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What is Sri Vidya?

By Swami Veda Bharati

Om. Sri.

What is Sri Vidya? I shall try to answer this question the only way it can be answered, in a very roundabout way. For, defining is confining. We need to rise beyond the realm of our definitions. It is like the new trend in the computer science known as the fuzzy logic. If you can appreciate fuzzy logic or the theory of chaos, then you would somewhat understand what it means to rise beyond mere apparent definitions and becoming all-conclusive, where the order is not quite as easily visible, quite as simply discernable as it is in the well-defined axioms or axiomatic logic based on S is P , S is not P . It is not so in Sri Vidya, the science of Sri, God's science of the universe.

The concept of Sri forms the entire Hindu-buddhist civilization, directly or indirectly, quite often in small segments and powers. However, even in this area of ancient civilizations, with the exception of, say, one in half a billion people, no one really understands what Sri Vidya is because learning Sri Vidya is not like mastering any of the sciences, it is mastering one's own self. It is God's science of the universe, God's science of self-knowledge, that very self-knowledge where God within us also knows Herself.

One of the countries where the word Sri is very popular is the Bali Island of Indonesia. The ancient Indian Rishis, sages, founders of sciences, they through whom many sciences were revealed, crossed the seas, and established what is now an ancient civilization. In Bali you would often hear of Bhu Devi or Sri Devi. Bhu Devi means the deity which is the earth. And then Sri Devi, the mother deity of prosperity, no, not prosperity, no, growth, no; ah-- I'll play the modern anthropologist: fertility, now you've got it right! But you haven't. You see, to understand the ancient Eastern sciences, one would have to learn to forget some of the popular definitions given in high circles of learned people in modern systems. Until you can step out of that, you cannot move from the reductionist sciences and schools towards the holistic sciences and schools. It's a question of redefining yourself. And by redefining yourself you will redefine that which your self knows, wishes to know, will know and the seed of that knowledge as well as the

substratum of that which we wish to know, or do know, since all these modes of knowing occur within the self. This is one of the very basic principles of Sri Vidya.

Talking of the Sri Devi, in every rice field in Bali there is a small shrine to Sri Devi by whose presence the rice grows. Well, obviously it's a fertility cult, so say the experts from the Western civilization which is all-knowing, and knows all about what people think and feel everywhere and how they work out things in a most unscientific way with all these superstitious beliefs such as that some goddess makes the rice grow. Now, for each village there are priests who perform the appropriate rites. There's a chief priest for the whole of Bali Island, who, by his own method of internal coordination, sets up the entire agricultural policy: when the people of different areas should plant, when they should irrigate the fields, when they should reap the crop. In comes the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and all the great scientists of the world who want to pull these backward people out of their unscientific, superstitious views and institute studies of agricultural patterns and how the agriculture may be improved. As they have done in many, many societies, destroying the entire established fabric and ensuring almost the extinction of a vast diversity of living things through their 'scientific' methods. A few exceptional people are wise and it occurred to them to do a computer model of what would be the best way to really coordinate the planting and the irrigation and the reaping of crops in the right time in all different areas and topographies of the island. It turned out that the models thus prepared coincided with exactly what the chief priests of Sri Devi have been doing in guiding the entire country in matters of agriculture for the last ten or twenty centuries. Leave well alone; the scientists concluded. For details see Stephan Lansing's book, *Priests and Programmers: Technologies of Power in the Engineered Landscape of Bali* (Princeton University Press, 1991).

It is heartening to see that for a change someone took the trouble of trying to comprehend the ways of those who have understood some sciences intrinsically, who know to plan the agriculture of an entire country by intuitive methods. Not guess work, please. Intuition is not guess work. We also need to correct the trend both in the East and West, of equating intuition with guess work. Sri Vidya is the science of intuitive mastery of exact sciences.

The way we write Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss, in the Western countries, the common term used in the communication in India is, for a man, Sriman; for a woman, Srimati; for Ms., Su-Shu and so forth. The Queen of Thailand, Sirikit is actually the sanskrit work Srikirti, the glory of Sri. So all the 850,000,000 Indians carry the title Sri, Sriman, Srimati, Su-Sri: one endowed with Sri. A title originally in ancient times reserved for those who were initiated into Sri Vidya, they in whom God's glory of the universe has made a home, those who are endowed with knowledge, empowered with the energy and the intuition of mother Sri. The basic text of Sri Vidya says: one who knows mother Sri can never be orphaned. In the rituals and ceremonies in the Indian tradition, when one sips the holy water they say, *Mayi Shrih Shrayatam*: may Sri dwell in me. The word for refuge is *Ashraya*: to be one as Sri. "May many come taking refuge in me, may I seek refuge in none"--is the prayer of those who wish to have this capacity to give refuge. This capacity is Sri. You might translate Sri Vidya as the science of capacities, the science of potentialities.

One of the first principles in Sri Vidya is that your individual self cannot be separated from the universal principles. In studying universal principles of any science, you must first be studying yourself. And the application of those principles must first be directed towards yourself so that you cannot study physics or chemistry without first studying yourself. This would make no sense to an average student of physics and chemistry, but, what about biochemistry? You see there a relationship between what you consider to be

your individual self, mere body, and the constituents of the world. At least you see the connection between what is happening in you and what is happening in the test tube. Without understanding that link there can be neither biochemistry nor pharmacology. Sri-Vidya is thus a science of connections. The connections are realized not through writing research papers on them. But through processes of concentration, contemplation, meditation one achieves an assimilation of the universe and oneself.

