

## CHAPTER- 4

### THE RITUALISTIC CONTEXT

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#### **Ritual and Symbolism:**

With respect to religious studies rituals can be described as time-honored patterns of sacred activity rooted in the psycho -cultural consciousness of a people, wanting to link the mundane or natural reality with the divine or transnatural. By invoking the sacred and transcendent with a series of mental, physical and verbal actions these acts tend to achieve a symbolic character which confers a completely novel significance and implication to them. As Krishna<sup>1</sup> has pointed out:

*“rituals transform the biological cycles which is the most fundamental of all cycles into a cultural cycle. That is why in all cultures birth and death is not just biological phenomenon but profound cultural events associated with a lot of ritual and ceremonies which transform the biological into the cultural.”*

The rites and ceremonial processes which are responsible for this transformation of the natural or the casual into the cultural are closely allied to the attitude of the practitioners to time and space and to the symbolism extant in the order which they follow. The importance of this symbolism is rightly stressed on by Mircea Eliade<sup>2</sup> in following words:

*“all research undertaken on a religious subject implies the study of religious symbolis. Religious symbols are capable of revealing a modality of the real or a structure of the world that is not evident on the level of immediate experience....An essential characteristic of religious symbolism is its multivalence, its capacity to express simultaneously a number of meanings whose continuity is not evident on the plane of immediate experience.”*

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<sup>1</sup>Krishna Daya, 'Prolegomena to Any Future Historiography of Cultures and Civilizations', Delhi, PHISC Series, p.8

<sup>2</sup> Eliade Mircea, 'Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism' In *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology* Ed by Mircea Eliade and Joseph M Kitagawa , University of Chicago Press, 1959 p.95

Regarding the importance of such sacred symbology Geertz<sup>3</sup> writes;

*Sacred symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos-the tone, character and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood- and their world view-the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive idea of order.*

For a scholar and an uninitiated I feel this is the most appropriate and fruitful entry point in any system of thought or practice. Saivite Scholars have been engaged in this process of interpretation, deduction, elucidation and explanation of various texts, rituals, myths, arts and so on yet it has remained an enigmatic area. As Ricoeur<sup>4</sup> points out;

*That symbols (especially religious symbols) tend always to have a double intentionality, that is to say, a first level obvious and literal signification as well as a second level indirect and oblique signification which is opaque, analogical and characterized by an inexhaustible depth. The interpretation of the symbol or a complex of symbols is thus, never simply an exercise in translation, difficult as this is. Interpretation, rather, is an attempt to understand and give expression to the 'transparency of an enigma' which any symbol or symbol complex represents.*

To add to what Ricoeur says these religious symbols don't have one particular meaning but can be interpreted variously. While dealing with such data the idea of Foucault's floating meaning strikes us. And it is precisely this complexity which gives the religious symbol, (ritual, art or myth) its power and efficacy.

Susan Langer<sup>5</sup> in her important study, *Philosophy in a New Key* states that:

*Symbols are not proxy for their objects, but are vehicles for the conception of objects. In talking about things we have conceptions of them, not the things themselves and it is the conceptions, not the things, which symbols directly mean.*

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<sup>3</sup> Geertz Clifford, 'Religion as a Cultural System' in M Banton ed, *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, London, 1966 p.5

<sup>4</sup> Ricoeur Paul, 'The Symbolism of Evil', California, 1980 p.14-24

<sup>5</sup> Langer Susan K. 'Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957, p.60

She further goes on to enumerate three types of symbols viz: Discursive symbol, Presentational symbol and Artistic symbol and being a Formalist considers the Artistic symbol to be the most significant one:

*An artistic symbol- which may be product of human craftsmanship or (on a purely personal level) something in nature seen as significant form has more than discursive and presentational meaning: its form as such, as a sensory phenomenon has what I have called implicit meaning, like rite and myth, but of a more catholic sort. It has what L.A Reid called 'tertiary subject matter', beyond the reach of 'primary imagination' and even the 'secondary imagination' that sees metaphorically.*

Her approach instantly draws a connection between the ritualistic activity, mythological exegesis and the artistic manifestation. In all traditional societies and orders **myth and ritual** are two central components of a religious practice. Although myth and ritual are commonly united as parts of religion, the exact relationship between them has been debatable. One of the approaches to this problem is "the myth and ritual, or myth-ritualist, theory", which holds that "myth does not stand by itself but is tied to ritual". Eliade too subscribes to this theory which suggests myths are created to explain a certain ritual.

There is an entire gamut of scholars who believe in the ritual purposes of myths hence at once increasing the importance of ritualistic behavior. According to Frazer<sup>6</sup>, "myth changes while custom remains constant; men continue to do what their fathers did before them, though the reasons on which their fathers acted have been long forgotten. The history of religion is a long attempt to reconcile old custom with new reason, to find a sound theory for an absurd practice."

The explanation somewhere rings true, as even nowadays people follow rituals without realizing their actual import. Logical questions will yield no satisfactory answers so many a times a ritual is blindly followed to continue a tradition. Burde<sup>7</sup> divides religious rituals into four categories: worship rituals, rites of passage, festive

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<sup>6</sup> Frazer James, 'The Golden Bough', Macmillan 1922 p.477

<sup>7</sup> Burde Jayant, as quoted by S.S.Toshkhani in 'Rituals of Kashmiri Pandits

rituals and sacraments while Tachikawa and Hino<sup>8</sup> divide religious activity in two kinds: That which takes as its goal the spiritual well being of the individual ; and that which has the purpose of enabling the group or the society to operate smoothly (festivals, initiation rites etc.) . Toshkhani<sup>9</sup> concludes that whether performed with the purpose of spiritual or material well being of an individual or religious cultivation of a social group, rituals serve as a means of communicating with divine beings or transnatural powers that are believed to guide and influence the course of human actions.

### **Locating the Lakulisa-Pasupata rites in the world of Saivite rituals:**

The extremely important body of literature which can throw major light on the ritualistic practices and modes of worship in Saivism are the *Saivagmas* with their threefold categorization viz. dualistic, dualistic cum monistic and monistic. This Agamic literature, deriving its essence from practioners of *Saiva Sadhana* comprises of a well organized body of thought with its own intrinsic logic and rationale.

To summarize in short all the three categories mentioned above focus on the concept of 36 tattvas and *Parama Siva*, the ultimate principle is described as the 37<sup>th</sup> tattva. This 37<sup>th</sup> tattva is conceived of as purely undifferentiated transcendent consciousness which is beyond the purview of the rest of the 36 elements. His '*Svatantra Sakti*' roughly 'free will' is considered responsible for all the creation which is nothing but his evolution in the world of multiplicity, his *lila* (sport). By this logic every created being has a *Siva tattva* in him/her and it's by bypassing the rest of the elements and by realizing Siva in oneself that a spiritual aspirant seeks the higher realm. The arcane secrets which guide the aspirant on various paths leading to Siva are codified in various Tantric and Agamic texts.

