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VEDIC AND TANTRIC MANTRAS

vaidikaś tāntriko miśra iti me trivikṣo mahābhāṣā
Bhāṣāvataraṇa 11.27.

INTRODUCTION.

An investigation of the relationship between Vedic and Tantric elements in the use of mantras in later Hinduism seems at first sight a rather specialised objective; some might even argue that such a distinction is artificial. True, the categories «Vedic» and «Tantric» are often subjected by Indian exegetes to specific religious agenda and are therefore not purely descriptive term, but – as hope to demonstrate in the following pages – they can still help us in understanding a neglected area in Indian religious history.

Although it is perhaps not wrong to say that Vedic and Tantric element converge in later «Hinduism», it is important for the historian to focus on those aspects in which the Tantric is in clear opposition to the Vedic. The methodological justification for such a seemingly biased approach is the inclusivism in Indian religious culture has blurred the distinction between heterogeneous elements, and that if we start the investigation of issues like the one discussed here from the vedicized Tantric system of the Śrīvidyā, we fail to understand the historical process that has led to this apparent freedom from contradiction¹.

One peculiarity of many studies on Tantric mantras is their emphasis on linguistic and on «meta»-issues. But attacking the problem from a linguistic-cum philosophical angle cannot inform us about the religious function of mantras, in

¹ Nevertheless this is often done in studies on Tantric mantras. Either because they are either easily available or well-represented in secondary literature, works like the *Mahāvīṇyāntantra* are selected to stand for «Tantrism» or «Śāktism», as for instance in WHEELER's article on «Mantra in Vedic and Tantric Ritual» (ALPER 1989, p. 97). It is true that wide-spread misconceptions about the history of Tantrism have paved the way for ahistoric approaches.

some cases the concentration on language theory produces incorrect and even absurd results. For instance STAAL has concluded that «it is not possible to make a systematic distinction between Vedic, Tantric, and other Hindu mantras»² – without realizing that it is his comparative approach that excludes any such distinction. His proclamation that «*hmm*» is a universal mantra, which occurs even in the *Zauberflöte*, hardly needs refutation³.

The present article attempts to fill the gap by investigating some seemingly innocuous changes in the ritual use of mantras in their historical and theological dimensions.

THE THEOLOGY OF MANTRAS.

Vedic and Tantric mantras are obviously defined by their source: a Vedic mantra is one that is derived from the Veda, a Tantric mantra from the Tantras. Generally speaking Tantrikas consider Vedic mantras to be almost powerless, because they regard their source, i.e. Vedic revelation, as a lower form of knowledge that cannot lead to liberation. The Vaidikas on the other side of the religious spectrum do not accept the Tantras as valid revelation and consequently regard Tantric mantras as impure⁴. A problematic area is Smāra Hinduism, i.e. the broad mainstream that is based on *śruti* and *smṛti* and therefore includes Purāṇic forms of worship. We may of course talk of Purāṇic mantras, but it is, I think, important to do so without confusing the Vedic and the Tantric elements in them. The Śivapurāṇa, for instance, is predominantly Vedic in its selection of mantras⁵, whereas the *Devībhāgavata*, to be discussed below, is not. To treat *Purāṇas* in this respect as independent would thus unnecessarily confuse the distinction⁶.

Apart from this theological distinction between Vedic and Tantric mantras, there is also an important formal one in that Tantric mantras often contain *bījas*, «seed syllables», like *hrīm* etc. These *bījas* are not meaningful Sanskrit words,

² STAAL (1989), p. 63.

³ Otherwise the fact that even contemporary Bavarian uses «hm» in three senses, and perhaps more importantly, the sound «a», i.e. the *āśkāzāpṛayitāpāramitā*, in eight different meanings – if we include *abhyāsa*-forms like «a-a» *vishāpa* – would show a remarkable mantric awareness – if we obvious propensity for *bījas*. See *Bairische Grammatik von Ludwig Mertke*, München, Hingendubel Gesagtes. *Wann need ausgerechnet heids Aualdo kabhādūgāgā vādr, vadāmnā kemā. - A-a-»*.

⁴ SANDERSON (1983), fn. 69 (*Tantrāloka* 13.198).

⁵ «In contrast to the preeminence of and constant recourse to «Vedic» mantras, one cannot fail being struck, in this *śāiva* Purāṇa, by the very subordinate role played by Tantra generally and Tantric *bhūmantras* in particular». ROCHER (1989), p. 192.

⁶ It must be emphasised that, because of the complexity of the processes involved, we should avoid constructing simple historical models. The aim of then present study is to show that «Vedic» and «Tantric» were important religious coordinates that may still sharpen our understanding of the history of Hinduism.

and as such are comparable to the Vedic *stobhas*⁷. But the comparison ends here since there is no necessity for a *stobha* in a Vedic mantra, and there are indeed no too many *stobhas* in them, whereas a Tantric mantra is defined by its *bīja*⁸. The term «ritualistic dadaim» therefore (inspired by the *stobha* «*dadān*»), though amusing, is misleading⁹. Tantric *bījas* can not be explained as artistic statements even if it were convenient to do so for philosophising about them.

Generally speaking, all Vedic mantras – according to the proponents of Tantric practice – are, for the simple reason that they are derived from the Veda, incapable of leading to liberation. However, for the esoteric monist Śaivas the hierarchy of mantras is more complicated, since they reach a gradation of mantras within the Śaiva revelation. For instance, the mantras used by the Śaiva Siddhānta are ineffective as compared with those of the Kaulas:

«All the mantras that are taught in Siddhānta-Tantras etc. are powerless, & they are devoid of the splendour of [Śiva's] power. The great mantras of the Kula [scriptures], whose splendour shines naturally, appear with supernatural [lit.: «heavenly»] splendour and are causes for immediate knowledge¹⁰».

Furthermore the division of schools into «general» (*sādhānta*) and «special» (*viśeṣa*), with the implication that the «special» is more effective, but only accessible to an elite, is applied to mantras.

