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## Upāyas for Eternal Bliss in the Traitā Philosophy

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# Upāyas for Eternal Bliss in the Traita Philosophy

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## Abstract

The realization of the self is at the core of all the philosophies that have their origins in what is geographically present-day India. The three philosophies of the Sanātana dharma emphasize on attainment of mokṣa through “yoga.” Jñāna, *prapatti* and karma yoga are the means to *mokṣa* in Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, and Dvaita respectively. The technique of Traita is as simple as the aspirant is comfortable in a position to realize Śiva. The continuous practice of *dhāraṇā* and being able to sustain in the state of being Bhairava beyond the state of *samādhi* is *mokṣa*. The Traita declares Bhairava as the absolute and Śakti is an indistinguishable aspect of Śiva, through whom Bhairava can be realized. The paper here tries to bring out the essence of the means/*upāyas* as outlined for realization, with a special reference to the text *Vijñānabhairava* in the *Rudrayāmala* tantra.

**Keywords:** Traita; *Vijñānabhairava*; Śakti; *dhāraṇā*; *mokṣa*

## Introduction

The philosophies of Sanātana dharma are unique in establishing themselves. The key hold of all philosophies revolves around the eternal supreme brahman. The Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, and Dvaita emphasize the knowledge of the eternal being, whereby Advaita emphasizes “brahman as knowledge,” Viśiṣṭādvaita emphasizes “know that eternal brahman to be Śrīmannārāyaṇa” and Dvaita emphasizes on “the knowledge of one supreme reality that appears as duality in the relative world.” All these philosophies declare ātman to be eternal. But one will always be bound to the cycle of births and deaths unless he realizes his own self to be eternal. Each philosophy has prescribed a means to be followed. The paths defined by these philosophies are intellectual. They deal with the “WHY” of the things in this world. But, the doctrine of Trika holds a very unique position in attaining *mokṣa*.

The Traita / Trika is otherwise known as Kashmir Śaivism. In Traita, the one supreme reality appears as the threefold science of man and his world, the three energies, namely a) *parā* – Śiva (Supreme) b) *parāparā* – *śakti* (medium;

combination of the lowest and the highest) and c) *aparā* – *nara* (inferior). It explains the realm of *aparā śakti*, which is found in the three states of *jāgrat*, *svapna*, and *suṣupti*, and finally, the province of *parā śakti*, the supreme energy is found in the fourth state of “*turya*.” The Trika declares the whole universe and every act in it, whether spiritual, physical, or worldly, exists within the three energies. It intends for any human being without the distinction of religion, color, caste, creed, etc. Its purpose is to enable the aspirant to rise from the state of individuality to universality. It is based on the āgamas that exist within Lord Śiva (the revelation of Śiva). Tantra can be called a doctrine but not a philosophy because it deals with the “HOW” of the things in the world, especially to attain mokṣa. The word *tantra* itself means “technique” or method. When it deals with the methodology in attaining mokṣa, then it becomes purely scientific. The question how to attain mokṣa is answered by Tantra in a technical way. In Tantra one need not know its reality by intellect, rather it should be realized by the change in the totality. Tantra is a science in which experiencing is vital than intellectual theories. Śiva/Bhairava is the highest state of being.

The word *tantra* is made up by the joining of two words – *tanoti* (“expansion”) and *rayati* (“liberation”). It means liberation of energy and expansion of consciousness from its gross form. Legend says that Lord Śiva, in order to enlighten the universe, manifested the tantras. When Śiva manifested the tantras, he appeared with five heads and eight hands.<sup>1</sup> These tantras are manifested in three ways. Initially ten tantras came into existence which were dualistic called Śiva tantras. Then eighteen tantras came into existence which were filled with the thought of monism cum dualism called Rudra tantras. Finally, the Bhairava tantras manifested from Śiva, who is monistic in nature. These Bhairava tantras are connected with Kashmir Śaivism. They are sixty four in number and are said to be supreme. Among the Bhairava tantras, there are a group of eight tantras known as the Yāmala tantras which relates to Traitā in a very foundational level. The word *yāmala* means “union.” So, *Rudrayāmalatantra* literally means the Tantra of union between Rudra and his śakti, otherwise understood as the union between the consciousness and the energy. The *Vijñānabhairavatantra* (VBT) forms a part of the *Rudrayāmalatantra*. The *Rudrayāmala* is used as a source by many other