Derived from the root 'gam' the word *Agama* means coming near or approaching and would literally convey the sense of achievement on coming nearer to lord. Broadly speaking the *Agamas* can be subdivided into two main portions the first being the philosophic section and second dealing with various practices and rituals. They talk

<sup>8</sup> Tachikawa and Hino as quoted by S.S.Toshkhani in '*Rituals of Kashmiri Pandits*

<sup>9</sup> Toshkhani S.S, *Rites and Rituals of Kashmiri Brahmins*, Pentagon Press, Delhi, 2010 p.5

about various pooja paddhatis (methods of worship) and also throw major light on the temple building and temple art. Rather than standing for any particular book or treatise they stood for a system of thought and a body of practices which were verbally transmitted from guru to his disciple and committed to the memory. Thus here the knowledge seems to have been essentially a confidential affair between the initiated practitioner and his master. Later when these Tantric and Agamic texts were penned down then too the language used was so cryptic and symbolic that one had to be in the lineage of the disciples to understand the actual meaning of the text. Literal reading of such texts can be an extremely futile and many a times misleading exercise and in Drabu's words<sup>10</sup>

***"They are written in a language which can be read by all but understood by few".***

The actual import of these words was understood by me when I started going through the text of PS considered and emphasized as a Tantra by *Kaundinya*. It made absolutely no sense in the beginning and I realized if we didn't have access to *Kaundinya's* Bhasya which contextualize these sutras, they would be totally obscure. Following the same order as *Lakulisa* the commentator had access to the verbal injunctions that go with the sutras and hence he could throw light on the discussions which were accompanied while transmitting these sutras. The first aphorism of the fourth chapter describing the vidhis goes on as :

***Gudha-vidya tapa-anantyaya prakasate (PS 4.1)***

The literal translation would be:

"Learning, when concealed becomes penance and leads to the state of the infinite

Now in itself the literal meaning does not suggest much and it is only by referring to the commentary that one can better understand the aphorism

Explaining the sutra Kaundinya writes<sup>11</sup> (p136-38)

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<sup>10</sup> Drabu V.N, 'Saivagamas: A Study in the Socio-Economic Ideas and Institutions of Kashmir, Delhi 1990

<sup>11</sup> *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakraborti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970, p. 136-138

*'Guhu' means 'to preserve'. It should be preserved, that means it should not be disclosed. Concealment means not disclosing. Learning, mentioned before manifests (discloses) itself and others like the lamp. Concealed learning means that it should not be brought to light by the marks of the aspirant. Now the question is –what is the result, attained by the concealment of vidya by the Sadhaka? So the answer is 'Tapa anantyaya prakasate (penance leads to the stage of infinite) this is the reading. Or 'kuravonmahitavat tapo'nantyaya prakasate- this is the alternative reading. So here that itself is a penance. Its etymology is mentioned earlier. 'An' (the state of the infinite) is also taken to be a particular Yoga in the shape of remaining firm. That is the effect of penance like the states of 'Atigati' and 'Sayujya' (complete identification of the Sadhaka with Mahesvara). Now is the word 'anantya' used to mean the limited or the unlimited or both the limited and the unlimited? The answer is –this word 'anantya' is used in the senses of both the limited and the unlimited, for all pervasiveness in the unlimited and in also in both of them. This word of 'anantya' is in the sense of His states, good and bad because it is said- "And these are not my only forms".*

From here the commentator goes on to enumerate the various forms of unlimited Brahman and ways and means of keeping the penance hidden from public. The Tantric Sadhana is claimed to lead an aspirant to spiritual 'siddhi' and 'mukti'. The Lakulisa-Pasupata system seems to amalgamate the orthodox vedic teachings with more esoteric meanings and symbolism of tantras. Regarding the system Pathak<sup>12</sup> observes,

*Vedic Saiva school appears to be same as Lakulisa-Pasupata...It may however be noted that even Lakulisa-Pasupata is originally Agamic but it is described in Puranas as Vedic because it is comparatively more orthodox and in the beginning it recognized the Vedic institution of Varna.*

Seeing tantric systems as opposed to Vedic system again is a very reductive way of looking at things. We have various examples to show give and take between both traditions. Vedas too had its esoteric sections full of symbolic meaning and the practices which are usually associated with tantras. AV is full of such rites and rituals.

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<sup>12</sup> Pathak, V.S. *History of Saiva Cults in Northern India (from inscriptions 700 AD to 1200 AD)*. Varanasi: Tara Printing Works, 1960 p.14-15

On the other hand practitioners of tantras use various Vedic mantras besides the ones composed in *Tantra shashtra* itself. The use of *Bija Mantras* and mantras associated with mystical syllable forming part of a mantra used as an amulet (*kavaca*), the heart (*hrdaya*) and mentally assigning and invoking various parts of the body to tutelary deities (*Nyasa*) to attain various *siddhis* is the root followed by tantric aspirants. They envisage the entire macrocosm in their own bodies and the practices of *Nyasa*s, various *Mudras*, *Yantras* and *Mandalas* are nothing but invoking the divine presence and extending the limited physical body into limitless macrocosm. To achieve these ends Tantras lay stress of external factors like the place, time and instruments used for the sadhana. The deities are invoked with hand gesture and finger manipulation (*Mudras*) and particular position of the hand on different parts of the body to render it fit for adoration. As Drabu<sup>13</sup> observes

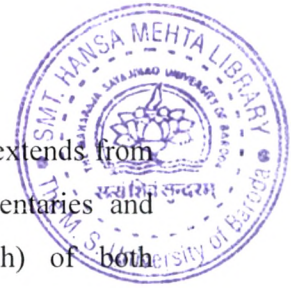
*“Basic to both yantra and mantra is the belief that these operate both within the gross physical body and the subtle body, which was to be organized as to promote the goal of yoga by a process of reintegration of rituals, symbolic and suggestive.”*

Thus all the paraphernalia associated with Tantric exegesis is primarily to focus the individual's concentration and make him/her aware of the divinity residing inside the body, a form of 'yoga' union of the micro and macro-cosm. In short tantras provided a practical discipline of the mental and psychological Vedic side.

As Sanderson<sup>14</sup> observes the reference of Agamic tradition can be found as early as in *Atharvaveda* and its ancillary tract known as *Atharvaveda parisista* is filled with mention of Saiva practices and *Ucchusmakalpa* (*Parisista* 36) talks in detail about the fire sacrifice to achieve supernatural ends that invoke *Ucchusma Rudras* with esoteric Saivite mantras Major importance here is paid to the *Pasupata* vow to which a whole *Parisista* is dedicated (*Parisista* 40: *Pasupatavrata*). The literature of the Agamic Saivas is dominated by the prescription of rituals through which the Saivas initiated candidates into their religious discipline (*Diksa*), consecrated successors to office (*Abhisekah*), installed images and other objects of worship (*Pratistha*) and performed the repeated services of worship (*yagah*) and propitiation (*Mantrasadhana*).

<sup>13</sup> Drabu V.N, *Saivagamas, A study in Socio Economic Ideas and Institutions of Kashmir*, Delhi, 1990 p.89-90

<sup>14</sup> Sanderson Alexis, *Atharvedins in Tantric Territory :The Angirasakalpa Texts of the Oriya Paippaladins and their connection with the Trika and the Kalikula*, From alexissanderson.com



By studying such literature related to Lakulisa-Pasupata system, which extends from spiritual texts claiming the authority of divine revelation eg PS to commentaries and treatises on these texts eg(Pacarthabhasya) to manuals (Paddhatih) of both transregional and local reach eg (*Ganakarika*, *EklingaMahatmaya*, *Vishvavitri Mahatmaya*) we can make out a detailed picture of comparative analysis and arrive at some understanding to how these model rituals changed overtime , were adapted in different regions and were related to those of the similar systems of ritual seen in the literature of Pancaratrika Vaisnavas , Mantrayan or Vajrayana Buddhists and ascetic sects like Ajivikas.

