

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MYSTICISM OF THE SRI CHAKRA

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ABSTRACT: *The Sri Chakra is an important device used in the worship of the primordial energy which is the cause for the creation, maintenance and destruction of the cosmos. The author attempts in this article to provide an explanation for the mystical aspects of the celebrated yantra.*

INTRODUCTION

The sages of India conceived a comprehensive picture of the reality of all forms of creation which are also manifestations of the Supreme Consciousness. They also understood that the almighty consciousness gave birth in the process of creation to numerous gods and goddesses. Each god has a distinct purpose to fulfill.

The *tantra sastra* similarly, teaches that apart from the material world in which we live, there exist other worlds and universe. The Supreme Godhead controls these systems through the medium of a hierarchy of gods and goddesses (*devatas*). These entities exist in various planes on the rising tier of consciousness. These *devatas* help man in his uphill journey of liberation. The *tantra* developed this line with an eye on practical utility and this spiritual science is acclaimed as a great *sadhana sastra* or practical science.

The concept of Sri Chakra

Though the Supreme Consciousness is formless, nameless or timeless, in manifestation it has to limit itself to a form.

The formless great radiance has to radiate rays of definite forms and channels them as the various gods thus creating out of ONE, MANY with specific and distinguishable forms and features. These lines of light create the form-patterns of the gods which are known as *yantra* or *charkas*. A *yantra* is an instrument, a machine or a storehouse of power. It contains rather, in itself in a controlled form, the uncontrollable power of the deity. Tantrics believe that by worshipping the *charka* of a deity, the worshipper realizes the same deity or in other words he merges with it.

Mandala an important aspect of a *yantra* which is frequently drawn or made with powders of various colours. The *mandala* is used in the case of any deity whereas the *charka* is intended for a specific deity. In south India it is a practice in most of the homes to draw a *mandala* in front of the house every morning to bring in auspiciousness and to ward off evil. The Tamil word for *mandala* is *kolam* (guise), as it contains in disguise the divine power. The *mandala* employed in *tantra* is no decorative imagery for a ritual. It provides a potent

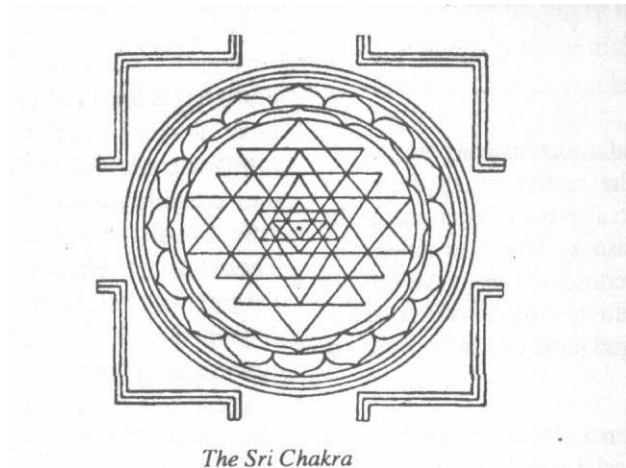
material focus for the operation of subtler forces within and without.

The Chakra like the *mantra* leads one to direct perception of the Divine form and that is the reason why so much emphasis is given to the Chakra in tantric worship. In the Chakra are caught the lines of beauty, harmony and symmetry on which the eternal geometrician fashions the universe. And they are therefore, drawn with lines, triangles, circles and squares. All these are symbolic.

The Symbolism

The circle represents the principles with no beginning and no end. The triangle represents the triple principles of creation, the lower triple worlds as well as higher. It points out to the one that is threefold, the

yni, the origin of all matter. A triangle with apex turned up indicates a broad – based one – pointed aspiration rising from the depths to the heights. In tantric parlance it is called *vahni kona*, the cone of fire. This is the fire of aspiration which is ever burning in the heart of the worshipper and which carries (*vah*=to bear) on its crest his surrender to the Divine. The triangle with apex downwards in Sakti, the grace of the Divine Mother. The well-known *satkona* formed by superimposition of a triangle with apex downwards over a triangle with apex upwards signifies a rising aspiration and a responding grace, the ascent of the being and the descent of the deity or in other words the dynamic Sakti superimposing on the heart of the static and supine Siva. The lotus flower signifies the gradual unfolding of the latent powers in the being.



The Sri Chakra

When the Chakra is conceived as the material manifestation of the Deity, all the emanations of the Deity are also conceived as stationed in the Chakra. The main deity (*pradhan*) takes abode in the centre of the Chakra while its emanations gather round the *pradhana* as the *parivara devats*. Worship is done to the *parivars* and then to the *pradhana*.

The Sri Chakra is a configuration of nine triangles, five triangles with apex downwards superimposed on four triangles with apex upwards. It consists of nine chakras. There are nine Chakreshwaris, nine classes of *yoginis* and nine *mudras*. Like the ninefold of Sri Chakra, the *mantra* is also nine fold as it contains only nine letters. The masters are nine in number. The human body has nine apertures. Therefore, an identity is sought to be established between

the Chakra, Deity, Mantra, Guru and the *sadhaka's* body.

Sri Chakra is most auspicious and worshipped to get all the auspicious things in life, finally culminating in the attainment of liberation. It is also worshipped for the "six acts" viz., appeasement, attraction, stoppage, enemy, removal and death. The techniques for these specialized acts are described in various tantric texts.

CONCLUSION

The tantra deems it essential to inculcate the doctrine that no worship of the Deity is complete without the worship of the Deity's body in a material image-an idol or a picture or some symbol in the physical world. Inner worship leads one on the path of yoga and knowledge. But for full development, for a mastery over material nature, outer worship is necessary. It is powerful and effective, intensifies devotion and goes a long way to stabilize the inner realization in outer conditions.

Worship is done to the goddess in the Sri Chakra as it is the form-pattern of the

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goddess, the spot in which all the rays of the great Radiance focus. There develops an intimate relationship between the worshipper and the Sri Chakra. As the worship proceeds the worshipper begins to feel this emblem of the great goddess as a part of himself. He looks to the Chakra for everything and always gets the needed response, guiding him through the labyrinths of the *sadhana*.

It may be mentioned at this juncture that the Sri Chakra has been the source of inspiration for the construction of the Devi Temple to be consecrated at Sriperumbudur in November 1993. Having Sri Rajarajeswari as the presiding deity, the dome of the temple is built in the shape of mount Meru. It is hoped that the temple would radiate its soothing vibrations on countless spiritual seekers.

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