Chapter XI

ĀTMAN and MOKṢA IN Śaivism and Śaktism

Śaivism is a powerful religious creed in the south like Vaiśṇavism and both are rivals of each other. The Vaiśṇavas regard Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa or Nārāyaṇa or Vāsudeva, or Rāma or Vithobā as the ultimate Reality and the God to whom they direct their devotion and they seek redemption from them. The Śaivas, like the Vaiśṇavas look upon Śiva as the ultimate Reality and the cause and substratum of the universe and they believe that redemption can be acquired by surrendering to God Śiva or Rudra who is approachable by sincere devotion and He redeems His devotees by his grace. Like the Vaiśṇavas the Śaivas also emphatically hold that Śiva can be attained by pure and exclusive devotion, faith and love for him by withdrawing the objects of the world. Śaivism is as old as Vaiśṇavism and is predominantly popular in the Southern India.

God Śiva or Rudra was supposed to be a God of destruction and terror in the times of the Grhyasūtras. "He was the god that held sway over regions away from home, over fields, wildernesses, cemeteries, mountains,
old trees and rivers. Whenever a man came to anything which inspired awe and terror, Rudra was the God thought of and prayed to protect."¹ Šiva is supposed to be a powerful God wielding superior power against all the evils like epidemics, diseases, poisons, serpents, storms, thunderbolt and other awe-inspiring phenomena of nature. Mačnicol believes that Šiva is mainly not an Aryan but an aboriginal God. The adoption of the euphemistic name (Šiva, the auspicious) is itself an indication of an attempt to civilize a deity always terrible, but not always worthy of reverence. His aboriginal name may have been Bhairava. Šiva by His very force and fury was fitted not inaptly, to represent that power in the universe which causelessly destroys and causelessly creates.² He is taken to be an antidote against all such evils and therefore, men approached Him to appease Him and to secure from Him protection, security and happiness against the evil forces of the world. Men approach Šiva out of fear while Viṣṇu is approached out of love and admiration being attracted by His good and auspicious qualities and men seek to achieve from Him perfection, bliss,

peace and everlasting joy. The sentiment of love, admiration and worship is at the root of Vaiṣṇavism, while in Rudra-Śaivism the sentiment of fear is more predominant, both being monotheistic in nature.¹

The philosophy of the Śaiva-creed is known as the Śaiva-Siddhānta. Śaivism looks upon God as the director of the universe and as different from Māyā, soul and Aṇava (matter) which together form the universe. He is perfect and hence, immutable, however, He is omnipotent and He directs the affairs of the universe by His will. He guides and regulates the evolution of the world. As He is perfect, He neither thinks, nor desires, nor acts, nor likes, nor dislikes. He is impartial to all like fire and water and loves all equally. He is not in space and so He must be omnipresent. He is immanent in all the things of the world, animate and inanimate. He possesses infinite love for all and hates no body. His main five acts are (i) creation, (ii) sustenance, (iii) disembodiment (death), (iv) suppression of Aṇava and (v) enlightenment. The devotees need to love and adore Him out of gratitude. He is unborn and imperishable and so, eternal. He is free from all defects and imperfections. He is omniscient as Aṇava has no influence on Him.

He is all-doer in the sense that He is the impeller of all actions simply by His will. He is blissful and quiscent.

The Śaivas look upon Rudra that is mentioned in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad as the ultimate God and worship Him as Śiva. Rudra in the Mahābhārata is associated with Umā or Pārvatī, Durgā, Kālī, Karālī. Śiva is also worshipped as the Paśu Pati, where Paśus are the individual, finite, imperfect souls and their master is the Lord Śiva. The Paśupatas divide the reality mainly into three aspects -- the Lord (Pati) is Śiva Himself. He cuts the Karmas of the souls and produces things to be enjoyed and suffered and their means. He exercises His power of creation only as impelled by the Karmas of the finite souls. He possesses a body which is unhuman and unfettered. The body is made up of powers and, five specific formulas (mantras) being imagined to be the different parts of the body. The five powers and forms are -- creation, protection, destruction, concealment and benefaction.¹

The Paśus, whom the Lord Śiva rules are the individual souls being of the atomic size and self-conscious.