The active ascetic initiates of this order seem to have been few in number yet throughout the history of subcontinent Saivism has exerted a tremendous influence on the religious life of common people and as Sanderson<sup>15</sup> observes:

*..there can be no doubt that for several centuries after 6<sup>th</sup> CE it (Saivism) was the principal faith of the elites in large parts of the Indian subcontinent and in both mainland and insular South East Asia....only Mahayana Buddhism was able to rival the popularity of Saivism and that too in its 'Mantramarga' way, a system to ritual, meditation and observances in which Buddhism itself borrowed heartily, if not in essence but atleast in form and style from Saivism.*

The fact that by 6<sup>th</sup> CE Saivism had become a very important and powerful mainstream religion followed by royalty as well as commoners points towards an interesting shift from the essentially *Atimarga* Saivism to *Mantramarga* one, from a faith and set of beliefs associated largely with ascetic sects to a popular religion of a householder. While the more esoteric and difficult practices were restricted to the initiates, the support of a wider community of uninitiated lay followers was sought. Sanderson refers to an unpublished corpus of texts comprising principally the *Sivadharmas* and *Sivadharmittara* which contain observances recommended to the laity. Moreover he believes that inclusion of lay followers by simplifying the religious system was to counter the popularity of Buddhism and its wide appeal to general people:

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<sup>15</sup> Sanderson A, *Religion and the State: Saiva officiants in the territory of the kings Brahmanical chaplain*. Alexissanderson.com



...following the example of the Buddhists the Saivas had propagated a lesser religion of merit gathering that centered on the support and veneration of the persons and institutions of the religion proper, promising that those who followed it would be rewarded in death by a period in paradise of Siva (sivalokah, rudralokah) before returning to the world in the most desirable of rebirths.<sup>16</sup>

### **An insight into Asceticism:**

The term '*tapas*' which applies to ascetic practices in general recognizes the efficacy of the endurance of discomforts and of the difficulties which such an aspirant has to face. The importance of *tapas* is stressed upon in *Ait. Brahmana*<sup>17</sup> in these words

*"Heaven is established on the air, the air on the earth, the earth on the waters, the waters on truth, the truth on the mystic love and that on tapas."*

Upanisads too uphold the idea of *tapas* especially the *Jabala Upanisad* which advocates an extreme form of asceticism and asks the aspirants to root out all desires from their hearts. Coming to the Epics, both *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in its main and auxiliary plots mention various hermitages full of ascetics who acquired supernatural powers and privileges due to their extreme and prolonged austerities. The story of *Kirata-Arjuna* where Arjuna takes the *Pasupata* vow and meditates on Siva by performing austerities is a well known event from *Mahabharata*.

The pen picture of an early form of Saivite ascetic is met with in Kesi Sukta of Rg Veda<sup>18</sup> where a muni is described as follows:

*"The hairy one supports the fire*

*The poison-fluid, and heaven and earth;*

*He is all sky to look upon,*

*The hairy one is called this light*

*The Munis, girdled with the wind,*

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> (*Ait Brahmana*, 11,6,4)

<sup>18</sup> Kesi Sukta of Rg Veda as quoted by G.W Briggs in 'Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis', Delhi, p.214

*Wear garments soiled, of yellow hue;  
After the wind's course follow they,  
When once the gods have entered them.  
Transported with the ecstasy  
Of Munihood we mount the winds;  
Ye, mortal men, are able now  
To see our bodies and no more.  
He flies through regions of the air,  
Beholding all the various forms-  
The Muni, who was made a friend  
Of every god for ministry.  
The steed of Vata, Vayu's friend,  
The Muni, by the gods impelled,  
In both the oceans hath his home,  
In eastern and in western seas.  
Treading the path of sylvan beasts,  
Gandharvas and Apsarases,  
The hairy one knows every thought,  
Sweet and most stimulating friend  
Vayu has twirled for him; for him  
He breaketh things most hard to bend;  
When he, the hairy one, has drunk  
With Rudra from the poison-cup."*

This hymn describes an ecstatic ascetic who looks wild in his exterior but possesses the supernatural powers matching the deities and has done away with the fetters (*pasa*) which bind him to the wordly life.

Radhakrishnan<sup>19</sup> summarizes the description given in Ath Veda in these words:

*We hear of great ascetics who obtain the mastery of nature by tapas. They reduce the elemental forces to their control by this asceticism. It was then well known that ecstatic conditions could be induced by the mortification of the body. Man can participate in divine power by the hidden force of magic. The possessors of magic and witch-craft were accepted by Vedic seers and their calling was dignified with a result that magic and mysticism soon became confused. We find people sitting in the midst of five fires, standing on one leg, holding an arm above the head, all for the purpose of commanding the forces of nature and subduing the gods to their will.*

Thus all sorts of marvelous achievements were made through extreme penance. Our epics and Puranas are full of stories which suggest the power of tapas. Indra got rid of *Brahma-hatya* by meditating upon *Pasupati* and performing severe austerities for thousand years. *Ravana* is known to have worshipped *Siva* in the most difficult ascetic methods and received the boon of invulnerability in return. *Visvamitra* the *Ksatriya* compelled the gods to grant him the birth and rights of a Brahmin by performing severe austerities. The power of asceticism is well summarized by Manu in these words<sup>20</sup>

*"Whatever is hard to be traversed, whatever is hard to be attained, whatever is hard to be reached, whatever is hard to be performed, all may be accomplished by austerities; for austerity possesses a power which it is difficult to surpass".*

As comes across through various myths and legends *Siva* himself is the ideal ascetic. Rather Puranic *Siva* is an interesting amalgam of a worthy householder and a thorough ascetic.

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<sup>19</sup> Radhakrishnan S. 'Indian Philosophy', Oxford University Press, 2008 vol 1, p121

<sup>20</sup> Manusmṛti as quoted by G.W Briggs "Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis", Delhi, p.217

What characterizes *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system is not only its philosophical side or spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) but also the rites and rituals it prescribes. *Kaundinya* in the beginning of his bhasya offers adoration to *Pasupati* who has created the whole world beginning from the *Brahman* for the good of all. He says that the five subjects of discussion in the *Pasupata* system are:

*Karya* (effect)

*Karana* (cause)

*Yoga* (meditation)

*Vidhi* (Behaviour)

*Dukkhanta* (cessation of sorrows)

The teaching of *Pasupata* system is for the total annihilation of all kinds of sorrow and this teaching can only be communicated to proper disciples. When the disciple follows the ascetic practices recommended by the lord he attains liberation through His grace. So the most important step is to get initiated in the system which is termed as *Diksa*.

### ***Diksa* (Initiation):**

*Diksa* is defined as a process of imparting real knowledge (*jnana*) and a perceptorial instruction which removes the karma-vasana (acts- latencies) of a pasu as mentioned in *Tantraloka*<sup>21</sup> , . Guided by the guru a *Sadhaka* applies himself to passing successively beyond the behavior patterns and values meant for pasu (the bonded soul). In other words the social and moral rules which apply to a layman no longer apply to the aspirant. Infact *diksa* is a process which witnesses a transformation to another mode of being who strives towards a spiritual upliftment by following the rules and rites of the order in which the person is initiated. It is supposed to 'kill the pasu' in jiva and to lead him to moksha. It creates so to say a new body, a 'mystical body' which enables the aspirant to enter the transcendent mode of being.

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<sup>21</sup> *Tantraloka Ahnika I P.80*

The incarnation of *Siva* as *Lakulisa* by entering a corpse is probably the best mythical example of this rite. One has to be dead to the world to rise as *Siva*.

