“It is dualism to maintain that Consciousness is one thing, its power to become or evolve is another...”

8.0. Power called citi (Śakti) is studied in the last chapter with all its aspects of expansion. The power in Kashmir Saivism is not inert, but conscibus. Consciousness is always free. For this reason, Kṣemarāja starts; “ditiḥ svatanaṭrā”, “Consciousness is free”. So here is dealt first consciousness or power as Freedom, which develops to Svātantrya-vāda.

8.1.0. Svātantrya-vāda: consciousness as freedom

Consciousness as Free is the essence of Kashmir Saivism: svatantraśabdah brahmavadavailakṣanyamācakṣamānāḥ māheśvarasāravatvāynte.

Absolute is declared conscious owing to the power of freedom. There is an invariable concomitance between freedom and consciousness. For example, a man is conscious, because he has more freedom than a tree. Freedom is nothing, but the awareness of oneself; the opposite of it is dependence. This self-awareness or svātantrya is technically called vimarṣa. Kṣemarāja defines, “Freedom is the highest Energy (parāśaktirūpa) which consists of consciousness (citiḥ). It is the highest type of self-awareness and not different from the Lord Śiva. parāśaktirūpa citiḥ bhagavati svatanaṭrā anuttara-vimarṣamayī śivabhāttārakābhinnā”. This highly technical term vimarṣa is explained: “To be conscious of the consciousness”. In another way, consciousness is the cause of the world and therefore it is Free. yata-śceyam viśvasya siddhau parādvaya-sāmarasyāpādanatmani ca samsārahetuh tatah eva svatanaṭrā.

This is the absolute freedom of the Absolute, that is called svātantryavāda in Śaiva philosophy. It gives rise to many implications that can be studied as follows:
8.1.1. Freedom and activity: a state of beyond logic

The main implication of the doctrine of Freedom in this non-dual system of the Śaivites is to ascribe activity to the absolutely non-dual Lord. Freedom of Consciousness resulting in activity, is called Power (Śakti). It can be understood better as follows:

For a Vedantin, consciousness can never be active. Activity is the characteristic of inert ones. It demands duality, which is false.

In any action an inert one functions the object of action and consciousness functions as the subject. When both are related due to superimposition, we call action is effected. For a Vedantin, there is no inert, nor duality. So all action is false and does not belong to consciousness. When there is no world of duality at all, how can action exist? Due to ignorance, superimposition of the object on subject (body on self), action is attributed to self. Moreover Śankara’s main approach was to refute the doctrine of action (karmakāṇḍa) and to establish the doctrine of knowledge (jñānakāṇḍa).

The Śaivites look on this problem in another way. For them, inactivity is the property of the inert ones, and activity is the natural property of consciousness. There is an invariable concomitance between the two: consciousness and activity, for, no inert by itself can move. To move an inert, at least one sentient agent is required. A sentient knows himself, otherwise it is jada. So, where there is action there is consciousness and where there is activity there is consciousness. Consciousness is active, because it is free, “svatantrah kartā”, says Panini also.

In this way the activity of the consciousness, due to its nature of freedom, makes the Lord to perform the five activities. These five actions of the Lord are nothing but the five powers which differentiate this system from that of the Vedanta—says Kṣemarāja. Variety of manifestation is possible without contradicting oneness as in the case of mirror. While explaining this activity of consciousness, the Saivites slightly depart from the reality. They explain that the process of exhibiting activity is not in the general manner,
but consists of a different mode. Since the essential nature of consciousness is unity but an action requires succession. So, the Śaivites answer that though the empirical action is consisted of succession, yet the action in the higher stage of creation (i.e. for holding a cause effect relation between the non-differentiated world and the non-dual consciousness) is not successive, but simultaneous, a transcendental type of accomplishment\(^{14}\) which is possible due to the same unique power of complete freedom (\(pūrṇasvātantra\)). “\textit{nanu jagadapi citah bhinnam naiva kiṅcit; abhede ca katham hetuhetumadbhāvah, ucyate: cideva bhagabāī śvachasvātantrā kāryakāraṇa-bhāvah}”. So the \(kāryakāraṇabhāva\) is paramārtha. It is due to the power of complete freedom (\(pūrṇasvātantra\))\(^{19}\). This play of power is inconceivable (\(acintyā\)) for a human mind, and the Śaiva gives the illustration of one’s inability to cross his own shadow\(^{16}\), as the Vedantins ascribe that \(māyā\) is inconceivable: \(acintyā khalu ye bhāvā\). 