The Pasus are all-pervading and eternal and the doers of actions. They are imperfect in knowledge and powers as compared with Śiva; but when they secure mukti or emancipation when their fetters (Paśas) are removed and, then they become omniscient and possess the real powers of actions. The individual souls are of three kinds. They are the (i) Vijnānakala (ii) Pralayākala and (iii) Sakala. 1 The first kind of Pasu is Vijnānakala. Such a soul has shaken off his connection with all organs by destroying the impressions of deeds done in the past by means of knowledge, meditation, asceticism or by enjoying the fruits of actions. With it remains only the simple taint (mala). The Pralayākala is that paśu whose organs are destroyed by the dissolution of the world; but the impressions of deeds and their taints remain behind. The Sakala is that which possesses all the three Kalas or fetters, taint or mala. The Vijnānakalas, when their taint is removed are raised to the status of Vidyeśvaras which are eight -- (i) Ananta - endless, (ii) Sūkṣma -- atomic or subtle, (iii) Śivottamaḥ - the most excellent Śiva, (iv) Ekanetraḥ - the one-eyed, (v) Ekarudra, (vi) Trīṁūrtikaḥ - one with three forms, (vii) Śrīkanṭhaḥ and (viii) Śikhandī. The Pralayākalas also

2. Ibid. p.183.
are of two kinds -- those whose fetters have matured reach liberation and those others whose subtle body undergoes many births in accordance with impressions of deeds. Liberation is conferred upon the souls or Pasus in accordance with their deeds.

Pasas or fetters are divided into four kinds which are (i) Mala or taint which hides the powers of knowing and acting of the soul and, is like the husk that envelops the grain of rice; (ii) Karma -- impression of deeds for the attainment of fruits; (iii) Mayā, the material cause into which the whole world returns at the time of dissolution and the world springs from it; (iv) Rodhasakti -- the obstructive power of Śiva. It regulates the other three fetters and conceals the true nature of the soul. 1 Śiva is possessed of this power and hence, He can create the world. The Pasus are of two kinds, the impure and the pure; the former being associated with the body and the latter exist with any body.

The Pasus attain liberation after they become free from the four fetters by means of sincere and singular devotion to the God, Śiva. Śiva can be attained only by those who exercise self-control and dedicate themselves to

Him exclusively and love Him wholeheartedly. The souls (Paśus) become Śiva in emancipation; they become omniscient and their powers also enhance excepting that of creation. The Paśus become eternally free from ignorance, Karma and the miseries of the worldly life. In other systems the destruction of misery is final deliverance, in the Paśupata system the attainment of the highest powers is also to be added. With others the fruit of Yoga is the attainment of the absolute condition; here it is attainment of the highest powers. The powers that are acquired are three -- (1) Manojavatva -- the power of doing anything instantly, (2) Kāmarūpītvā -- power of assuming variety of shapes and forms of bodies and senses without an effort, (3) Vikramañadharmītvā -- Great power. Thus then a man acquires these miraculous powers of knowledge and action at the end of the course of conduct and discipline.  