*Svachhanda Tantra*<sup>22</sup> suggests that for ordinary aspirants or samayis there is the provision of reciting vacanas, listening to oral discourses, vedic studies, japa, dhyana and so on and their souls are purified by these traditional practices but the case for an ascetic aspirant is very different and follows a strict code of conduct. This *Putraka Diksa* is for those who desire to attain liberation from the bondages, who want to break all the fetters (*pasa*) which bind them to their physical existence. Regarding the 'Putraka' which derives from the term 'Putra' (son) SvaT<sup>23</sup> says that *Putraka* is the son of the guru who is not his biological issue but is born of the womb of Vagisi and whose vasanas (desires) are subdued by the divine grace. It seems that the history of *Putraka* goes back to the period of Brahmanas when it was thought that the Acarya himself bears the child. By placing his right hand on the disciple's head the guru was supposed to have conceived the disciple and hence the latter became his mind-born son. The Vedic, Puranic as well as Tantrik texts are full of references to such mind-born sons which seem to have been the worthy disciples who carried the knowledge acquired the guru further thus maintaining the lineage from antiquity. This *Sparsa Diksa* was meant for highly developed disciples and after being blessed by the guru the disciple was supposed to take his 'new birth' as a Brahmana alongwith Savitri who seems to have been introduced to emphasize the sharpening of his intellect. The guru seems to divinize the Sadhaka by his mystic touch and this touch is highly venerated in most of the religious texts. The idea of re-birth is of prime importance and hence the concept of 'death' assumes a major significance.

According to Eliade<sup>24</sup>, *Yoga* techniques aim at escaping the limitations of the body, allowing the soul (*atman*) to rise above *maya* and reach the Sacred (*nirvana*, *moksha*). Imagery of "freedom", and of death to one's old body and rebirth with a new body, occur frequently in Yogic texts, representing escape from the bondage of the temporal human condition.

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<sup>22</sup> *Svachhanda Tantra with Commentary by Kshemraja Ed by Madhusudan Kaul, KSTS, Bombay, 1921*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Eliade Mircea, 'Yoga, Immortality and Freedom' trans. Willard R. Trask. Bollingen Series, no.56, Princeton University Press, 1970 p.301

Considering the purpose of diksa as the imparting of jnana, the means to obtain it, the spiritual exertion by the guru to wash off the impurities accumulated in the disciple's inner heart (antastala), communication of right knowledge and a mantra in a systematic way, we have a list of a number of diksas quoted in Tantraloka. One of these called *Pranatakramana diksa*, whereby the disciple's body falls off to attain moksa in a body less form has been mentioned. Through the performance of Jalandhara a dead disciple was traced out and initiated at the place where he lay after his death<sup>25</sup>. Quite in the same vein KM ch 3.4, 3.5 says

***Anekrtvachatatambalam gatasajalasanidau***

***Devkhatetataudevi! siptosauvipulejale***

***Nitauasau kachhapedevi! Yatrajalesvarah***

***Jalmadhye mahalingamtisthate chavaranane***<sup>26</sup>

*Holding the child to her bosom she went to the water body and immersed the corpse of her son upside down in the devkhat lake*

*O devi, that child (Lakulisa) then was taken to the Jalesvara linga in the middle of the water body by a group of tortoises*

The pattern followed here too is the death of the miraculous child and then the resurrection of the same when thrown in the waters or when taken to Jalesvara linga. It is quite tempting to read this entire episode as the mythical explanation of the Jalandhara. The entire idea of Siva entering a corpse points at the initiation after the physical death. The next line which talks about 'Pretanjali' too focuses on the aspect of death very clearly.

***Pretanjalitattodattva haputra! Tvamkutaugattva?***<sup>27</sup>

*After giving Pretanjali to his dead son he said, O My son where did you go?*

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<sup>25</sup> Drabu V.N, 'Saivagamas: A Study in the Socio-Economic Ideas and Institutions of Kashmir, Delhi 1990

<sup>26</sup> Patel H. H.S. Ed. Shri Kayavarohan Tirth no Itihas, Ahmedabad, 1964 p.21

<sup>27</sup> Ibid p.22

The severing of bonds is clear in this section and later on too when the child (Lakulisa) refuses to return home and instead says:

***Kumara uvaca:***

***Mamasparsantimunya mammatapitatatha***

***Astikaryamparamkincit srnvantaumuniuttamah***

***Tayajsokamvishalaksi! Namematakadachan***

***Srnvanturishiyah sarveitihampuratanam***<sup>28</sup>

*Kumara (Lakulisa) said:*

*O Munis, my mother and my father, don't you touch me*

*O great Munis there is something great to be done, listen carefully*

*O long eyed lady, stop grieving, I never had a mother*

*O Rishis listen properly to me, I will enlighten you with ancient knowledge (history)*

The importance of diksa comes across clearly by an Agamic injunction which suggests that diksa is the only knowledge which without internal jnana has capacity to emancipate the aspirant

Looking more closely we see that the mystery of liberation which is nothing but return of the elements (tattvas) to Siva tattva, signifies an anticipation of death. The Yogico-tantrik exercises and rituals are only an anticipatory visualizations of the merging and return of elements in the higher *Sivatattva*, a process set in motion by purification through *Diksha*. Abhinavagupta too has amplified the concept of such a diksa which according to him is the diksa leading to the separation of the body or death and attaining Sivahood. Explaining this Drabu<sup>29</sup> writes

*"When death approaches a disciple, he through Samkari diksa goes to Siva. Thus to reach Parama-Pada the aspirant has to raise himself to another mode of being and to reach it, he must die to this life and sacrifice the personality that has issued from temporality, that has been created by history."*

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid p.22-23

<sup>29</sup> Drabu V.N, 'Saivagamas: A Study in the Socio-Economic Ideas and Institutions of Kashmir, Delhi 1990

Thus by initiating a disciple, his guru withdraws the aspirant from the outside reality into his own self, awakens his *kundilini* which lies dormant in uninitiated people and sets him on a way on which he can get united with the supreme force. In the process the bonds of *Maya*, (apparent reality or illusion) are broken by making the aspirant go through vigorous processes. All these procedures and the *vidhis* followed by the practioners of this order are only means of realizing the Highest Reality and the experience is totally internal and takes place in ones consciousness. So a major importance is paid to condition the body and mind to situations which are challenging and require extreme self control.

To be initiated and to meditate is to rise to such planes of existence unknown , unfathomable and inaccessible to the profane . Thus the path of Initiation is the path of death and mystical Resurrection and in all Saiva diksas the goal is to transcend the earthly existence and to move from imperfect ignorance to perfect knowledge.

Broadly speaking the diksa for the ascetic aspirants of this order comes under the heading '*Jnana diksa*' which aims at the purification of an aspirant and thus emancipating jiva from its animality (*pasutva*). To reach such a stage the ascetic has to undergo vigorous practices and do exactly the opposite of what human nature normally forces one to do. The *vidhis* or the rites mentioned in PS will be understood better if seen in the light of these speculations, rather than by studying them independently as some aberration or irrational behavior.

Briggs<sup>30</sup> suggests that the most of the Saivite sects that preceded *Kanphatas* were *Pasupatas*, *Lakulisa-Pasupatas*, *Kalamukha* and *Kapalika* (and probably *Aghoris*) all of which could be broadly classified under the term *Pasupatas*. These initiation rites were well thought psychological acts is clear from a passage in Briggs<sup>31</sup> about initiation in Kanphata order.

*"Initiation is divided, roughly into two stages, the first, a probationary period, followed by ceremonies leading to preliminary discipleship; the second during which the ceremony of splitting the ears which leads to full membership in the sect is performed. An initiate in the first stage is called an Aughar; in the second he becomes*

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<sup>30</sup> G.W Briggs in '*Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis*', Delhi, 1973 p.218

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid* p.27-28



*a full fledged Yogi.....The candidate is first closely confined for a period ranging from forty days to three to six months, that is , for a period of testing satisfactory to the guru. During this time the candidate is tried as to his resolution and ability to carry through his undertaking. At the same time he is dissuaded from becoming a Yogi, the guru pointing out to him the hardships that his initiation and his life as a Yogi would entail."*

Only if the *guru* is completely satisfied that the disciple has enough discipline and self control then he is initiated in the system which is marked by fasts and presenting of two edged knife for piercing the ear, an act which has given the order its name (*kan-phata*). Then he takes his vows of *ahimsa* (non-injury) and receives the *guru-mantra* (initiatory verse) and he is officially recognized as the disciple of the one who initiated him. This is followed by ritual shaving of the head and wearing ochre robe. In the second stage the guru pierces his ears puts around his neck the *singnad janeo*, or sacred thread of the order.