In ascribing activity to the absolute, the Śaivite pleads that when consciousness fully develops to be the realiser of itself, it is then called the \(kartā\). When the Vedantin’s Brahman could not know its being of consciousness, they laugh at them and refute “why their consciousness has not so developed to know its own consciousness”\(^{17}\).

8.1.2. Freedom for unaffected action

In performing action, the absolute is neither touched by action nor inaction, but appears to be touched. Moreover action is always relative (\(pratiyogi\)). Where there is no second thing, how could one perform any action with a nonexistent thing? The Śaivites reply that without \(kārttivājñāna\) there cannot be any knowledge of \(akārttivājñāna\). \(Kārttva\) is established with \(akārttva\). So here \(kārttva\) is \(kārttva\)-\(visiṣṭa\)-\(akārttva\)-\(this\) is the \(pūrṇa kārttva\). It is because \(cit\) becomes the substratum of both \(kartā\) and \(akartā\), both of which are knowledge. “\(kārttva\)-\(jñāna\)-\(sahito\)‘\(pyakartā bhāti\)
sundarah". But this kartrtva of Śiva is not different from the akartrtva of Brahman.

\[\text{akartrtve jadatvamsyat kartrtve dvaitamāpate}/\]
\[\text{advitiye svātmamātre kartrtā'kartrte katham}///\]

The absolute is pūrṇa-kartā in the sense that both kartrtva and akartrtva exist on it. To regard one either kartrtva or akartrtva leads to imperfectness. So a combination of both is accepted. This is the absolute freedom:

\[\text{ata etad dvayaṁ yasya sattayaśa prakāśate}/\]
\[\text{saccidānandasvarūpam vadūmāḥ pūrṇakartrtat}///\]

This is His sarva-kartrtva-absolute activity or vilāsa- sporting. Like a lamp, it shines for the utility of the world, though Himself is unattached. For this reason the power of activity does not bring any change to the absolute. Such type of creation without the modification of the original, saves from parināmavāda of the Śāṅkhyā system. Fearing of this Parināma-vāda, the Vedanti had to take resort to Vivarata-vāda, where the effect becomes unreal. But in this system, though the cause is not modified, yet the effect is not modified. Naturally there might be, if the cause is not modified, only two possibilities viz., either the effect is false or there is no production at all. But the Saivites surpassed the two. They say that neither the effect is unreal nor there exists any absence of creation; still the cause is not modified. So the system here goes beyond logic. It happens so due to this power of Freedom.

8.1.3. Creation due to svātantrya: fulfillment of freedom

The third result, achieved by this power of Freedom is that there does not arise any necessity to accept the beginningless ignorance, nor the impression of the past lives, nor the beginningless action etc. to explain the process of creation. By accepting this, neither any atom nor any prakṛti is required for creation. Rather the reflection of Itself on Itself could produce the creation. Kṛṣṇeṣ vara writes, “By His own desire and not by any other’s desire like
Brahman, She Herself, but not by any other thing like material” “svecchayā natu brahmādivat anyecchayā”

The why of creation and the concealment and revelation of the absolute are more clearly explained by this power of Freedom. For the Absolute is enough powerful to do any thing. So automatically Its nature becomes to play, ātma-vilāsa as they say. An illustration that brings home is that just like a child, being free and for his own joy, moves round and then falls heavily on the ground, observing the whole world revolving round, so also the Lord comes and goes due to his freedom. Freedom is defined as the power to know oneself or the perfect awareness of oneself the opposite of which is dependence: paramārthaḥ tayā svatmāvijnānām hi svatantaraḥ/ato nyathā tu vijnānam paratantram prakīrtitam?

