

Induction to Saiva anustāna and Siva puja

The **Āgamas** also known as Tantra Texts are manuals of ritual technology. The texts consist classically of four parts; **chariya-pāda, kriya-pāda, yogapāda & jñāna-pāda,**

1. chariya-pāda — deals with the consecration of temples and icons, ritual practices used in the temples and at home, celebration of temple and spiritual festivals etc.

chariya also means our personal actions by the outside enforcements such as order, rewards, fear, tradition and custom etc. This is the beginning of our spiritual journey

2. kriya-pāda — deals with the details of temple construction, sculpturing of icons, the type and form of the materials and vessels to be used etc.

kriya also means our personal actions with our inner involvement but still needs some external reminders, rewards and guidance.

3. yoga-pāda — deals with the personal spiritual life of the aspirant — the theory and the practice of **sādhana**.

yoga also means entirely self-enforced actions.

4. jñāna-pāda — deals with the theory of Knowledge, Theology, Soteriology, Cosmology and Philosophy.

Jñāna also means diving into deeper parameters, exploring, experiencing and enjoying the various dimensions by ourselves and revealing and sharing them for others.

The fundamental theoretical basis of all the ritual taught in the **Āgamas** rests upon the teachings concerning Cosmology, Theology and Ontological hierarchy.

In order to understand the ritual, one has to have a thorough understanding of this theoretical basis. Everything connected with the ritual has a definite symbolic meaning. **Only when this esoteric meaning is understood and practiced with full awareness, and integrated in one's life can a transformation in the self take place.**

In this guideline we are attempting to present the practical aspect of daily **anushtānam** and puja ritual and cover the very basics of the vast theoretical foundation of Tantric Mysticism, Cosmology, Philosophy and Ontological hierarchy.

Beware, that we cannot cover the vast theoretical foundation of Tantric Mysticism, Cosmology Philosophy and Ontological hierarchy. — the keen student should learn about these from other sources.

The 36 Elements and the three divisions of Maaya -the inert material source of everything.

Two very important concepts pervade all Hindu ritual —

(a) the 36 elements/ **tatwās** (from the element of earth to **nātham** – the sound potential and

(b) the three **mayās** (pure, impure and **prakriti mayās**).

So it is important to have a good grasp of their functionality. Ritual is the formal interaction with the Universe on its expressed and its subtle level.

The Scientific Universe can be reduced to 36 elements/ tatwas in Saivism. None of these **tatwās** can be seen by the naked eye but they connect us intricately with everything in the universe for our daily interaction and experience with the universe.

Agamas presents a much simpler user-friendly interface with them in the form of daily **anustanām**, puja and rituals. This simplified elemental system does not negate anything scientific and is not in itself “scientific” but is practical as an interface with the complex universe of 36 elements at 3 planes of its existence in **māya**. Ritual deals a lot with these elements and so this is a good time to renew our acquaintance with them.