The antiquity of such rational and well thought over rites of Initiation can be gleaned through initiation rites of *Ajivikas*, an extreme ascetic order whose connection with *Lakulisa-Pasupatas* has already been discussed. As is the case with *Kanphatas* there is no one form of initiation and the ceremonies vary from one group to another. Unfortunately most of the written sources available for this sect have been extracted from Buddhist and Jain sources hence they have been described as derogatory. Their practices are ridiculed *Tittira-Jataka* and the extremism completely mocked at.

Two Pali references give us some indication of the probable initiatory rites of *Ajivikas*. Only by reading these critically rather than taking them on face value can lead to valuable information.<sup>32</sup> narrates an incident of a false ascetic who after a career of fraud and deception is judged and executed by a lion. The tiger who prosecutes the hapless ascetic while talking about the religious leanings of the latter says, "he has burnt his hands by grasping a lump". The commentary elaborates these lines ; "At the time of his going forth as an *Ajivika* his hands were burnt by grasping a heated lump". '*Hattha daddha pindapatiggahanena*'. This Basham believes points at

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<sup>32</sup> *Tittira Jataka* as quoted by Basham, A.L. *History and Doctrine of The Ajivikas*. London: Luzac and Company Ltd., 1951p, 104

the fact that Ajivikas were sometimes initiated by a painful ordeal and he further suggests that there are suggestions of the survival of the practice at a much later date too. Painful procedures seem to be the watch word of these ascetic orders. It seems that physical as well as mental endurance were tested to the maximum by these extreme practices.

Another more explicit description is given in *Mahanaradakassapa Jataka*<sup>33</sup> where the ascetic Guna is described as an ignorant, naked, wretched and blindly foolish Ajivika. '*ajanantam nagga-bhoggam nissirkam andha-balam ajivikam*'. The aspect of nudity is stressed here and this was considered as a major negative aspect of Ajivikas by Buddhists. There are various references to show the latter's abhorrence of nudity. An inscription at Belagami, Mysore, dated 1162 CE catalogues the types of ascetics to whom alms were given at the Kodiya math; among those there is a mention of Nagna-Bhagnas, who seem to have been habitually naked and who according to Basham<sup>34</sup> were naked Ajivika mendicants. Interestingly such naked ascetics are mentioned in *Rajatarangini*, the first ever recorded work of history in India. While describing the Iconoclastic activities of Harsha in 10<sup>th</sup> CE, the text refers to 'Rugna-Nagnataka' ascetics, with ematiated or decayed noses, feet, and hands who may have been Ajivikas.<sup>35</sup> (*Rajatarangini* of Kalhana, book vii, 1092-94).

Verses as translated by Stein are as follows:

*"In order to defile the statues of gods he had excrements and urine poured over their faces by naked mendicants whose noses, feet and hands had rotted away." (1092)*

*"Crippled naked mendicants and the like covered the images of the gods which were dragged along by ropes round their ankles, with spittings instead of flowers." (1094)*

The mention of *Ajivikas* can be found on and off in Kashmir and in my paper on Harwan<sup>36</sup> monuments I have tried to see *Ajivika* leanings in the monuments unearthed there and in the previous section have tried to see them as a Saiva ascetic group.

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108

<sup>35</sup> *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana, Book vii, 1092-1094 Trans and Ed by M.A Stein, Delhi, 1961

<sup>36</sup> Kher Kaw Geetika, 'An Enquiry into the sectarian affiliation of ruins at Harwan' in *Heritage of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh*, Ed. by G.L Badam and K.K Chakravarty, Research India Press, 2010

Hence in light of all the evidence Basham sees 'nagna-bhagna' as 'naked and crippled' and believes that *Ajivika* initiatory ordeals may have resulted in harsh mutilation and deformity in the body of the ascetic.

Another element in the *Ajivika* initiation, is described in *Dhammapada* commentary while narrating the story of Jambuka<sup>37</sup>.

*Jambuka's habits are so disgusting that his parents decide that he is not fitted for ordinary life, but only for Ajivikas (Ajivikanam esa anucchaviko). Therefore they take him to a local group of Ajivika ascetics, apparently while he is still a child and request that he be initiated into their community. The boy is placed in a pit up to his neck, planks are laid over the pit, above his collar bones, and sitting on the planks, the Ajivikas pull out his hair with a piece of the rib of a palm-leaf.*

This painstaking ordeal seems to have been a part of initiation only as we find Ajivikas with matted hair depicted on Borobudur stupa. The pit in which the novice was placed most probably symbolized his spiritual rebirth from the womb of Mother Earth after being dead and surpassing the pain and torture of the physical world.

The Ajivika reputation for asceticism apparently reached the Far East. Chinese and Japanese Buddhist literature classes the Ashibikas (i.e. Ajivikas) with the Nikendabtras or Nirgranathas as practicing severe penance.

In this context Sugiura<sup>38</sup> writes:

*"They both (Ajivikas and Nirgranthas) hold that penalty for a sinful life must sooner or later be paid and since it is impossible to escape from it it is better that it be paid as soon as possible so that the life to come may be free for enjoyment. Thus their practices were ascetic- fasting, silence, immovability and the burying of themselves up to the neck were their expressions of penance".*

We don't find direct reference to Initiation rites in Lakulisa-Pasupata system but the commenatary on PS does furnish information about the discussion between Lakulisa and his immediate disciple Kausika which throws considerable light on the nature of such an initiation. R A Sastri<sup>39</sup> elaborating on PS (p11) notes that Lakulisa went to

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<sup>37</sup> Basham, A.L. *History and Doctrine of The Ajivikas*. London: Luzac and Company Ltd., 1951p, 104

<sup>38</sup> Sugiura, S. *Hindu Logic as Preserved in China and Japan*, Philadelphia, 1900 p 16

<sup>39</sup> *Pasupata Sutra*, Ed by R.A Shastri, University of Trivandrum, Trivandrum, 1940

Ujjain and taught a Brahmin called Kusika who had come from Brahmavarta country (near Cawnpore) to receive former's blessings. The teaching he further suggests were in the form of present sutras hence connecting them directly to the initiation process. All the five sections of the Sutras are devoted to instruct students how to pray to God and to reach the lord Rudra (Rudra Sayujya) hereafter.

The first aphorism is explained and contextualized in detail by Kaundinya and since it provides a major insight in the philosophy and content of the whole text it needs to be looked into critically:

***Athatah Pasupateh Pasupatam Yogavidhim Vyakhyasyamah (PS 1.1)<sup>40</sup>***

*(Now then we shall expound the Pasupata Union and rites of Pasupati)*

*After offering obeisance with the head (bent) to that Pasupati, the Lord of the house (world) who created the entire world beginning with Brahma for the good (of all), Kaundinya following the tradition of his predecessors makes the commentary known as Panchartha (five categories), the best of its kind, enriched with significance and knowledge of the highest order.*

After a brief explanation about the analysis of the words and compound words used Kaundinya goes on to enumerate the qualities of a Pasupata teacher and his disciple:

*..this preceptor is the best of all Acharyas, because he has the direct vision of the effect (Karya=World) and its cause (Karana=Pasupati), he is a learned Brahmana (vipra) and he has direct knowledge of means and its end, he answers the questions and he is in the state of the all powerful, as he is emancipated, he is within the range of mind and the not-mind because he has power of assuming forms at his sweet will. Similarly for insisting the 'brahmana', prohibition of women and instruction for conquering the senses as mentioned in – deafness, blindness, want of smelling capacity, dumbness, dullness, madness, leprosy, impotency, lameness etc' thus free from all these diseases and possessed of active senses is the Brahmana disciple.....The Acharya is inclined to pronounce the injunctions for the sake of*