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<sup>1</sup> “His five heads came into manifestation through his five great energies: *cit śakti* (all consciousness), *ānanda śakti* (all bliss), *icchā śakti* (all will), *jñāna śakti* (all knowledge), and *kriyā śakti* (all action). These five energies which appeared in his mouths, which are known as Isāṇa, Tatpuruṣa, Aghora, Vāmadeva, and Sadyojāta experienced the sensation of illuminating the whole universe” (Lakshmanjoo 1988: 89).

*āgamas*, but the original appears to be lost. Strictly speaking, a *yāmala* is a different class of text and supposed to pre-date the tantras. However, manuscripts of the *yāmala* seem to be lost, except as quotations in later works. The VBT is the epitome of *Rudrayāmala* tantra

It is a text which describes how to experience that supreme independent state of god-consciousness which is transcendental and immanent in its pristine purity. The text is a conversation between Śiva and Pārvatī where Śiva answers, technically, the questions of Pārvatī that are highly philosophical. The text deals with 112 techniques to enter into the universal and transcendental state of consciousness. These techniques are emphasized with *dhāraṇā* as the underlying tool.

The process of *dhāraṇā* is very natural for human beings. *Dhāraṇā* is nothing but concentration. In our day-to-day lives we use our energy for various activities, like talking, reading, etc. These activities bring us success because we concentrate and focus on it so that we succeed in that activity. The concentration here is directed towards the external world and is reflected in our external life. Similarly, there are certain activities which take place in our internal world, such as happiness, depression, etc. One can focus and concentrate on these internal activities where the awareness of the consciousness can be maintained continuously without break to realize the self. The VBT prescribes this form of *dhāraṇā* for one who can conceptualize their emotions. The text allows to utilize those activities for which we fall, and through those activities get elevated in the awareness. The Tantra never instructs to negate certain activities of ours like good, bad, etc. One can experience the state of Bhairava even in his states of enjoyment and weakness.

### *Sādhana*

The *Trika* lays great emphasize on *sādhana* or practice. *Sādhana* is a process of internal refinement, which allows man to move towards perfection. The *sādhana*s bestow the three qualities of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. These qualities are attained only when the inner awareness is streamlined and refined. Every form of life is continuously refining itself and moving towards perfection. *Sādhana* is a way of hastening this process and ensuring that it takes place in a controlled manner. The basis of *sādhana* is *abhyāsa*, which means regular and uninterrupted practice. No matter what kind of a person you are, whether *sāttvic*, *rājasic*, or *tāmasic*, Tantra offers a way to bring you close to enlightenment. This is the uniqueness of Tantra. It never seeks to reform. Instead, it says there is a path for you whether you are a person of very low intellect

or of very high and elevated intellect. Even if you are in the clutches of anger, jealousy etc, you can start from where you are. The *upāyas* according to Tantra are broadly classified under four heads. They are *anupāya*, *aṇavopāya*, *śāktopāya*, and *śāmbhavopāya*. The aspirant has to pass from *aṇavopāya* to *śāktopāya*, and finally from *śāktopāya* to *śāmbhavopāya*. One *upāya* leads to another.