⁷ See STAAL in: STAAL (1989), p. 61.

⁸ This statement needs to be qualified. There are mantras without *bījas* in Tantric ritual. Like for instance in general formulas of adoration of the type *om* [name in the dative] *namah*. It remains to be seen, whether these ever occur outside the subordinate parts of the ritual, but the impression is that the mantras of the main Tantric deities require a *bīja*. The *Mahānirvāṇatantra* would seem to be counter example, since its *mūlamantṛa* of Brahma in the 3rd chapter is indeed without *bīja*. But the recent Tantra is a special case. Although DERRETT's point in saying that it is a «well-intentioned fraud» (see GOURDIAV and GUPTA (1981), p. 99) is obvious, the terminology is inappropriate, because scientific distinction between genuine and apocryphal Tantras will be difficult to maintain. A word can only be called apocryphal outside a theological context, if it is not what it claims to be. B. DERRETT is right in that the *Mahānirvāṇatantra* is in many ways an anomalous product. Despite the fact that the Tantra teaches as its main part a Kaula adoration of a form of Kālī with the expected mantras (the *mūlamantṛa* is *hrīm śrīm kṛīm*, see comm. on 5.33-4) and procedures, one of its them in the introductory dialogue is that of a purification of Tantrism. In its first chapters it claims the validity of Tantric worship, but only because Vedic mantras are ineffective in the Kali age (2.14-1'. As if to lead the reader gradually to «real» Tantrism he is first presented with a cult of the absolute *brahṇa*. The *mūlamantṛa* of this «deity» is *om sac cid ekam brahṇa* (comm. on 3.41-3); its *vyāṇa*, *dhyaṇa* and a *brahṇa-gyāntṛ* (3.105) etc. that follow are a Tantric cult, but without *bījas*, of a *nc* Tantric pseudo-deity. This practice, which is open to Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas and others (3.141), has strong Vedic overtones (*sacchāndalakeśanam* 2.34d; *vedāntaveśya bhagavān* 2.45c); a perspective that not uncommon in later Śrīvidyā, but with the distinction that here the cult is Vedic to the mantric core.

⁹ STAAL (1989), p. 61.

¹⁰ *sādhāntāntasya tantrasu ye mantrāḥ samudāhṛtāḥ // vṛyabhāṣā tu te sarve śāktivijñitā yata kaulikāḥ tu mahānirvāṇāḥ dīpaṇeśvabā // sṇpurānti dhyateśvakeṣāḥ sadāpṛayitavyakāteṣāḥ Tantrālokanivēka* 29.3.

The occurrence of a *bīja* indicates that a mantra is Tantric, and the *bīja* may further reveal the particular cult in which the mantra is used. If we take, for instance, the five Tantric *brahmantras*, we see that in the different mantric systems it is only the *bīja* that changes. By reciting *om keṣam śāmanārbhne namaḥ* one indicates that one is following the mantric system of the *Suacchandatantra*¹¹, whereas by saying *om hom śāmanārbhne namaḥ* one follows the ritual system of the *Saiva-Siddhānta*¹². We could therefore say that, regardless of their meaning, mantras, including *bījas*, make sense in a ritual context.

Above, or below, the level of ritual¹³ theological positions on mantras may differ widely. This is not the place to enter into a discussion of the theology of mantras in different Tantric schools, but we may add a few points made by the non-dualist exegetes that help to elucidate the place of mantras in Tantric ritual: A mantra denotes a deity and is used in ritual to evoke its presence, to awaken the deity in the consciousness of the worshipper¹⁴. The power of the mantra is thus its ability «to make aware of something», or «to articulate» (*pari-mṣ*). For a sectarian Śaiva like Abhinavagupta this is of course only the property of Śaiva mantras, the *parāmarśā* of mantras of other schools like Vaiṣṇava etc. is impure¹⁵. Now the *bīja* represents this awareness (*parāmarśā*) more fully in that it is not limited to a specific denotation¹⁶.

But even a Tantric mantra is powerful¹⁷ only if learned from the teacher directly; a mantra taken from a manuscript is powerless¹⁸. In other words, the mantra is a sound that is transmitted through a line of teachers (*paṇḍitānā*) and has as its source the supreme deity; it is thus thought to be efficient only within this specific socio-religious context.

¹¹ See *Suacchandatantra* 1.43cd-4g with Kṣemarāja's commentary.

¹² See BRUNNER (1986), p. 93. For the pattern *om* plus a name in the devī case, see *Tantrāloka* 15.183.

¹³ It should be noted that despite the fact that research on Tantrism has almost exclusively concentrated on philosophy, Tantric religion is highly ritualistic and can only be understood comprehensively with that perspective. SANDERSON writes on the importance of the study of ritual manuals: «However, once one has realized that it is necessary to approach the Śāstra traditions of Kashmir from an understanding of their basis in ritual, then the importance of these materials becomes obvious. For they are almost our only evidence of Śaivism in the region which is not of a theoretical or prescriptive kind. They provide us with a background of reality against which to evaluate the implications of theory and to consider the degree and manner of the idealisation of actual practice that we must expect in authoritative prescriptions». SANDERSON (1997), p. 15.

¹⁴ *śāmanārbhne namaḥ* / *mahāśāmanārbhne namaḥ* / *mahāśāmanārbhne namaḥ* / *śāmanārbhne namaḥ*

¹⁵ *Tantrāloka* 16.253cd-256.

¹⁶ See *Tantrāloka* 5.141, which refers to *bījas* and *pīndas*.

¹⁷ That is, full of «vitality» (*vīrya*). For this term, see *Tantrāloka* 4.141 and 30.121; *Śivaśāstra* 1.22.

¹⁸ See *Tantrālokanīveka* 4.66 for the idea that written mantras are ineffective except in the cases of *śāmanārbhne namaḥ* and the slightly obscure quotation in *Tantrāloka* 15.594 that one should not write down the «heart of the mantras», i.e. its *bīja*?