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<sup>40</sup> *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kaundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakrabarti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970 p47-55

*favour. And because of instruction for worship, prompting favour and the desire to attain the Good (Siva) the disciple aiming at reaching the end of all pains (dukhanta) is here inclined to approach the guru (preceptor) but not for dharma, artha (wealth), kama (desires) and moksa."*

Knowledge comes across as the cherished acquisition that a disciple of this order was aiming at. The idea was to reach the end of sorrow by burning all desires and breaking all the fetters which bound them to their physical existence. The unified perception of all manifest reality as composed of Siva and the destruction of bonds resulting from finite differentiations are the goals of the process of initiation. Abhinavagupta deftly summarizes the main purpose of initiation and the paraphernalia associated with it in these words<sup>41</sup>

*"Here what is to be perfected is only the attainment of that mantra, but neither vows nor formulas are of any useful assistance whatsoever. The only thing of any use here is the complete destruction of the disease of doubt, because doubt the essence of which is uncertainty and error, is the principal obstacle to an absorption whose nature is the cognition of that which has one taste."*

Then the commentary goes on to give an account of *Lakulisa's* birth in *Kayavatarana* and his interactions with *Kusika*<sup>42</sup>.

*"Again , as the good are accepted as authority, for being actuated by (special) desires to assume forms at will and because of his not being born God in the shape of man took form of a Brahmana and became incarnated in Kayavatarana. And he walked to Ujjaini, How (known)? By the authority of the Sistas (good and learned persons) and by the sight or hearing of symbols. He assumed the mark remarkable for the highest stage (asrama) and pronounced the injunctions; he lived on the altar of ashes in a pure spot for the connection with the disciples in a house, as mentioned in his own scripture, as bath by ashes, lying down and re-bath with ashes, garland of flowers and a single garment are prescribed an as the temple is reputed for being the resort."*

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<sup>41</sup> Muller-Ortega P.E, *The Triadic Heart of Siva'Kaula Tantricism of Abhinavagupta in the Non-Dual Shaivism of Kashmir (Sury Series, Shaiva Traditions of Kashmir)*p.169

<sup>42</sup> *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakrabarti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970 p.56-57

*Hence being prompted by Rudra the worshipful Kusika approached the Acharya, marked in him signs of excellence beginning with the highest pleasure and the opposite signs in himself, paid homage to his feet and according to the custom related his caste, gotra ,learning and freedom from debts .The disciple stood like a patient before the Acarya who was like a physician.”*

Then follows a philosophical discussion on cessation of sorrow and authority of Pasupati between the preceptor –disciple duo. Importance of Yoga-vidhi is stressed upon in the next paragraph and these vidhis are explained one by one in context of Yoga and other important factors.

*“The question is –‘Is Yoga attainable simply by knowledge? The answer is , because it is said –for attainment of that we shall expound the practices (vidhi). Here the term ‘Yoga-vidhi’ means the practices of Yoga, a certain course of action”*

In the last part parts of *Vidhis* are given as follows:

*Here the question is –the portion, accepted is being duly explained first. Now to think of this .What is the beginning, the middle or the end, or of how many parts is the Vidhi?*

*The answer is –the first ‘vidhi’ is by ashes, the middle is by abuses and the end is in being dull and that vidhi has three parts viz. gift, sacrifice and penance. How is it known? Because .....*

Hence Pancarthika initiation is a rite of passage into the practice of the religion. And then begins the next sutra on importance of ashes and is followed by two more with the same concern.

### **Guru:The divine preceptor:**

Siva in his form as a teacher of yoga, music and other sciences is known by the name of *Daksinamurti*. He is called so because he is believed to have imparted the knowledge of yoga to rishis while facing the south.

PS 1.9 says : “**Mahadevasya Daksinamurteh**” and to explain Kaundinya<sup>43</sup> writes:

*Here daksina is in the sense of a quarter or direction. The Sun divides the quarters. The quarters again divide the image. The image here means that form which the Sadhaka, seated near on the right side of the Lord with his face turned north realizes and which is characterized as Vrsa-dvaja (the bull symbolized) as Sulapani (with trident in his hand) as Mahakala and as Urdhava-linga (with penis raised up) etc. Or the people go to the temple of Mahadeva and so there the Sadhaka should worship. The Daksinamurti being taken, the images on the east, north and west are to be discarded.”*

The last line clearly suggests the importance of *Daksinamurti*, i.e Siva in form of a teacher in the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order. Vidya, knowledge being of prime importance for a *Lakulisa-Pasupata* aspirant, the guru automatically assumes a significant position and is identified with Siva himself. The merger with Siva is what a guru is supposed to achieve after he leaves his mortal frame. The *Daksinamurti Upanisad* and the *Suta-Samhita* give the esoteric meaning of this icon. It is stated that He is the supreme god who at the end of an aeon (kalpa) absorbs within himself the whole universe and remains dazzling with joy. Further it is stated that Jnana (knowledge) is known as daksina and since daksina is ever *Daksinamurti* in front of Siva and is gazing at him in the aspect of *Daksinamurti* he is called *Daksinamukha*. The *Apasmara-Purusa* under his foot (also seen under *Najrajamurti*’s foot) is the personification of the ignorance of the living beings which he keeps under his power. i.e. he has power to dispel ignorance at his own sweet will<sup>44</sup>.

As far as visual representations are concerned an image of is seen in four different aspects viz. as a yogic teacher, as a player of vina, as a knowledge giver and as tutor of Shastras i.e. *Vyakhyanamurti*. Of these the last form is the one which is most frequently seen in the temples and hence its iconography and form will be discussed in detail.

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* p.58

<sup>44</sup> Gopinath Rao, T.A, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, 4 Vols, Madras, 1916 ,p.277

## Vyakhyana Daksinamurti:

As an expounder of Shastras *Daksinamurti* is represented as seated on a secluded spot on the Himalayas, under a banyan tree, on a seat covered with a tiger's skin; or seated on a white lotus (padmasana). Three eyed and four armed he is usually shown sitting in virasana with his right leg dangling and many a times resting on the apasmara-purusa. His front right hand is in jnana mudra and front left hand is either in varada or danda mudra. The other two hands hold aksamala and agni(fire)/sarpa (snake). Sometimes he is shown holding a book too. His hair is matted and his jatas sometimes are seen to be held together with a patta-bandha and often the smiling face of goddess ganga can be seen in middle of his jatabhara. The face is shown calm and relaxed and his gaze is fixed upon the tip of his nose in a meditative pose. Interestingly surrounding this teacher-god are seen rishis, his disciples usually seven in number. Different texts give different names of these rishis but interestingly most of them are directly related to Pasupata school of thought as can be gauged from the chart.

Name of the text	Rishis mentioned
Amsumadbhedagama	Narada, Jamadagni, Vasishta, Bhrigu, Bharadvaja, Sanaka, Agastya
Kamikagama	Kausika, Kasyapa, Bharadvaja, Atri, Gautama
Karanagama	Agastya, Pulastya, Visvamitra, Angirasa

Texts mention that these rishis should have a jatamukuta on their heads, the garland of rudraksa seeds round their neck and white yajnopavitas on their person and their bodies should be completely covered with ashes<sup>45</sup>.