Śaivism had its own internal divisions. Kāśmīra Śaivism is a well known branch of Śaivism which itself is again redivided into the two branches known as the Spandaśāstra and Pratyabhijñāśāstra. Kāśmīra Śaivism came into existence during the 9th century A.D. and it is supposed

to be a more humane and rational school. Vasugupta and Kalaṭa are associated with the Spandaśastra. This branch derived the existence of any material cause and, any prompting cause like the Karma for the creation of the world. They did not believe in the Pariṇāmavāda nor in the Vivartavāda according to which the world is created by God out of Himself or by Māyā, respectively. The Kāśmīra Śaivism looks upon Māyā as the Lord's power, which is peculiar (śaktiviśesāḥ) and it accomplishes something that is impossible of accomplishment for any other agency. Māyā is the Tirodhānaśakti, the wonderworking power. According to this school the Lord Śiva is entangled in the five sheaths created by the Māyā and He then becomes the jīva.¹ According to this school God is independent and creates merely by the force of His will all that comes into existence. He makes the world appear in Himself, as it were distinct from Himself, though not so really, as the things appear in a mirror, but He is not affected by them. God possesses such a wonderworking power and He Himself appears in numerous forms. The individual soul also is identical with the Lord Śiva; the Supreme Self. But it does not perceive this identity with Śiva due to impurity (mala) which is of three

¹. Sakhare M.R. -- History and Philosophy of Lingāyat Religion. p.444.
kinds. The soul forgets its free and universal nature through ignorance and believes itself to be imperfect; it falsely identifies with things which are not itself, like body and is afflicted by the pains accruing from them. The impurities are of three kinds -- Āṇava -- caused by the finitude of the soul, the Māyāya -- caused by Māyā and the Kārma resulting from actions. These impurities make the soul forgetful of its real eternal and pervasive nature. These impurities vanish when the devotees acquire the vision of Śiva that absorbs all the finite thoughts, by means of the most intense contemplation of Him. When this condition becomes stable the jīva becomes liberated for ever and becomes the Supreme Self, the Śiva Himself.¹

Thus, the Kāśmīra school of Śaivism holds that liberation or Mokṣa consists in attaining identity with Śiva by the jīva (śivasāyujya) and not in simply attaining similarity (sārupya) with Him. The individual soul becomes free from the three taints, attains complete at-one-ment with Para Śiva; once such a state is attained Māyā cannot separate them.²


The other branch of Kāśmīra Śaivism is represented by Pratyabhijñāśastra. According to this school, the jīva is neither a vikāra, modification of Śiva nor an illusory appearance but it is Śiva Himself in essence, although concealed by Māyā. It believes in the identity of the jīva with Śiva and it is forgotten due to ignorance. It believes in the self-illumined (svayam-prakāśa) nature of the Self and the individual souls are different due to the adjuncts with which the fundamental light of the Self is associated. In fact, there is only the same universal infinite self-illumined consciousness and, it is the Supreme Self. Śiva or Maheśvara is characterised by His sentience, absence of limitations, knowledge free from dependence on any adjuncts, independence, blissfulness.1 Everything therefore, shines with the light of the Self or Śiva whose it is a manifestation. Similarly, Śiva is omnipotent and possesses infinite power and He creates the world only with His will.2

The soul is in essence of the nature of God Śiva; the only thing is that their identity is not recognised. The jīva remains unconscious of the omniscience, omnipotence of all-blissful nature of the Supreme Self. The Pratyabhijñā holds that the soul can become the Self only when and

2. Ibid. p.197.
only if it recognises its original identity with the Self. The jīva can regain its lost divine nature by simply recognising (pratyabhijñā) that it itself is nothing else but the Self. This is possible by two means, i.e. by externally knowing the divine attributes of God Śiva and developing love for Him and internally by developing the consciousness that -- I am the God Himself. The difference between the two stages is like that of a woman who is enamoured with a man whose fine qualities are described to her and she becomes restless to meet him in the first stage and in the next when she is shown the man himself for whom she feels intense love she meets him and enters into a union with him. Similarly, here it is necessary to recognise the Lord Śiva as the essential nature of the jīva is absolutely necessary for the attainment of liberation.¹ While the Spanda school mentions the dawning of the form or vision of Bhairava or God on the mind in the course of meditation and thereby clearing away of the impurities as the way to the realisation of the identity with God, while the Pratyabhijñā school maintains that recognition of oneself as God is the way.²