We said above that Sri Vidya is God's science of the universe. Here I reiterate what has often been taught in lectures on Sri Vidya. God's energy, capacity, potentiality is three-fold; iccha, jñana, kriya. These are the three shaktis: iccha-shakti, jñana shakti, kriya-shakti, respectively the energy called will, knowledge, and action. In that which you know to be self; in that which you know the self that is God; in that which you know to be the universe that is God, that is in God. In God that is the universe, God that is in the universe, God that is in you, God that is you. These sentences must not be taken in a sequence, for if you depend on sequence of thoughts, then you will never reach that knowledge which in the yoga sutras is called a-krama, knowledge without sequence, simultaneous; flash of lightning, of truth; as knowledge in which these principles are not studied in a logical sequence, through an intellectual process but all of them flash as one.--(See Yoga-sutras III. 54)

When this, God's science of creation, maintenance and dissolution, through his power called will, knowledge and action, is absorbed, assimilated, is fully realized by the yogi he is then the master of Sri Vidya. Even these words are sequential, for the language fails here. Sri Vidya is the science of energy fields of the metaphysical universe. The energy fields that are non-sentient and the energy fields that are sentient; the energy fields that know themselves to be, the sentient ones, and the energy fields that do not know themselves to be or whose degree of knowing is somewhat reduced. When these energy fields are seen as parts of a single assimilated whole, then you begin to understand Sri Vidya, and that the microcosm and the macrocosm; the pinda and brahmanda; the shape and form on one hand and linga, that is your subtle body, your operative self, and the egg of God, the ovum that is the universe: all these are inseparable.

The Newsweek, one of the bibles of the modern world, on May 4, 1992, starts an article titled "God's Handwriting," with these words: "There is no dearth of creation myths, from Easter Island's bird-god that laid the world egg to the Old Testament's six days of Genesis." Actually, this concept of the universe as an egg is very basic to the Indian tradition of cosmology. Often the form of the linga, the sign of the presence of light that is worshipped in the temples of India, is somewhat oval; it represents the

1. For a deeper understanding of the Yoga-Sutras, it is recommended to study: 1) The Commentary by Hariharananda Aranya, S.U.N.Y. Press. 2) The Commentary by Usharbudh Arya, Himalayan Publishers, and 3) instruction cassettes available from Rishikesh Foundation, P.O. Box 279, Clarence, NY 14031.

universe expanding within an oval space. If you take away the physical body of a human being, what remains is the oval of light.

Sri Vidya begins where quantum physics ends. The contemporary philosophers of science have reached a cul de sac, and do not seem to know where to go from there because they are presented with enigmas, the gigantic, vast and majestic koans, the mysteries of the universe in a jyotir-bindu, a pinpoint of light that is infinitesimal. Infinitesimal because the space has not yet been created, therefore it has no location because locations are in space. So the question of where this pinpoint of light was or is, is like a question

of what happens to a soul after death, where does it go? Well, where does it go? Where is there to go? You talk of the soul as if it were something confined to spaces and times, so you speak of after death and before birth and the soul going away someplace as though it has a passport to galaxies or something. It's an n/a question: not applicable.

Yet because we are so conditioned to going in space, we cannot imagine a condition wherein space has not yet been created. So with regard to where the pinpoint of light is or was, that some say, explodes into a big bang, this question of where does not arise, because if the universe has not yet been created, no space has been created. Now, here, please, I'm not trying to establish points of compromise between modern science and the ancient traditions. I'm speaking purely and simply in ancient terminologies.

Jyotir-bindu, the pinpoint of light, explodes, expands; for this very pinpoint of light is also the nada-bindu, the pinpoint of sound.

Another word for the pinpoint of light is tejo-bindu. Among the Upanishads there are four upanishads whose names have the word bindu in them. Elsewhere, I have given the etymology of the word bindu: that which one must burst through; that which must explode; that which must burst; and that, I repeat, which one must burst through. That is the meaning of the word point, which is cognate to or is derived from the word bindu. The word bindu is derived from the verb root bhid or bhind, to burst, to break through. It means to explode like the explosion of an atom so that we may burst through the atomic particle and come to the next dimension of energy.

I was saying that there are four Upanishads that have the word bindu in their titles. Brahma-bindu Upanishad, or Upanishad of Brahman as bindu or bindu of Brahman; Brahman as the point. The great transcendental being as the point. Then the Tejo-bindu Upanishad, the point of light Upanishad. Then the Nada-bindu Upanishad, the point of sound Upanishad. Then the Dhyana-bindu Upanishad, Upanishad of the meditation that is the point. Get the point?

Now once again, you are not to take these phrases, the point of light, the point of sound, light as point, sound as point, meditation as point, or the point of meditation, brahman as point or the point of brahman, in sequence. Until you can abolish sequences, you will see no relationship, and without that abolition of sequences, you will not understand the central point, that bindu around which the Sri Yantra is built.