This image of Siva as daksinamurti has a lot in common with Lakulisa murtis seen all over the country.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid p. 278-280





Illus 32. Siva as Daksinamurti, Kailashnath, Kanchipuram, Pallava, 8<sup>th</sup> CE

### ***Vidhis:***

According to Kaundinya Vidhi or behavior constitute those activities which bring about merit (dharma). That is to say that yoga cannot be attained only by gaining knowledge but a certain course of action has to be followed by the aspirant to make him realize the fruits of yoga. Vidhi is of two orders, the principal comprising of direct religious practices ‘carya’ and the subsidiary one comprising of purificatory rites.

### **Use of Ashes: Meanings and Metaphors**

#### ***Bhasmana trisavanam snayita (PS 1.2)***

*One must take bath by ashes in three periods of a day*

#### ***Bhasmani Sayita (PS 1.3)***

*One should lie down in ashes*

#### ***Anusnanam (PS 1.4)***

*Re-bath (with ashes)*

Use of ashes in initiation ceremonies can be seen in Kanphata yogis who after first stage of initiation are besmeared with ashes to signify their death to the world and their rebirth in the new order. Mention of ashes is found from KM<sup>46</sup> (4.3) while describing the form of Lakulisa;

***Drtyagnopavitam cha mekhalabhasmasanyutam/***

***Prahasmanassarve nityam protphullocanam//***

*He (Lakulisa) was seen adorned with a yagnopavita, mekhala and had ashes smeared all over. He had beautiful eyes like blossoms and was seen running*

Hara<sup>47</sup> believes that the importance of use of ashes is fundamentally based upon the ancient Indian belief that attributes special cleansing efficacy to the ashes, which are the remnant of all burning fiery energy.

Regarding the nature of ashes commentary on PS 1.2 says<sup>48</sup>: (p 56)

*Here ashes mean the object which is given to Vama (Pasupati) and which is produced by fuel set on fire. That is made by others, it is an earthly food and shining. Ashes should be acquired like alms from the villages. Because ashes are helpful to the observances of bath, lying down and rebath, they must be taken and because they have nothing to do with injury they are the purest and best things and they should be taken profusely as the means of spiritual rise ....*

Interesting reference can be found from Caryapada by the Sahajyana siddha Kanhapada (Krsnapada or Kanu-pa). Equating himself with a Kapalini and explaining the essence of a true kapalini Kanha says<sup>49</sup>

*'the yogin Kanha has become a Kapali, and has entered into the practices of yoga, and he is sporting in the city of his body in a non-dual form ..... The ashes he smears on his body are the ashes of passion (raga), aversion (dosa, dvesa), and attachment (moha).....*

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<sup>46</sup> Patel H. H.S. Ed. *Shri Kayavarohan Tirth no Itihas*, Ahmedabad, 1964 p.23

<sup>47</sup> Hara Minoru. *Pasupata Studies* ed by Takashima Jun, Vienna, 2002, p.61

<sup>48</sup> *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakraborti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970, p.56

<sup>49</sup> Lorenzen David N, *The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas: Two lost Saivite sects*, Delhi, 1972 p.69-70

Here one is reminded of the story of sage Mankanaka narrated twice in and is repeated in important texts like Skanda Pu, Padma Pu., Vamana Pu, and Kathasaritsagar. Here the sage Mankanaka having performed austerities for many years accidentally cut his finger on a blade of grass. Instead of blood he saw vegetable sap flowing from the wound. The sage became ecstatic and began to dance at his achievement and power developed by years of penance. To teach him a lesson Siva dressed as a Brahmin came to him and tapped his fingers together and they were turned to ashes. When the sage saw such a miraculous feat he realized his vanity and base passion. The fact that 'One's own body is only made of ashes' dawned upon him completely and he went back to his penance. Such successes as Sukumari Bhattacharji<sup>50</sup> observes belong to Yoga as a discipline. Thus Siva's feat is indicative of attaining higher success for ashes in this context symbolize the complete mortification of the flesh, the triumph of the spirit over the physical world and also the supreme detachment. In short Siva is seen here as a supreme sage –a Yogisvara and in this aspect he reflects the Samkhya concept of inactive Purusa as well as 'Avyakta' of Svetasvatara Upanisad. Hence the yogic aspect is somewhere linked with inactivity but at the same time this period of inactivity raises the potential of Siva as a creator.

The symbolism of ashes does not end there. The enigma of the symbolism of ashes is brought out very well by O'Flaherty<sup>51</sup> in these words which reconcile both erotic and ascetic aspect of Siva.

*On an explicit superficial level, the ashes are ascetic, disgusting (being the ashes of corpses), and simply anti erotic. But, for all their apparent loathsomeness, the ashes assume an erotic and creative significance upon Siva by their association with the burning and resurrection of Kama and Sati.*

This contention is further substantiated by the passage given in Hathayogapradipika which mentions that the ashes were used in rites of expiation and were used in place of sandalwood paste upon the bodies of a couple who had performed Tantric ritual intercourse. While on one hand they always reminded the aspirant of the universal

<sup>50</sup> Bhattacharji Sukumari, 'The Indian Theogony: A Comparative Study of Indian Mythology from the Vedas to the Puranas', Calcutta, 1978 p.200

<sup>51</sup> O'Flaherty Wendy, 'Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva, London .1973 p246

truth i.e 'Everything is ashes', on the other they were used for their practical antiseptic value too. Rather the practical value has been presented in a garb of metaphysical expositions to stress on the importance of the ashes. By this logic ashes assumed the symbol of sin-destroying object which Siva grants to his worshippers.

This can be better understood in context of *Pasupata* concept of Sauca (Purity) as mentioned in PS.

As seen above the Lakulisa-Pasupata's had invented a new set of Niyamas in which they included rites and practices related to ashes in a big way. Hara<sup>52</sup> believes that ashes were used by the ascetics of this order primarily for cleansing and purification purposes. Kaundinya too suggests the importance of this concept in his commentary on PS 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4)<sup>53</sup>

*"Purity (Sauca) is established in the system (tantra). How? Because we have the teaching (in our scripture) that one should bathe with ashes (bhasma snana). Again this purity is of three kinds: purity of body (gatra-sauca), purity of mind (bhava-sauca) and purity of soul (atma-sauca)..."*

*Ashes burn all those defects which are born of company, which owe their origin to parents, which are due to food and drink, which are caused by cross-breeding and which resort to the body, bones and marrows. And again it is said – The good thinkers say that the impure food caused by hairs and worms becomes eatable, if it is only touched by ashes".*

The fact that bathing with ashes is classified along with purity of mind by removing desires and purity of soul by courting dishonor points at its importance as a major purificatory rite. This triple division of purity is also seen in the Ratnatika on GK by Bhasarvajna though he uses the words kaya sauca, antahkarana sauca and atman sauca instead of the ones used in PS. This purificatory device is taken to a metaphysical and mystical level can be seen in this passage again cited from PBh which quotes from scriptures from other orders<sup>54</sup>:

<sup>52</sup> Hara Minoru. *Pasupata Studies* ed by Takashima Jun, Vienna, 2002 p.57-60

<sup>53</sup> *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakrabarti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970 p.72-73

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p.75

*He who drinks wine, approaches the wife of the teacher, steals and kills a brahmana; is released from sins, when he besmears himself with ashes, lies on the heap of ashes and reads the chapter on Rudra. He who is self controlled and who always takes to bath by fire (ashes), saves twenty-one generations and goes to the blissful state. Thus in other scriptures also bodily purification by ashes is reputed*

### **Daily practices:**

After initiation and being marked with ashes PS recommends that the ascetic aspirant should live in a temple, cave or natural ghettos and perform daily rituals

#### ***Ayatana-vasi (PS 1.7)***

*(A resident in a temple) (chakroborti p 59)*

#### **Pbh elaborates<sup>55</sup>:**

*..The aspirant should live in that house made by others and so he is the resident and takes the house. He lives in a place on earth, in the sky (in caves or upper floors?) in the root of a tree or goes on wandering at large anywhere.....It has been said "If there is any holy place (a temple) of Mahesvara in a village or a forest, that is the residence of the virtuous and that is the grandest spot for spiritual success..*