Here one might ask about the status of those mantras that are used in Tantric ritual but are ultimately derived from the Veda, like for instance the five Vedic *brahmantras*¹⁹ that are used in the Tantric *kalānyāsa*²⁰. I have not seen an attempt to resolve this inconsistency, but it is easy to imagine a justification: for instance the aghora-mantra that is used in Tantric ritual, it might be argued, is taken by the adherents of the Āgamas from the *Suacchandatantra*, not from the *Tantrīyānyaka* and therefore effective²¹.

This simplified description of a clear-cut division between Vedic and Tantric mantras applies to the more heterodox Tantric traditions, which we took as our starting point. As we shall see, the picture changes in the system of the later Śrīvidyā where the boundary between the Vedic and the Tantric is indeed more difficult to draw. But in order to understand the historical process of amalgamation that has led to present day «Hindu practices»²², it is important to investigate Vedic and non-Vedic elements *within* later Hinduism. This I wish to demonstrate by analysing such a hybrid, that is Vedic-cum-Tantric practice, namely the ritual used for the recitation of *māṇamantras*.

MĀĪMANTRAS.

This type of mantra recitation common in present-day Hinduism has to my knowledge never been the object of scientific analysis. In this practice a text like,

¹⁹ Preserved in the *Tantrīyānyaka*. The passage occurs in Śāyana's text (The *Tantrīyānyaka* of the Black Yajur Veda with the Commentary of Śāyānabhāṣya. Ed. Rājeśvarī Mītra, Calcutta 1872 [Bibliotheca Indica]) as *prapāhaka* 10, *anuvāka* 43-47; as *prapāhaka* 6, *anuvāka* 43-47 in Bhaskara's text (The *Tantrīyānyaka* with the Commentary of Bhāṭṭa Bhaskara Mītra. Ed. Mahādeva Sastr and K. Rangaraya, MLBD 1985); as *Khanda* 17, 1-5 in JACOB's edition, and no. 277-286 in VARENNE's edition which is based on what he calls the *ānubhava* version, represented by the Anandāsrama Series. Bhāṭṭakara prelates Śāyana, who died in 1387 A.D. (See Sebastian J. Carr: Contribution of Bhāṭṭa Bhāṭṭakara Mītra to Vedic Exegesis. Pune: Institute for the Study of Religion 1985 [Studies in Indian Religious Texts 1]). Another source that prelates the two commentators is the *Pāṣṇasāstra*, where these mantras occur divided into Sūtras. Compare also *Nṛsīṃhapurāṇa* *ṭīpāṇīśat* 1.6 for the *śāmanārbhne namaḥ*, *Matrīyānyaka* *śāmanārbhne namaḥ* 2.9.10 for the *aghoramantra*, and *Kāṭhaka* 17.10.11 for the *śāmanārbhne namaḥ*.

²⁰ See *Ramanāgama*, *kṛyāśāstra*, *pāṭala* 2 (p. 22-28).

²¹ According to the *Jñānapāṭāśikā*, a short text that is transmitted in a manuscript together with other recensions of the *Kāṭhatantra*, Śaiva ritual is to be performed with mantras that were spoken by the five faces of Śiva, but not with those taken from the Veda: *pāṭāśikāśāstrānāṁ mantrāṁ śivodaitā śiddhantakṛtāḥ / saṁyake yāgāde śmṛtibhāṣyān nāyār vedāśāśāstrāḥ // jñānapāṭāśikā folio 1 verso* (NGMPP B. 118/7). My theoretical explanation of the discrepancy does not apply to the more Veda-oriented Tantric schools, which freely acknowledge that the long *brahmantras* are Vedic and are therefore not to be used by women. Sūtras and other disqualified social groups (see *Īśānavāgopadeśapādhanī*, vol. 3, p. 33 and 62). That the latter work is influenced by *Śrīvidyā* formal quotations are not recorded by the editor, like for instance 1.73: *prapāṭāśikāśāstrāḥ yathānu*

the saṁgrahāt / atrodābhāṣyānti bhāṅī bhāṅīmantrāḥ samantakāḥ //.

²² GONDA, for instance, has used the term «Hindu practices» in a rather loose sense, as applied to the mantra *hom śāmanārbhne namaḥ*. See GONDA (1976), p. 47.

for instance, the *Bhagavadgītā*, or one of the various *Sahasranāmastotra*s²³, is used as a single long mantra²⁴. This complete recitation of a text (*pāṇḍava*) may be undertaken in order to promote one's religious welfare, or for very specific ends, such as curing an illness. For this purpose the text to be used is embedded in a ritual, which we shall briefly analyse. This liturgy is often only printed in recent editions or booklets for devotional use and, since the texts presented in them are popular versions, they are usually not systematically collected by libraries²⁵.

Before comparing the various elements that can appear in this preliminary recitation, we shall give the beginning of the *Bhagavadgītāmāntramā* as an example. Fortunately this text is an exception, since it is edited in the appendix to the critical edition of the *Bhagavadgītā*²⁶.

asya śrībhagavadgītāmāntramātraḥ
bhagavān vedavyāsa ṛṣiḥ / anuṣṭup
chandaḥ / śrīkrṣṇaparāmāṇvā devaī /
aśocyān anuśocyas tvam prajñāyādānśi
ca bhāṣase iti bhāṣm / sarvaḍarman
pariyāya mām ekam śaranam vraja iti
śaktiḥ / abam tvām sarvaḥpēbhyo
moksyaṣyāmi mā śucalḥ iti kīlakaṁ /
śrīkrṣṇaprīṭhartham
ḍharmanāṭhākāmanokēkante jāpe
viriyogaḥ //

Of this *Bhagavadgītāmāntramā* the Ṛṣi is the holy Vedavyāsa, the metre is *anuṣṭubh*, the deity is the highest self Kṛṣṇa. [The passage] «You grieve for those not to be grieved...» [2.11ab] is the seed [of the mantra]; [the passage] «Give up all *dharmas*, take refuge only in me» [1.8.66ab] is its power; [the line] «I will deliver you from all evils, do not grieve» is its *kīlaka*. [This mantra] is used in recitation for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa in order to [obtain] the four goals of life.