## Śāmbhavopāya

The *śāmbhavopāya* is the highest means of realization. It functions in the *māṭṛkā cakra*,<sup>2</sup> *pratyāhāra*, and *pratibimbavāda*. The *Mālinivijayottaratantra* defines *śāmbhavopāya* as “the one who preserves the thoughtlessness.” When the aspirant preserves the thoughtlessness continuously and by the grace of his master, he enters the transcendental consciousness where he finds that the whole universe has come out from sentences and sentences from words and words from letters and the letters from the real “I,” who is Paramaśiva reflected in his own consciousness. *Śāmbhavopāya* is also called *icchopāya*, as it originates from *icchāśakti* and it is that means which exists in the state of the meant. In *śāmbhavopāya*, there are no means to travel upon. One need to just reside in the meant. Once the aspirant is firm and fixed in the meant, the rest is done by the help of the master. One must reach that state where only the master shines for you and merge with the master’s consciousness. This merging with the master’s consciousness happens only for those who have reached a high, elevated and developed state of awareness.

The awareness is fully directed to the present moment not to the past or future. This *upāya* is amply illustrated in VBT. Many of the practices employ this *upāya* to raise the awareness. There is a sense of choicelessness in this *upāya* because there is no object or support on which the awareness is to be steadied. When the awareness is maintained continuously, the awareness loses its accustomed support and it turns within (inwardly). The inward awareness then becomes steady and vigilant. This is the state of watchful awareness.

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<sup>2</sup> “*Māṭṛkā*, the Universal Mother, is the master director of the triple knowledge consisting of *āṇavamala*, *māyiyamala*, and *kārmamala*. Here, the word *māṭṛkā* means *ajñātā mātā*. *Ajñātā mātā* is the state where universal energy is known in the wrong way. When universal energy is known in a correct way, it is simple *svātantrya śakti*. When it is known in the wrong way, it is energy of illusion and it is called *māyā śakti*. So *māṭṛkā* is both. *Māṭṛkā* means *ajñātā mātā* when universal energy is not known correctly and *svātantrya* when it is known correctly. This means that *svātantrya* controls the three instruments of bondage. *Svātantrya* is your own will! If you bind yourself or if you free yourself, both are under your control” (Lakshmanjoo 2007: 26).

To attain mokṣa, the aspirant has to know that the independent supreme state of god-consciousness is the formation of the universe and should perceive the undifferentiated knowledge.

*hr̥dyākāṣe nilīnākṣaḥ padmasamputāmadhyagaḥ |  
ananyacetāḥ subhage paraṃ saubhāgyamāpnuyāt || 49 ||*

O embodiment of good fortune, one who contemplates with closed eyes and one - pointed concentration on the mantra in the middle of the lotus in the heart space achieves the highest spiritual realization. (SS 1.15) (Trans. by Satyasangananda Saraswati [2003: 209]).

*gr̥āhyagrāhakaṣaṃvittiḥ sāmānyā sarvadehinām |  
yoginām tu viśeṣo 'sti sambandhe sāvadhānatā || 106 ||*

The subject-object consciousness is common to everybody. Yogis however are especially alert regarding this relationship. (SS 1.18) (Trans. by Satyasangananda Saraswati [2003: 331]).<sup>3</sup>

### Śāktopāya

Śāktopāya is that upāya which functions by the means of energies. It is also called *jñānopāya* because it originates from jñāna śakti. Here, in this means, the aspirant is more important than the master. The aspirant has to make himself capable of receiving the master's grace. He must work to develop a great velocity of awareness until he reaches the feet of the master. The aspirant does not have to recite mantras or control his breath to be aware on a particular spot. He just has to see and concentrate on the supreme being that is found in between two actions without action. In VBT, it is called "centering."

*ubhayor bhāvayor jñāne dhyātvā madhyam samāśrayet |  
yugapac ca dvayam tyaktvā madhye tattvam prakāśate || 61 ||*

One should think of two objects, and in the event of such knowledge being matured, then cast aside both and dwell in the (on the gap or space) middle. Having meditated in the middle, the experience of the essence arises. (Trans. by Satyasangananda Saraswati [2003: 232])

<sup>3</sup> *lokānandaḥ samādhi sukham*: Here, the sūtra explains how the objective world and the subjective world are perceived by the yogis for whom both the objective world and subjective world are not different and are found inter-wined well (the yogis perceive objective world in the subjective world and subjective world in the objective world), unlike the normal people who perceive the subjective world and objective world separately.

