Vaisnavism

The worship of Visnu is of Vedic origin as has been amply proved by the nature of the yajnas and the -yajnika basis of Matsya, Varaha, and Vamana puranas has been generally accepted. The discrepancies in the puranas regarding the order of the avatara and also the numerous variants of the stories regarding Narasimha, etc. can be reconciled only in the light of sacrificial ritual and symbolism. The Vedic Visnu had also some tantric features as proved by the names Sipavista, Yamana-Trivikrama, and from such passages as "Visnur yonim kalpayatu." The Vaikhanasa and the Pancaratra tantras insist on their Vedic origin in spite of some objectionable doctrines as accepted by Ramanuja and others. The Vaikhanasa is specially insistent on its Vedic basis. The Atri Samhita (Samurtar canadhikarana) says that Bramha (Vaikhana) having learnt from Visnu taught the tantra to Atri, Marici, Bhrigu, and Kasyapa. The Vaikhanasa of worship is Vedic because it says that the worship of Visnu in amurta form is nothing but the Vedic fire worship and in the ritual the priests have the same names and functions as in the yajnas - Hotr, Adhvaryu, etc. The five forms of Visnu in the Vaikhanasa are represented by the Vedic five fires - Visnu is the Garhapaty, Purusha-Ahavaniya, Satya-Daksinagni, Acyuta-Anyaharya, and Aniruddha-Sabhyagni. The amurta worship is not for ordinary individuals.

Devarcanam dvidha proktam amurtam ca samurtakam
Amurtam garhapatyadi sarvagnisu hutam murtam
Tasyadhanadikam sarvam sutre Vikhanasoditam.

Samurtalaya bimbo nityam vidhivadarcanam
Agnyadhanam prathistha syat istih parvarcanadhika
Yagascavabhrantah syad utsavas tadvidhanatath
Visnor etat samurtam yah pujanam bhaktitas caret

Samurtyarcana Adhikarana, 27.1-2.
Agneyam Pancaratram tu diksayuktam ca tantrikam
Avaidikatvat tat tantram tato Vaikhanasena tu,
Saumyena vaidikenaiva devadevam samarcayet.

The Pancaratra agama has been opposed to the Vedas by Sri Samkaracarya in his Bhāṣya on the Vedanta Sūtras (2.2, 42-45). Sri Ramanuja in his Śrī Bhaṣya tries to prove the Vedic basis of Pancaratra quoting the Pauṣkara Saṃhitā and the Saṭvata Saṃhitā, admitting that the theory of the jīvas having a birth, according to the Parama Saṃhitā (?) is opposed to the Vedas, but it is also opposed to the Pancaratra. Sandilya's denigration of the Vedas is explained away as "Nahi ninda nyaya." He relies on the Pancarata section of the Santiparvan of the Mahābhārata. "Vakta Narayanās avayam." To Madhvacarya, Pancaratra, Bharata, Mula Ramayana and the Brahma Sūtras are as authoritative as the Vedas themselves (Mahābhārata Tatparya Nīrṇaya, I, St. 31). Yamunacarya in his Agama Pramanya and Vedanta Desika in Pancaratra Rakṣa have adduced evidence to prove that Ekayana sakha is not a mere kalpana.

The theories of some modern scholars that Narayana is probably a Dravidian god of the Sea with which only the Dravidians and not the Aryans were familiar is without any foundation. The attempts to connect some of the Avatāras - Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Vaman, Narasimha, etc. with aboriginal totemistic worship have not been convincing.

The three major works of Pancaratra are Saṭvata, Pauṣkara, and Jaya Saṃhitās. The Saṭvata was taught to Narada by Samkarsana. The Jay was also taught to Narada whose disciple Sandilya made it popular. The Pauṣkara Saṃhitā was taught to Pauṣkara (Brahma) by Visnu himself.

In the Sandilya smṛti it is asserted that Sandilya taught the Ekayana Sastra to the Rsis on the Totadri hill.

