

Writers



KASHMIR

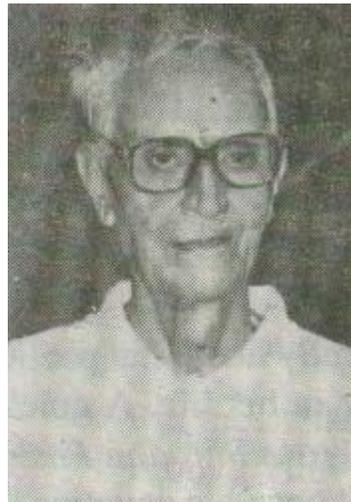


Columnists

KASHMIR Writers & Columnists



SELECTED WRITINGS OF JANKI NATH KAUL 'KAMAL'



Late Shri Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'

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1.0 SHRI JANKINATH KAUL 'KAMAL'

The Man and His Achievements

By Prof. A. N. Dhar

Born at Drabiyar, Srinagar, in 1914, Shri Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal' was well known as an accomplished scholar through his writings in the fields of Kashmir Shaivism and Vedanta, which have received countrywide recognition. He attained fame and popularity as a versatile and talented writer and earned for himself a position of special esteem because of his qualities of dedication and selfless service.



Late Shri Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'

All his life, he had been a devoted teacher and scholar, content with his modest earnings, and very proficient in his work. An octogenarian who our community has reason to be proud of, he remained mostly busy in reading and writing, when he was free from domestic and social preoccupations (excluding the hours he devoted to his daily meditation). Of course, he took special delight in delivering discourses on religious and literary topics at his residence or at select places - for which he spared several hours a week in spite of his busy schedule.

His scholarly writings in English, Hindi, Sanskrit and Kashmiri, published in the form of books and articles (that have appeared in standard journals, including the Prabuddha Bharata, Kalyan, Malini and Koshur Samachar), have been favourably reviewed and commented upon by critics and scholars of note. In recognition of his valuable contribution to Hindi language and literature, he received a prestigious award from the Hindi Sansthan, U.P. Government, on Hindi Divas, on September 14, 1992, in Lucknow. On August 15, 1996, on Independence Day, a still more prestigious award - Certificate of Honour - was conferred on him which was presented to him by the President at Rashtrapati Bhawan on June 9, 1997, in recognition of his significant contribution to Sanskrit studies.

Koshur Samachar had the privilege of printing a picture of the investiture ceremony in colour in its issue of 1997. Shri 'Kamal' attended the function which afforded him an excellent opportunity to interact with the other fellow-awardees (all eminent scholars of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic).

Early Life

Jankinath Ji had to come up the hard way to make his mark as a man of achievement. His mother passed away when he was just 7-8 years old; his father remarried but died when his son had barely attained the age of 13. Facing hardships as an orphan, Shri Kaul lacked the means that would have facilitated his education at school. Thus he could not continue his studies beyond matriculation. After a few years of service in Women's Welfare Trust, Srinagar, he joined the teaching profession at the age of 30 and taught at the D.A.V. Institute, Srinagar, for 30 years until he retired as a senior lecturer in 1974. In view of his competence and meritorious services, the Institute re-employed him for another five years until 1979. It was during his teaching career itself that he Improved his educational qualifications - passed Prabhakar and got his B.A. and B.T. degrees, followed by an M.A. in Sanskrit from the University of Jammu and Kashmir. He worked as Research Officer at Sri Parmanand Research Institute, Srinagar, for 4 years (from 1981 to 1985). Since 1986, he held the post of Editor, Cultural Desk/ Research Officer, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Shivalaya, Karan Nagar, Srinagar, and after his displacement from the Valley in 1989, he had been discharging these functions at Jammu.

A deep interest in spirituality, rooted in his constant quest for truth, had been the main motivation behind Shri Kaul's life-long study of holy scriptures. His proficiency in Sanskrit provided further impetus to his sustained study of Shaiva, Shakta and Pedantic texts in original. Right from his boyhood days, he had the marks of a true Jigyasu and Bhakta in one. No wonder, therefore, that he had read the works of Swami Ram Tirth in English and Urdu and also those of Swami Vivekanand with passionate zeal when he was a young man in his twenties. He had in him the makings of a poet; it was in his early youth that he started composing lyrics in Kashmiri and Hindi.

Divine Love

His intense love for the Divine brought him into contact first with a well-known scholar and saint, Shri Nilakanth. It was under his guidance that he studied Bhagwad Gita in depth along with the commentaries of Shankaracharya and Shankaranand. Shri Nilakanth, on his retirement from government service, lived in ShivanandAshram, Rishikesh, from 1957 onwards. In 1963, he took sanyasa and came to be called Swami Nilakanthanand Saraswati. He left his mortal coil in 1988. Before shifting to Rishikesh, he recommended Kamal Ji to the illustrious sahit-scholar, Swami Laxman Joo, known in the country and abroad for his mastery of the Shaiva texts and his attainments in spirituality.

During his long association with Swami Laxman Joo, he wrote several eulogistic and devotional lyrics on him in Sanskrit, English and Kashmiri. After the Swami ji attained mahasamadhi, he wrote several biographical articles on him which appeared in various journals. In all humility, Kamal Ji has acknowledged his debt to the great saint of Ishabher as to how he profited academically and spiritually from his discourses on Kashmir Shaivism and his explication of the Shaiva texts. Some of the valuable lectures of Swami ji have been recorded and rendered into English by him with great care and editorial skill. Likewise, some discourses given in Kashmiri by Swami Laxman Joo on the practice of meditation and Pranayama have been reproduced by him in the Nagri script in a presentable form. During his association with the Swamiji, he also came into contact with a householder saint, Pandit Satram, who lived at Ishabher close to Swamiji's Ashram. From this saint, he learned Vidyanarya's Panchdasi, which he found very useful.

A study of the corpus of Shri Kamal's works reveals three things about him - his capacity for rigorous research, his wide-ranging scholarship and his writing skill as a translator, commentator and creative artist. His achievement as a writer is stupendous, considering the hardships he had to face as a man of modest means.

Poetic Sensibility

I would first like to talk briefly about his poetic sensibility that flowered early in his life. A quick look at his book of Kashmiri lyrics *Shradha Posh*, brought out in 1942, reveals at once his devotional intensity, his deep mental involvement with the Transcendent, his spiritual aspiration as also his dispassion and his practical grasp of the technique of meditation as recommended in our sastras. The very titles of some of the poems are striking and significant - *Murli Nad*, *Sahana Panai*, *Viji Vav*, *Berang Nundabon*, *Samvit Panchadasi*, *Turya Tirth*, etc. The preacher's tone is marked in the poem *Grahasthiyas Updesh* that exhorts one to combine purity with a satisfactory performance of worldly obligations to maintain the delicate balance between *Parmarth* and our social conduct. His diction is simple and lucid and his manner straightforward. The diction is usually a mix of Kashmiri words in common use and the appropriate terms derived from the sacred texts. As an illustration, I give below my translation of the first 10 lines of the poem *Siva Sankar Sambu*:

Settle your mind,
Chanting the mantra
Siva Sankar Sambu.

The mind cleansed,
Light will shine forth
Dispelling all darkness;
With true faith
Aided by self-introspection,
Utter the mantra
Siva Sankar Sambu.

Get into the temple
At early dawn
After a sacred bath;
Then meditate,
And ponder the mantra
Siva Sankar Sambu.

Shri Kamal's lyrical genius as a Hindi poet blossomed forth in the volume titled, *Viksipt Vina*. This work has been specially mentioned as the author's valuable contribution to Hindi poetry in the citation that accompanied the award conferred on him in 1992. The poem *Main* strikes the keynote; here is my translation of the first stanza:

I'm the melancholy note
From a Vina with broken strings;
I am the wailing song
That has burst forth
From the anguished heart
Of a helpless woman!

The various lyrics strung together in the volume reveal the depth and intensity of the author's feelings and the loftiness of his aspirations. The reader at once feels that a 'lark is singing' in the poet's breast. At the same time, the poems show how sensitive he is to the pain and suffering that life brings in its train.

Magnum Opus

From the long list of Shri Kamal's publications, I would select three titles for special mention:

- i) Bhavaninamasahastrastutih, which I consider his magnum opus. It is a translation from Sanskrit into English of the hymn containing a thousand names of Bhavani, accompanied by an elaborate commentary,
- ii) Siva-Sutra-Vimarsha, edited with a critical commentary in Hindi, and (iii) Panchastavi A Pentad of Hymns to Bhavani. The Sanskrit hymns are translated into English followed each by an elaborate and illuminative commentary. Three favourable reviews on the first title (including one by the present writer) have appeared in Vedanta Kesri, Indian Book Chronicle, Koshur Samachar and Prabuddha Bharata. The book has been in great demand and it has been reprinted. His achievement as translator, annotator and commentator is impressive and his perceptive and critical comments in Hindi on the Siva Sutras are thoughtful and lucid. I find this work in no way less useful and, in some respects, even finer than Jaidev's notes in his English commentary on the text. The third title is a fine work, packed with insightful comments on the hymns matched by perceptive allusions to the relevant materials that illuminate the esoteric meanings of the hymns. The book has been very well received by readers all over the country. Swami Ranganathananda of Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad, was all praise for this work. He mentioned the book to me when I met him in February 1997 at Hyderabad.