This is followed by the so-called *karanyāsa*, the assignment of lines from the text as mantras to the fingers²⁷, then similarly to the *aṅgas*, i.e. heart, head, top-

²³ On «Stotra Literature», see GONDA (1978), p. 25-38, which however focuses on the Veda.

²⁴ *mantras* are often divided into *brāh*, *pūda*- and *māntramātras*. The *Tāntrāyogavivṛttopadhbhātī* has a division into *brāh*, *brāhmantras*, *mantras* and *māntramātras* (1.18ff; vol. 1, p. 2), according to which the latter consist of more than twenty *akṣaras*. They are also correlated to the stages in life; *brāh* give perfection to children (1), *brāhmantras* to youths etc.

²⁵ Bibliographically this «azaar literature» (GONDA) is a problem, since in some cases the text is printed without any bibliographical information.

²⁶ The text has been edited in Appendix I (p. 78) to: The Bhagavadgītā. Being Reprint of Parts of Bhismaparvan from B.O.R. Institute's Edition of the Mahābhārata. Ed. S.K. BELVALKAR. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute 1945. I have also seen a Telugu edition of the *Gītā*, which quotes two versions of this ritual. See also: WALTER SLAIE, Katalog der Sanskrit-Handschriften der österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, Wien: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften 1990, mss. 7 and 8. Furthermore I have compared an undated, probably Kashmirian Nāgarī manuscript of the text in a private collection.

²⁷ *nainam cchinantī śastrāni nainam dhātī pāvakeḥ iti aṅgushābhyāṁ namah / nainam kleśanantī āno na śrosvatī vāṛmūḥ iti hṛdīnāṭhānāṁ namah / vachobhāṣaṁ śrīśānāṁ vāṣānāṁ śāntīnāṁ śāntīnāṁ*

knot, and weapon²⁸. Having thus prepared the body ritually the practitioner proceeds to imagine the deity with the help of the meditation verse(s) (*dhyanāśloka*) that contains the iconographical details. After completing this introductory ritual the recitation of the text, here the *Bhagavadgītā*, may be undertaken. In such a ritual preliminary to the *pāṇḍava* many other elements of a fully-fledged *pūjā* may occur. One pocket edition of the *Rāmāyana*²⁹ describes a *rāmāyana* preliminary to a *pāṇḍava* in almost thirty pages³⁰. But here we shall concentrate on the simpler ritual as quoted.

First the *mantra*, i.e. the text to be recited, is mentioned and three pieces of information about this *mantra* are given: the Ṛṣi, the «seer» of the *mantra*; then the metre; and finally the deity of the *mantra*. These are said to be indispensable for the use of Vedic mantras: the *Ārṣeyabrāhmana* states that one who uses a mantra without knowing these three, together with the *viriyoga*, incurs sin³¹. And it is indeed only for Vedic mantras that the first two of these make sense; in early heterodox Śaivism mantras have no seer, and most of them are unmetrical³².

Then the *brāh*, *śakti* and *kīlaka* are given. These elements are Tantric in the sense that the terms are known from Tantric ritual³³. APTE gives *kīlaka* in his dictionary as «the inner syllables of a mantra», but his reference to the *Hansopaniṣat* is unfortunate, since the mantra «*hamsa*», which is the object of this small Upaniṣat, is too short to satisfy the conditions of this pattern: according to that work the Ṛṣi is *hamsa*, the metre *avyakṛtagāyatrī*, the deity *paramahansa*, the *brāh* «*ham*», the *śakti* «*sa*», the *kīlaka* «*so 'ham*». In her edition and translation of the *Pūjāvidhinīyāna* NOWOTNY gives another example in which *brāh*, *śakti* and *kīlaka* are the first, second and third word of a 3-word mantra³⁴, but, if we look at

eva ca iti madhyamābhyāṁ namah / nityaḥ sarvagatāḥ śihānur aślo 'yam sanātandḥ iti anāṁkēḥyāṁ namah / paśya me pāṭha rāḥāni śataśo 'tha sahasraśaḥ iti kamitīkēḥyāṁ namah / nānāvāḥānī dhyānī nānāvānākerīṭnī ca iti karatalakēḥyāṁ namah / iti karanyāśaḥ //

²⁸ *aṅganyūṣaḥ / nainam cchinantī śastrāni nainam dhātī pāvakeḥ iti brāhavyā namah / nainam kleśyanty apo na śośyati māṛuḥāḥ iti śraśe svāḥā / accheḍyo 'yam adāḥyo 'yam akleḍyo 'soḥya eva ca iti śīkēḥyāḥ vāśatī / nānāḍāḥānī dhyānī nānāvānākerīṭnī ca iti aśrīḥyo pḥatī / iti aṅganyāśaḥ //*

²⁹ Śrinadvalmīkīrāmāyana of Mahārṣi Vālmīki (Along with its virtue and mode of recitation). Ed. by Shrivani Sharma Vasisṭhi, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Vidya Bhavan 1982. See the *Sundarānandā* for a brief *pūjā* for «*Smārtas* and others».

³⁰ Since most of the elements described here are also part of the *Smānta pūjā*, one may consult the detailed treatment of this ritual in BÖHNEMANN (1988).

³¹ See *Ārṣeyabrāhmana* 1.6. Similarly *Bṛhaddevatā*: *nḥomo 'yam jāpe home ṛṣiś chando 'tha dānātum / anyathā cet prayatīānās tapāpāḥ cātra bhṛyāe //* 8.134. The passage following [in ms. A of the edition] elaborates on the same theme.