8.2 Ābhāsa-vāda: Consciousness as limited (subjective realism)

Ābhāsa-vāda of this philosophy stands in contradiction to parināma-vāda. The word ābhāsa, does not mean appearance as in Vedanta, but means manifestation, the literal meaning of the word. Creation is only a manifestation of that what lies inside. There being only one consciousness, all ābhāsas are nothing but the ideation of the universal consciousness, appearing as external to the empirical subject. With compare to dream, it is said that ābhāsa is like the dreaming objects, which are nothing but the manifestation of the dreamer. They are like the ideation of an artist’s art. They are compared with the waves in a sea of universal consciousness. Which is not affected by its waves.

A jar is an ābhāsa not of one, but a combination of ābhāsas, as many qualities like roundness, brownness, heaviness etc. we perceive. The combination of all ābhāsas is done due to the svātantryaśakti and it is spoken of as
one, because it is conceived of having one causal efficiency at the time of cognition.

Abhāsavāda forms the Śaiva theory of creation as well as the theory of knowledge. So it performs two functions,

(I) Epistemology and (II) Ontology.

8.2.1. Epistemology

Jīva and jagat

Everything being the manifestation of the universal consciousness, the phenomenon of knowledge is explained like the rise of two waves in the Sea of the universal consciousness. One of them has purity (nairmalya), the capacity to receive reflection, and the other is without it. The former is called jīvā-bhāsa (limited sentient manifestation) the later, jadābhāsa (insentient manifestation). When the rising sentient wave is affected by the insentient which rises simultaneously with the former, as a mirror by the objects placed before it, the phenomenon of knowledge is said to have taken place. Manifestation being the characteristic of consciousness and not of the inerts, there is no great difference like light and darkness, as Śankara says, between jīvābhāsa and jadābhāsa, subject and object.

8.2.1.2. Ignorance and error

The manifestation of the world is due to ignorance, but the ignorance itself is due to the power of freedom of the Lord. Ignorance is the cause of bondage. Due to ignorance, the non-dual is not realized. So it aims at removing the veil of ignorance. It is not a total absence of knowledge, for such a state is to be found only in insentient, such as bricks and stones. It means simply imperfect knowledge, as it is found in ordinary mortals. The self is covered with the three impurities, of innate ignorance, (anava mala) which is the cause of another called kārmyamala, which again is the cause of the third
ignorance, called the impurities of transitory existence (māyiya mala). The opposition of ignorance is perfect knowledge by which the self is realized. Here, there is no negation of the universe, but a new interpretation and appreciation. Error, caused by ignorance, is not subtraction, sublation or cancellation, but a fulfillment, a transformation or a supplementation. Error, called akhyāti is a part of truth. So, it is imperfect knowledge (apūrṇa khyāti). There is no error in itself. It is relative, partial or limited knowledge (called error) with reference to complete knowledge. Error consists in the unification of the abhāsa. There is no error so far as the “this” part of the rope in conceiving a snake is concerned. So error or akhyāti is apūrṇa khyāti. It is defined “That state which for the time being negates or keeps away from Śiva, the consciousness of His full nature”.

8.2.2 Ontology: Power as the Principle of Negation

Objects are the limited manifestations (abhāsa) of the Absolute, and the absolute becomes manifested through its own opposition or power of Negation. Śakti is that power of the Absolute by which the Absolute Itself is negated and the final manifestation takes place. Even the manifestation of the Śivatattva is possible due to this power of Śakti. It represents the passage from the noumenon to the phenomena, from the Absolute to the relative. Negation consists in His self-concealment or disappearance (tirodhāna). The divine Śakti which is the nature of the self-forgetting and self differentiating, conceals the Supreme ego of the Lord and thereby manifests the finite universe. In Vedānta, negation is the nature of rejection or cancellation. For the Śaiva, negation is grounded in reality and performs a positive function. The Absolute must have the power of self-limitation or self-negation, otherwise we cannot account for its determinate or limited manifestation. Animated by the desire to manifest the universe, which is found in the identity with Himself, the magnificent parama-Śiva at first passes in the void, the Absolute void-says Pratyabhijñāhrdayakāra.
Negation at the highest level is nothing but the manifestation of the supreme will. It is an expression of the fullness of Reality, not something external to the Absolute, but the power of freedom of consciousness to obscure his own nature. Negation is neither a fulfillment of, nor an exclusion to the Absolute, for It (absolute) is Perfect. To regard negation as external would amount a negation of the Absolute itself. Therefore, the Saivites assert that in fact negation is the manifestation of the Absoluteness of reality and does not involve any contradiction in it. Contradictions do not operate in reality. We speak of certainty, for example, of a jar, that “This is a jar and nothing else” only on the basis of differentiation, the chief characteristic of which is negation. Nothing can be absolutely negated. Negation is not negative, but it exists; for, it shines (cf. bhāvarūpa). This shows the similarity with and the difference from māyā.

