

## ESSENCE OF TRIPURA SIDDHANTA

The philosophy of Saktism is Advaita or Non-Dualism and the highest reality is termed as Paramashiva or Mahatripurasundari. Shiva is the static consciousness and Shakti is the dynamic consciousness or Chit-Rupini. Shiva is pure awareness, which is the basis of all existence. Through his Shakti, he effects the manifestation of the universe. He is the sole cause of the world. The ultimate reality is non-dual and is of the nature of pure consciousness. The universe of Forms and names are all aspects of the same ultimate Reality. It is the movement of Brahman, the 'Spanda' that brings about the distinction of Sabda (word), Artha (object) and cognition (Pratyaya). These three are the aspects of the Brahman's Primal Energy.

It is the causal impetus of the Divine, which makes them emerge out of itself. The world of sounds, things and thoughts- is the manifestation of the same non-dual Spirit.

The Tatvas (or divine principles) describe step-by-step how Supreme Consciousness makes itself, appear to itself, as limited consciousness stuck in a unconscious world and universe, and thus gets to experience the limited, conditional joys and sorrows of earthly existence, and then describes in a reverse step-by-step process, as to how that Supreme Consciousness then reveals its own true nature to itself, and thus experiences the outrageous joys of spiritual liberation.

The 36 Tatvas are divided into four groups representing the four stages of existence and creation, as well as the 4 states of awareness. These are:

1. The Physical Plane or Waking State: wherein we find the physical world, our physical bodies, and our waking state. Physical objects exist, change, and move around in a rigid structure defined by measurable time and space, according to the measured flow of energy as described in the rigid mathematically based laws of thermodynamics, all described in the rigid non-relativistic Newtonian Laws of Physics. This is the most superficial level of existence – a mere rigid shadow of the Subtle Plane of Existence.

2. The Subtle Plane of Existence, and Dream State: made up of the world of thought and dream objects experienced in the dream state, or seen as thought images and objects in the mind during waking. It is also an entire plane of existence beyond the physical world whose objects are not limited by rigid laws governing change or movement in time and space. This is the realm of magic and dream where things change according to the power of one's will, desire, and need, and the only resistance is the power of one's own previous actions (Karma), or the will, desire, need or Karma of others. The Physical Plane of Existence is a mere rigid shadow of this level of existence.

3. The Causal Plane of Existence, and The Deep Sleep State: to the average person, this plane of existence and state of consciousness is experienced as a totally timeless, space-less

unconscious void – unconscious nothing. The average person experiences this every night during the deep sleep stage of sleep. To the conscious, it is experienced as completely totally void of any features or objects of consciousness, and they know it as the basic featureless unconsciousness “ground” from which all non-conscious objects spring that exist in the physical or subtle planes of existence. Thus this is the “non-conscious” ground from which the physical and subtle planes of existence continuously spring.

4. The Supra-causal Plane, experience of Supreme Consciousness: unlimited consciousness – unlimited by time, space, thought, or any structures or processes. Has no features or characteristics except being just pure consciousness. This is the true nature of consciousness – unlimited and transcendent of all other planes of existence and the structures and processes they contain. This is the basic source of the creative energy from which the other three planes of existence spring.

The creation of the entire universe from pure cosmic consciousness takes place within the framework of these four planes of existence. This is described by 36 Principles (Tatvas) of cosmic creation, which are spread amongst the 4 levels as they describe the creative process as it flows down from Cosmic Consciousness to the physical level of creation. And it is these thirty-six Tatvas that also describe the process of cosmic destruction, and the process of individual awakening that happens in human beings (Kundalini) when they come to know

of this directly. These 36 Tatvas also describe the process of Karma which determines the quality and nature of human life, of all life, and of the existence of the universe in the first place as it emerges from pure consciousness by the will and desire of God.

## SUPRACAUSAL PLANE OF SUPREME CONSCIOUSNESS

This is the basic level of existence – of pure Cosmic Consciousness – Paramashiva – the totally unlimited Supreme Consciousness, that exists everywhere, is eternal, and from which everything is created, and will return to eventually. This Supreme Consciousness is completely devoid of objects, features, or anything else other than pure unlimited consciousness. But from this pure consciousness the entire world is created. This creativity is contained within two basic conscious principles: Shiva and Shakti. Reality, Paramashiva is transcendent, beyond the levels of matters, life and mind. It is without parts (and hence called Nishkala), without activity (Nishkriya) and beyond the reach of word (Asabda) and mind. The same Reality as the Cause of the world-process is called Ishwara. From him arise the five categories of pure, Siddha creation and then are the course of infinitesimal consisting in the emergence of the thirty-one categories composing impure (Asuddha) creation. The five categories (Tatvas) of pure creation are:

