras*. The *tāntrikamantra* is formed inserting *tāntrika* syllables in *vaidikamantra*, e.g *hrīm om. śrīm* and others are *tāntrika* syllables.

There are *tāntrika* letters which, when used in the end of the *mantras*, convey the purpose to be served by the *mantra*, e.g *namaḥ svāhā, hūm phaṭ vaṣaṭ etc.*

1. *rūpaṅ me bhagavānmantrā vijneyā mūrtayo 'matāhl*
Jāgratsvapnau suṣuptiś ca turyaṅ ceti catuṣṭayamll :LT XXII.22

Mantras are of two kinds: gross and subtle, and partless and with parts. Some *mantras* are said to be *vyāpaka* as they provide all the *mantras*. The *Pāñcarātra* system admits five *mantras*, i.e. *praṇava*¹, *ṣaḍakṣara*², *aṣṭākṣara*³, *dvādaśākṣara*⁴ and *jitantā*⁵.

There are *aṅgamantra* that is *hṛīm*, *śiraḥ śikhā*, *kavaca*, *netra* and *astramantra*. There are the *mantras* for the deities forming the ornament and weapons of *Viṣṇu* and other deities. The twelve syllabled *mantra* is of great importance in the system. Special *mantras* are used for specific purpose like invocation, *bhūtaśuddhi*, *arghya*, *pādya*, *ācamanīya* and others.

1 *om̐*

2 *om̐ namo viṣṇave*

3 *om namo nārāyaṇāya*

4 *om̐ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*

5 *om̐ jitaṁ te puṇḍarikākṣa namas te viśvabhāvāna namas te śtu hṛṣikeśa mahā puruṣa pūrvaja*

Tārā's aṅgamantras:

Om̐ hṛaṁ jnānāya hrdayāya namaḥ (hr̥n mantra)

Om hr̥m aiśvaryāya śirase svāhā (śirā h-mantra)

Om hr̥m śaktaye śikhāyai vauṣaṭ (śikhā- mantra)

Om hraiṁ balāya kavacāya hum (kavacā-mantra)

Om hraum tejase netrābhyāṁ vauṣaṭ (netra-mantra)

Om̐ hraḥ vīryāya astrāya phaḥ (śtra-mantra)

Mantras are stated to convey three aspects, i.e. gross, the subtle (sūkṣma) and the transcendental (para) aspect. *Tārā* is the name given to the *praṇava*. The *mūla mantra* and *vāsudeva mantra* get detailed treatment. The parts of *prapatti* are shown to be conveyed in the former *mantra*.

Among the other mantras, *nṛsimha mantra* gets a special dedication and it is worth noting that the word *nṛsimha* is derived as destroying the bondage of men¹. The *Pañcāhuti mantra* and *puruṣasūkta* are analysed part by part and explained. The *Ahirbudhnyasamhitā*² rightly observes that many *mudras* relating to the use of *mantras* are treated in the *Jayākhyasamhitā*.³

The *Mantras* are to be used in meditation. The efficiency of them get a detailed treatment in *Jayākhyasamhitā*.³ Likewise they are to be used during the worship of God in the *maṇḍala* while doing

1. LIV *Nārāyaṇabandham*

2. AhS-LXI.

3. JS-XIX 8-12.

nyāsa and forming *mudrās*.¹ The *Sanatkumārasaṁhitā* treats the *mantras* in a particular way. *Mantras* are threefold, namely, *sāvitṛī*, *viṣṇugāyatrī* and *mūlamantra*.² The *sāvitṛī mantra*, ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय is called *gāyatrī mantra* in the *vaidika* rituals. *Mūla mantras* are two in the *Pāñarātrā āgama*. They are *Aṣṭākṣarā* and *dvādaśākṣara*.

The *Āgamas* prescribe a way of life for the various *vārṇāśramas*. In this respect, it is equal to the *veda*. It adopts Vedic concepts and *mantras* including the *Vedic* names such as *yāga*, *utsava*, *ijyā*, *avabhṛta*, etc.

Man does not live alone. He lives in a certain environment. He has to face certain things which could be either desirable or undesirable to him. In order to overcome certain enmities and other

1. JS XIV 69-89.

2. See appendix २.३

3. *mantratrayam samu-diṣṭam sandyopāsanāni karmāni prātasca visnugāyatrī madyāhne dvādaśākṣaram aṣṭākṣaram jayet sāyam sarvadāṣṭākṣaram tu va*, SKS Brahma V 97—98

4. *ibid brahma IX-101b mūla mantra dvayam cāpi pañcōpaniṣadōjayet*

other undesirable occurrences man resorts to certain rites like *śāntika*, *puṣṭika*, *vidveṣaṇa*, *māraṇa*, *uccāraṇa* etc.¹ Some of them are purely *tāntrika* rites. *Siddhis* are also adopted here.

The Vedas too contain the treatment of such practices. Expiatory rites are prescribed for such practices, which prove that such acts are undertaken². Śonery and such sacrifices used to be performed where special mantras are to be used. Enchanting the enemy and slaying him are enjoined. The Vedic mantras are used in these cases. Hence, the Āgama need not be condemned for the treatment of these topics.

The Āgama is concerned with the ways and means of worshipping God. Because of necessity for man Āgama also deal with other matters like medicine, purificatory ceremonies for the departed souls³ etc.

1. vide IS XXVI. SS XVII

2. Āpastambadharmasūtra I 9-27-28.

3. JS XXVI LT 1- Pads XXV, XXIX

In all these cases *mantras* are to be used, for, the *Āgamas* believe that any act, whatever be its nature, is to be done only with the utterance of *mantra*. On this account, the *Āgama* does not cease their validity.

The *Āgamas* recommended iconic form of worship and these icons were installed by great sages or *ācāryas*. One cannot have a direct access into the sanctum sanctorum and perform worship for the image of the Lord. It is because a person's physical body is made up of matter and as such, he is not fit to do the *pūjā* for the Lord whose form has become non-material by the process of the installation ritual. Hence the *Āgamas* prescribe expiatory (*prāyaścitta*) rites and the act of initiation (*dīkṣā*). One who aspires *Pāñcarātra* worship, will have to get the five sacraments¹ as a first step. The *Āgamas* have enjoined the ritual of *dīkṣā* or initiation to perform the Pancaratra worship.

1. They are *tāpa*, *puṇḍra*, *nāma*, *ijya* and *mantra*.

In order to undergo the ritual of *dīkṣā*, one has to approach a qualified person to initiate him into these rituals. The qualified person who initiates the aspirant into this fold is known as an *Ācārya*. The following chapter is devoted to the definition of an *Ācārya*, the disciple (*śiṣya*) and *dīkṣā*