In this way “The doctrine of Abhāsavāda presents that the individual lives in a world consisting not of shadows and appearance as the Vivartavāda would have us believe, nor the momentary creation of the beginningless vijñā saṇa-vāda would represent it to be, but of ābhāsas, the apparent of perception which have got a separate existence from himself.”

Summerisingly, it may be said, “The essence of the Ābhāsa-vāda is that all ābhāsas are neither unreal nor valueless, but regarded as merely imperfect or incomplete in itself. It is a manifestation of the Unlimited as limited.”

8.3. Reality of the world

The reality and the unreality of the world are the most cardinal points, which at first, attract our attention. This is why many schools, even Aurovindo in modern period, came to refute Śankara. Kashmir Saivism in this regard has a unique place. We find that it regards the universe both real as well as unreal. The following are the arguments.
8.3.1 World as real.

(a) The world exists, the Saivites say, with all its multiplicity even after self-realization. But its existence attains a new interpretation, as it is known in its true perspective.

(b) By no means the world can be separated from the Absolute. They are identical, "abheda".

(c) The world is nothing but citi Sakti Herself.

(d) The experience of the Lord is never unreal. The world is the experience of the Lord.

(e) The universe is the operation of Sakti, and merges in it. So it is either "is" as unmanifest or "exists" as manifested Sakti. So it is real in the sense that it is the aspect of the Ultimate Reality.

(f) The reality can be known from the relation between Power and Power-holder as follows:

(i) "Although the manifestations of power are not known independently... It does not mean that they are unreal."

(ii) "Power exists as an inseparable nature of an object. It is the very being of the possessor. Without power, there cannot be any concept of its possessor."

(iii) The distinction between power and its possessor is imaginary. For example, a chair is not different from its constituent parts like leg, hands, back etc., but the distinction is conventional.

(g) Relation between the manifester and the manifested is not of cause-effect relation, in the sense that the former constitutes the material for the latter, but is similar to that which exists between thinking self and the thought, a subject-object relation.

But, the world changes for the Saivites also. So they hold that a thing may be real and yet be the subject of change. So they hold that the world is unreal also. The unreality of the world can be known from the following statements:
8.3.2 World as unreal.

When the non-duality is the reality, how can the duality exist there? Modern Śaiva Scholars vigorously establish the reality of the world for this system. But the following statements should be considered:

(a) Abhinava says: “In the sphere of māyā, all duality such as blue, yellow, pleasure and pain is only practical and not real”.

(b) All that shines in the sphere of māyā is illusory.

(c) The reality is actually veiled and the universe is limited as apparent.

(d) All the vision of the individual is not real, but false and he is deluded.

(e) The limitation of the world is essentially unlimited, it assumes limitation.

(f) The world though not different, appears to be different from the Lord.

(g) The argument of B.N. Pandit finally concludes that the reality of the world is not noumenal, but phenomenal.

(h) Last but not the least, Abhinavagupta vehemently and straightforwardly declares the world to be unreal. He says that the universe is as false as the dream (svapnabhrāma-is his wording) or the snake on a rope, or ghost on shadows.