³² GONDRIAN writes that «the vedic seges, as has been said, continue to play an important role, but only as transmitters, not as revealers. It should be noted that each mantra possesses its ṛṣi who is often mentioned together with its deity, *śakti*, etc., and assigned to the parts of the speaker's body (ṛṣyādhyāśa)». GONDRIAN and GUPTA (1981), p. 6. But this, as we shall see, applies only to vedicised Śrīvidyā.

³³ I do not know of an instance in early non-Śrīvidyā Tantrism where these terms denote parts of mantras.

mantra during the *sandhyā*-rite, the author, having dealt with the enunciation of the Rṣi (here *viśvāmitra*), the deity (*śanīdā*), the metre and the use (*vinijyoga*) of the mantra, describes the placing (*nyāsa*) of the constituents of this mantra on six parts of the body. He then remarks:

«This placement (*nyāsa*) on six limbs is optional, since it is clear in the appendix to the *Gṛhyaśūtra*⁴⁴ that the performance of *nyāsa* is unvedic. One must understand this to mean that there is no obligation [to perform] the *nyāsa* of syllables, words, or quarter-verses etc. as well as the performance of *mudrās*, or [recitations] for release from a curse etc., since they are Tantric and therefore unvedic»⁴⁵.

As we would expect from an impartial writer on law, the author does not condemn such a practice, he even describes Tantric *nyāsa*s in other places without repeating his cautionary remarks⁴⁶. Thus a de facto acceptance of a Vedic-cum-Tantric practice does not necessarily indicate that two religions have merged beyond recognition. It is on the contrary plausible that *śrīṣṭas* were always aware of the discreteness of its elements⁴⁷.

It would be possible to produce a collection of passages on the issue from different authors and times, but for the present purpose, that is, for understanding the rationale behind the hybridization, the elaborate discussion by Rāmeśvara in the beginning of his commentary on the *Parasūramākapaśtra* will be the best choice. His position is that of a Smārta who argues for a hybrid cult of Tripurā.

He starts with the question whether it is proper for a Vaidika to expound the *Parasūramākapaśtra*, because it is Tantric and the Tantras are, since they are motivated only by greed, invalid. As support for this conservative view he quotes Kumārila as well as passages from various *Purāṇas*. In one quotation from the *Agniṣirāya* some denizens of hell say «we burn [in hell], since with our mind affected by covetousness we have obtained Tantric initiation and given up the way of the Vedas»⁴⁸. Summarising this negative view of the Tantras Rāmeśvara says: «Through this censure of Tantric practitioners⁴⁹ it is made clear that Tantra is not

⁴⁴ This must refer to the apocryphal *Aśvalāyanaḥyopariśiṣṭa*, where, after a description of the *nyāsa* of the parts of the *gṛyā*-*Ṛmantra*, it is stated: *enam* [i.e. *anganyasam*] *eṣe nechaḥanti, sa hi vidhir avatīka* etc. *Aśvalāyanaḥyopariśiṣṭa* 1.5. See below on this text.

⁴⁵ *iti sadānyāsaśḥ kaṃyo na vā k anyeb* // *nyāsaśilāber avatīkatānā* *iti gṛhyopariśiṣṭe spāstam* // *etenāḥkanyasya āspādasya āspādānyāzāzānām mudrāzātibhēb* *śāpavimocanādātibhē ca tāntrikānenāvādi-* *katāzā anāzāsyākatavām vedhāvāyam* // *Dharmasūdhā*, p. 227.

⁴⁶ See p. 265, 269 etc.

⁴⁷ One Pandit whom I asked about details of his daily *pāṭyāna* was fully aware of the presence of non-vedic elements in its ritual, but maintained that although the *śrīṣṭas* should not really be used, there was no question of infringing proper conduct and, *vānācāna* being ruled out, this practice was unobjectionable.

⁴⁸ *tantrādikṣam anpṛāpīāb* *lobhōpābhācācāzā* / *nyāśnā vādikām adbhānām tena dābhyāmāhe* *anānyam* // 1. 1

to be trusted. For we see the same censure of Tantras frequently in many other *Purāṇas* too. And it is obvious that a scripture that enjoins the use of the five “m” is based only on greed»⁵⁰.

Rāmeśvara rejects this conservative position and argues that, since *Purāṇas* are valid scripture, their position on the Tantras should be the guiding line. He then adduces passages that permit Tantric practice for those who are specially qualified, and only for them; that means, the problem is resolved by adhering to a strict *adhikārabheda*: for Vaidikas only Vedic worship, for Tantrikas only Tantric *pūjā*. Then the author leads us, through a series of quotations⁵¹, to the position that there are in fact two forms of *valid* worship, Vedic and Tantric.

Still the opponent cannot soften his position on *adhikārabheda* and says: «I concede that the Tantras are valid for persons who have special qualification, [i.e.] men fallen from the Veda, for the mixture of women and Śūdras! [?]»⁵² [but] not for the Vaidika. And it is possible to quote a valid statement to the effect that the qualification for Tantra is limited to non-Vaidikas»⁵³.

Then a passage adduced before, in which the principle of a division of qualification is explicitly stated, is quoted in favour of the opponent's position. Rāmeśvara disagrees and eventually quotes a passage from the *Adhyātmarāmāyana* in which Tantric *pūjā* is taught for obtaining liberation in order to prepare the reader for his next step, namely that both ways of worship have to be combined! He quotes passages that enjoin worship according to Veda and Tantra, or with Vedic and Tantric mantras, and presents his final position: Tantric worship is not for those fallen from the Veda, it is in fact an additional practice for Vaidikas, whereas for Śūdras and other disqualified groups it is the only practice. Thus there is an *adhikārabheda*, but the boundary is different. To the twice-born the following principle, quoted from the *Triparīṭṭāna*, applies: «By the three higher castes all the Tantric [worship] is performed after the Vedic [worship]»⁵⁴.