So, that jyotir-bindu, the pinpoint of light, that point that is the light, is also nada-bindu, the pinpoint of sound. Hence, the big bang from the pinpoint of light. In the tradition we are taught that nada and jyoti, the sound and light, are one. The light produces the sound, sound produces the light. And in my little book of Blessings I have said: may you see the light that sound produces as it travels through space; may you hear the sound that light creates as it travels through space. So we may see the explosion of light, and of sound, explosion of what later comes to be known as matter in space, is one and the same. Now, the ancient tantric system says that it is actually the space itself that is identical with the sound, that is identical with light, and these ripples and wrinkles that occur in space become the winds of the universe.

I have here another article from the magazine called Asia Week, which is Asia's equivalent of Newsweek and Time published from Singapore and Hong Kong. Dated May 8, 1992. I wish I had the original articles from scientific journals to refer to, but this will do quite nicely. The title of the article is "Ripples in the Wind." It says on Page 26: "Every culture has its creation myths. Unless you can see it through a telescope, it's a myth. But you cannot see that pinpoint of light which the present theorists are saying exploded into the universe and if you cannot see, it must be a myth, too." Now, where do you draw the

line between reality and myth? Anyway, the article goes on: "Every culture has its creation myths. The ancient Tibetans believed that in the beginning there was a vast emptiness without cause and without end. From it arose faint ripples of wind that after aeons grew stronger and eventually formed the world. Modern science has its own creation myth, which it calls the Big Bang Theory. Like the Tibetan legend, it holds that the universe was a vast emptiness. Then, about 15 billion years ago, a cataclysmic explosion sent matter shooting in all directions, eventually creating the planets and stars. Of course, most scientists would be appalled to hear the Big Bang described as a myth. To them, it's a legitimate theory, but dressed by observation, calculation and the whole penopula of scientific thought.

"Now they are excited by the discovery of "ripples" of matter. They say it confirms the theory and helps explain the foundation of stars and galaxies. These huge ripples as described by a scientist as 'wispy clouds of matter' were apparently set in motion by the big bang and have been moving outwards ever since. The scientists are justifiably proud that their sophisticated and expensive instruments have allowed them to record echoes of these ripples across billions of light years of space, and their conclusion -- doesn't seem much different from that of the ancient Tibetans." Hooray for the editor. I couldn't have said it better.

Now, so far, so good. But not quite so good. The question is not only concerning the origin of the universe and its expansion, but also the question of consciousness. Now where does consciousness come from? Can we produce consciousness in some research lab? And once again, until we can take the holistic, assimilationistic point of view, we will not be able to answer this question. The Tantra, which is an expansion of Sri Vidya, believes that the original energy dwelling in the first pinpoint of light, is a conscious one. Sri Vidya and all Tantra believes it to be that force which is consciousness. It is not that somewhere in the process of expansion, when all the chemicals have formed that these chemicals then interact and thereby produce something called consciousness. In fact, the process of creation is the process of reduction of consciousness. It is not an evolutionary process, it is a devolutionary process. And since the process of creation is the process of devolution, the process of reduction of force, therefore, it has the inbuilt entropy, the well-known principle in modern science. Everything moving toward the principle called antaka, the principle of dissolution.

One of the questions in the modern philosophy of science is whether this universe is going to keep on expanding? What is going to happen with it? Where is it expanding into? In this context the concept of emptiness is one of the most important philosophical principles. It is the same principle, shunya, which the Buddhists call the ultimate reality. It is the same from which the Indian civilization derived the concept of zero, for which the common word used nowadays in Indian schools is still shunya. And I shall not belabor the point that I have made elsewhere that this shunya is not simply a void. It is that void which voids all voids. Shunya is the ultimate reality, is that void that voids all voids.

So, just as the question as to where this pinpoint of light was is meaningless, because the word where means in what point of space and the space hadn't yet been created. The same applies to the question: into what is the universe expanding, where is it going. They are also meaningless, because where the universe is not, there is no such where, nor there. As for it to be something called "there," there would have to be some relationships of times and places and points. Even in elementary philosophy, such a question doesn't arise. It is by expanding that the universe creates space, not that it expands into some empty space. The ancient Indian philosophy of physics, called Vaisheshika, speaks of akuñchana and prasarana, contraction and expansion as interlinked principles. The Sanskrit texts discussing the attraction of gravity and the basic principles involved in it, also discussed this question of attraction and

contraction, the centripetal and centrifugal forces as well. They also arrived at the conclusion at that time that the minutest atomic particle would have to be simply a point in space, bindu, the point in the centre...

We are discussing here bindu, the point in the centre of the Sri Yantra, the point from which the expansion occurs, and into which the circle contracts again. From my meagre understanding of the principles of tantra, I would like to venture a proposal to the modern philosophers of science, that they stop being unidirectional. The idea should be abandoned that expansion is occurring into some empty space the presence of which, something called space, outside the universe has not been established. We need to understand that the winds in space (vayu) that were spoken of by the ancient sages, need to be looked at much more closely. Once again, light and sound are one, sound and light exists before creation and after the final entropy (dissolution) is invalid, for the space is the first creation and the last one to dissolve. Until space is created, the question of where does not arise. The space is a location for light, and sound. The ancient texts say akasha-deshah shabdah, the location of sound is space. One of the words for space is akasha, that which is lit all over, that which is filled with light, although the space travellers tell us that it is all dark. Simply because it is dark to our eyes does not mean that it is not filled with light. If we are all owls, that is not God's fault.