Śaivism became a popular creed in the Southern India in the form of the Vīraśaiva or Lingāyat Sect founded by Basava in the 12th century. The Lingāyat school continues to be a powerful and popular creed even in the present days. It holds the main tenet of Śaivism that Śiva is the ultimate Reality, the Brahman, the Highest and He is characterised by existence (sat), intelligence (cit) and joy (ānanda). He is the support or the resting place of all the things (sthala) and is the non-dual (advaita) final Reality.¹ The Vīraśaiva school is thus a monistic school and holds that Śiva is the Absolute, the final reality devoid of any particular attributes. Śiva is the supreme entity. He is the all-knowing, all-doing, all-sustaining being called Prakāśa, the serene Lord, all-pervading, indivisible and infinite. He has two aspects -- the immanent and the transcendent. Śiva as immanent appears as involved in the changing phenomenal world and, Śiva as a transcendent entity is the immutable Reality, the substrate of all change, permanent and non-relational absolute entity. In it He is beyond all manifestations.² As Sakhare says He is the origin and source of the universe and is the Parabrahman, as the Vedāntins are pleased to call Him. He is self-

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² Sakhare M.R. -- History and Philosophy of Lingāyat Religion. p.431.
conscious. The vibration of the perfect egoity is His śakti and through it He holds and visualises the entire universe of objects as "This is". The Vimarṣa, the Perfect Egoity, is the Śakti.

Śiva manifests Himself with the help of His unique power as the Linga and Anga; Linga being the God, the object of worship of the Angas which are the individual souls (jīvas) that worship the Linga. The power with the help of which Śiva manifests Himself in these two aspects is inalienable with Him and it can never be dissociated from Him. It is a part of His nature, and therefore, the doctrine of the Vīra Śaivas is described as the Śaktivīśīśṭadvaita, monism qualified by the Śakti. God is characterised by Śakti. The relation of this power with Śakti is one of essential identity (sāmarasya) which means the union of two things which are identical in their essential nature. The idea of Sāmarasya is peculiar with the Lingāyatas. The whole world of names and forms exists in Śiva as His own externalization, an object of His own enjoyment. Śakti is the Ātmavimarṣa or Prakāśavimarṣa the expressive nature of Śiva Himself and it works wonders in obedience to Śiva's will which again is nothing but a phase or mode of His power. She possesses the common nature of Śiva and is styled Dharmacāriṇī or the lawfully wedded wife of Śiva.
acting in perfect accord with her husband's disposition or will. The Parasiva is tranquil and content and creates the manifold world only to sport with it. The Śakti divides itself into two by its own will, one of the parts resorting to Śiva is called Kalā, and the other resorting to the individual souls is called Bhakti or devotion. Such a creative activity or Śakti of Parasiva has a peculiar susceptibility of leading to action and entanglement; it is downward (adhomukhī) and it tends to the creation of the universe associated with the vale of miseries, while Bhakti, another form of the same Śakti or power is Urdhvamukhī and it has the upward direction; it has a tendency to the upliftment of the individual soul into thorough union or at-one-ment with Parasiva leading the jīva to final deliverance by making it free from the malatraya three taints. Bhakti exists in the Anga while Śakti (Kalā) exists in the Linga (God).

Linga represents Parasiva, the highest Absolute Brahman in the saguna form in the form of the God that is merciful by nature and is related to the world and to His devotees. Linga is Śiva Himself and not His emblem. It is divided into three forms -- (1) Bhāvalinga -- which is

without parts and is perceived by faith. It is the highest existence (sat) unconditioned by space and time. (2) Prāṇalinga, has parts and is apprehended by mind. It is intelligence of the Supreme Self. (3) Īṣṭalinga has parts and is apprehended by the eye. It is the joy. The first is the highest principle, the second in the subtle form and the third is Sthūla one.¹