Before discussing another aspect of the process of hybridization, namely the infiltration of Tantric practices into Smārta Hinduism, we have to mention another important example of a hybrid ritual: the veneration of the junctures

⁵⁰ *iti tāntrikāpuruṣanindayā tantrasyāśradhāpovānam spāstam* / *enam anyeso apī bahupurūṣeṣu tantvanindīyāb* *bābūlam upalambhā* / *mapāñcākādānāvādhīyācāśtrasya lobhākenānātanām saspāstam* //, p. 4.

⁵¹ Including an instance of a Tantric *pūjā* in a *Purāṇa*: *tubhā bhūtmotānakānde pradōsanābhā-* *mye tāntrīkāsarvāyā brāhmanāyāpūrtvōr upāśiṣṭā*, p. 6.

⁵² The phrase *śrīśūdrānām samkṛeṣu ca* is not clear. One expects either «women and Śūdras», both of whom are not qualified for Vedic mantras, or unlawful intermarriage (*sankṛa*) with (female) Śūdras.

⁵³ Lit.: «And it is not possible to say that there is an absence of a *pramāṇa* that limits the *adhikāra*...». The original runs as follows: *na ca vādikāntrīke tantrasya adhīkārasamīcōcāpṛamānābhāvā*

(*sandhyā*). In Śrīvidyā works it is, as we expect from Rāmeśvara's remarks, indeed standard practice to perform the Vedic Sandhyā first and then the Tantric.⁵⁵

As far as the mantras are concerned this hybrid ritual is remarkable, since the practitioner is enjoined to perform the recitation of the Vedic *gāyatrī*⁵⁶, then, in the Tantric part, the recitation of a Tantric *gāyatrī*⁵⁷. The question remains, whether the heterodox schools, i.e. those who unlike the Śrīvidyā thought of the Veda as totally ineffective and therefore did not subscribe to this process of hybridization, did also perform, for instance, this double *sandhyā*. Unfortunately the evidence is not quite conclusive, since we cannot be absolutely sure that the Tantric sources intended to describe the whole ritual to be performed, and not just its Tantric part. If we look at the *Somasambhupaddhati*, we find a Tantric *Śiva-gāyatrī*⁵⁸, without indication of a Vedic part to be performed beforehand. Neither is there anything in Abhinavagupta's account of the *sandhyā* to suggest such a combination, but there is a brief remark by Kṣemarāja⁵⁹, to the effect that a Vedic *sandhyā* is to be performed by the practitioner of the *Svacchanda*-cult.

But this is not too surprising, since the Tantrics are «Vedic to the extent that like all Hindus of caste they had first been purified by the Vedic rites of passage (*samskāra*) [...] And even when they had gone through the ceremony of initiation (*dikṣā*), the Tantric rite of passage which gave them access to Śaiva ritual, they were still bound to conform to the rules of the Veda-based social system (*varṇāśramadharmā*) and its local variants (*deśadharmā*). The Śaiva initiate therefore saw himself as subject to two levels of injunction: the general or common Vedic level and the special level reached by his initiation»⁶⁰. This has to be borne in mind when we discuss the combination of Vedic and Tantric elements; it is above all the attitude of the heterodox exegetes that is markedly different from that of the adherents of the combined practice: for them the performance of the Vedic cult is seen as a merely exterior compromise, whose practice neither adds to, nor detracts from their goal – unless one would believe in it⁶¹. However, with the *ṛsyādhyāyā* Tantric mantras themselves are vedicized.

⁵⁵ Also *Mahānirvāṇatantra* 5.44: *vaidikīm tāntrikīm caiva yathānyekamanograh / sandhyān samācāren mantrī tāntrikīm śrīnu kaṭhaye //*. The *Syāmapaddhati* by Śāhīb Kauḷi states that the physical and the Vedic bath have to be performed before the Tantric *snāna* (*madātāpākerṣanāsnānaṁ svāśābhojanavādeksānāṁ ca vibhāvācāmya...*); the same principle applies to the *sandhyā* (*vaidīkacandhyān sam āpāya tāntrikīm ārabheva*) and *tanpāya*. The text will be edited in my forthcoming «Śāhīb Kauḷi's Stories and Paddhats».

⁵⁶ That is *Rgveda* 3.62.10.

⁵⁷ See SANDERSON (1995), p. 28.

⁵⁸ Compare the description in the *Somasambhupaddhati* 90f.: *śivāyārgyājñāliniṁ datvā gāyatrīm kateho jāpet // 90 // om tanmahēṣya vāhavo vāgōvīsādhāyā bhānāhi tan nūb śivāb pracodayāti /*.

⁵⁹ Commenting on *Svacchandatantra* 2.ccd *sandhyāyā vandanam kuryāt chāstradrīṣṭena karmajā* he says *śāstradrīṣṭena vedādīśidhena*.

⁶⁰ SANDERSON (1995), p. 23.

We see here a further step in parallellising Tantric ritual with its Vedic counterparts, because for those who practiced the religion «the need to match these orthodox rituals was strong enough to compromise the very beliefs which justified the separate existence of the Tantric system. Equivalence in observable practice was ultimately more important than insider theories of superiority»⁶². The tension created by these diverse forces of compromise, rejection and fusion goes some way towards understanding the development of Tantrism as well as the change of main-stream Hinduism under its influence.

THE PROCESS OF INFILTRATION.

Purāṇas.

For the process of infiltration of Tantric material into the mainstream we find evidence in the manuals for domestic ritual, the *Purāṇas*, and some later *Upāniśads*. We quote examples from each and shall concentrate on passages where the *ṛṣi*, metre and deity are mentioned for a mantra that is tantric, or tantricized through *bhāṣas*, or used in a Tantric *nyāsa*.