If the firmness is lost, the aspirant will be forced out of śāktopāya into aṇavopāya. It is only by maintaining an unbreakable chain of awareness one will be able to discover the reality between any two actions or thoughts. All actions and thoughts are the proper framework for the practice of śāktopāya. The aspirant of śāktopāya must insert continuous awareness in the center of any two actions or thoughts. In śāktopāya also, the awareness is not steadied on. There is nothing to concentrate and meditate on. This upāya seeks to turn the attention towards what exactly is meant by “I” or self, thus understanding the deeper significance of mantras and supreme consciousness which is the source of all mantras. By focusing on this upāya, the awareness is elevated through the *bhāvanā* of faith, sanctified and ultimately transformed by the energy of mantra. The aspirant intuitively realizes the supreme reality, which is his own self. Śāktopāya intends for the aspirant who is highly spiritually oriented. It is a process of self-enquiry.

### *Aṇavopāya*

Aṇavopāya is concerned with the *aṇu*, the individual soul. It is the upāya which functions by the process of concentrating on *uccāra* (breathing), *karaṇa* (organ of sensation), *dhyāna* (contemplation) and *sthānaprakalpana* (concentrating on a particular place).

In *uccāra*, one has to concentrate on breathing deeply and find the center point between the two breaths. It is a very essential element of practice of *cakrodaya*. This *uccāra* can be with sound or without sound.

The process of *karaṇa* is concentrating on a sense organ and maintaining one-pointedness continuously. If some aspirant concentrates through the sense of sight, he should concentrate without blinking his eyes at one point with unbroken awareness, eventually the point vanishes and the aspirant enters the vastness of the center. In *karaṇa*, one can employ all the organs of sensation. One must be aware of where the sensation arises in case if he prefers to concentrate on any other organ of sensation other than organ of sight. Through such a process one-pointedness is created and maintained in the long run.

*Dhyāna* means contemplation on a particular thing which is shapeless and formless. It is the highest form of aṇavopāya, just like contemplating on the *hṛdaya kamala* or on the meaning of some mantra like *so 'ham*, *śiva*, etc. If one contemplates on a particular form or shape, it is a lower form of aṇavopāya.

*Sthānaprakalpana* is a process of concentrating on some particular place. There are two levels of *sthānaprakalpana* – higher level and lower level. The high-



er level of sthānaprakalpana comes under the higher level of aṇavopāya where one has to discover each and every aspect of the reality like where the *devas* reside, location of the dawn, location of midnight etc in the course of breath. The practice of sthānaprakalpana is simply to see the vastness of the universe in one breath.

*tantryādivādyaśabdeṣu dīrgheṣu kramasamsthiteḥ |  
ananyacetāḥ pratyante paravyomavapurbbhavet || 41 ||*

When one-pointed awareness on the prolonged inner sounds of different musical instruments, such as stringed, wind and percussion, is gradually established, in the end, the body becomes the supreme space. (Trans. by Satyasangananda Saraswati [2003: 195]).

The lower level of Sthānaprakalpana is a practice in lower aṇavopāya. This is a process in which one concentrates on the different points in the body like *bhrūmadhya*, *kaṇṭha kūpa*, and *hṛdaya*.

Aṇavopāya is the means found in the world of duality and is called *bhedopāya*. The means which exists in the world of mono-duality is śāktopāya and is called *bhedābheda upāya*. That means which exists in the world of pure monism is śāmbhavopāya and is called *abhedopāya*. Aṇavopāya is called *kriyopāya* because it is the means which exists in *kriyā śakti*.