Srimat Totagirer murdhni srimatyayatane Harih
Sandilyam rsim asinam pranamya munayo'bruvan.
........Srimad Ekayanam sastramarutam guhyam sanatanam
Jnanam sarva vedanam anantasaram idam tviti.

Nirvrttam vaidikam karam yat proktam bhava bhesajam.
Panca kalatmakam jnanam taccā Brahmaika daivatam, etc.
Sakti Worship

The Mother-goddess worship in India is firmly rooted in the Vedic tradition. The theory that the Aryans worshipped only male sky-ward and sun-ward deities and that the Mother goddess worship is alien to the spirit of Indo-European peoples has no foundation in the Vedic literature. Aditi, Raka, Sinivali, Kuhu, Gungu, Ratri, Agnayi, Varunani, Aranyani, the divine rivers, Indrani, etc. are as important as Indra, Rudra and other male deities. Aditi as the sacrificial altar represented the earth and the oceans. Agni on the altar is Jatadevas and the proto-type of Jata Vedase Devi.

\[ \text{Jatavedase sunuvama somam aratiyato nidahati vedah} \]
\[ \text{Sanah parsad atidurgani visva naveva sindhum duritatyagnih.} \]

(Tai.Ar IV-20-2).

Sri is also an aspect of Agni. Hence Srividya appropriately arose from the Cid Agni kunda. The Sri Sukta is a supplement to the Rgveda V-58. The Brhad Devata (V.91) says that in this hymn Agni as the bestower of riches is incidentally praised \( \text{(nipata bhaja).} \) Sri Vidyarnava Tantra (II. p. 186) and Samkara's Prapancasara (Ch.XII) give the method of worship of Laksmi as Sri. The flames of the fire are named Kali, Karali, Manojava, Sulohita, Sudhumravarna, Sphulingini, Visvarupa Devi, in the Mundukopanisad. The word Sri itself means the three Vedas (Tai. Br. II. 27). The terms Asvakraanta, Visukranta and Rathakraanta are derived from the Vedic sacrificial ritual. In the Agnyadheya, the yajamana imitates the foot-steps of Visnu. He takes steps from the south-western corner of the altar, first to the east with his right foot, the succeeding steps covering the ground up to the north-east corner. The importance of the Visukranta strides in the Vedic marriage ritual and elsewhere is well recognised. Seven and in the Atharvan ritual eight or ten steps have not only a cosmic but a sexual significance also. The Rathakrantha refers to the rolling of the chariot wheel following the Asvakranta or the foot-steps of the horse in the Agnyadheya. The Vamadevyā Sama should be chanted following the horse when the Ahavaniya fire is being transferred from the Garhapatya. The Vamadevyā is deeply associated with sex symbolism. The cart wheel is made to revolve in three rounds and the Ahavaniya is finally established on the hoof-mark of the horse (or of a bull according to the Paingi Brahmana) which is called "kamandalu." In the Asvamedha ritual the roaming of the horse is for ten or eleven
months and the depositing of an oblation on every foot-print of the horse is also Asvkranta. The sex symbolism of the horse is clear in the Asvamedha,

\[ Yo \ va \ asvasya \ medhasya \ pada \ veda, \ asvaisaiva \ medhyasya \ pade \ pade \ juhoti. \]
\[ Darsapurnamasau \ va \ eShvanya \ medhyasya \ pade \]
\[ Yad \ darsapurnamasau \ yajate \ asvasivamedhyasaya \ pade \ juhoti. \]
\[ Etad \ anukrti \ ha \ sma \ vai \ pura, \ asvasya \ medhyasya \ pade \ pade \ juhoti \]


As Burnell has pointed out the endowing of feminine attributes is at the root of Sakti worship which was possible only in the Aryan language, since in the Dravidian languages inanimate things are always in the neuter gender and have no masculine or feminine forms of names as in the Aryan language. The primitive aboriginal mother-goddess worship is therefore based only on the Vedic sacrificial ritual. Every tantric term and detail of ritual has Vedic analogies and symbolic significance. The tantras and agamas have preserved a continuous Vedic tradition and shaped the present Hindu religion.

(To be continued in Tantric Hieroglyphics – III)