One of the first principles again is that expansion and contraction in space are an identical process, just as creativity and entropy are interwoven. The boundaries between evolution and devolution cannot be determined. They are two sides of the same coin. So, this is silly notion to ask: if the universe keeps expanding, then what? Are the atoms and subatomic particles going to move so wide apart that they are simply going to evaporate? No. The ancient philosophers of Tantra spoke of light expanding, becoming space; space being filled with light; everything around us being one with this light, akasha; for there is no part of space which is not light, which is not energy. In other words, akasha, space, is a form of energy, the very first form of energy. If we understand that, only then we can understand what the present day theory is trying to say: that the processes that are taking place in the formation of this universe are as though ripples in space. They are ripples in the vast energy field, called the field of light, that is akasha.

I quote again from the article titled "God's Handwriting" in Newsweek of May 4, 1992. It says, "But for the truly weird, imagine the Big Bang. An explosion of space, not in space, a kernel of cosmos inflating so widely that faster than an eyeblink a blob smaller than a proton grew as big as today's entire visible universe. This infant world, developing ripples of energy in the fabric of its space, the ripples stretching as the universe expanded and creating the sparkling necklaces of stars and the pinwheels of galaxies that bedeck the night sky."

To quote one of the scientists in Berkley "Announced that they had discovered primordial wrinkles floating at the very edge of space and beginning of time. No more than wispy tendrils, they are between 2.9 billion trillion and 59 billion trillion miles across. The most gigantic and the most ancient structures ever seen." That is why Carl Sagan has said that the Hindu cosmology comes closest to the modern Western cosmology. The only difference is that the modern cosmology still separates fields of consciousness from the expanding fields of the universe. And that is why it has no bearing on the principles by which we may live, by which we may order our individual lives, by which we may worship. And I use the word worship with great precision. Worship is the attitude which you may worship nature and the environment as sacred. The consciousness that is in me is not in me. I am that field called consciousness and so also what you refer to as nature is a field of that consciousness.

This expansion and contraction are not opposite principles. They are not to be studied or even thought of

in sequence. Evolution is devolution. Creation is dissolution. Creativity is entropy. The beginning is the end in any loop. And the universe is nothing if not a loop. There is nothing in the universe that is not a loop, a chakra, where one does not return to its origins.

To put it differently, whenever in nature one follows a direction of any kind, one must also simultaneously follow in the opposite direction to reach the distant goal as well as to reach the origins. To reach the origin is to reach the most distant end. The ultimate end is the very origin. The origin is the ultimate end. Creation thereby becomes a process that leads to dissolution, and dissolution becomes the process which thereby leads to creation. Thus a student of Sri Vidya, a novice or one proficient in it, ceases to see negations of anything; he sees positions as negations, negations as positions. Not as opposite principles, but as a single composite principle. Wherever he formerly saw opposite principles, he must now see complementary composite principles. Therefore in a debate as to whether X is the correct answer or its opposite, the minus-X or non-X is the correct answer, the answer is in the composite of the X and the non-X. I do not know if the mathematics has been developed to follow through on this. I would say perhaps yes. The close association of the 0 and 1 in the binary system may be an example of this principle. For, it is the zero that gives value to a digit, that often ascertains its value. It is in relation to a zero that we often evaluate a digit.

Again, seeing the two opposites in one and the same, the ancient texts say that from this great expansive self that is the infinitesimally minute pinpoint of light, from this vast expansive self, (tasmad va etasmad atmanah), which is the minutest, infinitesimal pinpoint of light, there arises akasha, the energy that is space, the light that is space. It is also the location of all sound. Now on this basis, the ancient philosophers of Vaisheshika figured out that because of this principle, when something falls elsewhere, we hear its sound as a ripple, as a wave, over here in our ears. In that energy, akasha occurs vayu the wind. From that vayu, comes the fire, the light again, the visible lights of the world, the fires that burn in the universe, such as in the interiors of the suns, as well in the gems. Both are considered as a single principle. Including the lights in between also, the lightnings and the fires we burn with kindling. Then comes the state of flow, the waters; and when the flow reaps its opposite principle of inertia, then comes prithivi, the solid. Then further biological diversity occurs. The process of dissolution, of course, is the reverse. The inner solids begin to flow, the flows become fires, the fires become winds, ripples in space, the space returns to that vast expansive conscious self which is the infinitesimally minute pinpoint of light, the tejo-bindu, the nada-bindu.

To comprehend this, one must go through the process of dhyana-bindu. The point that is meditation; the point of concentration on the principle of consciousness. So once again, the discussion as to whether the universe is expanding and will keep on expanding and into what it will keep on expanding, is invalid. The question itself is untenable. Any argument, only based on that will ultimately be found to be untenable because while the universe is expanding, it is contracting. The akuñchana and prasarana that I spoke of earlier from the Vaisheshika philosophers, are taking place simultaneously. While it is expanding, it is returning into that pinpoint of light. It is not that one process is the reverse of the other, but the two, what appears to us to be two, is a single, composite process.