In sum, Shri Jankinath Kaul Kamal was remarkable as a scholar and writer. Tall, slim and pleasant-looking, saintly and erudite, always neatly dressed, he exuded the culture and warmth that evoked admiration from one and all. Those who were close to him and listened to his illuminating discourses found his company invaluable. As a scholar, he was every inch professional.

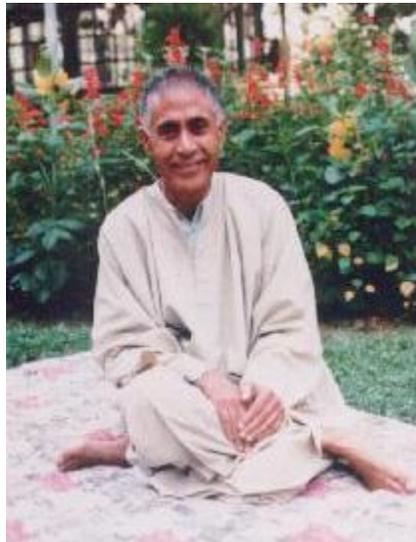
Source: Koshur Samachar

2.0 SWAMI LAXMAN JOO

The Sage of Ishaber

Introduction

Fathers of the Kashmir Monistic Saiva Thought, who flourished in the valley from ninth to thirteenth century A.D., were erudite scholars and eminent saints. They recorded what they practised and accomplished thereby. Later, there were interruptions in this line of thought. and it was mostly the ritualistic faith that kept the tradition alive. After Sivopadyaya, the eighteenth century scholar-saint who wrote commentaries and books of the kind, there appeared saints of the order during nineteenth century. But they, only taught the lore and made no use of pen. Early twentieth century saw the Kashmir of past glory blessed with a son who, not only practised and lived this wonderful philosophy-the Trika Saiva of Kashmir named Pratyabhijna Darsana-but also disseminated its postulates by teaching and writing among the seekers of Truth in the country and among those from foreign lands.



Swami Lakshman Joo

Birth and Initiation

A luminary of the first magnitude on the spiritual firmament of modern times, Lakshmana Raina was born at Namchibal in Srinagar (Kashmir) on May 9, 1907. He showed signs of spiritual fertility from his very birth. Finding the child far too precocious, his noble, god-fearing and devout parents put him in the tutorage of Swami Rama, who had been their family priest, and saint of high order in the tradition of the refined Tantric Monism of Kashmir known as the Trika system. From his early childhood Lala Saab cast a spell not only over his parents and relatives but also on Swami Rama. At sixteen, however, the boy was ripe enough for being initiated by Swami Mahtab Kak, who had been commissioned by his illustrious preceptor just before entering mahasamadhi, when the promising Laksmana was only seven years old. The enterprising and well- to-do parents could not prevail upon the young boy, to enter the life of a householder or even to take up a job.

Renunciation and Learning

It was typical of young Lakshmana to take his own time to do things rather than act on the spur of moment and force the pace. He had requested his loving parents to make a place available for him in solitude. But it took them some time to execute the promised plan. Yet the spiritual urge compelled the earnest aspirant to leave home for practising yoga at the famous forest ashrama of Sadha-malyun in

Handawara, Kashmir. He left no clue about himself at home except a line on a piece of paper requesting his brothers to give comfort to his parents. Getting the clue after a thorough and anxious search for the young Lakshmana, his father Pandit Narayan Das and his preceptor Swami Mahtab Kak went there to meet him. They succeeded in persuading him to come to the city and accept to live in a newly built house in their factory premises as he had desired. Here the earnest scholar-saint devoted himself to the study of Kashmir Saiva literature available at the Research Department of the Jammu and Kashmir Government started early by Sir Pratap Singh, the then Maharaja of the state. Highly learned Pandits had helped the department in editing and publishing a number of books on Kashmir Saivism, excavated and discovered throughout the state. Lakshmana Joo engaged the most efficient Pandit, Rajanaka Maheshvara to teach him Saiva sastra at home. He also studied Sanskrit grammar and the allied schools of Indian philosophy at full length. He edited the Bhagavad Gita with its Sanskrit commentary by Abhinavagupta and wrote important footnotes to it. This was published when he was about twenty-five years old.

Seclusion

During the year 1934-35 Brahmachari Lakshmana Joo chose a secluded place at the foot- hill above Ishaber village in the vicinity of the famous Nishat garden. He loved the spot because his ideal teacher Abhinavagupta, one of the most prominent authors of Kashmir Saivism, had lived somewhere around the place in vineyards about nine centuries ago. A bungalow was constructed by his parents at the selected site. It had a spacious garden with multi-colour flower-beds, fruit-bearing trees and a vegetable garden. Adjacent to this spiritual abode Sri Jia Lal Sopori of Srinagar built a house for his daughter Sharika Devi, who, after taking a vow of leading a celibate life, had found her worthy preceptor in Brahmachari Lakshmana Joo. Deviji remained in utter penance for attaining perfection in the monistic Saiva order by learning Agama Sastra from him and practising Saiva-yoga under his care. Devotees and seekers of Truth began to pour in now. It was about this time that the present writers was introduced to this holy man of divine charm by his own master and later recommended for the study of Utpaladeva's masterpiece, Sivastotravali. This marked the beginning of the Sunday class at the ashrama that always remained increasing and surcharged with wonderful spiritual vibrations.

Meeting Ramana Maharshi

Suddenly the young saint made a silent trip to certain places of his own choice in India. He wanted to confer with saints of high order perhaps to ascertain his attainments. He spent some time at Bombay beach to establish his power of spiritual perception. Then spending a very short time with Mahatma Gandhi at Sevagram he rushed to have a glimpse of Sri Aurobindo at Pondicherry where the Mother evinced interest in him. Therefrom he found his way to Tiruvanmalai to meet Ramana Maharshi at the Ramanachramam. Bhagavan Ramana looked at the young attractive saint graciously. It must have been the moment of Drstidiksa-initiation by mere sight. Swami Lakshmana Joo spent some weeks in the presence of the Maharshi. He later expressed: "I felt those golden days were indeed divine". Thus Swamiji revived in 1938 A.D. the spiritual link that united Madras and Kashmir when a monk of Madhurai, named Madhuraja, had travelled to Kashmir in the eleventh century to meet the great Abhinavagupta. Swamiji returned to Kashmir with greater spiritual charm. He then wrote a Hindi translation of the Sambapancasika, adding important hints as footnotes to it. This was published in 1943.

Aurobindvan Solitude

Swami Lakshmana Joo took to strict seclusion in his own ashrama premises for several months. During that period of 'Aurobindvan solitude', he concentrated on the Kramastotra culled out from the Tantraloka. Giving a wonderful exposition of the twelve forms of Saiva Yoga in lucid Hindi preceded by the original Sanskrit text, this small book of deep insight into the Reality of dvadasakali was published in 1958. Along with his progress in spiritual attainments, Swamiji propagated the Saiva faith so efficiently and effectively that scholars and seekers after Truth got drawn towards him, not only from his own country but also from abroad.

The Ishwara Ashrama

After India was declared a free country, she has virtually remained in shambles, not tidy as before. A sense of insecurity increased day by day in everyone's mind and almost everywhere. In the suspicious circumstances, Swami ji disposed off his immovable property along with that of Sharika Devi ji, about the year 1957 and started to live in a small house newly constructed at a stone's throw from the general road near Gupta Ganga Temple in Ishaber village. 'Ishwara Ashrama' was the name given to the ashrama and the disciples began to call Swami ji Ishwara Swarupa. (This ashrama is the headquarter of Ishwara Ashrama Trust now).

Ashrama Activities

The Ashrama activities gathered momentum. Swamiji held regular Sunday class/satsanga. On Mondays he observed silence (maunam) and spent his day in 'God's House', the tiny cottage for meditation, built in a beautiful small garden near the previous ashrama-place. A set programme was followed on other weekdays. A spacious lecture hall with cupboards on one side for library and a havana-shala for annual yagya were constructed in the premises of Shri Ranvir Siva Temple, Gupta Ganga by the Dharmarth Trust of Jammu and Kashmir under the trusteeship of Dr. Karan Singh, former union minister and ambassador. The complex was named Kashmir Saiva Pathika. Sunday discourses on Tantraloka by Swamiji, lectures by eminent spiritualists and seminars were held there with grace and glory. Swami ji, at certain occasions gave series of lectures on spiritual topics for the elevation of common people, besides taking special classes and guiding scholars in their research work. Maiden translation with footnotes in Hindi of his favourite book Sivastotravali was published by the Chowkhamba Sanskrit series office, Varanasi in 1964. This Swamiji taught with a new exposition each time.

