CHAPTER III

SAIVISM AND VAISNAVISM
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According to Saivism, Rudra Siva is the first cause who creates, sustains and re-absorbs the universe. The early epic recognises him as an ascetic, 'rapt in contemplation of his own unfathomable being, who, though performing terrific austerities is also often willing to grant boons and to confer favours upon his worshippers. His phallic aspect, attesting to his ability for unlimited production'. According to archaeological findings, the Siva aspect of the Divinity existed even before 1st Century B.C. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata have referred to his divine power and greatness. Siva is very often regarded as Lord, Master and Father of the universe. In him the finite and the infinite meet, and in him all the opposites are reconciled. He is described both as the creator and destroyer, terrible and mild, evil and good, male and female, eternal rest and ceaseless activity. Again this great god transcends both the finite and the infinite, yet indwells the soul.

Scholars regard the worship of Siva as pre-historic. 'The people of Mohenjo-Daro worshipped a male deity who

may be regarded as the prototype of Siva. He is represented as seated in the yoga posture and surrounded by animals. This explains the later conception of Siva as a *yogin* and *pasúpati*. All other qualities are attributed to Siva in the later ages.  

The worship of Siva is popular throughout Indian subcontinent till today. There are different sub-sects of Saivism. In the process of evolution due to the influence of Samkhya, Siva came to be worshipped along with Sakti. The phallic worship in the Puranic age got a mystical and philosophical meaning and was recognised as an inseparable part of the Saiva religion.

Most of the Saiva Puranas record a detailed account of the process for the realisation of the supreme knowledge (*Siva-jnana*). Linga Purana lays great emphasis on yoga and siva purana on bhakti and yoga. The Siva Purana further states that by the process of renunciation of worldly Karma one comes nearer to Siva. Through the knowledge of Siva one can discover the sorrow of the cycle of birth and rebirth. Accordingly a detachment from sense objects arises which again gives rise to emotion (*bhava*) and meditation (*dhyana*). Thus a devotee concentrates and meditates.

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on the nature of Siva and attains the state of yoga by the grace of Siva. At the end, the individual gets liberation and becomes equal to Siva. When one's soul becomes lost in Siva one is said to be in the state of samadhi. It is like a lamp that burns in a steady flame. This analogy of flame in the heart according to some scholars, is the symbolic example of siva linga. Siva linga is like a lamp which is burning in the heart of every man and which is the controller and director of past and future. Originally linga is used as a symbol of Siva. 

Svetasvatara Upanisad gives stress on the supremacy of Siva. He is the God of all gods (Mahādeva) and the Great Master (Īsāna). He is attained by true tapas (austerity) and then comes the removal of all bondage. Both Agni and Rudra are combined in the concept of Siva. 

It is noticeable that, Sakti — the feminine aspect of god head did not get separate importance in Saivism. Uma, Ambikā, Pārvati, Haimavati, Kāli, etc. got only the status of wife of Rudra-Siva. 'Siva and Sakti are not two separate realities, but two phases (conceptual)
or aspects of the same Reality'. In Kashmir Saivism Sakti is described as the hrdaya (heart) and the Sāra (essence) of Siva.9

Thus, Siva who is always immersed in a yogic trance can be viewed as Absolute Brahman of the Upanisads and of course, the Purusa of Sāmkhya. Sāmkhya, though is not a direct descendent of the Upanisads, yet it could not but describe the concept of Purusa with an image of Siva. In Saivism Siva is the spirit (Purusa). Only Kashmir Saivism accepts the trinity consisting of Siva, Sakti and Nara which according to some scholars is due to the influence of Tantra.

According to Spanda, a branch (the other being pratyabhijna) of Kashmir Saivism, Siva is supposed to be the cause of all distinctions. Vasugupta, the Kasmir Saiva Acharya, describes,

"Spanda (vibration) is a psychic energy. It is a divine power in the form of serpent power (kundalini) which asleep or coiled at the basic centre, awakened by breath control and concentration on the Divine on it... it assends to the highest centre above the cerebrum and unite with Siva."10

Siva the God, according to the followers of this school, is independent and creates merely by the force

10. Ibid.
of his will all that comes into existence. The individual soul is identical with the supreme soul but fails to perceive this identity due to Maya and Karma.