The Vīraśaivas hold like the Vaiṣṇavas that one can attain deliverance by sincere and faithful devotion to Śiva. The way of the attainment of Śiva is called Śivayoga which does not consist in the formal worship of images, in the performance of Yajña or in muttering hymns but it consists in the sincere devotion, aspiration and self-concentration, inward and upward, to the Divine Power above and its working to the Divine presence in the heart and by rejecting all that is foreign to these. This bhakti is self-opening and self-expansive. It is of three kinds -- faith (Vidheya-bhakti), aspiration (Vicārabhakti) and surrender (Viśuddhabhakti). Bhakti essentially consists in Prayer (prārthanā) and (Ārādhanā) worship.²

² Sakhare M.R. -- History and Philosophy of Lingāyat Religion. p.575.
Again the devotion takes three forms -- the Yogāṅga in which a man obtains happiness by his union with Śiva, it is also known as samsārabhakti; the Bhogāṅga in it the individual enjoys along with Śiva and the third is the Tyāgāṅga which implies the abandonment of the world as transient and illusory. The method of attaining deliverance according to this school is one of sincere devotion (bhakti) and one of moral and spiritual discipline. Deliverance means to them the realisation of sāmarasya identity in the qualified form, and the experience of the blissful state of Śiva. It does not mean in the least the absorption of the finite individual soul into the ParaŚiva or Parabrahman but retention of it in a highly evolved form in the company of the Lord Śiva, enjoying Śiva's blissful company like Rāmānuja. Sakhare interprets it in a different way and says that the aim of Śivayoga is not only to rise out of ordinary ignorant world -- consciousness but to bring the supramental power of the Divine consciousness down into the ignorance of mind, life and body, to transform them to manifest the divine life in matter.\(^1\) It aims at bringing down the Divine from the heaven to the earth by gradually purifying the senses and the mind, the vital and mental medium of layers to make

\(^1\) Sakhare M.R. -- History and Philosophy of Lingāyat Religion. p.574.
them worthy of the manifestation of the Śiva to bring down the Divine peace, joy and light on the earth. The Vīra-śaivas also admit the possibility of the living liberated soul (Jīvanmuktas) who are free from ego and manifest the Divine peace and joy while alive.

Śaktism

The Śaktas, who are called so as they choose their Deity of worship (Iṣṭadevata), Śakti. The Śāktas are the "Tantrikas" and they share to a large extent the philosophical views of the Śaivas. In this cult, both in doctrine and practice, emphasis is laid on that aspect of the one in which it is the source of change and, in Time and Space, and all objects therein.

The Śāktas recognise Śiva as the final infinite, omniscient, all-pervading and omnipotent God and they do not subordinate the power (Śakti) to God Śiva, but give equal importance to Śakti along with Śiva. Śiva equipped with the Śakti is the cause of the world. Śiva’s omnipotence cannot be proved without His Supreme Power over all the objects of the world. Śiva, without this Śakti represents the static Brahman that is beyond all change of the world
and is the immutable and eternal Reality, while Śiva when associated with Śakti represents the dynamic aspect of the Reality which includes all the changing phenomena of the world. In fact, both are the same, the difference lies in the points of view and the attributes that are given importance. Śakti is not always in the manifest form; it remains invisible and does not actualise itself into its manifestations. As Woodroffe says, until there is in fact, change, Śakti is merely Potency of Becoming in Being, as such is wholly one with it. The Power (Śakti) and the Possessor of Power (Śaktimān) are one. As therefore, He is Being -- Bliss -- consciousness so is she. She also is the full (Pūrṇa) which is no mere abstraction from its evolved manifestations. The two are inalienably related to each other. Śiva so far He is imagined to be the creator and sustainer of the world is associated with Śakti. Śiva and Śakti are related as prakāśa and vimarśa. Śiva is prakāśa pure consciousness and Śakti is Vimarśa, the power latent in Prakāśa and gives rise to the world of distinctions. If Śiva is consciousness (cit), Śakti is the formative energy of consciousness (Cidrūpinī). Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva perform the functions of creation, preservation and destruction in obedience to Śakti. In the perfect experience of