Honours Conferred

Two saintly persons of Swami ji's calibre, contemporaneous with him, were Pandit Nilakantha Jyotishi (later Swami Nilakanthananda Saraswati, D.L.S., Richikesh) and Pandit Satram Bhat of Ishaber. Although each had a different mode of thought yet the 'spiritual trio' was destined to meet and corroborate on the Yoga-bhumi of Ishaber. They met closely on Rrahma-sutra Sankarabhasya and Yogavasistha Maharamayana. Scholars and professors came to Swamiji from the universities of Torino (Italy), Paris, Oxford, and America for his guidance in Pratyabhijna and Tantraloka. To the scholars and his disciples from foreign lands he gave pithy and short lectures on abstruse topics in English. For Kashmiri disciples he explained the tenets of Saivism in a literary style full of elegance and wit. To general audiences he spoke in lucid Hindi. Swami Lakshmana Joo read his paper in Sanskrit on 'Kundalini Vijnana Rahasyam' at the All India Tantra Sammelanam held under the auspices of the Varanaseya Sanskrit University at Varanasi in the year 1965. His exposition of the subject was much applauded by the great luminary Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj and other scholars of great repute. After some years the Varanaseya Sanskrit University conferred upon Swami Lakshmana Joo the degree of D. Lit. honoris causa, in recognition of his splendid and valuable service to the cause of Sanskrit. When Swami ji was informed about this, he simply gave an innocent smile and said in an expression of humour "I have become a doctor now". The Jammu and Kashmir Akademi of Art, Culture and Languages presented the robe of honour to Swamiji at a special function while Mir Qasim was Chief Minister of the state.

Contribution

Swamiji's contribution to the promotion of the studies in Kashmir Saivism, propagation of the Trika philosophy and growth of Kashmiri culture will be remembered for long. This considerably helped the revival of this philosophy and way of life which had otherwise been fading away due to political changes in the valley. Swamiji, however, became known nationally and internationally as the best exponent of Trika philosophy. The saint-scholar gained spiritual ecstasy of jivanamukta (liberated while living) and in his own country came to be known as 'the sage of Ishaber' to whom all sorts of people - young and old, male or female - came to pay obeisance and receive blessings or a blissful touch. A reproduction of a few of his lectures in English was published in 1982 under the caption: "Lectures on Practice and Discipline in Kashmir Saivism." "The Kashmir Saivism - supreme secret" was published in the year 1985. This contains lectures on important topics of Saiva philosophy based on the Pratyabhijna of Utpaladeva and the

Tantraloka of Abhinavagupta given by Swamiji to his western disciples. The Pancastavi of Dharmacharya with comprehensive Hindi translation and footnotes was published in the year 1987. Beside these works, some of the texts relating to Kashmir series (K.S.T.S.) were translated for the first time by Thakur Jaidev Singh after they were taught to him by the Master. Jaidev's language reflects in a luminous fashion the mystical experiences in the texts namely Pratyabhijna hridaya, Siva sutra, Vijnanabhairava and Paratrisika which also bear his elaborate introductions. Swamiji's immense erudition stimulated some more disciples and admirers to expound these Saiva texts. Prof. Nilakanth Gurtoo wrote Hindi translations of Paratrisika and Spandakarika. The present writer, wrote an independent, pithy and upto-date Hindi commentary on Siva-sutras that was highly praised by the Master. Smt. Kamala Bawa translated the text and commentary of Pratyabhijna hridayam into Hindi. Smt. Prabha Devi translated into Hindi Para Pravesika, Paramarhasara and Guru Stuti. All these have been published. Dr. Oscar Botto wrote on Abhinavagupta and Tantraloka in Italian and Dr. Lillian Silburn (France) translated some Saiva hymns and certain texts on Saivism into Italian and French respectively. Thus Swamiji taught as well as spread with effective measure this unique philosophy of Kashmir in the country and abroad.

Birthday and Excursions

Swamiji's birthday was celebrated every year on such a grand scale that it turned to be a great fair for common people and an auspicious day for his admirers and devotees who flocked from all parts of the country to have a glimpse of the sage sitting in long samadhi. Indian as well as foreign disciples attended to see this godman 'living free' on this earth. Sri Dinanath Ganjoo, Smt. Kamla Bhagati, Sri Narayan Joo and Smt. Raj Dulari Kaul among many others sang Kashmiri poems of eulogy to their preceptor. This cheerful holyman of wisdom, wit and peace distributed prasada and day long. The next day Swamiji spent in giving gifts to devotees and disciples. Once Swamiji remarked "If I had to celebrate my birthday twice a year I would finish up all my extra property by distributing it."

Excursions to places of sanctity and natural scenery in the valley were occasionally arranged. Kirtans by disciples and discourses by Swamiji were usual features all along. Prominent places visited on large group excursions were: Verinag, Takshakanag, Karkutanang, Sadha-malyun, Uma Nagari, Hangalgund, Tangamarag, Naran-nag (Sindh Valley), Dacchigam and Dara etc. by bus, and different places around and in Dal Lake by dunga (house-boat) during summer besides longer trips to Hardwar and Rishikesh during winter.

Moments of bliss were experienced when saints and men of learning came to meet the sage of Ishaber. Dr. Karan Singh often visited the ashrama to receive blessings. Smt. Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India sought interview with the sages whenever she came on a visit to the state. Swamiji had a meeting with J. Krishnamurti at Kotarkhana in the Dal Lake. Maharshi Mahesh Yogi visited the Ishawara Ashrama and invited Swamiji to his house-boats in the Dal Lake. Swamiji gave an interesting exposition of the Vijnanabhairava to his devotees on request. Paul Reps, in his short introduction to the chapter 'Centering' says: "It presents 112 ways to open the invisible door of consciousness. I see Lakshmana joo gives his life to its practice". Swami Ramdas (a jivanmukta) of Kanhangarh, Mangalore, Swami Satyananda Saraswati of Munger, and Swami Muktananda of Ganeshpuri were pleased to meet the Swami when they visited Srinagar. Swami Lakshmana Joo himself attended and presided over spiritual meetings held occasionally in the valley and outside it. In 1976 Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Srinagar (Kashmir) organized a spiritual congregation in the Ashrama precincts. This was graced by the world famous cultural ambassador of India, Swami Ranganathananda while the meeting was presided over by Swami Lakshmana Joo, who described Sri Ramakrishna as a sidha yogi.

Another time Swami Ranganathananda was invited by Swamiji to address a special meeting of scholars and devotees and declared the chief guest as 'messenger of peace'. Swamiji occasionally went to Hardwar and Rishikesh to meet saints, especially Swami Sivananda Saraswati of the Divine Life Society giving expositions to parallelism of Kashmir Saiva Mysticism with the mysticism of Sankara Vedanta.

Ecstasy

During his years of maturity, Swami Lakshmana joo was writing a comprehensive compendium of Kashmir Saiva Darsana in lucid Hindi. It runs into several chapters. Excerpts from the manuscript were at times read out by him to selected disciples among whom the present writer was fortunate to be one. It is understood that writing of the book remained incomplete but was published later in 1994 by Sri Prabha Deviji. Prof. P.N. Pushp, while writing his foreward to this book titled Trika Rahasya Prakriya has also observed the incompleteness of this work. During his latter days of ecstasy Swamiji only explained selected pithy verses from the Agama sastras and Yogavasistha and sang these alongwith his disciples in divine rapture. These continue to be sung by devotees at Sunday satsang meetings with the wonderful Gurustuti composed early by one of Swamiji's illustrious disciple of Varanasi, Sri Rameshwar Jha, who having studied and practised Vedantic Mysticism had found great interest in the Kashmir Saiva Mysticism and had accepted Lakshmana joo as his preceptor of the Faith.

Occult Powers

Though Swamiji was a master of occult powers, he never made a display of those powers. Swamiji was against their being used as he was convinced that the use of occult powers was an impediment on the spiritual path. He was the master of self- control and care. However he appeared to have made use of his divine power sparingly and with great caution. Not only his close disciples but also un-acquainted people of different beliefs, from far and near, some of whom had not even met the Swami in person, were convinced of his powers which he might have used un-assumingly for their upliftment. Certain contemporary saints of the country have said that Swami Lakshmana Joo had been strictly guarding his earned treasure of powers and, if at all, he used those scarcely. His awe- inspiring sight and proverbial sympathy drew people of all walks of life near him with their problems to which he was often sharp in giving decisions. It was also observed that he gave a healing touch to those who needed it. Common people believed him to be a redeemer from evils. Some persons of pure heart felt a current of mysterious joy running through their body while receiving his touch on bowing at his lotus feet.

Picture of Personality

Swamiji had disciplined himself into such unwinking vigilance that he was never found saying or doing a thing that was not in consonance with the Truth of his way of life. Only eight months before Swamiji chose to merge in the infinite, his chief disciple Brahmavadini Sharika Devi entered the Divine on Feb. 1, 1991. He did wonderfully well what was quite befitting to his nature and practice. In fact there was very high aiming in the core of Swamiji's very existence which was manifest in a happy combination of three lements:

- (i) Simplicity, an expression of simplicity;
- (ii) Enthusiasm, the vital push of the spirit within;
- (iii) Wisdom, the light of the soul as the portion of the Divine Himself.