The ultimate reality which is designated as Siva, Paramesvara, Purna, Atman, etc. is both transcendent and immanent. The transcendent aspect is described as Siva, and the immanent as Sakti. Considered as purely transcendent Siva is Śāva (dead). But as a matter of fact, there is a perfect equilibrium (samarasya) between Siva and Sakti. This state is known as Parama Siva.¹¹

This part can be compared again with Samakhya-Purusa. A vyakta (purusa) is the ultimate cause of the creation which itself is uncaused (Karika XV). Siva is considered as self-caused (sayambhu) and therefore, both Siva and Purusa of Samkhya are 'infinite, endless indivisible, inconceivable, inactive and immanent. At the earliest stage of creation, Purusa is in a state of trance. So is Siva, according to the Great Epic, 'the great ascetic, isolated and eternally at rest.'¹²

Kasmir Saivism, which is also known as Trika explains the knowledge of reality in three modes viz.,

¹¹ Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. IV, p. 83.
¹² Zaehner, op.cit., p. 82.
non-dual (abheda), non-dual-cum-dual (bheda bheda) and dual (bheda). Like Brahman, Siva is pre-consciousness, the benign one, the Highest good and bliss. Though He is one, yet He is in constant play with His own Sakti. Trika has given ample scope for bhakti. Another important feature of Kasmir Saivism is that it does not give an independent reality to Prakṛti as the Samkhya does, for according to it, Prakṛti represents a stage in the evolution of the universe out is Prama Siva. Moreover, like Advaita Vedanta, it does not reduce the universe to a mere illusion or maya. Siva is also considered to be the divine physician and also the 'Lord of dance'. His constant companion of a white bull and his consort is Parvati who is rather a part of himself.

There is another manifestation of Siva is a symbolic presentation of union between male and female principles. The totality of his nature is the totality of all existence and it is represented by the image of Ardhaṇāri-svara where the gods form the two halves of one body. To explain it philosophically it is a creative union of the active and passive principles. There is a description of this aspect of Siva in the Mahābhārata. In the Rgvedic

story of Yama and Yami we had a similar primeval bi-sexual character.

"The Yogisvara Siva together with his active (huntress) wife is a direct illustration of the inactive Purusa and the active Prakrti principles. Siva and Parvati thus satisfied the religious cravings at all levels of consciousness." 15

The cult of Ardhanārisvara is as old as Saivism. Though it is not popular in the present day society. The idea of Ardhanarishvara is a symbolic expression of the two aspects of one ultimate Being. In the inactive or negative aspect all creative impulses remain dormant and the whole universe lies as a mere potency and possibility. 'This negative aspect is the state of nothingness'. In this aspect Sakti remains perfectly absorbed in the Lord, as if in a union of deep embrace. 16 Thus, the union of Siva and Sakti is the basis of the concept of Ardhanārisvara. Each human body is the temple of Ardhanārisvara. This concept also represents the dual personality of human being. Thus, a man is a man because of the predominance of male aspect and vice versa.

In the united image of Radhakrishna the idea of Ardhanārisvara, once again could find expression. For

instance, according to Vaisnava Sañajias every man has within himself the spiritual essence of Kṛṣṇa and Radha.

With the introduction of Tantricism the cult of Ardhanārisvara was modified.

In Kalyān Sundara form of Siva a similar idea is presented by the marriage of Siva and Parvati. 17

Thus, in the concept of Ardhanārisvara, the male and female deity got an equal status. The root of this concept can be traced in the Upanisads, where Atman—the original Purusa was bisexual and then he divided himself into male and female parts and multiplied. 18

Following the Tantric and Sahajia schools, S.B. Das Gupta finds an ontological reason behind the concept of Ardhanārisvara. As he observes—

"The male and female represent in the visible world the division which is present in the nature of the Absolute as Siva and Sakti, and the perfect union of the Siva and Sakti is the highest reality." 19

A similar idea he has found in the Sahajia Buddhism.

