

Outlines

OF

Indian Philosophy.

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Āgamas. Garbe has pointed out the influence of the *Bhāgavata* (Vaishṇava) *Āgamas* on the former. The latter bears equally clear traces of the influence of the Śaiva cult. Both works seem to be due to an ancient synthesizing movement in which was attempted a higher standpoint than the monism of the *Upanishads*, the pluralism of the *Sāṅkhya* and the *Vaiśeṣika* and the three *tattvas* (triple reality) of the *Āgama* Schools, a standpoint from which all three can be reconciled and treated as different aspects of the higher point of view.

The influence of the *Āgamas* or *Tānttras*, as they are more familiarly known, on Indian life has been profound. The living Hindu religion of to-day from Cape Comorin to the remotest corners of Tibet is essentially *Tāntric*. Even the few genuine Vedic rites that are preserved and are supposed to be derived straight from the *Vedas* e. g. the *Sandhyā*, have been modified by the addition of *Tāntric* practices. Equally profound has been the influence of the *Āgamas* on the development of Vedānta philosophy. *Śaṅkara* was a professed *Śākta* and his *advaita* exposition of the *Vedānta*, though overtly independent of the *Śākta Āgamas*, is influenced by *Tāntric* theories and his discipline by *Tāntric* practices. *Rāmānuja* who, according to Dr. Thibaut, expounds a less forced form of *Vedānta* and more near to the

ideas of Bâdarâyaṇa, the author of the *Vedânta Sâtras*, than Śaṅkara, was a Vaishṇava and regarded the Vaishṇava Āgamas as authoritative, though he too seldom quotes them to support his exposition. Madhva is so much under the Āgama influence that his *Bhâshya* is but a string of Āgama texts with a few words thrown in here and there to connect them.

The Āgamas have all been kept secret, very few having been printed or being easily available in Mss. The names of 108 Pāncharâtra Āgamas, 28 Śaiva Āgamas and 77 Śakta Āgamas are given as the authoritative books of these schools. Hundreds more are quoted in the commentaries of the few books that one can get at. The few Āgamas that are available now belong to different ages. The *Lakshmi Tantra*, for instance, among the Vaishṇava Āgamas which is predominantly Śakta in tone, the *Pâdma Saṁhita*, which is nearer to advaita than the modern Vaishṇava relishes, being decidedly ancient, and the *Parâșara Saṁhita* and the *Bhâradvâja Saṁhita* which are highly sectarian and support specific recent tenets being decidedly of a very late age. In the case of the Śaiva and Śakta Schools, their common tenets are so many and specific differences so few that this test of age cannot be applied, but many of the existing Āgamas are

anterior to the age of Śaṅkara.

And we must also remember that, in the case of these writings, as in that of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Purāṇas* and the metrical *Smṛitis*, portions of the substance are very ancient, but the form has grown with time. The contents of the *Āgamas* are of unequal value. Here and there we meet with snatches of high philosophy, subtle psychological analysis of ecstatic mental states, and valuable descriptions of centres of *prāṇa* and lines of force in the subtle body, but the bulk of the *Āgamas* is but grovelling superstition, mostly of a revolting form, and endless details of dull ritual. Besides the *Āgamas*, this school has given birth to a whole series of philosophical works—of *Sūtras*, *Kārikās*,* *Bhāshyas*, *Vrittis* and *Vārttikās*, besides independent works—an immense literature jealously guarded from the prying eyes of the modern inves-

* A *Sūtra* is ordinarily a series of extremely brief prose aphorisms, generally unintelligible without a Commentary. A *Kārikā* gives the substance of a *Sūtra* in verse form and is also terse. A *Bhāshya* is the exposition of the supposed teachings of a *Sūtra* but really the teachings of the *Bhāshyakāra* supported by a great wealth of argument and quotation. A *Vritti* is a further exposition of the same. A *Bhāshyakāra* always strikes out an original line of thought and twists the *Sūtra* as he likes; but a *Vrttikāra* is supposed to follow the lines of a *Bhāshya*. A *Vārttika* is generally a *Vritti* in verse form. A *Ṭippaṇi* contains brief explanations on a *Sūtra*, on the lines of some *Bhāshya*.

tigator, but slowly sacrificed to the omnivorous poochies.