Endowed with a magnetic personality, divine charm and wide scholarship behind his spiritual attainments Saivacarya Iswara Swarupa Sri Swami Lakshmana Joo was an inextricable combination of life and religion. By years of study and contemplation, his practice of yoga had ripened to such an extent that his teachings contain the best solution to the problems that face humanity today. His very presence was solace to the depressed, hope to the forlorn, joy to the seeker, inspiration to the scholar and satisfaction to the soul striving for spiritual upliftment. The best in him was all-lovingness that attracted towards him people of all faiths and of different creeds. An embodiment of magnificent qualities, he was a faithful friend, a benefactor brother, a fondling father, a true teacher, a noble neighbour, an instinctive instructor, an affirmed administrator, a congenial companion and above all the girdling guide of all who came near him. His disciples and admirers sought to throng around his radiant personality as honey-bees hover about a fragrant lotus in bloom. Iswara Swarupa's sagacity made him into an exemplary sage. He looked simply divine, when he made a short tour to United States in June-July, 1991.

Homage

The playful ways of the Master - the sage of Ishaber-came to an end on this earth in Delhi in the early hours of the 27th September, 1991 in moments of calmness and tranquility. He had verily been a yogabhrasta (fallen from yoga in previous birth) for he was born in a house of pious as well as wealthy and well-thought parents-sucinam srimatam gehe yogabhratobijayate. The present life of grace and glory was only the means for this Divine being to merge into Supreme Siva, the final beatitude of life. The powers of Truth and Light may not be visible to the naked eye but they are there for the discerning. To pay homage to the beloved 'Gurudeva' let us live for the Divine and let Divine take control of our life to fulfill his purpose.

Source: Koshur Samachar

3.0 SWAMI RAMJI

"Immersed in Samadhi, he never moved out for 20 long years"

In the middle of the 19th century AD there lived a Brahmin named Shukdev at Chinkral Mohalla, Srinagar. The Brahmin was a Purohit and lived a pious life. Around 1852 AD (1910 Bikrami), a son was born to him. According to his horoscope, it was predicted at his birth that the baby would grow to be a great saint. Nobody could imagine at that time the great spiritual heights that Swami Ramji would attain in his life later.



Swami Ramji

The boy Ramji received instruction as Purohit; in those days modern education on Western lines was in its very infancy in this country. In his youth he came in contact with Shri Lala Joo Kokru, who was well-versed in Kashmir Shaivism through reflective heredity. Since Ramji also had a spiritual bent of mind, to which heredity and environment again must have contributed, he took to the study of Shaiva philosophy under Shri Lala Joo. His intelligence and interest brought to him a clear comprehension of this school of philosophy. As the adage goes, when you deserve the desire in you gets fulfilled by itself. When you really need help, it must come.

Later, Ramji met his guru, Sri Manas Ram Monga (or Maneh Kak as he was called) who was a great mystic saint of the time in Kula system of Kashmir Shaivism. He had great spiritual attainments and wanted that philosophy to spread through a line of disciples. Being a Siddha Yogi and eager to transmit

the knowledge to a capable person who understood this subtle philosophy, the master found the true disciple in Ramji and transmitted Yoga to him by his divine touch.

Ramji devoted himself to the practice of Yoga in right earnest. He did not undergo the formal renunciation as a Vedantin usually does. He continued with his work of Purohit in a professional course and regularly attended Yajman's houses for conducting worship and religious rites for quite some time of his early life.

Naveh Naran

Swami Ramji had a great devotee in Pandit Narayan Das Raina, a merchant and houseboat owner of Srinagar at that time. In fact, Shri Narayan Das was the first to introduce houseboats in Kashmir. Among Kashmiris he was, therefore, known as 'Naveh Naran'. He was a man of high ideals. His simple habits, loving nature and cheerful behavior had earned a name for him. Swami Ramji is said to have been his family priest. The family honored Swamiji and all his requirements were met with pleasure by Sri Narayan Das.

Swami Ramji, with his comprehensive study of Kashmir Shaivism and severe practice of Yoga, got well established in the system. Now he wanted a secluded place. He found a congenial one at a fellow-disciple's home at Safakadal. When a flower is in full bloom, it gives out fragrance. Swami Ramji was now a Siddha Yogi. Discerning people who could recognize his worth came to him. Common people too thronged round him to invoke his blessings. This disturbed the family life of his fellow-disciple. Realizing this, Swami Ramji one evening called on his admirer and worthy Yajman, Sri Narayan Das, at Fatehkadal. "Naran Joo: I want to be in seclusion. Will you provide me with a place to -live? " he told his trusted Yajman. The noble Pandit was simply pleased to welcome the sage and offered a small three-storied house, which he owned, just 300 metres from his residence. The second storey of the small house was furnished. In a few days Swami Ramji moved to this room. Here he carried out his spiritual practice (Sadhana) and taught the Shaiva-Agama (Advaita Kashmir Shaivism popularly known as Trika philosophy) to worthy disciples like Swami Mahtab Kak, Swami Vidyadhar and Swami Govind Kaul who had been his personal devotees and received inspiration and his personal guidance to rise to their full stature in their time.

Scholarly Exposition

Many more devotees and admirers, mostly householders, were attracted towards him by his scholarly expositions of the Agama and Yogic wonders. He was the greatest Yogi of his time in Kashmir. His mere look or touch was bound to make a person a changed one. He wielded a wonderful Shaktipata. Even Maharaja Pratap Singh, the then ruler of Kashmir and a discerning devotee, is said to have approached him for blessings. In his later years Swami Ramji is said to have sat, with knees to his breast, at his Asana (seat) and did not move out for 20 long years. Here the saint-philosopher imparted Yogic instructions to deserving disciples and delivered discourses on Trika philosophy for hours together to his listeners who were spell-bound to see him immersed in undisturbed Samadhi.

(To enlighten his own disciples he (Swami Ramji) openly displayed, even while in body, his own Shaivahood, by remaining in Samadhi continuously for four hours daily).

Stories about his Siddhis are still current in the valley. The separate house where Swami Ramji lived is now the famous Shri Rama-Trika- Shaivashrama. Devotees and admirers are heard chanting devotional hymns and recitations from Shaiv-Agamas up to this time.

Shaivashrama

Shri Narayan Das and his wife, Srimati Arnyamali, were greatly devoted to Swami Ramji, who from the* family priest had now evolved to be their spiritual Guru. They had been serving him and looking to all his needs and convenience with great love and devotion. On May 9, 1907 (about 1964 Bikrami), the couple

was blessed with a son. When the news of the birth of this baby was instantly conveyed to Swami Ramji, it is reported that he got up to dance and uttered:

"I am Rama and the child be named Lakshmana."

(Even in his old age, Swami Ramji lost his body-consciousness out of divine joy at the auspicious birth of my Master (Shri Lakshman Joo), singing 'I am Rama and he (the new born) be named Lakshman' and danced in joy).

Divine Being

He believed that a divine being had taken birth in the form of the child. Truly so, the child, who was named Lakshman, showed signs of abnormality as he grew up. Swami Ramji encouraged the anxious parents and conferred blessings on this divine child. He had recognized divine features in the child who would often go into fits. Once when the parents approached Swami Ramji to express their anxiety about the child he sent them back with a remark.

".What happens to him, may be graced unto me." Thus the child, Lakshman, entered boyhood under the spiritual care of this great sage, who later initiated him into Gayatri Mantra, Pranayama and certain Yogic practices.

(There lived the renowned saint, his Holiness Swami Ramji, the Shaiva teacher of my Master - Swami Lakshman Joo).

Knowing that he would not be in the mortal coil till the divine boy attained maturity, the sage L entrusted his future initiation into the-Shaiva order to his chief disciple, Swami Mahtab Kak. Entrusting his craving disciples and the seven- year old Shri Lakshmana to the charge of Swami Mehtab Kak, his principal disciple, he (Swami Ramji) entered the real abode of Shiva by giving up his body). After a few years, Swami Ramji left the body in 1915 AD (1971 Bikrami Magha Krishnapaksha Chaturdashi) to merge in the Divine Universal Self of which he had been an embodiment.

Divine Rapture

Swami Ramji was sometimes heard by his close disciples uttering in divine rapture his experiences of Supreme-Consciousness and here is given a verse (Shloka) from his pen:

(On accepting the Truth from the mouth of the Master, whose word is the sacred text, all my ignorance got dispelled. The mind (Chitta) dived deep in the ocean of consciousness eager to taste the loving nectar of equality. The web of thought calmed down in the state of unqualified meditation. Thus the Supreme-Consciousness inexpressible is revealed to me in its perfectness.)

Source: Koshur Samachar

4.0 THE INSPIRED SAGE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

*deham ca nasvaramavasthitamuthitam va
siddho na pasyati yotadyagamat svarupam
daivadapetamuta daivavasadupetam
vaso yatha parikrtam madiramadandhah
(Bhagvata Bk. XI, Ch. 13, Ve. 36)*

Drunk deep, one becomes unmindful,
Knows not about the cloth he wears -
Whether it's fallen off the body or held on to the shoulder;
Likewise, the sage of spiritual attainment
In disembodied joy of Divine Ecstasy,
Knows not about this transient body -
Whether he retains it by the power of destiny
Or has gone beyond it by Grace Divine [1].