Thus, Sri Vidya begins where the current understanding of quantum physics ends. It is the science of sciences, the mega-science. Wherever there is a study of points, lines, configurations, graphs, charts, it is part of Sri Vidya. Wherever we study forms as fields of energy, it is Sri Vidya. But it is experienced only with the assimilation of these principles into our consciousness; not in intellectual process, but in our very being, in our very essence; so that our essence is not seen apart from the ever expanding and

contracting universe. Therefore, Sri Vidya cannot be learned as a series of drawings alone, the drawing of a yantra. It has to be learned as concentration on the points within.

If you take diagrams of the chakras within our personality, and superimpose them one upon the other, it becomes the internal Sri Yantra. It is not by drawing on paper that one will learn Sri Yantra. It is by doing the drawings within. That is why it is such a long process. The mastery of the points and the expansions and contractions can take a hundred lifetimes.

One one hand, Sri Vidya is a science of internal energy fields, where all the fields become one composite field. This entire field is drawn into a single pinpoint of concentration, the point becoming the centre--not the centre of something--but of itself within itself, as well as the point from which the expansion occurs. It is at these points within the centres of the chakras that the forces in the universe that have been ejected from the original point of light, meet and merge in us. By entering into those points with our entire mind and bursting through them like an atomic explosion do we thereby become one with the expansion in the universe. That is called cosmic consciousness, the awareness of virat, the vision that Krishna gave to Arjuna, the vision that Yama granted to Nachiketas.

So, the entire science, for example, of the marmas in ayurveda is part of Sri Vidya. Marmas are the points in the body where a little pressure can cause an illness or death. Or a healing. Similar are the points of acupuncture. They are all parts of Sri Vidya.

In the Tantras it is said that one cannot learn music without the study of dance. One cannot learn dance without sculpture. One cannot learn sculpture without architecture. One cannot learn architecture without music. One cannot learn music without architecture. One cannot learn architecture without sculpture. One cannot learn sculpture without dance. One cannot learn dance without music. For architecture is forms; it is solid music; music in solids; music cubed. Music can be seen as graphs; arising and falling of lines and energies. Make them into three dimensional solids, it becomes architecture. The body of architecture is dance. The relationship of dance and architecture is in sculpture. That is why some of the most profound works of architecture in India were sculpted out of mountains. One can still visit these two-story, three-story monasteries simply sculpted out of the mountains without a single piece of masonry in which the pillars constitute intricate dancing figures as part of that sculpture.

This composite vision of art is part of Sri Vidya. And then one needs to see the entire universe as architecture and God as the architect. See the entire universe as music and dance, as we see in the dance of Shiva. All that is part of Sri Vidya, it is a great, grand vision. No, not vision. Not imagination. But, the image of reality.

Here I do not want to lead you into what again may be dismissed as superstition. Tell me, how is it that, in all the cultures, the benefits of so many herbs have been so accurately established? By what trials, approved by what FDA, did the thousands of herbs of the Indian pharmacopoeia become defined as suitable or unsuitable for certain diseases and certain healing processes? I assure you that that, too, is part of Sri Vidya. In fact, some of the herbs have been identified as suitable for certain healing only by their shape, their line drawing, pointing to the similarity of a certain organ. Now that does not mean that if a leaf looks like a hand then it is good for healing the hands. One has to go much deeper, one has to observe and experiment.

The shapes of mountains, and their peaks, the apexes of the pyramids, the spires of the churches, the shikharas of the temples of India, all of these are line drawings of music, the lines along which the

energy of expansion and contraction flows in the universe.

Even the ordinary chessboard is a yantra, part of Sri Yantra. It is a simplified bhu-pura, the earth-city, the earth as a city in which all the patterns are taking place, divided into 64 subsquares. So also in the tradition of yoga we speak of 64 yoginis, which are principles of establishing relationships between squares and cubes. Establishing relationships between arithmetical squares and cubes on one hand and geometric squares and cubes on the other through the process of seed mathematics is a part of understanding the mathematics of the universe as architecture. The sanskrit word used also in the current, modern Indian education system for algebra is bija ganita, seed mathematics in which signs play a role like that of bija-mantras.

So, into how many areas can we enter, altogether, simultaneously, and see the relationships? How is it that without the aid of the computer in the ancient times one could figure out the number of rice grains? One of the origins of the chessboard, is that a king offered to the priest/mathematician as much rice as he wanted. The priest said: "Oh, one grain of rice on one square of the chessboard, then double that one on the second square, then double that on the third square, and so on." The king could not fulfill the demand because the figure reaches more than the amount of rice that can cover the whole earth. Or even more than all the number of atoms in the universe. The game of chess has more possible moves than all the atoms in the whole universe. How were these calculations made? On a square board, divided into 64, what is the relation between the four corners of the square and the figure 64?