The **Āgamas** are generally divided into four parts (pādas,) **Jñāna**, **Yoga**, **Kriyā**, and **Charyā**. "Jñāna is knowledge of the Lord; that knowledge is called release" (*Pādma Samhita* I. ii. 6.) "Yoga is the restriction (bandha) of the unagitated chitta to one subject" (*Ib.* II. i. 3.) "Kriyā (embraces all acts) from ploughing the ground (for laying the foundations of the temple) to establishing (the idol) (*Ib.* III. i. 6). **Charyā** is "the method of worship" (*Ib.* IV. i. 1). The **Śaiva Āgamas** regard that the last three parts together constitute **Tapas** to be learnt from a human teacher and that the first, i. e., **Jñāna** can be taught only by **Śiva** who comes as the **Guru** to the ripe disciple at the psychological moment and gives him an initiation (**Dikshā**) into wisdom.

In the earlier **Āgamas** of all the three cults the Supreme Real Being of the Universe, corresponding to the **Brahma Paramam** of the *Upanishads* and called **Nārāyaṇa** in the **Vaiṣṇava** tantras and **Maheṣvara** or **Śiva** in the other two tantras retreats to the background and all cosmic functions are attributed to **Śakti** treated as his wife but the really the predominant factor.

But in the **Vaiṣṇava** and **Śaiva** schools

the male god soon acquired a prominent position and they also broke up into different sects. Yet these numerous schools have some common characteristics: They acknowledge three tattvas—ultimate realities, (1) A supreme Being with the male or female aspect predominant. (2) the class of individual souls (3) the objective Universe. These three Realities (t a t t v a s) are given different names in the different schools, but their attributes and mutual relations do not vary much, though the terminology varies from school to school. These schools are also all agreed in opposing the M ā y ā - v ā d ā, the doctrine of the unreality of the world, developed from the teachings of Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara and reduced to absurdity by their modern followers. Says the *Paushkara Āgama*. "If, (as the Śaṅkaras say) the world is an illusive appearance of conscious being, the effected world will be a hollow unreality; how can the world which is established to be really existing by all methods of proofs be a false transmutation of consciousness" (*Ib.* ii. 5).

The *Āgamas* do not regard the world as a false show; as Bhāskararāya says in *Lalitā Sahasranāma Bhāshya*, under the name *Mithyājagad adhishṭhānā* No. 735, "Really according to the belief of the *Tāntrikas*, who hold (the doctrine that) the world (is) a transmutation of Brahma, the Universe is real; because as there is absolutely no

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difference between Brahma and the world just as (there is no difference) between a pot and the clay (of which it is made), the reality of the universe necessarily follows from the reality of Brahma. As we accept that the difference (between Brahma and the Universe) is false, we accept all the texts declaring non-difference. From the unreality of difference (between Brahma and the Universe) it follows that the relation of supporter and supported is false. Hence the Vedānta theory of the illusoriness of the world cannot be accepted."

Intense B h a k t i, personal Devotion, to the world-mother or to the world-father (whether called M a h ā d e v a (Śiva), or N ā r ā y a ṇ a, characterises these schools. The root of this attitude of B h a k t i to a supreme Being can be traced to that spirit of the vedic Ṛ i s h i s, which made them praise as the Highest, whatever God, high or low, they happened to invoke at any time—the spirit which Max Muller has labelled Henotheism. The development of the Ā g a m a schools gave a great impetus to B h a k t i by concentrating the attention on one Deva and this resulted in an extreme development of B h a k t i, a devotion that expressed itself in an absorbing love, a complete self-surrender, which the want of a sense of humour led to such ridiculous extremes that the devotee's life became one orgie of singing and dancing and worse.

Another common characteristic of these Ā g a m a

Schools is their intimate association with abnormal manifestations of the sexual instinct. The emotional nature of man is the common root of devotion to a superhuman being as well as to human beings and the habit of self-abandonment to a divine being which grows with devotion easily degenerates into self-abandonment of different kinds. Hence there exists in India to-day debased forms of Śakti-worship, Śiva-worship, and Viṣṇu-worship much too revolting to be described.

This devotional movement has, as in another countries, given a great stimulus to Art; Temple architecture, especially in Southern India, and Lyric (devotional) Poetry, especially Sanskrit, Tamil and Hindī have reached a high order of perfection; only for want of cultivation of the powers of observation, this poetry is not noted for any wealth of poetic images, but is oppressed, as other departments of life in India are, by a load of soul-suffocating convention. Music, Dancing (Nāṭya) and gesticulation (abhinaya) have also been evolved under the influence of religious devotion; but the last art has degenerated into gross sensuality as its modern expounders are the women euphemistically called 'slaves of the Gods (devadāsīs) attached to the Southern Temples.

The following notes regarding the early references to Śiva and Viṣṇu temples in inscriptions so far discovered and deciphered have been drawn up by my friend, Mr. T. A.