*deho pi daivavasagah khalu karma yavat
svarambhakam pratisamiksata eva sasuh
tam saprapancamadhirudhasamadhiyogah
svapnam punarna bhajate pratibuddhavastuh
(Bhagvata Bk. XI, Ch. 13, Ver. 37)*

This body moves on the power of destiny
Unto the fruit of actions done in previous births;
The natural plan of whose commencement
Involves investigation, as if, of arrows
Shot formerly - whence and why;
But one in a meditation mood
Got firm in the knowledge of the Supreme Self,
Shares not the experience of manifest projection,
Just as a person, on waking from sleep,
Minds not his dream [2].

*vag gadgada dravate yasya cittam
rudatyabhiksanam hasati kvacicca
vilajja udgayati nrtyate ca
madbhaktiyukto bhuvanam punati
(Bhagavat Bk. XI, Ch. 14, Ver. 24)*

Whose earnest devotion melts the mind
And renders his speech convulsive,
Who frequently weeps, laughs on occasions

Unabashed sings aloud and dances;
Endowed with My Bhakti,
He makes mankind sinless [3].

[1]. Just as in the case of Lal Ded (of Kashmir) in her own expression:

*'suy gav Lali me vakh ta vacun
tavay hyotum me nangay nacun.'*

"To Lala, that precept inspired me:
Therefore, I took to roaming naked."

[2]. As is said about the accomplished sage:

*prakasamane paramarthabhanau nasyatyavidyatimire samaste
tada' budhah nirmalavrttayo 'pi kincinna pasyanti bhavaprapancam
(Yogavasistha)*

"When the sun of spirituality shines bright
And the darkness of ignorance vanishes completely,
The wise, even with a purified mind-process,
Then, has no feeling of worldliness as himself."

[3]. This is the sign of a truly inspired sage:

*etavadeva khalu lingamalingamurteh
samsanta samsrticirabhramanirvrtasya
tajnasya yatmadanakopavisadamoha -
lobhpadamanudinam nipunatanutvam. (Yogavasistha)*

This alone is the sign of that non-distinct self,
Whose long-drawn rolling in births has ended,
And, who is tranquil on realisation - Thou Art That;
That his relative emotions -
Desire, anger, grief, delusion and greed,
Lose their weight day after day.

5.0 HOW TO KNOW THAT BRAHMAN

The Supreme Peace

The Upanisad (Kathopanisad) speaks of the secret Brahman:

*ya esa suptesu jagarti kamam kamam puruso nirmimanah
Tadeva sukram tadbrahma tadevamrtamucatyē
Tasminllokah sritah sarve tadu natyeti kascana Etadvaietad
(Kath II.ii8)*

'Purusa, who keeps awake and goes on creating desirable things even when the senses fall asleep, is pure; and He is Brahman, and he is called the Immortal. All the worlds are fixed in Him; none can transcend Him. This is That'.

The knowledge of the unity of the self, though validated by proof and reiterated more than once, does not find a lodging in the hearts of those Brahmins of insincere intellect whose minds are swayed by the intellect of numerous logicians; therefore, the Upanisad, being eager to inculcate it, says again and again:

*agniryathaiko bhuvanam pravisto
rupam rupam pratirupo babhuva;
ekastatha sarvabhutantaratma
rupam rupam pratirupo bahisca
(Kath. II.ii. 9)*

'Just as fire, though one, having entered the world, assumes separate forms in respect of different shapes, similarly, the self inside all beings, though one, assumes a form in respect of each shape; and (yet) it is outside'.

Another mantra follows with another illustration of Air:

*vayuryathaiko bhuvanam pravisto rupam rupam pratirupo babhuva
ekastatha sarvabhutantaratma rupam rupam pratirupo bahisca
(Kath. II.ii. 10)*

Here the contingency arises - If the one entity is the self of all, the sorrowfulness of the world will belong to the Supreme Brahman itself. The Upanisad answers:

*suryoyatha sarvalokasya caksurna lipyate caksusairbahyadosaih
ekastatha sarvabhutantaratma na lipyate lokadukhena bahyah
(Kath. II ii. 11)*

'Just as the sun, which is the eye of the whole world, is not tainted by the ocular and external defects; similarly, the self, that is but one in all beings, is not tainted by the sorrows of the world, it being transcendental' .

*eko vasl sarvabhutantaratma ekam rupam bahudha yah karoti
tamatastham ye nupasyanti dhiraste'sam sukham sasvatam netaresam
(Kath. II.ii. 12)*

'Eternal peace is for those (and not for others) who are discriminating and who realize in their hearts Him who (being the One, the Inner Controller, and the Inner Self of all) makes a single form multifarious'.

*nityo nityanam cetanascetananameko bahunamyo viddhati kaman
tamatastham ye anupdsyanti dhirastesam santih sas'vafi netaresam
(Kath. II.ii 13)*

'Eternal peace is for those (and not for others) who are discriminating and who realize in their hearts Him who (being the eternal among the ephemeral, the consciousness among the conscious) alone dispenses the desired objects to many' .

This was spoken by Yama to Nachiketa, an intelligent and earnest boy, who had approached the former in order to know the Truth, the Supreme Peace. Then Nachiketa, the inquisitive and self-reliant boy, put a question to the teacher Yama:

*tadetaditi manyante nirdesyam paramam sukham
katham nu tadvijaniyam kimu bhati vibhati va
(Kath. II. ii. 14)*

'How shall I know that supreme, unspeakable Bliss which they realize directly as "This" ? Is it self-effulgent ? Does it shine distinctly ? Or, does it not ?'

Yama answers how it is both self-effulgent and shines distinctly (or multifariously):

*nk tatra stiry bhati na candra tarakam
nema vidyuto bhanti kuto yamagnih
tameva bhantamanubhati sarvam
tasya bhasasarvamidam vibhati
(Kath. II.ii. 15)*

There - is Brahman which is one's self- the Sun does not shine (i.e it does not illuminate that Brahman, though it illumines all). Similarly, neither the moon, the stars nor these flashes of lighting shine; how can this fire, that is seen by us, shine ? In short, all, inclusive of these that shine, shine according as He, the supreme Lord shines. Just as hot water, fire-brand etc, owing to their contact with fire, burn according as the fire does, but not independently; similarly, it is verily by His effulgence (tasya bhasa) that all this (sarvamidam) - the sun etc, shines variously (vibhati). This being so, it is that Brahman itself that is effulgent and shines variously. Through the various kinds of effulgence in the effects, it is known that the characteristic of luminosity is intrinsic in that Brahman. For that

luminosity which does not exist naturally cannot impart itself to others; for a pot etc. are not seen to illuminate others, whereas luminous things like the sun etc are seen to do so.

6.0 UTPALADEVA AND HIS PRATYABHIJNYA PHILOSOPHY

Very little is known about Utpala, the great mystic Saint of Kashmir, except that he might have lived somewhere in Nauhatta (Navyut) in Srinagar. From some authors on Kashmir Shaivism and his contemporaries we find that he was a Brahmin and lived a married life around the middle of 900 A.D. He was the son of Udayakar.

Utpaladeva must have been a precocious boy with a sharp intellect and a quest for learning. This becomes evident from the fact that he was taken as a disciple by the great philosopher. Siddha Somananda, whose great work Shivadrishti, the Pratyabhijny Shastra (Philosophy of Recognition), inspired him to write the Ishwar Pratyabhijny Karikas. It is stated in the Shivadrishti that Utpala was motivated to write the Karikas on the request of his son, Vibhramakara. Therein he summarized the teachings of his master and this work is spoken of as "the reflection of wisdom taught by Somananda". Kashmiri's Persian-knowing scholars have termed it is Khird-e-Kamil (wisdom of the sage).

Mass of Literature

Together with the various commentaries there grew up a mass of literature around these Karikas (also called Sutras) of Utpaladeva. Thus, Pratyabhijny assumed such an important position that the whole system of the Kashmir Shaiva philosophy has come to be known, outside Kashmir also, as the Pratyabhijny Darshana. Even at present scholars from foreign lands taking up research work in the Pratybhijny school of thought come to Kashmir to seek help and guidance from Shaivacharya Swami Lakshman Joo, the living Yogi and Jivanmukta (liberated while assuming body) at Ishaber, Nishat (Srinagar).

Although Ishwar Pratyabhijny is heavy to study, yet it is a perfect work on philosophy. It is not only a set of philosophic doctrines but contains instructions on practical Yoga also. This is preached for the aspirants of highest calibre who have developed acute awareness. None of the means (Shambhavopaya, Shaktopaya and Anavopaya) is recognised in this philosophy. Only the five functions are to be followed. The doctrine advocates <verse>.

No Impurity

Since there is no existence of impurity, whence can there be any erosion. It is only a change in the point of view. Nothing has happened to Shiva; no Jiva-bhava has been assumed by Him.

Somananda has explained the doctrine to Utpala with the following example:

A girl and a boy whose marriage has been fixed by their relatives and who have not seen each other happen to sit together along with their friends and relatives at a fair. The girl happens to serve refreshments to the boy. As a matter of course, there is no special feeling between the two. But, when an acquaintance comes and hints at the would-be marriage of the couple, at once feelings of love run through both the boy and the girl. The girl recognizes her lover. Such is the recognition of Jiva with Shiva. This is Pratyabhijny philosophy in the nutshell, as preached comprehensively by Utpala. He sat and wrote these abstruse aphorisms on the philosophy in calm moments. This was his self-introspection.