When you begin to see these relationships, then you immediately begin to drop the relationships, because relationships are between two. Until the number two is dropped, the unity will not be established. Without that unity, the merger of consciousness into the pinpoint of light will not occur. Until one sees it all into that single pinpoint of light you will not understand that the universe actually is not even expansion of the pinpoint of light, but rather replication, the same point occurring again and again and again. The same one point. And the point, having occurred so many times, having replicated itself, identical to the very original pinpoint, becomes a light, becomes a ray, becomes a line, becomes a ripple, becomes a figure.

In drawing the Sri Yantra within the human body also we go through the same process that we understand in the drawing of Sri Yantra on a wooden, copper, silver or golden squared board. The downward expansion, the upward expansion. Contraction of forces into a point. Expansion of forces from the point.

The 61-point exercise known to the practicing meditators, for instance, simply delineates the periphery of the bhu-pura, of the city that is the earth, the earth that is the city, which is the body, in this particular case. And when you will see the relationships among those 61 points, how many lines can one draw from one point to the other 60 points? How can one connect those 61 points? Then the sadhaka is amazed at what fields of energy are dancing within us. When one uses any of those 61 points as an entry point into the linga, the subtle body, one finds that the awareness will have to pass through certain central points, and from there expand, to permeate the whole body. Here is a theory of personality based on experiential epistemology that is yoga.

In preparing the personality to be seen by oneself as a Sri Yantra, so that one may see the universe as a Sri Yantra, so that one can understand these line drawings, one goes through the process of bhuta-shuddhi, purification of the constituents of personality. And when total purification is completed the personality becomes a Sri Yantra.

In drawing the internal Sri Yantra, one may take a chakra and may be taught to draw its bhu-pura first, the boundary, the ramparts of this citadel, of this particular city. Then he finds the entry point; then find where the energy flows meet, and then swim along those flows of energies coming to the central point. Or one may start from the point and expand outwards to the ramparts, to the bhu-pura. Or one may see the two processes as a singular process in a single instant. That is why the phrase that the article I just read to you from Newsweek touched me: "faster than an eyeblink." It said, "A kernel of cosmos inflating so widely that, faster than an eyeblink, a blob smaller than a proton grew as big as today's entire visible universe." I have in my lectures on meditations from the Tantras spoken on unmesha and nimesha. Now remember that the eyeblink is a measure of time in all the Indo-aryan or Indo-European systems. Augenblick is a measure of time in German, augenblickje in Dutch. The time it takes for the eye to blink. In the blink of an eye. In the shortest possible moment. The idea is derived from the unmesha and the nimesha. Unmesha, out-blinking the eye. Nimesha, in-blinking the eye. This opening and closing of eyelids.

yasonmesha-nimeshabhyam jagatah pralayodayau;

tam shakti-chakra-vidhava-prabhavam shankaram stumah

We adore Him,

The creator of Harmony and Peace,

The Origin of the diverse glories of the whirls (chakras) of energy,

The One by whose outblinking and inblinking

the creation and dissolution of the universe occur.

I. 1 in Spanda-nirnaya of Kshemaraja

2. A record cassette of the process of bhuta-shuddhi by Dr. Rajmani Tigunait is available at the Himalayan Institute.

This is from one of the texts of Kashmir Shiva philosophy that developed from the seventh century to the seventeenth century A.D. and reigned supreme during that time. These texts, all say that unmesha is nimesha; nimesha is unmesha. Out-blinking is in-blinking; in-blinking is out-blinking. Opening the chakra means closing the chakra. Drawing the chakra-world to its most central point is the goal of such concentration. It is practiced so that what others call expansion is understood to be expending, debilitating of energies in pursuit of sensual desires. The sense thoughts and sense emotions must cease and the principle of the conservation of energy be followed, for the energy to be drawn to that central point from which it ripples out as spanda, as a spontaneous vibration at all times.

Just as in the practice of internal concentrations in Sri Vidya, so also in learning to draw the Sri Yantra there are two processes among others. Drawing from the bhu-pura, from the ramparts, inwards. From the ramparts inward to the central point, to the palace of the great Mother. The opposite way, from the inner point outwards.

One of the branches of Sri Vidya is surya-vijñana, the solar science. The solar science establishes a

connection between the rays of the mind and the rays that solidify to become forms. As a child I read an article on surya-vijñana, on the solar science, in the yoga issue of the well-known Hindi magazine known as Kalyana. The article was by the then most famous scholar of Tantra, Gopinath Kaviraj. After fifty years I found the book again in my library and I was surprised how much of it I remembered. Because the article triggered something in me as a child and ever since then I kept longing to meet a master who would show me the solar rays of the mind.

If it were simply a matter of sitting down and drawing a diagram, well, anybody can draw diagrams. I can draw a straight line, more or less! I'm still learning to draw the line, learning to understand a little of the triangles; how the triangles merge into the points and how the points expand into triangles. The lines of energy that go from one of the 61 points to all the other 60 and how they interlink: I have quite yet to envision fully. My own perception is that one cannot learn these sciences without 24-hour concentration. Take, for example, the demonstrations of surya-vijñana, the solar science. The writer of that article spoke of his guru who said that everything in the universe is rays of energy. The mind also is a ray of energy or, rays of energy emanate from the mind, and one connects these rays of energy to produce any form. The Tantras say, sarvam sarvatmakam: Everything is everything. Gold is lead, lead is oxygen, oxygen is hydrogen, hydrogen is uranium. For, essentially, in their energy essence, they are all one; it is only a matter of manipulating the energies. The ancient alchemists of the West or the masters of al kimia believed it to be so. "Al," which is the definitive article in arabic, "kimia" from which the English word chemistry is derived. Masters of al-kimia in the arabic civilization and the masters of rasayana in India all spoke of the fire within everything. They stated that if we can learn to manipulate the fire within everything we can change anything into anything.