For one wishing to lift Tantric ritual into the orthodox realm, *Purāṇas* were an excellent starting point, since they, because of their status as *smṛiti*, could be accepted as valid scripture by non-sectarians, but were at the same time prone to amplification and redaction. As an example for this I shall briefly analyse some of the relevant passages from the *Devībhāgavatapurāṇa*.

Without the present issue in mind one might come to the conclusion that the *Devībhāgavatapurāṇa* has no consistent attitude towards non-Vedic cults, because it seems to present widely diverging standpoints about Tantric worship even within a few lines. But read as a defence for including Tantric cults into the Vedic domain, the contradictions in it could well be intentional, for in order to teach Tantric practices to orthodox Brahmins, while maintaining its authority as *smṛiti*, it has to degrade Tantric elements and pay lip service to the *śruti*. This is done in chapter 7.39, which touches upon the problem of Vedic versus Tantric *pūjā*. Both rituals are to be performed only by those initiated into it; whoever performs the wrong *pūjā* «falls», i.e. loses his religious status. In the section about the Vedic *pūjā* the text assures the Vaidika that there is no reason for him to adopt non-Vedic practices: «In some places, sometimes, a religion is taught which integrates Tantric doctrines»⁶³. This [Tantric] element is never to be adopted by the Vaidikas»⁶⁴. Thereafter the validity of the Veda is asser-

⁶² SANDERSON (1995), p. 27.

⁶³ Lit. «with a side-glance at Tantric doctrines».

⁶⁴ *smṛityoś ca stūter artham gṛhītvāta ca nṛgātāb / manvāśīnān svātīnān ca tatāb pṛānānām ṛṣyae // kvacit kadāci tantrī ārabhātāṣṭeya pāroditam // dharmam vudanti so nyāsa tu natva gṛhīyo sti*

ted's, and it is stipulated that the king should expel those who adopt other *dharma*s from the country. In this category would be the Vāma, Kāpālika⁶⁶, Kaula, Bhairavāgama, all of which are in contradiction to *śruti* and *smṛti*, and which were produced by Śiva in order to delude.

Then there is a sudden shift in perspective:

«There are some good Brahmanas, who are distressed [since they are] outside the path of the Veda. In order to liberate them gradually Śiva composed the Śaiva-, Vaiṣṇava-, Saura, Śākta and Gāṇapatya-Āgamas. In them some elements are taught here and there that are not in contradiction to the Veda. It is never a sin for Vaidikas (?)⁶⁷ to adopt these»⁶⁸.

In other words, some Brahmanas who have lost their *abhikāra* for the Veda may adopt Tantric worship wholeheartedly, and we may add that by so doing they would in any case lose it: To this excuse is added a list of Tantras, which signals that there are groups of scriptures related to all the five deities of the so-called *pañcāyatana* that receive offerings in Smārta ritual. With this the author wants to suggest that, though leaving the Vedic domain, we are still within the non-sectarian Smārta religion. Perhaps the slip of the pen that follows indicates what the author really meant, namely Āgamas composed by Śiva (*śaikhareya*): presumably all the other groups of Āgamas are in this context empty⁶⁹.

The solution first envisaged by the *Devībhāgavata* in this passage is that of *abhikārabheda*: in principle the Vaidikas should adopt Vedic rites and the Tāntrikas Tantric ones. But the arguments mentioned in the previous section also provide us with an excuse for those who adopt Tantric rites, namely the *śāpa*, and reassure the hesitant that no sin is incurred. We must add that the author had as an introduction to the passage distinguished an internal and an external form of *pūjā*. The division into Vedic and Tantric applied only to the external mode, whereas the internal is now described in the conclusion of the chapter: the internal *pūjā* is the dissolution of consciousness (*samvillaya*), which is to say that the differences in *krivā* are resolved in *yoga* and the conservative reader may calm down.

Compared with the early heterodox Tantric tradition that declares the Veda invalid and the practices derived from it ineffective, the *Devībhāgavata* is very

⁶⁶ There is one passage on valid scripture where it is stated that *śruti* and *smṛti* are the eyes, but the Purāna is the heart. In the case of contradiction, however, the Veda is valid! (11.1.20-33).

⁶⁷ «Kāpālika» is given in the text.

⁶⁸ The instrumental *vatākaib* is odd.

⁶⁹ *dagdhā ye brāhmaṇavarā vedamāṅgabhāṣikṛtāb / teṣāṃ uddharanāṅgāyā sopānudekanmatib sadā // śaivāc ca vaiṣṇavāc ca saurāb śāketāś śāketāś tātānva ca / gāṇapatya āgamāc ca pāñcāyā śaikhareya tu // tāva vedānmutābho 'nyo 'py ukta eva kvacit kvacit / vaidikāś tadgrāhe doṣo na bhāvay eva karhitā // 7.39.29-30.*

⁶⁹ There are of course Vaiṣṇava-Āgamas, and there are traces of a lost canon of scriptures taught by Śurva, but if all are thought to be taught by Śiva, the perspective is in any case sectarian Śaiva, not neutral Smārta.

moderate; but elsewhere in the text it is strongly suggested that the actual practice advocated is Tantric. We find one indication in the chapter that describes the *bāhyapūjā* in detail: there the goddess is imagined as sitting on five corpses⁷⁰. These five are identical with «the five elements and the five states of consciousness [i.e. waking state up to *turyāñā*], but I [Devī] am unmanifest consciousness and utterly beyond them. Therefore these [five] always become my seat in the *Śaktiṅtra*»⁷¹. This unspecific reference to a group of Tantras might be interpreted as neutral eclecticism, in other words that the Tantras are sources just like the Veda. As proof for this one could adduce passages that pretend to give a résumé of Vedic, Tantric and other modes of worship, as for instance in the case of *ācamana* of which six modes are listed⁷². But if we examine further passages⁷³ we must conclude that the authors or redactors of this Purāna tried their best to appear unbiased while including Tantric practices into orthodoxy.