Tradition has it that Utpala, in the later period of his life, would often be in ecstasy. He would sing rapturous notes, intensely musical and pregnant with meaning. These, verily, reveal the heart of Utpala.

His poems give expression to the philosophical doctrines of Kashmir Shaivism known as Trika system of philosophy in a devotional form. These occupy the same place in this system as the Vedanta Stotras do in the Vedanta philosophy.

Adi Sankara

Utpala's philosophy is as deep as that of Adi Sankara, though, perhaps, more devotional. He believes in self-surrender and love. He uttered his poems in ecstasy which were noted and written down by his disciples. He was so deep in divine rapture that he had no body consciousness and when he came to it once and found almond blossoms strewn on the ground, he uttered; "O Shiva, Bhaktas have adorned You with flower wreathes. Only I fall back in adoring You", and instantly went into Samadhi. Again, while running in divine ecstasy, his locks would get entangled in the low-hanging branches of trees and he would feel that Shiva was catching hold of him. He would then sit there and be in meditation for long periods.

Utpala's poetic works were compiled by his disciples - Sri Rama and Adityaraja. Later a great scholar, Vishwavasta, divided these into 20 Stotras assigning a heading to each. It is also said that Utpala himself had assigned the headings Sangrahastotra, Jayastotra and Bhaktistotra to 13th, 14th and 15th Stotras.

This great work came to be known as Shivastotravali (a rosary of hymns to Shiva). Commentary in Sanskrit has been written to this work of Utpala by Kshemraja, the fourth in line of disciples. Utpala was followed by his pupil Lakshmangupta, who was the guru of Abhinavagupta.

Shivastotravali (or Utpala-Stotravali) is so soul-stirring that once you read these Shlokas, you will continue to sing and muse on them. The ringing music in your ears will make you shed tears of joy and forget yourself. Kashmir's Persian scholars have termed it as Jnoon-e-Kamil (divine ecstasy of the sage). A stir is experienced while singing:

<verses>

"O Lord! Stand by my side and listen to the definition in brief of pleasure and pain. What is union with Thee is pleasure and what is separation from Thee is pain."

Isolational Joy

Here you have the feeling of isolational joy that you experience by listening to the shrill voice of a morning bird or the continuous flow of a waterfall. Utpala, for all purposes, was a loving and pure-hearted mystic. As the chief characteristic of his language is symbolism, he appeals to all sections of people. He has the power to penetrate human feelings and enraptures one with his dynamic touch. His great utterance to this effect is:

<verses>

"O Lord! I may have increased desire for the objective world like other people but with this difference that I shall look upon it as Thyself without any idea of duality."

The available works of Utpaladevacharya are as follows:

Pratyabhijnya Karikas (or Sutras);
Shivastotravali (with Kshemaraja's Sanskrit commentary and Hindi commentary by Swami Lakshman Joo); and
Ishwara-Siddhi and Ajadapromatri-Siddhi.

Source: Koshur Samachar

7.0 PRATYABHIJNA EXPOUNDED BY UTPALADEVA

The Pratyabhijna School is quite akin to the non-dual vedantic thought of Ajatavada explained by Gaudapada. Vasugupta was the first propounder of Shaivism in Kashmir. He flourished in the middle of the late Eighth Century A.D. Worship of different deities, Yoga systems and Shaiva faith have already been in practice here. According to Dr. K.C. Pandey, Kula, and 'Krama' system of Shaivism existed here much before Atri Gupta and Sangamaditya were invited by king Lalitaditya (725-761 A.D.) to settle in Kashmir. 'Agamas' are believed to be as old as 'Vedas'. It is natural that after the lapse of a certain cycle of time an established system of 'thought begins to fade away. Its revival, which emanates from God Himself, is also natural. Shaivism was thus revived in Kashmir when Lord Shiva Himself revealed 'Shiva-sutras' to Vasugupta in the vicinity of Harwan Village. He re-established the faith by explaining the Sutras to his disciples. With this he combated the growing Buddhism in Kashmir. This faith developed into two school of thought-one Spanda system of thought and the other Pratiyabhijna Philosophy; Siddha Somananda's Shivdrishti explains the latter. His teachings were imbibed well by his disciple Utpaladev, who possessed a sharp intellect. This brilliant disciple reestablished the thought of 'recognition' with his illustrious work Ishwara - Pratyabhijna. It is stated that Utpala was motivated to write the Karikas at the request of his son Vibhramakara, who wanted to imbibe them. In this treatise Utpala reflects the wisdom taught to him by his preceptor. It is an exhaustive exposition of the Philosophy of Recognition. Persian Scholars of Kashmir have termed it Khird-i-Kamil, "Wisdom of the sage". Together with various commentaries on this book and other similar works there grew up a mass of literature round the Pratyabhijha Karikas of Utpala. This work assumed such importance that the whole system of Kashmir Shaiva philosophy came to be known as Pratyabhyha Darshan in India and the countries abroad.

We know little about the early life of Utpala, who grew to be a great mystic saint of Kashmir. This, however, comes to us by tradition that he lived somewhere at Nowhata in Srinagar and that his time was the middle of the ninth century A.D. This is also as calculated from the date available in Rajatarangini. From the colophones of the works of his contemporary authors and those who followed him, we know that he was a Brahmin and lived a married life. His father's name was Udayakara. Utpala was followed by his disciple Lakshmana Gupta, one of the preceptors of the great Abhinavagupta, who wrote an exhaustive commentary and gloss on this work.

Although Utpala's Ishwara Pratyabhijha is difficult to assimilate as it deals with abstruse logic, yet it is a perfect work on this philosophy. It is not only a set of philosophic doctrines but also contains instruction on practical yoga. It is, therefore, interesting for aspirants of the highest ability, who can develop constant awareness of Supreme Consciousness. The three means advocated by Kashmir Shaivism in general are recognised in this philosophy. It is, however, known as Anupaya - the means without any means. The doctrine as summed up by Abhinavagupta is:

"Only the five great functions are to be followed. Since there is no existence of impurity, whence can there be any erosion: it is only a change in point of view. Otherwise, nothing has happened to Shiva. No Jeeva Bhava has been assumed by Him." (Abhinavagupta's commentary).

This doctrine of 'Recognition' was explained by Somananda to Utpaladev with the help of the following illustration:

A girl and a boy whose marriage was fixed and who did not know each other, one day happened to sit together along with their relatives and friends at a fair. During this short company the girl served tea to the party in which one was her would-be groom. There was no stir of feeling in either of them. But while tea was being served, a common acquaintance gave a hint of the scheduled marriage to the one sitting

by his side. Instantly a wave of the feeling of love ran through the bodies of both. The girl recognized her lover." In the same way 'Jeeva' recognizes himself in Shiva with the help of his preceptor. This is the philosophy of 'Recognition' in a nutshell. Utpala explained this more comprehensively than his teacher had. He sat and wrote his abstruse aphorisms during calm moments. It was his self-introspection which got established as philosophy. Gaudapada, the grand preceptor of 'Adi Shankaracharya' also had expounded a similar philosophy earlier. It is known as 'Ajatavada' in the Advaita vedanta philosophy. He says that nothing is born and so nothing dies. It is only the change in vision that the world appears as such." Utpala explained the philosophy in his own way and convincingly too.

Tradition goes that Utpala, during the later period of his life, would often be in spiritual ecstasy. His practices had ripened by the divine grace of Lord Shiva as a result of which he uttered notes full of divine rapture, intensely musical and pregnant with esoteric meaning. These utterances, verily, reveal the 'heart of Utpala'. He gave the same philosophy an exclusively devotional tinge. He sang verses in different tunes in praise of his Lord, expressing non-dual devotion, 'Abheda Bhakti'. He was so engrossed in ecstasy that he could not keep a record of his composition. He 'floated' above body-consciousness.

Since divinity also recedes to duality more often than not, while the soul resides in the body, Utpala at times came down to it when he opened his eyes to look around, his spiritual joy predominated in him. Filled with divine consciousness he would find his own mental reflection outside and get instantly drawn within. Once in spring, being in his ecstatic mood for long, Utpala opened his eyes and saw almond blossoms strewn by wind on the ground. At once he exclaimed: "Ah! devotees have performed worship and adorned the Lord with flower wreaths. Only I fall back." Uttering this he instantly got into Samadhi again.

Another time, while running in divine ecstasy, Utpala's locks got entangled among bushes. He felt that his beloved Shiva was catching hold of him. Imagining this he got drawn into meditation. To common people this may mean that Utpala was a psychologic abnormality with a soft heart. Since psychology has no approach to the spiritual field, as it is beyond the range of mind and matter, Utpala is known to have measured a considerable divine height. He needed not to sit for meditation. Shiva was always in his being just as Mother Kali's Divinity was always present in Paramahansa Ramakrishna's being. He sang in a melodious tune while panting for the final beatitude of Shiva, addressing him with earnest devotion. This speaks of the extent of his joy, the expression of which was termed Janun-i-Kamil - divine ecstasy of the sage by the Persian scholars.