- |    |           |        |          |       |
|----|-----------|--------|----------|-------|
| 1. |           | Shiva  |          | Tatva |
| 2. |           | Shakti |          | Tatva |
| 3. | Sadashiva | or     | Sadakhya | Tatva |

#### 4. Ishwara Tatva

#### 5. Suddha Vidya Tatva

Shiva Tatva, which is the first process in the order of world evolution, and is Chit, with its important aspect of power as Consciousness. It is pure, unlimited consciousness itself.

Shakti Tatva, a co-ordinate of the first Tatva, manifests as the aspect of Bliss or Ananda, the unlimited creative power of Supreme Consciousness. Shakti has 3 basic aspects through which it does the actual creating:

Ichha Shakti: the basic will or impulse to create.

Jnana Shakti: the basic knowledge or awareness of creation.

Kriya Shakti: the basic power to create.

Sadashiva Tatva is Sat, the stage where the experience of 'Being' begins. It is the power of Will or Ichha that is predominant. In Ishwara Tatva, the power of Knowledge or Jnana plays an important role.

In Suddha Vidya Tatva, the power of action or Kriya dominates.

These five stages of Experience represent the gradual differentiation in the pure Experience, which serves as the basis of the evolution of the pluralistic universe.

At first, there is only the distinction less experience. Into this is introduced the condition of distinction by Shakti. In the Sadashiva Tatva, the experience of the form, "I am This" arises with the emphasis on "I". In Ishwara Tatva, the emphasis is on "This – This I am". In order that the universe of minds and

objects may emerge, there should be a balance between “I” and “This”. This is what is obtained at the stage of Suddha Vidya Tatva. Here, in the experience “I am This”, the two get equalized. It is in such an experience that there is activity and movement of thought.

These five called Suddha Tatvas deal with ideal creation. With the rest of the thirty-one categories, which commence with Maya, begins the actual creation.

### CAUSAL PLANE OF CONSCIOUSNESS & DEEP SLEEP STATE

The activities of the supremely creative Shakti creates a condition of extremely limited consciousness stuck in a seemingly infinitely vast unconscious world or universe, and this is what we actually experience of our consciousness – where we feel like our consciousness is so fragile, and so tiny – that it is stuck inside our heads, totally at the mercy of outside conditions, easily eradicated in a split second, as we struggle to survive in a huge totally non-conscious world which is dwarfed into insignificance within the incomprehensively vast non-conscious universe in which it wanders in endless circles until its inevitable fiery demise.

This sense of difference and distance and unconsciousness is actually only a creation of a veiling power of Supreme Consciousness – a Shakti called Maya. Maya works via five aspects of its veiling power.

Maya is the first of the thirty-one categories of impure creation and is the power of obscuration or “Tirodhana”. It obscures the infinite spirit, and makes possible the rise of plurality of souls and things. Again, the limitless experience begins to be limited as regards the experiencer and the experienced, the “I” and the “This”.

The next five categories are called Kanchukas or constrictors. They are the ones, which bring about limitation.

Kaala is temporal limitation. It veils the experience of the single supreme infinite moment to create the sense of the limited sequential flow of time.

Niyati is restriction in regard to space. It veils the experience of all-pervasiveness to create the sense of limited existence in one place stuck amongst vast areas that are different and separate from you.

Raga is attachment to particular things. It veils Iccha (basic supreme will to create) to create a sense of a fragile, limited, weak will power.

Vidya is limited knowledge. veils Jnana (unlimited knowledge of supreme creation) to create the experience of limited knowledge and understanding.

Kalaa is limited agency. veils Kriya (unlimited power to act) to create the sense of limited power and abilities, and helplessness.

The soul enveloped in these agencies arises as Purusha and that is the seventh category. Thus is formed the basic experience of

individuality separate from everything else; limited, helpless, relatively powerless, and limited in knowledge and understanding of so much that makes up the surrounding unconscious, mostly inaccessible world.

Thus is created the base level illusion of tiny limited consciousness existing insignificantly within an endless non-conscious expanse. That basic level of non-conscious expanse is called Prakriti, the eighth. But at this level, there is nothing to be conscious of – no worlds, or bodies, or even time or space. Thus, this stage is experienced as Void – non-conscious Void because all there is, is the basic state of limited individual consciousness without any instruments or organs to sense with, in a non-conscious expanse without any objects or features or characteristics to be conscious of. Thus, Prakriti is the corresponding limitation (with regard to Purusha) on the objective side.