So, the master of solar science could, within the view of his disciples, produce first a shimmer in the air. The shimmer becomes delineated, the lines become form and there is a lotus flower. It was demonstrated thus. Or look at it differently. We have spoken of light and sound as one. My master Swami Rama speaks of the experiments they made in the caves: spreading sandalwood powder on a square board and producing sound vibrations in its presence by reciting a seed-mantra in an appropriate notation of sound and music. They thereby simply produced a Sri Yantra design in the sandalwood powder. Now, who among us has such concentration of mind to produce the like result. We don't even understand what we mean by rays of the mind, let alone transmit them, and then have them connect with the rays which solidify as forms.

Many cities in India have been built around Sri Yantra. There is a book titled Hindu Temple by the famous scholar, late Stella Kramrisch. It's a classic. A reading of this book would explain how some of the great architectural wonders are built around partial application of the Sri Yantra principle. So are the pyramids. When a yantra takes a three-dimensional form, that form is then called a meru. The meru is the central mountain of the universe. Since the entry into the interior cave of personality for meditation was one and the same principle as of finding a cave in a mountain for meditation, the projection of this two-fold principle of entry into the cave then became architecture. When you enter a temple or a cathedral, you are entering the cave in the mountain, the cave of the heart, the cave of the skull. Hence sometimes we refer to the skull as a dome.

There are at least three cities in India named after Sri. The capital of Kashmir, Sri Nagar. Another Sri Nagar is in the Garhwal Mountains, which we pass when we go to the great shrines for pilgrimage. And, one of the old cities where New Delhi--the capital of India--is situated has an area even now known as Siri. Alas, time passed and people stop being part of the energy field; they cease to identify with the

energy field of the city. The locations of the Sri Yantras are lost. All kinds of dissensions among the people occur because the field is destroyed; or it is warped by their dissensions.

One of the dimensions of Sri Vidya is to honor the Shakti principle in living human beings, especially the recognition of this mother Shakti principle in women. For women to see themselves as shakti, as sacred energy, and for men to see women as embodiment, incarnation of shakti. Shakti, the sacred energy of consciousness having become flesh. What it means is brahmacharya, the practice of celibacy. Not practice of celibacy as a psychologically-damaging suppression but an assimilation of upward and inward energy. One who is initiated into Sri Vidya at one time or another will slowly, naturally become celibate because the habit of expending the energy of svadhishthana chakra will be changed into expanding, that is contracting. Closing the outward gates and opening the inward flood gates. In fact, one of the symptoms of the opening of the second centre of consciousness is natural celibacy. Synonymous with opening of the sixth centre. The two are almost identical. So long as there remains in man a desire for woman, in woman a desire for man, as principles exterior to them, no celibacy can occur. It can only be a suppression and not a solitude of serenity.

In certain Shakti temples in India once a month on the full moon the worship of Sri in the form of a living lady is performed. She sits on a seat of honor and receives the worship. The reader would say, "What? I worship a human being, a lady?" It is not the worship of a human being. I change the direction here a little. Sometimes when I pay my respects to my master or address him the word that has popped out of my mouth involuntarily has been 'mataji,' a respectful way of addressing one's mother. The first time it occurred I said, "Oh, excuse me, Swamiji," apologizing for my mistake. But he said, "Oh, no, quite correct." Because one may worship the mother principle even in a male body. People who have difficulty in seeing the Mother Principle in women will have further difficulty in understanding this form of the worship of God.

It cannot be understood intellectually. Either it occurs as an assimilated internal principle or it doesn't occur at all. I have observed that when such worship of the live Sri is performed, the person in whom the Sri at that time is invoked and resides, changes. A deification occurs. If Christ can be present in a piece of bread, why can't shakti be present in a living woman? And be honored and worshipped.

One might object: I do not want to deify a human being. But who am I to deify a human being? Deifying means 'making into a deva, making into divine.' It is not the worshipper who makes him divine. It is not the worshipper who causes the consubstantiation or transubstantiation in the host to occur. It is the Grace that does it. The person becomes deified by an internal presence. From that moment the person has no personal name, no personal form. The worship is not offered to the person of that name, shape and form but to the divine principle that becomes manifest. I have seen that change occur. You can see the stance; you can see the entire body undergo a transformation; you can see the eyes and you know then that you are not in the presence of a person. That some internal universal beauty named Mother Lalita has come and taken abode to receive the worshippers' offering. We call Her Tripura-sundari. Tri means three. Pura means polis. Sundari beauty. The three Miss Universe! The Beauty of the three universes. She comes and dwells there. It is the same as the primary force of consciousness, as the lightning of all beings. Sometimes this lightning becomes Shiva, or it becomes Shakti, and emanates from you. You embrace your emanation and you say you have married. This divine marriage into which a Christian monk enters, is the same marriage which is the marriage of Shiva and Shakti, which is the marriage of Krishna and Radha, which is the marriage of Rama and Seeta, which is the marriage of you and your lightning.