Thus Utpaladev is said to have composed in this state a large number of verses many of which were collected and compiled by his disciples Sri Ram and Adityaraja. Finally, these were classified into twenty hymns by a great scholar Vishwavarata, who gave each hymn his own heading. The collection is named Utpala's Shivastotravali. This information has come down to us from Kshema Raja, a later author, and a disciple of Abhinavagupta.

In his exhaustive commentary on Shivastotravali Kshemaraj tells us, at the very outset of the book, that Utpala had, however, named three hymns himself. These are Sangrastotra, Jayastotra and Bhaktistotra - thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth chapters respectively as arranged in the book. Unplumbed deeps of one's heart get stirred as the rhythm on reciting of the verses touches one's ears. One sits rapt and breathless. A new life, a new course of study and meditation seems to begin. The centre of interest gets shifted. You continue to sing to yourself or the muse on the versified lines. Tears of joy, like pearls, trickle down the eyes and one virtually forgets oneself. Utpala addresses his beloved:

<verses>

O Lord: just, a while to listen to me
My pleasure and pain, in a nut-shell, I tell.

This being with thee is joy Supreme,
Bereft of thy grace, I suffer again.

Here you have a feeling of the joy of solitude that is experienced by listening to the shrill voice of a morning bird or the continued flow of a waterfall. Utpala, for all purposes, was a mystic, a loving and pure-hearted soul whose example we much later again find in Laleshwari, Nund Rishi and Ropa Bhawani. Swami Rama Tirtha was also one of such exalted modern saints.

As the chief characteristic of Utpala's language is symbolism, it appeals to all sects of people, especially to those who understand it. His power of penetrating human hearts enraptures one with his dynamic touch. He sang:

<verses>

O Lord: I may possess like common people, desire for enjoyment in the world. But with this difference that I should look upon these as thyself - without the least idea of duality.

Utpala laid stress on reconciliation of knowledge and devotion which practically means earnestness in knowing the self. He categorically expressed:

<verses>

"There is naught but thy existence in the Universe for those endowed with knowledge of self."
"Thy worship is great celebration for those who are blessed by thee."

Both these statements ever befit thy earnest devotees." Again he gushed

<verses>

"All their actions bear fruit who worship thee for their fulfilment. But every act of thy devotees who reside in thee is the fruit by itself."

These lyrical songs of Utpala are pithy and pierce through the very recesses of the heart of a devotee who is endowed with Divine grace. Utpala sang, rather uttered these notes like a singing bird, not for others but for himself, drowned into the Divine. His own feelings and emotions, joys and sorrows and above all his intense longing as an earnest seeker of spiritual Truth are vividly pictured in the hymns. Utpala's philosophy of Recognition can be summed up in the lines of Carol Schnieder

"Being sad with you is more beautiful
Than being happy Anywhere else."

This exactly conveys what Utpaladeva says to Lord Siva.

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8.0 FUNDAMENTAL ASPECT OF VEDANTA AND KASHMIR SHAIVISM

A comparative view of the two Philosophies

The six systems of Hindu Philosophy are Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Saankhya, Yoga, Mimaamsa and Vedanta. There are also many other schools of thought in India, but all are the variations of these six systems termed the Hindu Philosophy. To understand this clearly, we have to realize that the basis of all the schools of Indian Thought is the same which we call the Ultimate Reality, Supreme Consciousness, Brahman, Siva, Allah or God. All these schools of thought several conclude on common concepts which are :-

- i) All accept the central cycle of Nature, which is without beginning or end. This consists of vast phases of Creation, Sustenance and Dissolution.
- ii) All accept that life and death are but two phases of a single cycle to which the soul is bound. This is because of the ignorance of the true nature of things.
- iii) All accept Dharma as the moral law of the universe that accounts for these central cycles of Nature, as well as the destiny of the human soul.
- iv) All agree that knowledge of the self is the path to freedom and that Yoga is the method to attain final liberation.

All the schools of thought are, thus, but the fundamental interpretations of the Ultimate Reality. They are so inter-related that the hypothesis and the method of each is dependent upon that of the other. They are, in no way, contradictory to one another, as they all lead to the same practical end, the knowledge of reality and liberation of soul.

< verses >

'To get rid of evil and to attain permanent and supreme bliss', is the innate desire of every creature in the world.

Here is an attempt made to study a comparative view of the two schools of Indian thought, namely the Advaita Vedanta of Shankara and the Kashmir Shaivism, as these have great affinities with one another. Both advocate monism. Fundamentally, they have a single conception, but each develops it individually to suit particular minds. The physical reason for their individual development, apart from that of the mental, may be due to Historical background and Geographical situation of each.

Badarayana, probably, founded Vedanta in the plains of India while Durvasa expounded Trika Shaiva in the Himalayan ranges, the two being sober and sentimental respectively. Vedanta is an enquiry into the nature of the Ultimate Reality while Shaivism discusses the nature of this ultimate Reality and explains the cause of the initial impulse in nature. The sources of Vedanta are Vedas and those of Shaivism are the Tantras, which give supplementary explanations to Vedic thought. Both are said to be of divine authorship. No doubt, they are the revelations favoured to great sages and seers of this ancient land. But neither objects the postulates of either of these.

Both of these evolved philosophies seem to have had prevailed in this beautiful land of Kashmir since the very early times i.e. the first century A. D. or earlier. This is evident from a keen observation of the performances of daily and occasional rites and rituals by the Kashmiri Pandits even upto this day. Hymns from the Vedas and recitations from the Tantras are included in all kinds of such performances, simultaneously. Even later hymns like Mukundamala- a hymn to Lord Vishnu, and Sivamahimnastotram- a hymn to Lord Siva - the supreme deities of the two philosophies, are recited and worship offered simultaneously by devotees in traditional way. By this we understand that people in this land of Kashyapa

have from the very early times been accommodating perhaps because of their gift of intelligence from Nature. They always assimilated what came their way. According to Dr. Aurel Stien," the Brahmins absorbed Buddhist Faith and lived in harmony with their brethren who were converted to this faith in the valley. Thus the old religion here seems to have been polytheistic, of course, with special inclination towards ritualistic Shaivism.

Kula system of Shaivism, advocating the highest form of Siva had been introduced here in the fourth century A. D. Krama system of Shaivism, connected with Raja-Yog, and Kundalini Yoga, which stress that vital air and mind are interdependent, also had been introduced here early.

Then, Sankaracharya (788-820 A. D.) visited this valley in the first two decades of the ninth century. He only re-established the true faith of Upanishads called the Vedantas. To check further deterioration caused by the split in Buddhism, he explained the Upanishads in a system on the basis of Brahma Sutras in its commentary. He gave Vedanta Philosophy the right footing when he wrote his valuable commentaries on the ten principal Upanishads and the Bhagwadgita. He composed a number of hymns to different deities like Saraswati, Krishna, Skanda and so on, to give the unilateral direction to multifarious faiths in the whole country. He gave practical instructions that worship of different deities leads to the same goal, the Ultimate Truth on realization.

In his hymn to Dakshinamurti, Sankara's conception ultimate reality is the same as that of Pratyabhijna, reintroduced by Somananda and Utpalacharya, in Kashmir. To examine a comparison, let us study the following:

< verses >

"He, in whom this universe, prior to its projection was potentially present like a tree in a seed, and by whom it was wrought to its multiform by the magic, as it were, of His own will or in the manner of a great Yogi out of His own power, to that Supreme Being, embodied in the auspicious and benign Guru, I offer my profound salutation."

And < verses >

"By His own will the Supreme Lord, the essence of Knowledge (Supreme Consciousness) projects causelessly like the Yogi into this multiformal world."

Again, in the first stanza of the Dakshinamurti Stotra, Sankar, says:

< verses >

which means: "Who, by Maya as by dream, sees Himself the universe which is inside Him, like unto a city that appears in a mirror, (but) which is manifested as if without." In the commentary to this stanza in his book entitled 'The Hymns Of Sankara', Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan points out: "It is to be noted that in this hymn Sankara employs certain key-terms and concepts of the Pratyabhijna system known popularly as Kashmir Shaivism. The illustration of the mirrored city is found in the pratyabhijna works". Thus the people of Kashmir seem to have been influenced by the Vedanta Philosophy of Sankara as well as by the ancient Shaivism which later developed into Kashmir Shaivism.

