

Tantrik Ritual – Puja

Those who worship with the object of attaining a particular reward gain such reward which (however) is as destructible as a kingdom acquired in a dream. Those, however, who rightly act without hope of reward attain nirvana and are released from rebirth - Mahanirvana Tantra, XIII, 41 (Translated By Maha Yogi Paramahansa Dr.Rupnathji)

Outer Worship (bahiryaga)

Puja is the act of showing reverence to a god or to aspects of the divine through invocations, prayers, songs, and rituals. An essential part of puja for the Hindu devotee is making a spiritual connection with a deity. Most often that contact is facilitated through an object: an element of nature, a sculpture, a vessel, a painting, or a print.

The literal meaning of Puja is : worship, honour, adoration, respect, homage

Puja (worship) can take many forms and is but one aspect of the tradition. It can be either performed externally or internally. A tantrik may perform daily puja to her or his particular devata and this can be a beautiful rite involving all the senses.

The daily puja, whatever the favoured deity, includes worship of the Sun, Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu and Ganesha. For details see Shri Puja and Subhagodaya on this site. The main concept in puja is that the god or goddess are considered to be actually present in the yantra or image used and are given worship and treated as honoured guests. All recitation, mudras and ritual elements are given to her/him. Yet she/he is one with the worshipper, not separate.

Various ritual accessories (upachara) are used in the daily ceremony, with the 16 principal items being asana (seat), svagata (welcome), padya (water for washing feet), arghya (rice, flowers, sandal paste &c), achamana (sipping water), madhuparka (honey, ghee, milk, curd), snana (bathing), vasana (clothes), abharana (gems), gandha (perfume and sandal), pushpa (flowers), dhupa (incense stick), dipa (flame), naivedya (food) and namaskar (prayer). These may be multiplied up, depending on the devata. However, despite differences, all daily pujas follow a very similar pattern.

Other of the many elements in daily puja include meditation and recitation of the particular mantra of the devata, as well as worship of the Guru, considered to be one with Shiva.

Other types of worship include optional pujas (kamyas), usually performed for some particular object. According to the tradition, these may only be performed if daily puja is also done.

In the Kaulachara division of tantrika, the puja may take the form of worshipping a living human being as incarnating the god/goddess. See Virasadhana for more information.

Some tantriks also perform their own form of the Vedic homa sacrifice, with particular shaped fire-pits for the sacrifice.

There are other important components in the daily puja, such as the Gayatri. There are tantrik as well as vedik gayatris.

The mala or rosary is used in reciting the mantra of the deity. In nyasa or placing, the rites transform the body of the worshipper into mantra and

devata. View Yantra. There are many examples of yantras on this site. But turn here for information on materials as well as an example of 'installing life' into a yantra.

When a sadhaka (m) or sadhvini (f) realises his or her oneness with the devata, there is no need for external puja, which can be considered a method of realising that oneness.

Inner Worship (antaryaga)

As with so many other aspects of the tantrik tradition, there is a gross, a subtle and a supreme aspect to worship. External puja, using either an image or another object such as a yantra or a lingam, is a dualistic form intended, however, to lead the sadhaka to the recognition that there is no difference between worshipper and the worshipped.

After a certain stage, outer worship may no longer be necessary, or may be further complemented with inner worship. Here, for example, offerings to the favoured god or goddess (the isthadevata), may be in the form of offering the senses and the other elements and functions of the human body, all taken here to represent shaktis.

This is also combined with meditation and contemplation of the essential oneness of worshipper and worshipped, and may include other elements of the outer worship including recitation of the mantra (japa).

In fact, the external puja points to the internal worship. The different nyasas, mudras (hand gestures) and other paraphernalia is intended to produce that

feeling of oneness in the sadhaka or sadhika. The tantras proclaim the unity of macrocosm with microcosm.

According to the Tantrarajatantra, supreme worship is when the mind, which both accepts and rejects, dissolves into the still, deep source.

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