The limited *jīva* takes up some limited aspect, such as *buddhi*, *prāna*, or some object in space, as support and starts his practice of dhāraṇā. The support is selected based on one's *svabhāva* that one is born with, and not on the social, moral or religious nature that one picks up as one goes along.

The awareness is completely absorbed by it and drawn to the present moment. The *sādhaka* should always be aware that the timeless state can be attained only when he is able to maintain constant unbreakable awareness in the present moment. Through such a process, the past, present and future become one timeless entity which is eternal. When the *sādhaka* realizes that timeless state, he transcends and experiences the self which is beyond the three aspects of material existence such as time, space and object. The past is just the creation of the mind which associates the past events with the imaginary time frame. Therefore, the *sādhaka* has to fix his mind on an object so that he remains focused in the present.

### *Anupāya*

Other than the above mentioned upāyas, there is another upāya which is accepted by Trika. It is *anupāya*. The word *anupāya* means *na upāya*, not an upāya/



means. In this upāya, the aspirant has only to observe that nothing is to be done. Residing in your being is the only thing to be done and is the nature of this upāya. Anupāya is attributed to the ānanda śakti of Śiva. It is also called *ānandopāya*. Anupāya is the only means when it comes to contemplating on the wheel of the energies where the heroic yogi can perceive the svatantrya śakti<sup>4</sup> found as one with Bhairava. Anupāya is the unexplainable reality of the liberated aspirant.

## Upāyas classified according to VBT

The upāyas prescribed by VBT are classified into three types – *sthūla*, *sūkṣma*, and *kāraṇa*. *Sthūla* are physical in nature and belong to the *jāgrat* state. They include those methods that relate to the breath like *prāṇāyama* and to the *nādis* such as mudras. The *sūkṣma* upāyas are subtle in nature and belong to the *svapna* state. They include the methods of *dhāraṇā* that relate to the psyche, such as *japa*, *trāṭaka*,<sup>5</sup> and concentration on a symbol. The *kāraṇa* upāyas are abstract in nature and belong to the *susupti* stage. They include those methods that relate to the causal body such as *dhāraṇā* on emotions, ideas, thoughts and feelings. The aspirant can choose any upāya that suits his temperament. It depends on where one's awareness rests. The common underlying factor in all the practices of VBT is one's own awareness which must be directed towards one single object to the exclusion of everything else. Whatever the object may be the awareness must be directed to attain mokṣa. The objects specified in different practices range from *prāṇa* and breath, to *mātrkā* and mantra as well as *nāda* and *cakras*.

## Objects chosen to direct awareness

To hold on to awareness, the aspirant has to choose on to some object.

*Prāṇa* is one of the important object which an aspirant can choose to direct and hold awareness. Tantra asserts *prāṇa* to be the link between body, mind, and awareness. The existence of an individual can be categorized into five

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<sup>4</sup> *Svatantrya śakti* is the one energy in which all the energies of the world exist. She is the *śakti* of Śiva. She is the energy which/who takes the yogi, in flight, to the consciousness and causes the supreme knowledge of (*pratibhā*) being to radiate (*Bhairava*). The whole universe is filled with *svatantrya śakti*. *Svatantrya śakti* is where all the differentiated knowledge ends.

<sup>5</sup> The *trāṭaka* technique is a visual technique in which the aspirant stares at something without blinking and holding awareness through which the essence of *Bhairava* can be experienced.

sheaths in which the *prāṇamaya kośa* pervades and sustains the physical body. The *prāṇa śakti* is responsible for the entire creation. So choosing it as an object and directing the awareness will easily enable the aspirant to perceive the whole universe as his own self. *Prāṇa śakti* is represented in the physical body as *kuṇḍalinī*, which is the main focus of tantra and it claims that spiritual experience commences only when it is awakened. The awareness becomes internalized only when the *prāṇa śakti* is aroused.