## SUBTLE PLANE & DREAM STATE

From the featureless ground of the Causal Plane (Prakriti), springs endless objects created out of pure consciousness by the Shakti-s of will, knowledge, and creative impulse. These objects by definition are limited and separate from each other – each and every characteristic moving and changing in time and space. These limitations are formed by the powers of limitation of the Shakti Maya (Kalaa, Vidya, Raga, Kaala, and Niyati).



First created, are the basic instruments of will and knowledge, which direct the implementation of the instruments and organs of perception and action. Then from this are created the instruments and organs of perception and action, and then finally come the subtle and physical objects.

The Antahkarana (instrument of understanding, sense of identity, and other mental operations), which operates both in dreams and waking, consists of three parts:

Buddhi: the instrument of detachable, abstract reasoning that can see and understand objects and processes being outside and different from oneself.

Ahamkara: sees everything only in relation to oneself. It assembles, understands, and believes in the limited, powerless identity of oneself.

Manas: the basic thought process of the mind wherein thoughts come and go before the consciousness like a movie. All of these thoughts consist of:

- (1) Buddhi understanding
- (2) Ahamkara understanding or
- (3) Memories of objects

These instruments of mental functioning then employ limited powers of knowledge and perception (Jnana Indriyas) which operate both in dreams and waking:

Srotra: limited power of hearing.

Tvak: limited power of feeling by touch.

Chakshu: limited power of seeing.  
Jihva: limited power of tasting.  
Ghrana: limited power of smelling.

The instruments of mental functioning also employ powers of limited action (Karma Indriya-s) which operate both in dreams and waking:

Vak: limited power of speech.  
Pani: limited power of grasping and handling.  
Pada: limited power of locomotion.  
Payu: limited power of excretion.  
Upastha: limited power of creation (procreation to be exact).

Here are the Subtle Elements (Tanmatras) that make up subtle dream objects, that are perceived and acted upon by the Jnana Indriyas and Karma Indriya.

Shabda	Tanmatra:	sound
Sparsa	Tanmatra:	touch
Rupa		Tanmatra: color
Rasa	Tanmatra:	taste
Gandha	Tanmatra:	smell

## GROSS PHYSICAL PLANE & WAKING STATE

Here are basic physical elements that make up physical objects (Bhutas) that are perceived by the powers of perception (Jnana Indriyas), and acted upon by the powers of actions (Karma Indriyas). This includes not only outside objects like cars and

rocks, but also our bodies and the organs of perception and action by which we interact with those physical objects.

Akasha:			space
Vayu:	air	or	gas
Agni:			fire
Ap:			liquids
Prithivi:	solids		

This is the evolution of the world of things i.e. Artha Prapancha. There is a similar evolution of the world of sounds called Shabda Prapancha. Here too the line of evolution is from the subtle to the gross.

Corresponding to the five categories of pure creation, there are five stages of the emanation of sound. The first is Para, which is supreme and subtle. The second is Pashyanti, which is less subtle but still undifferentiated. The third is Madhyama, which is grosser and differentiated, but not yet articulate. Articulate sound is called Vaikhari, which is of two forms, subtle and gross. It is from Vaikhari that all letters or Varnas and syllables or Padas and Sentences or Vakyaas are manifested.

Para, which resides in the Shiva Tatva, represents the first movement of Sabda. This is also called Nada Tatva. Pashyanti stands for Shakti Tatva and is also called Bindu Tatva. These are the compliments of the ultimate potency of creation. From these arise what is known as the Tribindu, which is the root of all mantras. The subtle and esoteric aspect of Kamakala has to be learnt from a competent Desika.

Thus the duality that manifests in every Jiva is lost when the Supreme Mother reveals herself within luminous effulgence and everything in the world and within each one of us, becomes the mantra Shakti. The breathing in and out becomes cancels out and the mind and senses turn inward. One loses body consciousness and the feeling of duality ceases and brings about the awareness of equality. Then one experiences complete identification with the Shiva – Shakti one Parabrahman as Mahatripurasundari.

“Tat Tvam Asi” is the spontaneous utterance of liberation, We are that – as we play on the lap of the Divine Mother, basking in the luminosity of her Love. This is the culmination of all spiritual practices. Her presence lightens our life and nectarine bliss fills every pore of our heart.