

butes distinct from his self, who in moments of distress responds to his prayers and bestows grace. The devotee, then aspires for spiritual enlightenment and takes to ritual for self-purification. Śivapurāṇa enjoins several rites of worship and acts of homage, comprising a series of physical and spiritual practices in accompaniment with the Tantra, Yantra and Mantra appliances. He starts with the threefold devotion³¹ viz. hearing, glorifying and deliberating the attributes of God—a process that requires, according to Śivapurāṇa,³² the same steady attention as in the sexual intercourse. In this connexion Rudrasaṃhitā³³ mentions eight means for attaining mental concentration and spiritual enlightenment. Further the aspirant is asked to control the six cakras located in the spinal canal called suṣumṇā that lies between Idā and piṅgalā—two of the vessels of the body. That is possible only by taking recourse to the means of knowledge, by the purification of six pathways, the performance of traditional rites and yogic practices³⁴. The aspirant has to pass through this series of activities before he reaches another state of experience wherein he finds a perfect accord between his own self and his personal deity, yet there is an awareness of separateness from his deity till he reaches the last state of experience wherein all distinctions are obliterated and his self unites with his godhead.

31. VS. 4.

32. VS. 4. 4.

33. RS II. 12. 9. These are detailed in Bodhasāra PP 121-128.

34. Vāyaviya II. 10. 30.

ज्ञानं क्रिया च चर्या च योगश्चेति सुरेश्वरि ।

चतुष्पादः समाख्यातो मम धर्मः सनातनः ॥