"In Sahajia Buddhism Sunyata (void) and Karuna (compassion)
Vaisnava religion revolves round the worship of the Vedic deity Viṣṇu and Vāsudeva-Krishna who gets later identified with Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa. In the Rg Veda, Viṣṇu appears to be a solar deity. In the early Samhitās, Nārāyaṇa is described as a rṣi and devatā and the guardian of the cosmos.21 The Satapatha Brahmana identifies him as Purusa- Nārayana, and Narayan again is identified with Prajāpati Brahmā — the creator God. When the popularity of Nārāyana reaches its peak, Brahma becomes a subordinate God of the cosmic divinity — Nārāyana.22

The religion of the Bhagvad Gita represents the orthodox phase of Vāsudivaism in its fully developed form. Yet during the Great Epic (Mahabharata), the cult of Vāsudiva Krisna had to face a stubborn opposition from the followers of Siva.23 The Bhagvad Gita describes Vasudeva as Ksetrajna, nirguṇatmaka and knowable. Thereafter the Lord is identified with the Purusa of Samkhya and the Creator of Maya.24 Krisna (the active Purusa of Samkhya) possesses three powers or Sakti which are svarupa sakti, jiva sakti and Maya sakti. He also possesses three attri-

butes viz., the attribute of existence (sat), the attribute of pure consciousness (cit) and the attribute of bliss (ánanda). It is, perhaps, due to the Tantrik influence that Vaisnavism accepted the three aspects of Śrīkṛṣṇa as his energies.

Since the Lord is described as Saccidānanda, his svarupa sakti also has three attributes corresponding to the three aspects. In the sat aspect it is sandhini sakti, in the cit aspect it is samvit sakti, and in the ananda aspect it is the hladini sakti. Among these saktis, hladini is the principal energy and is the most important. 25

Though the concept of Sri or Lakṣmī as fertility Goddess is found in the epics and Puranas, the concept of Radhā in the context of Vaisnavism appears much later.

The central idea of Gaudīya Vaisnavism (Bengal Vaisnavism) is the bliss (hladini) aspect of Kṛṣṇa. Radhā is the embodiment of bliss and Kṛṣṇa is the substratum. The consummation of the ideal is the identification of the dual conception of Radhā and Kṛṣṇa and this represents the idea of Sakti and Saktimat. 26

26. Ibid., p. 290.
The worship of **Sri-Laksmi** by the side of **Nārāyana** represented the ideal of conjugal life set forth in the Puranas. It is interesting to note that the original image of Laksmi was four-handed. The two-handed image of her by the side of **Nārāyana** was later given to make her a subordinate goddess. One can compare this position with that of Prakṛti of Samkhya where prakṛti plays a very important yet subordinate role in the creation of the universe.

Though there are differences of opinions regarding the exact relation between Purusa and Prakṛti of Samkhya, the authors of Purana did not find any difficulty to assimilate the concepts of Siva-Sakti or Visnu Laksmi with the Samkhya concept. And as a result, Visnu Laksmi in the Laksmi hymn of Purana, Brahman and Māyā of Vedānta, Purusa-Prakṛti of Samkhya and Siva-Sakti of the Tantra all assimilated in the one dual image and of late the Radha-Kṛṣna concept could easily surrender in the same dual image. 27

In Bengal Vaisnavism, Radhā and Kṛṣna are taken as one and the same. Before the creation of the universe, 

it is held that Visnu was all alone, he wanted to create and this creative became his energy or Primal Prakrti. Radhā is considered as the 'transfiguration of the infinite potency of love contained in the very nature of Kṛsna'. Both are taken as one and the same principle. The reason for apparent separation of Radhā from Kṛsna, it is held, is for the self-realisation of Krisna. Krisna has within himself two aspects of the enjoyer and the enjoyed. To realise his nature as the enjoyer he created Radhā. Thus Radha represent the eternal enjoyed while Kṛsna is the eternal enjoyer. The secret of the eternal līla (sport) of Vṛndāvan is this mutual relation of love.