8.3.3 Analysis

What one feels from such contradictory statements about the reality and unreality of the world is that unlike the Vedanta, the world does not arise out of an alien principle for the Advaita School of Kashmir. The Śaivites are too bold to declare that their Lord, though Absolute and unchanging, yet possesses all wealths and Glory of everything. They do not fear to address from earth to Sadāśiva, as the true nature of the Lord. For, all these have come from Him alone. So, He shines in all of them. No other alien thing (like māyā) could exist infront of Him to snatch His property of the world and could de-
clare him as its Master or source. In this sense all is true. The reality can never be nonexistent or illusory like double Moon. In no case can the Saivites hold the world as mere figments of nescience. "The subject however, which changelessly endures (besides the changing world) may be said to be real in its fullest sense. Whereas the changing world is real in the sense that there is a direct causal nexus between Śiva and Śakti and the Universe. Śiva as Śakti is the cause of the universe, and Śakti in the form of jīva (all manifested forms) He actually involves." Calling the world as real, they surpass the logic of contradictoriness to maintain the doctrine of visvamaya and visvottirnātattva. They embrace all, but do not desert anything for the sake of Absolutism. This is the benefit of the system from a worldly or sādhanā point of view. They are not escapists, nor do they abandon anything. No less, but an integration is upheld. The Upanisadic proclamation "sarvam khaluidam brahma" and "sa aikṣyata" etc. are administered to its fullest application. This is what when Śankara recites-

"He, whose manifestations-which are themselves nothing but the Reality-appear as the object of the world..." 

8.4. World as consciousness: Mahāvidyā

There is no vidyā or avidyā in this system. Everything is conscious, but appears to be unconscious (opposite to māyā) due to the veiling play of conscious Śakti. The following are the arguments, the Śaivites present, to say the world as Conscious.

(a) Universal Consciousness and its power are not different, but the distinction is imaginary and conventional. So all abhāsas and actions are nothing but the appearance of the universal consciousness.

(b) Pratyabhijñākāra says that the universe as simply a manifestation of the universal consciousness. It is very much similar to the creation of a
Yogi (cf. *mahāyogīnā yaḥ svecchayā*). Objects are the series of consciousness like the pictures in a Cinema show.

(c) Subject and object are not different like light and darkness, for a connection exists in them.

(d) If consciousness would be different from power, both would be inert and therefore nothing. "The Sānkhya and the Vedāntins both are wrong in holding Śakti to be inert".

(e) In reality, the insentient is nowhere found to be powerful.

(f) Śakti hides Śiva's real nature and gives rise to the manifestation of the world which includes thirty four categories. Śiva and Śakti both are conscious. Śiva is the light of consciousness and Śakti is the power, which is the expression of the perfect I or Bliss aspect of consciousness.

(g) The contraction consists of consciousness alone. Therefore, it is consciousness. By that all becomes conscious, however unconscious it might appear.

In a negative way i.e. by refuting the inertness of things, Śaivites also establish the presence of consciousness in all things.

(a) In refuting Vedanta, they say, if *vidyā* or knowledge is conscious owing to its self revelation, then why will not *avidyā* be so when it reveals the world?

(b) If *māyā* due to its destructibility, becomes inert, why not then *vidyā* will be so when it is also destroyed? Reversely, if *avidyā* due to its revelation of inertness becomes inert, then a teacher due to the teaching of an ignorant also becomes ignorant.

(c) If *vidyā* in conducing for self realization, becomes conscious, then *avidyā* also in projecting or producing individuals will become conscious.

In this way the Śaivites prove the consciousness of the whole creation. Logically Kṣemarāja argues that everything even *avidyā* or ignorance, is knowledge. Very beautifully he argues: "If it be said that nescience is that which never appears or which is never experienced, then appearance
alone or knowledge alone remains. Again if it is said that akhyatit does appear or experienced (in some form), then being of the nature of knowledge, knowledge alone remains.

So he declares, “There is nothing in mind, body or sound which is not conscious.” Moreover in their system there is no such inert avidya nor vidyā, but the Full consciousness, Mahāvidyā, whose essence is Self, plays everywhere.

“Mahāvidyā is beyond Sat and asat. She is again the substratum of the behaviors of Sat and asat. She is viśvamayī and viśvoattirṇā. Whose form is Śiva... which is effulgently — bestows peace to the world and Herself is perfectly complete—that is called Mahāvidyā.”

\[
\text{asmanmate tvavidyā vā vidyā vā nāsti tattvataḥ/}
\text{mahāvidyā svātmarūpā samullasati sarvataḥ//}
\text{śivākārāpārā bhavajaladhisārā guruvarā}
\text{kṛpāpārāvarā bhajadamṛtadhārā dharavārā/
\text{umākāro'nkārā nijasahajasaundaryaramāni}
\text{mahāvidyā seyam jayati paramānandaramāni//}
\]