The reunification of the consciousness and energy leads to the realization of the oneness of the *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*. The cosmic consciousness or the highest spirit inhabits the cranium known as the *sahasrāra* cakra. When the *jīvātmā* unites with *mahāśakti* in the *mūlādhāra*, it sets the foundation for reunification of the consciousness and energy. The *mahāśakti*, who sets the wheel of creation into motion is, in her physical form is in the shape of coiled snake called *kuṇḍalinī*. When she unites with the *jīvātmā* in the *anāhata* cakra, the resulting explosion completely overrides the electromagnetic circuits of the brain and total illumination takes place in the *sahasrāra* cakra, the abode of Śiva, which has been described as thousand-petalled lotus.

*ā mūlāt kiraṇābhāsāṃ sūkṣmāt sūkṣmatarātmikām |*  
*cintayet tāṃ dviṣaṭkānte śyāmyantīm bhairavodayaḥ || 28 ||*

Concentrate on the *śakti* arising from the root like the rays of the sun, gradually becoming subtler and subtler, until at last she dissolves in the *dvādaśānta* and Bhairava manifests. (Trans. by Satyasangananda Saraswati [2003: 165]).

When the matter that constitutes man explodes, an enormous detonation occurs and immense heat is generated. This inner fire purifies the physical matter to such an extent that the degree of the inherent energy liberated frees the consciousness from its clutches. The resulting experience of this energy conversion is so subtle that the yogis were speechless and couldn't say a word about the experience. The only thing they said was "*neti neti*."

Another important concept utilized in the *dhāraṇā* in VBT is *śūnya* or void. This is the *dhāraṇā* without any support where the space is the criteria for achieving the awareness. When the space is focused continuously, the mind dissolves and the inner awareness crystalizes on a *bindu*, which is the *śūnya*. During such an instance, everything except the inner consciousness dissolves and the consciousness illumines from within.

*viśvam etan mahādevi śūnyabhūtaṃ vicintayet |  
tatraiva ca mano līnaṃ tatas tallayabhājanam || 58 ||*

O great goddess, one should concentrate on the universe as nothing but void. Dissolving also the mind like this, one experiences the state of laya or total dissolution. (Trans. by Satyasangananda Saraswati [2003: 226]).

## Trika: The non-kārmic doctrine

The philosophies of Sanātana dharma accept the theory of karma. Also, mokṣa is determined according to the karma of a person. In these philosophies, mokṣa is realizing the self by the real knowledge. If a person is not able to attain mokṣa, it is due to the binding of the being towards the material world, which is temporary. A person is bound to saṃsāra due to the “I-notion”, ego. This I-notion exists because of the past deeds, or karma. Though the whole universe is the manifestation of the supreme being, karma is a concept which is not controlled by the supreme being, because whatever good deeds a person does in this life, still he suffers in saṃsāra due to karma.

Trika does not accept the concept of karma. The experience of the limitless universal consciousness which is the supreme independent state of god-consciousness from the limited consciousness by the aspirant is apparently the state of mokṣa. According to Trika, the state of being bound in the limited consciousness is due to the lack of complete knowledge of Śīva. The aspect of saṃskāra does not peep into the enlightenment of an aspirant. The attainment of mokṣa is determined by the will of Śīva. If a person is bound by the limited consciousness, it is due to the malas or impurities which conceal the individual being.

## The impurities or *malas*

A person who is of limited consciousness is in that state because he lacks the complete knowledge of the of god consciousness, Paramaśīva. This is due to the malas that conceal the individual being. There are three malas: *karma mala*, *māyīya mala* and *āṇava mala*. All these malas reside in Māyā, the universal mother. The svātantrya śakti of Śīva, which is the pure universal energy of the universal consciousness, is also called universal mother. It is known as māyaśakti when that svātantrya śakti is in the limited consciousness and is the sole reason for the differentiated perception of the world. The svātantrya śakti always allows the individual being to rise up to the highest state of Paramaśīva.