This mutual relation of enjoyer and the enjoyed is similar to that religion between Purusa and Prakrti. Prakrti is described in the Samkhya philosophy as enjoyed by Purusa. Prakrti requires the presence of Purusa in order to be appreciated and Purusa also needs the existence of Prakrti in order to realise itself (Kaivalyartham).* The Samkhya makes Prakrti an integral part of Purusa and sometimes she is conceived as the energy of Purusa. The Samkhya thinkers are of opinion that there is a sort of


abstract tie which binds the two principles into a kind of fundamental union. In Vaisnavism the relation between Rādhā and Kṛsna is the relation of eternal love. It is a state of bliss.

Besides Rādhā, there are many young maids known as Gopis through whom Kṛṣṇa-līlā is manifested in Vṛindāvana. In the Gopis the divine love is manifested in its fullest degree to the state technically known as Mahabhāva or supreme love.

The unique feature of Bengal Vaisnavism is that of Sri Caitanya. The Sat-Cit-Ananda power of Sri Kṛṣṇa personified in Caitanya. Caitanya is conceived by his followers as a dual incarnation of Radha and Kṛṣṇa. According to Sri Rup Goswami, Rādhā being the hladini Sakti of Kṛṣṇa is inseparable from him. To know the nature and intensity of love of Radha, it is held, Kṛṣṇa incarnated in the body of Caitanya. In his outer appearance he was none but Kṛṣṇa but his dominating religious attitude was 'Rādhābhāva' or the love attitude of Rādhā towards Kṛṣṇa. He was of the ultimate nature of Kṛṣṇa with the supreme emotion of Radha (Rādhā bhava-dyuti-subalita kṛṣṇa rup). This is the significance of dual incarnation of

In their innumerable love-lyrics, the Vaisnava poets of Bengal expressed the attitude of 'Sakhibhāva' — the attitude of the female companion of Radha and Krisna, Joydeva, Vidyāpati, Candidās were absorbed in the sakhi bhāva which is believed to be the best means for realising divine love. The theological explanation which is given by S.B. Das Gupta for the Sakhi-bhāva is as follows:

"the General Vaisnava view is that Jiva being the Tatastha Sakti of Krisna is, after all, a prakṛti, and its pride being the Purusa (Purusābhimāna) must be removed before it can be permitted to have its proper place in the eternal region of Svarupa Sakti."31

Vaisnava Sahajiā movement of Bengal and Buddhist Sahajiā cult both were totally influenced by religion of Bengal Vaisnavism. The Sahajiās received their Philosophy of Rādhā-Krsna from the Vaisnava poets. According to the Sahajias Rādhā and Krsna are not merely historical personality, rather every man has within himself the spiritual essence of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā.

Das Gupta observes that this view of holding men and women as the physical manifestation of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

by the Vaisnava Sahajias seems to have been inherited from the earlier Tantric philosophy. According to the Hindu Tantras all men and women are nothing but the incarnation of Siva and Sakti which again, according to Buddhist Sohajia is the embodiment of Upāya and prajnā respectively.32

Coming back to Caitanya Vaisnavism, I would like to point out that the birth place of Caitanya was Navadvipa which was associated mainly with Tantric worship, folk cults like Vāsuli Candi Manasā, etc. and Sri Caitanya could not overcome the influence of local popular goddesses. And this perhaps, later made him to accept Sri Rādhā as energy and an inseparable part of Kṛṣṇa.