Earlier two great Shaiva families of Sangamaditya and Atrigupta had migrated into Kashmir, when King Lalitaditya (699-736 A. D.) ruled here. They practised Tantric Shaiva rituals. These had already influenced the thought of people here when Shankara's Tantric Philosophy spread and influenced the Trika also. This leads us to think that Shankara must have had personal touch with some founder-writers here. To illustrate this we quote the following passage from the book entitled 'Abhinavagupta - An Historical & Philosophical Study' by Prof. Dr. K. C. Pandey :

"On the authority of the Rajatarangini (Ch. V, 66) we know that Bhatta Kallata, the pupil of Vasugupta, was a contemporary of Avantivarman, King of Kashmir (855-883 A.D). There he is referred to as 'Siddha.' It is, therefore, evident that at that time he was an old man of established reputation. Vasugupta, the teacher of Kallata, therefore, it is natural to suppose, belonged to the preceding scholastic generation extending from about 825 to 850 A. D. We shall, therefore, not be wrong if we say that Vasugupta gave a systematic form to the philosophical ideas of the monistic Tantras in his Siva Sutras in the next decade after Shankaracharya's visit to Kashmir towards the end of the second decade of the 9th century A. D." - (Page 154)

Thus, the mixed faith that the people of Kashmir had professed so far developed into a philosophical system when Vasugupta and Somananda gave Spanda and Pratyabhijna thoughts during the middle and latter part of the 9th century respectively. The Trika system of philosophy which had appeared on this earth through Durvasa, was in this way re-introduced by Siva's will, for the welfare and spiritual development of the people of Kaliyuga. Srimat Swami Lakshman Joo, in one of his lectures on Kashmir Shaivism says, "Like Vedanta, this system endeavours to remove the innate ignorance that separates the individual from the universal."

Then, what are the points of difference between these two established philosophies?

There is no difference so far as the aim of both is concerned. Both the monistic philosophies aim at the realization of the Ultimate Reality, which one calls Parabrahman and the other calls Parama Siva. So Paramasiva or Parameshwara is that ultimate Reality, which the Vedas declare as "This world came out from the Eternal Existence which is one, the only and without the second."

< verses >

But there are points of difference in so far as their composition is concerned. On the basis of Sankhya, the two philosophies hold that the universe comprises of tattwas (or categories).

Twenty three are common in both:

Five Bhutas - (Elements)
Five Jnanendriyas (Organs of cognition)
Five Karmendriyas (Organs of action)
Five Tanmatras (subtle elements)
Three Antahkaranas (internal organs)-Mind, Intellect & Ego.

The points of difference are:

- i) In Vedanta the twenty-fourth category is Prakriti and the twenty-fifth is the Purusha, which is known as the Supreme Being (Parameshwara). He is ever pure and is not tainted with the stain of worldly corruption, just as no amount of dirt can ever alter the chemical purity of gold in a gold ring. Therefore, soul or self in Vedanta means the universal Soul, Paramatman or Supreme Spirit. This is identified with Purusha, the efficient cause of the manifest world. It brings all change by its mere presence as the sun brings forth the spring flowers.

Trika, on the other hand, adds thirteen more tattwas to the twenty-three of Sankhya. These are:

Prakriti - the world of difference which has the quality of being affected,
Purusha - the limited individual,
Six Kanchukas or sheaths - They are the limiting adjuncts on the individual in respect of space, Knowledge, interest, time and authorship.

So far this is all impure knowledge.

Five more tattwas are considered to be in the field of Pure- knowledge. These are the five energies Parama Siva called consciousness, bliss, desire, knowledge and Action. Kashmir Shaivism postulates the single reality of Siva with two aspects - one Transcendental and the other Immanent like two sides of one and the same coin. The first is beyond manifestation. But both are real as the effect cannot be different from the cause. It is said:

- iii) Vedanta discusses the relationship of God, Matter and World. The central theme of the Vedanta Sutras is the philosophical teachings of the Upanishads, which concern the nature of these three relative principles. This includes the relation between the universal soul and the individual soul. Shankaracharya explained, for the practical purposes, this union in his monumental commentaries in the 8th century A. D.

The system of Kashmir Shaivism deals with the three-fold principle of God, Soul and Matter, which gives it the name Trika. Vasugupta (9th century A. D.) received the Siva- Sutras by inspiration and explained these to preserve for man the principle of monism which existed in the Tantras, also known as Agamas. This revived an understanding of truth in its ultimate form.

- iv) In Vedanta, Maya, is a means of operation. It is not a substance. It is the force which creates illusion of non-perception in nature. It is the dividing force or we may call it the finitising energy which creates form in the formless. The world is known as Maya because it has no reality. It is only an appearance of fleeting forms. The real is never affected by the unreal as the ground is never made wet by a mirage. Maya is ignorance (avidya) when it operates the individual mind. It vanishes when the knowledge of reality dawns just as the morning mist dissipates on rising of the sun.

In Kashmir Shaivism Maya is the power of contraction of the five universal modes of consciousness, called the Kanchukas or sheaths. The power of contraction works thus:

Eternal Existence contracts into time
All-pervasiveness contracts into Space
All-completeness contracts into desire
All-knowledge contracts into limited knowledge
and, All-powerfulness contracts into limited power

Maya-shakti, as it is called here, produces Purusha and Prakriti which together establish the dual world of mind and matter. Here it is termed Maya-Granthi, as it becomes the cause of bondage. As un- divided power of Siva, Maya is not separate from the reality either. As the gross power of consciousness it is called Maya-Shakti, which grants liberation to the contracted soul. The influence of Maya is evident in the law of Nature. Every period of action is followed by a period of rest just as sleep follows action.

iv) In Vedanta we are required to pass through the four-fold discipline which consists of: viveka - Discrimination vairagya - Dispassion shat-sampat - Right conduct (six-fold) :- a) Mental quietness; b) Taming the mind; c) Abstinence; d) Endurance; e) Confidence; and f) Steadiness. mumukshutwa - Desire for liberation. (Tattwabodha of Shankaracharya) 2(b).

There are also three kinds of students who advance towards self-realization. They are those :

- i) who act with zeal and faith,
- ii) who act for the good of humanity,
- iii) who are immersed in meditation.

But in Shaivism it is said: < verses >

'There is no consideration of first being worthy of it. There is no restriction of caste, creed or colour for getting admission to this shaiva order. This naturally must mean that it is the intelligent who can grasp this advanced philosophy, being the latest development on all the others. For the fine intellects no restriction is imposed. But there are grades in Diksha-initiation. They are :

1. Samayik - when the disciple is given the training of proper discipline.
 2. Putrak - when spiritual knowledge is imparted to the disciple.
 3. Acharya - when the disciple becomes Acharya (preceptor) and imparts knowledge to other disciples.
- And
4. Siddha- - The perfect being. (vide Tantraloka) 3 (c)

- iv) Divine Grace is anugraha in Vedanta and shaktipaata in Kashmir Shaivism. Both the philosophies understand it to be unconditional. They are in complete agreement on this point. Vedanta says that intellectual power, study of the Vedas and even spiritual instruction are persuaded by divine grace alone :-

< verses >

'It is by Lord's grace that one is led to monistic practices.' Again, the Upanishads declare :-

< verses >

'Atma can be realized by him whom He favours and to whom He reveals Himself.'

In Shaivism also it is Shaktipaata that makes self- recognition possible.

< verses >

'One is directed towards the preceptor as if tethered with a rope' .

< verses >

'There is no human effort to earn shaktipaata'.

It is the independent will of Lord Siva to grant shaktipaata or divine grace to any one at any place and at any time.

- v) Badarayan's viewpoint is the outcome of the various schools of thought of his day, as there existed Ashmarthya, Audulomi, Kaashakritsna and others who had held different views previously. His is the accepted classic of the Vedanta system to-day. It was endorsed and expanded by Gaudapada and Shankaracharya through Maandukya karikas and Prasthanatrayi respectively. Vidyaranya held the same view in his Panchadashi.

Likewise, we find that the polytheistic faith with greater inclination towards Shaivism developed into Kashmir Shaivism or Trika philosophy with the advent of Vasugupta and Somanandanatha. This peculiar philosophy developed in Kashmir and includes almost all the previous thoughts. It was further adored by Kallata, Utpalacharya and later by Abhinavaguptapada. Siva-Sutra, Sivadrishti, Spanda, Ishwara-pratyabhijnavarshini need special mention in this context. Besides this, Abhinavagupta's Tantraloka and Paratrimshika Vritti form the encyclopaedia of Kashmir Shaivism.

To sum up, if we study both these philosophies with interest and zeal, we shall find that both lay stress on the practical aspect, which is realization of the Self. Both enable all to realise the teachings during

one's own lifetime. Their individual developments lead to the common goal - Realization of the Supreme Reality - where there is no experience of duality and hence no sorrow. It is the state of absolute bliss. It is the stateless state. The vedas declare :-

< verses >

Truth is one but the wise give it in many ways'.

Although Kashmir Shaivism can hardly be grasped until all the six systems of philosophy are comprehended, yet no such system of India will be complete without this. No doubt, Tantras suffered a great criticism from the western and eastern scholars, due to their esoteric or symbolic character. But thanks are due to Sir John woodroffe (Arther Avalon), who was the first to defend the outraged Tantras. In the foreword to his book entitled 'The Garland of Letters', Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan (professor Emeritus, Centre of Advanced study in philosophy, University of Madras) writes :-

"The decent Indian mind that had developed a deep-rooted prejudice against the Tantras became awake to their excellence after the pioneering work of this great foreigner."

He made their meaning clear and helpful for understanding the culture of India. Therefore, it is imperative that this line of traditional literature should properly be understood. Then it will be convincing to the common man that Kashmir Shaivism gives the detailed analysis of the ultimate Reality, which Vedanta already explained on the basis of Saankhya Philosophy.

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