The three malas are broadly classified into *sthūla*, *sūkṣma*, and *para*. The *sthūla* is karma mala, and is connected with actions. This impurity of action is the

saṃskāra of pleasure and pain. These malas, expressed through statements like “I am happy,” “I am sad,” etc., remain as impressions in the individual consciousness.

The māyīya mala is that impurity which creates duality, *bhinnavedyaprathā*, due to ignorance (*avidyā*).

The āṇava mala is the subtlest impurity which is the internal impurity of the individual. It stops one from becoming Śiva, although that individual may have realized his self. It is the sense of incompleteness though one is fully aware of his self.

The āṇava mala and māyīya mala are impurities of perception. Karma mala is the impurity of action.

## The role of the master

The role of the master is more of a transmitter than a teacher. His method of teaching is very subtle and refined. The knowledge gets transmitted directly from the master to the disciple when they are very well connected. Great importance has been given to the master in any spiritual practice. The sādhana does not bear fruit without the blessings of the master. In VBT, the entire conversation between Śiva and Pārvatī is in the context of the master and disciple. The master is none other than Śiva who uplifts the aspirant to the state of Bhairava. It is said that the universal consciousness is not equal to the one sixteenth of the part of the initiation from the master (*Lakṣmīkaularnavatantra*). This shows the greatness and magnificence of the master. At the same time, the aspirant has to rise and make himself eligible to accept the grace of the master. Śivasūtra 1.16, “*śuddhatattvasaṃdhānād vā ‘paśuśaktiḥ* |” clearly explains the state of an aspirant who has to put in his effort to receive the grace of the master. The *Vijñānabhairava* speaks to Pārvatī about this *saṃdhāna*: With one-pointed attention, you must feel and perceive that this universe and your body is simultaneously one with god consciousness. Then the rise of the supreme god-consciousness takes place.

*kararuddhadryastreṇa bhrūbhedād dvāroddhanāt |*  
*dr̥ṣṭe bindau kramāl līne tanmadhye paramā sthitiḥ || 36 ||*

By using the hands (as tools) to block the entrances in all directions, the eyebrow centre is pierced and bindu (or light) is seen. Being gradually absorbed within that, the supreme state is realized. (Trans. by Satya-sangananda Saraswati [2003: 184]).

With a continuous process of *saṃdhāna*, the *śuddha vidyā* effortlessly comes into existence, and by the will of Lord Śiva, the real state of Śiva comes into being.

Here the aspirant reaches the state of *khecari mudrā*.<sup>6</sup> Through such a great effort, the aspirant enables himself to help his master elevate him and realize his self.

The master is the one who puts before you the reality of god-consciousness. The *Śivasūtra* 2.6 says *gurur upayah |*, which means that “the master is the means” to attain liberation.

## Conclusion

Tantra is said to be unique in its approach to mokṣa. Instead of wasting time in purifying the body and the mind, Tantra encourages the aspirant to flow with the tides of his nature and find and maintain awareness continuously without any break. There is no sign of negativity. Everything depends on the will of Lord Śiva. Tantra is a doctrine which relaxes the person, and if the person is able to realize himself as Śiva even in his vices, Tantra allows it because realizing oneself as Śiva is more important than the way a person is in this world.

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<sup>6</sup> It is said in the *Tantraśaḍbhāva* about *khecari mudrā*: “When you are treading the way of totality (*kulamārgeṇa*), you must see the totality in the piece of the totality. Take one part of the universe and see the whole universe existing there. That is the way of the totality... Take for example, a grain of rice. One has to see the energy that exists in the grain of rice. This one grain of rice has the power to produce not only thousands of plants, but millions and billions of plants. Innumerable plants exist in that one rice grain. So, one part of the world is complete in itself...[One] must, [treading] the way of totality...[The *khecari mudrā* is] “becoming one with the supreme consciousness” (Lakshmanjoo 2007: 90).

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