ānanda, Śiva and Sakti are indistinguishable. The two coalesce in one being. 1 Śiva acts like the indeterminate Brahman and is characterised as quiescent, while Sakti being determinate and dynamic is possessed of will (icchā), knowledge (jñāna) and action (kriyā), and thus, the whole world is projected by Sakti. The two are inseparably related since force is inherent in existence. The Sakti is addressed as Mother in the Mahākāli Saṁhitā and the prayer runs as follows -- "Thou art neither girl, nor maid, nor old. Indeed thou art neither female, nor male, nor neuter. Thou art inconceivable, immeasurable Power, the Being of all which exists, void of all duality, the Supreme Brahman, attainable in Illumination alone". 2 Thus, Sakti is supposed to be not of feminine gender, or a female Reality. However Bhandarkar says "Though it admits a male element in the beginning, still it is thoroughly subdued by the female element which becomes predominant; and the highest deity is Tripurasundarī. The ambition of every pious follower of the system is to become identical with Tripurasundarī, and, one of his religious exercises is to habituate himself to think

that he is a woman."¹ He also refers to a number of goddesses worshipped as the forms of the Sakti, i.e. Umā, Rudrāṇī, Durgā, Bhavānī, Kumārī, Kālī, Kāpālī, Mahākālī, Canḍī, Kātyāyānī, Karālā, Vijāyā, Kauśikī, Lalītā, Ānandabhairavī and Tripurasundarī, Tripurasundarī being the supreme in excellence and power.²

The same Sakti which is one with Śiva evolves infinite real forms and is present in all those forms; Māyā is not here illusory but is the real power of Śiva that evolves the whole universe. Śiva, the Self or spirit is essentially constituted of pure consciousness, Sakti is a part of Him and Sakti manifests herself in the form of Mind and Matter both being derived from the same cause. There is a parallelism. The pure-consciousness of Śiva is immanent in both the Mind and the Matter. Inorganic matter also is consciousness in full subjection to the Power of Ignorance. It is consciousness identifying itself with inorganic matter. Mind and Matter are the subjective and objective aspects of the one polarized consciousness.³

The jīvas, the individual souls are thus, the

² Ibid. p.144.
³ Woodroffe John -- Shakti and Shākta. pp.46,47.
evolutes of the Śakti, the Māyā. They are the finite centres of consciousness and are produced out of Ignorance. They are not unreal, but their reality or experience is limited. They cannot have the full experience of Śiva. Ignorance, therefore, becomes equivalent to partial knowledge and limited powers. Illusion, therefore is neither in God nor in man.¹ God cannot have the vision of man although He is the cause of man and his experience. The experience of the jīva, though limited, is real, but out of ignorance it thinks that it is the agent or doer of actions; it does not recognise Śakti as the real agent of all actions. Its bondage is therefore, caused by ignorance.

The jīva, the finite soul can attain liberation by removing from its mind the ignorance which consists in falsely identifying its real nature with what it is not. It must realise by knowledge and spiritual insight that it is reality the pure consciousness (prakāśa) and its limitations are not real. "Knowledge of Śakti is the road to salvation, which is dissolution in the blissful effulgence of the Supreme. Liberation according to the Śāktas is not dependent on the observance of the external forms of religion like

¹. Woodroffe John -- Shakti and Shākta. p.44.
recitation of hymns, sacrifices and other rituals. What is necessary for the attainment of liberation is the knowledge for the jīva that it is an evolute of Śaktī and is in essence identical with it; and Bhaktī or devotion along with the physical and mental discipline help it.¹ The Śāktas admit the possibility of the Jīvanmukta and believe in the doctrine of transmigration of the soul.

¹ Radhakrishnan S. -- Indian Philosophy. Vol.II. pp.736,737.