In its eagerness to build bridges for the conservative to a Tantric *pūjā* the *Devībhāgavata* describes the use of the *gāyatrī-mantra*, but expands it by including Tantric elements. First the author states that the *nyāsa*s to be described are optional⁷⁴. It then lists the *ṛsis*, *chandas*, and *devatā*; the names for the «parts» of this mantra: *bīṇā*, *śāketi*, *kīlaka*, *bṛhadya*, *śīras*, *śikhā*, *kaucā*, *netra*, and *astṛā*⁷⁵. As expected, this is followed by the *dhyāna* of the deity and the *nyāsa* of parts of the mantra on the worshipper's body. The chapter concludes with a *gāyatrīdhāna*, a *gāyatrīśoṭra* and *-śaḥsaranāma*.

In chapter 12.7.5 the author says that the fact that *dīkṣā* qualifies for ritual acts, grants (*dā*) divine knowledge and removes (*ksī*) evil is known by those who are «proficient in Veda and Tantra». In the same chapter we also find the *nyāsa* of the *ṛsi* etc.⁷⁶

The technique here is, not unlike that of Rāmeśvara discussed above, to expound different views on Tantric worship in order to get the attention of a broader public. The outcome is not a clear recommendation of Tantric worship, but an integration of heterodox elements into the orthodox domain.

⁷⁰ The list is identical with that of the five so-called *kāraṇetaras* in Śaivism.

⁷¹ *pañcābhūātmakā ye eie pañcāvaśbhātmakā api / abhāṃ to anyekācāritrāpā tadatīṅāmi sarvabhūā // tāvo viśvataṅṅā 'vābh śāketiṅtraś sarvadhā // 7.40.11-12ab.*

⁷² *śādbhaṃ smṛtāṃ cāmanāṃ parvāṅṅam vailikam tabhā / tāntrikam svātam ity ābhūp śādbhāṃ smṛtācātmā // 11.3.1.* It should be noted that here all these modes are said to be sanctioned by *śruti*!

⁷³ For Tantric elements in others parts of the text, see the *mātrikānyāsa* (7.40.6); the main mantra of Devī is *brhm*, the *brhlekā* (*brhlekā sarvamanānāṃ n eyleā* 7.40.28). Even in a mythological passage: *brhmāṅgapaniṣāś tu pakṣīnṅdar nisevā* 3.3.41. *nānāmi brhmāṅgāṅṅ devīṅṅ 12.14.27.* For the *nyāsa* of *brhm* in a Śrīvidyā manual, see *Śūbhagodaya Śāb*.

⁷⁴ *nyāsaṅṅ karoti vā mā vā gāyatrīm eva cābhyaśet // 12.1.11.*

⁷⁵ 12.3.6-9.

mentions the incorporation of Śrauta and Smārita elements⁸⁷. The compromise with Vedism is made clear in the quotation from a *Svayambhuvanāntva*, which states that the Veda is valid, since it is, like the Āgamas, authored by Śiva⁸⁸. Instead of establishing a superior position for the Āgamas, the author seems more concerned with adducing arguments in order to defuse possible objections from the Mīmāṃsakas, such as: if Śiva is the author of the Veda, then the Veda is not beginningless. But the contradiction is only apparent, because Śiva is beginningless!⁸⁹

Other manuals, like the *Śradātīlaka*, regularly teach the hybrid mantras. Verse 1.5, for instance, enjoins the use of mantras «together with the seers, metres and deities» and the commentator Rāghavabhaṭṭa supplies us with arguments in support of this rule. He quotes several non-Tantric sources to the effect that a mantra is not effective without them.

It would be simple to adduce further instances of the hybrid ritual throughout later literature⁹⁰, but what are the conclusions?

One fundamental problem remains, namely the judgement of the scope of our sources: does a certain liturgy cover the whole ritual or only part of it, that is the part that is modified? In the present study one could of course argue that the omission of an element in a ritual, like the *ṛṣi* etc., may mean no more than that its performance was taken for granted. But if, on the other hand, it was clear to the heterodox Śaivas that the *ṛṣi* etc. belonged to Vedic mantras only – and we have reason to believe this – no explicit prohibition of the practice of reciting the *ṛṣi*, metre and deity can be expected. If we take into consideration the internal logic of the Tantric systems, the hybrid practice appears as an important modification of the core of Tantric ritual which aims at bringing it in line with Vedic orthodoxy. And this fits perfectly with the observation that the hybrid ritual is a feature only of the Śrīvidyā tradition. It could have been introduced in the process of an alliance with the orthodox Śāṅkarite tradition⁹¹ in order to present the originally heterodox Śrīvidyā⁹² as compatible with Vedism.

The preceding analysis is perhaps unspectacular in itself, but can be usefully applied. For instance, the fact that the *Rāmanātha* teaches such a practice⁹³ in its *keṛyāpāda* is an additional argument to exclude the possibility that it is part of the old *Rāmanāthasāmgṛaha* printed with it.

⁸⁷ 10.188; vol. 1, p. 96. On the work, see GOURDRIAN and GUPTA (1981), p. 128.

⁸⁸ Vol. 3, p. 7.

⁸⁹ Vol. 3, p. 9.

⁹⁰ Svārdyanātha Dixita's Smṛtīmūlaphalam, Āṅkikārdia, Part II, ed. J.R. Champure, Bombay 1938 (teaches *ṛṣi* etc. with *bṛhas*). Nityācārapradīpā by Naraṣiṃha Vāṅapeyī, Vol. II, Calcutta 1928 (Bibliotheca Indica CLV) (teaches *ṛṣi* etc.). One could add other Tantras, like *Kālāṅkavāntva* 4.15.

⁹¹ Compare the prominent position of the *śrīśāṅkaraṁtva* in the 65th chapter of Ānandagiri's *Śāṅkaraṁtva*.

⁹² See SANDERSON (1990), p. 156-58.

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