In the Bhagavatapurana, of course, Rukmini, Rukmini and not Rādhā is described as the eternal consort of Kṛṣṇa. But Rādhā has a supreme position in Vrindāvan Lilā. She is regarded as the:

"Hlādini Sakti (the power of Kṛṣṇa. The Hlādini sakti is an emanation from God's Svarupa sakti or sentient power. In God Svarupa sakti resides in the semblance of Rasa and makes him the transcendental Rasika. In the devotee this power is Bhakti. Radha is the personification of bhakti rasa, ... the embodiment of Love

32. Ibid., p. 128.
Divine and, therefore, superior to the other milkmaids and even the queens of Krsna. She is the greatest devotee of Krisna, who on his part, regards himself as her disciple."33

I have already mentioned Caitanya was the human combination of Krsna and Radha. Krisna wanted to relish his sports with Radha by becoming Radha.* Thus Rādhā and Krsna received almost as equal status in Caitanya Vaisnavism.

It is certain that material element of nature is symbolised by the term Krsna and its inherent energy by Radha. "As the energy is contained in the matter, so Krsna is said to be the Ādāra or Āśraya (receptacle) which holds the energy, i.e. Rādhā."34

One can notice, again, the similarity between Radha-Krsna and Purusa-Prakrti concept. In the post Caitanya Sahajia cult matter and its energy are considered to be the dual manifestation of the same cause. The Purusa-Prakrti concept are represented by Krisna and Radha. "Purusa and Prakrti are so closely united by the bond of love that the separation of one means the death of the other."

33. Ibid., pp. 112-13.

* Radha bhava Kānti dui angīkār kari Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitānya rupe Kailā avatar.- Caitanya Chritamrta Canto - I, Chap - 4.
"Emati jāniha bhai Prakṛti Puruṣā
Pīriti Primer lāgi dohe dohar bas
dohar vichhed dohe sahite nā pāre
tilek vichhed haile parāne se mare"35

The scientific truth behind this concept is that without energy matter becomes dead and energy cannot express itself without matter. The Samkhya expressed the same idea, as it appears by Purusa Prakṛti relationship. In the Samkhya system, Prakṛti like that of a woman seated on the shoulder of a man making him subservient to her will.* While in Bengal Vaisnavism, Prakṛti is united with Purusa in the close embrace of love. The Caitanya school have adopted the ideal of love as it exists between a lover and his beloved. 'Radha is notably the manifestation of the faculty of joy embodied in Kṛṣṇa, but she represents his full potentiality.'36 Radha like energy, cannot stand alone, but must have a shelter in the bosom of the eternal matter — Kṛṣṇa which is her main stay. The longing or attraction manifested in a symbolical way is usually called love.37

35. Ibid., p. 234.
36. Ibid., p. 235.
37. Ibid., p. 236.

* As a blind man and lame man can cooperate in order to get out of the forest, so the non-intelligent Prakṛti and the inactive Puruṣa cooperate to serve their respective interests. — Samkhya Karika.
I would like to discuss in the context of Vaishnavism, how Bhagavad Gita has dealt with the Purusa-Prakrti concept. The Gita interprets the Samkhya view of cosmology in a more popular and synthetic way. The Purusattoma (Absolute) of the Gita is similar to Brahman of the Upanisads. In his qualified aspect he causes Prakrti to bear the whole universe. 38

Again, Purusa and Prakrti are calle as Ksetrajna (knower of the field) and the Ksetra (the field). And everything is created through the union of these two. There are many interpretations of the story of Radha's love towards Krsna. There is no shortage of attempts to somehow explain away the femaleness of Radha. Actually it is said the story symbolises the relation of man and God. Ramanuja, the visistadvaita thinker and founder of Sri Sampradāya of Vaishnavism, unlike Sankara, admits the oneness of God with attributes — CIt the individual soul and acit - the matter, leaving no room for any female goddess. Sri Madhva, Nimbārka, and Vallabha all in spite of their being Vedantic thinkers admit Laksmi or Sri as the consort of Sri Krsna. "The worship of Sri with Krsna was introduced in accordance with the Sakta doctrine of

38. Mayadhyaksena Prakrtih suyate sacarācaram hetunānena Kaunteya Jagad viparivartate. (Gita 9:10).
creation. Madhva who prescribed the worship of Siva, Surya, Devi and Ganapati insisted that all prayers and actions were to be finally dedicated to Visnu alone." 39