In this interplay of the potent and the potency, the potent and the potency become one. Hence the very first verse of Saundarya-lahari celebrates the potent one joined by the potency.

In this internal marriage of the potent and the potency, the entire dance of the universe takes place. The earth in the first chakra, the waters in the second, the fires in the third, the winds in the fourth, the space, akasha, in the fifth one; the mind in the sixth. The Lord and the Lady in eternal embrace in the seventh. All presided over by the great Sri or Lalita, the Principle of eternal beauty. Not the beauty of forms but that principle, which dwelling within shapes and forms, beautifies them from within, giving them balances, harmonies and proportions. These emanating and reabsorbing forms constantly interact in the Sri Yantra form of 43 triangles. Four upward triangles, five downward triangles and konas, angles, take shape. I have spoken of the process of five-fold devolution, space to winds, to fires, to flows, to forms. These have their correspondences in the five chakras. The Verse 14 of the Saundarya-lahari says that the earth principle dwelling in the first centre has 56 rays emanating; the flow principle in the second centre has 52 rays; the ripples of winds principle dwelling in the heart centre has 54 rays; the throat centre containing the akasha, the principle of sound and space and their unity, has 72 rays; and the dwelling place of the mind, the ajña chakra, has 64 rays emanating from it. "Above all of these rays are thy two brilliant feet, Oh Mother"--says the verse.

So the question arises: where do I go from here? You contemplate these principles. You create time for the contemplation of the principles. Learn to change your vision of the relationships in the universe. Vision, and sentiment, concerning the relationship between men and women.

An average Nobel prize-winning philosopher of science even would be hard-put to see these connections. He would say that it is a hodgepodge of linguistic confusions. Now what is the relationship between sub-atomic particles and expanding of the universe with the worship of a woman in a temple, good God! He is likely to dismiss the entire thinking process. I wish there could be a conference between Western scientists and Eastern scientists. We could provide at least theories to answer some of the problems in modern philosophy of science. We could show how the consciousness dwelling in a pinpoint of light within my heart centre is the same as the pinpoint of the light of consciousness which exploded in a big bang and became the mahanada, the megasound.

Stated above, there are two ways of looking at the Sri Yantra or at any of the chakras within ourselves. Entering from the ramparts of the earth city, the fortress built on the earth city, and then going to occupy the central squares of the chessboard. Or expanding from there outwards. The one and the other are not two processes but one. That the expansion of the universe and its contraction and dissolution into the central point of light is one and the same. So that ultimately the two major systems of drawing the Sri Yantra also must be assimilated. When they are assimilated, that is called the samayachara. Where the guru's mind and the disciple's mind become inseparable, the individual mind and the universal mind cannot be delineated as separate, and the entire mind of the universe becomes your mind--is called samayachara. I wish that we could elaborate on these in a dialogue with the present-day philosophers of science.

Now again, to the question as to "Where do I go from Here?" Take time for contemplation. Memorizing the whole of Saundarya-lahari and reading a very poetic translation of it is not going to do it. There is a very beautiful poetic translation of it by W. Norman Brown, a very senior American sanskrit scholar who left his body some years ago. But that will show you nothing. Contemplate. Deepen the practice. Try to bring your meditation to a point. Your determination to know should be just that, but no effort on your

part is going to open the portals of the bhū-pura, of the ramparts of the earth city. That will happen only by grace, only by grace, "whomsoever he shall choose, shall find"--says the Upanishad. You keep knocking, yes, but there must be an element of self surrender and a decision in you that you want to prepare yourself as much as possible. When your mind is ready, there is no reason whatsoever that a master of Sri Vidya will not introduce you to what you can grasp, learn, master. If you have been given one verse of Saundaryā-lāhari to practice, then practice it.

Keep looking for the central point within, that is the point from which the universe is created, to which the universe is returning. It is the point within your centre to which the universe is returning through its expansion. It is this very point whose expansion is the entire Sri Yantra, the yantras of all your chakras superimposed upon one another, a single stem passing through them, becoming the thousand-petaled sheltering tree in your skull. Even those thousand petals must be dropped. There remains only a vertical line and that vertical line contracts and becomes a point again. This constant evolution-devolution, expansion-contraction, the merger in the unity of centripetal and centrifugal, this expanding and expending goes on constantly as a single process. Understand it. Observe it within. Integrate it and remain true to your practice. Whatever you are prepared for will definitely come to you.

3. To prepare for a study of Sri Vidya it is recommended to study the following cassette courses of Usharbudh Arya:

- 1) Kundalini and Chakras,
- 2) Gayatri and Chakras,
- 3) Meditation from Tantras

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[Primer for Those Who Would Govern](#), by Hermann Oberth

[Seven Years in Tibet](#), by Heinrich Harrer

[Arno Breker: The Divine Beauty in Art](#), by B. John Zavrel

[Mantra and Meditation](#), by Dr. Usharbudh Arya

[Alexander the Great](#), by Robin Lane Fox



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