Apart from following the ash rites and other rites of purification some special functions had to be performed in the temple by the aspiring ascetic practitioner. These have been mentioned in both PS and GK

#### ***Hasita-gita-nrta-dundunkara-namaskara-japyopahareno patisthet (PS 1.8)***

*(One should worship with laughter, songs, dance, sounds of dum-dum, salutations, mutterings and presents)*

Laughter is the first of six forms of worship that are to take place in the temple. The character of each is explained in both PS and GK and compiled in these points by Collins<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid p. 59

<sup>56</sup> Collins Charles D, *The Iconography and Ritual of Śiva at Elephanta.*, SUNY Press, 1988 p.135-137

- Laughter is a wild loud laugh, with the throat and lips wide open (Pbh).
- Song is performed according to the rules of the Gandharvasastra and in which, in public hearing, the names of God , those which derive from his qualities , his substances, and his acts are called to mind (Pbh) while singing, the adept rises to his feet (GK RT)
- Dance is what is performed according to the rules of the Natyasastra and consists of all possible motions of the hands and feet: upward, downward, inward, outward and shaking motion (Pbh). Both Pbh and GK RT mention that this dance should be accompanied by a song “Whatever is sung in Sanskrit or Prakrta in ones own composition or others’ should be sung”
- Dumdumkara [Huduk-kara as per GK] is the sacred sound like the bellowing of a bull, produced by the contact of the tongue-tip with the palate (Pbh) GKRT elaborates that this is to be performed after the dance when the devotee has again sat down and is still meditating on Siva.
- Inner worship or Namaskara is to be done mentally (Pbh)
- Japyam means the concentration of an idea with mind on the lines of the mantras known as Sadyojata etc

GK RT notes that laughing , singing and huduk-kara are verbal activities, dancing is a bodily one while Namaskara and Japa are mental. These six modes of worship or offering as they are called (upahara) are done in front of a image of Daksinamurti, the ascetic-teacher form of Siva. It further continues that after the sixfold worship is completed , one meditates on the God and declares that he will perform the avabhrtha-snana or purificatory ablution. He also pays homage to the teachers of the order and then he then departs, making obeisance to the lord and after that slowly circumambulates the image or the shrine while praying. Then he performs certain meditative practices outside the temple. This completes the prescribed regimen for the first religious stage.

## **Nudity:**

The aspect of nudity is explained and advocated in sutras 1.10 and 1.11 as an important step to detachment from the worldly desires

### ***Ekavasah (PS 1.10)***

*[Having only one garment]*

*..by the significance of this sutra only ,all objects being rejected, the disciple should be initiated to possess only one garment. The question is – when will he have the removal of shame ? The answer is –by knowledge and sinlessness*

Hence it is stressed that once the true knowledge dawns upon the aspirant all sense of shame and desires are lost completely and he moves to the stage when he can be roam about naked and feel no embarrassment.

### ***Avasa va (PS 1.11)***

*[Without any garment]*

*He should live without clot , naked as he was born and without any possession...For the sake of living without accepting and for the exposition of something not good – these two needs should be marked.*

And naked is how he is supposed to enter the villages and approach people for alms and ashes but at this stage he has to be careful not to talk to women and low caste people as the former can re-ignite the worldly passion which the aspirant is trying to conquer. If by any chance such an encounter is made the aspirant is supposed to smear himself with ashes perform breath control exercise, japa and wander around to control his mind and to wipe out the sinful thoughts.

*When these jealousy and other thoughts do not rise, the seed being destroyed, then that should be taken as the highest purity of thought.*

Once the mind is calm and all base emotions and feelings controlled then the aspirant gains Yoga and various miraculous powers like power of seeing ,hearing , thinking and knowing from a distance, power of omniscience, swiftness of thought, power to assume forms at will, faculty of expatiation and in short becomes a Siddha.

Regarding such a yogi Kularnava Tantra<sup>57</sup> says:

*A Kula yogi may dwell anywhere, disguised in any form, unknown to anybody. Such yogins in diverse guises, intent on the welfare of men, walk the earth unrecognized by others. They do not expend their self knowledge at once. In the midst of men they live as if intoxicated, dumb, dull.....Adepts in Kaula yoga speak in the manner of the uncivil, behave as if ignorant; appear like the lowly. They do so in order that men may ignore them and not flock to them; they talk nothing at all...Such a yogi lives in a way that this world of men may laugh, feel disgust, revile and seeing, pass at a distance leaving him alone. He would go about in different guises, at times like one worthy, at times like one fallen, at times like a ghost or a demon*

The method of worship of Pasupati by the Lakulisa cult is described in the commentaries of the SDS and GK in detail and has been summarized here.

An aspirant is supposed to perform panchagnisadhana. After cleaning his feet and teeth and performing ablutions in the morning, he smears his body with ashes and meditates on Siva. At noon and in the evening, a similar procedure is prescribed. After his bath he proceeds slowly to garbhagrha. On the right of the image, he kneels on the ground and placing his hand on his chest, visualizes Siva and meditates. While meditating on Siva, he laughs loudly; then he sings and dances. He then sits in the manner prescribed above, meditates on Siva, voices hudukkara three times, does namaskara six times and performs the japa. While coming out of the garbhagrha he salutes three times and goes around the deity also three times while continuing the japa. While bathing in a lonely place he pays homage to all the Tirthesas from Lakulisa to Rasikara, and then does one pradakshina around the deity. The place selected for meditation is examined in the morning and cleaned of dirt and impurities. When darkness descends the site is again cleaned with the end of a piece of cloth and purified with ashes. He stays there until he is tired and overpowered by sleep. He thereupon gets up and spreads the ground with plenty of bhasma (ashes), then sleeps and when on awakening repeats the procedure. When he obtains jnana, with the permission of the guru he performs krathana, spandana and mandana in the midst of the people.

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<sup>57</sup> Kularnava Tantra: Introduction by Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe), Readings M.P Pandit, Sanskrit Text: Taranatha Vidyaratna, MLBD, Delhi 1965. P 67, 68



Besides these Pasupata ascetics are advised to act in asocial manner e.g, pretend to sleep when they are not actually sleeping, shaking their legs as if suffering from a paralysis attack, walking like a lame man and exhibiting signs of lust at the sight of young beautiful women. The above description leaves no doubt that they are supposed to make themselves repulsive to the society in general.

If one sees such irrational sounding behavior in the light of philosophical position of the order and in light of material furnished by various texts, it starts assuming a coherent meaning. This nature is succinctly explained by Eliade<sup>58</sup> in these words:

*“Pain exists only to the extent to which experience is referred to the human personality regarded as identical with purusha, with the Self. But since this relation is illusory, it can easily be abolished. When purusha is known, values are annulled; pain is no longer either pain or nonpain, but a simple fact; a fact that, while it preserves its sensory structure, loses its value, its meaning. This point should be thoroughly understood, for it is of capital importance in Samkhya and Yoga and, in our opinion, has not been sufficiently emphasized. In order to deliver us from suffering, Samkhya and Yoga deny suffering as such, thus doing away with all relation between suffering and the Self. From the moment we understand that the Self is free, eternal, and inactive, whatever happens to us sufferings, feelings, volitions, thoughts, and so on no longer belong to us.”*

Such observation is corroborated by Vatulnatha Sutra (VS)<sup>59</sup> which comprises of thirteen esoteric aphorisms dealing with abstract Saiva thought. It is believed that it was penned down by Siddha Vatulanatha, who was a Kaula Siddha and probably lived in 12<sup>th</sup> CE.

VS-12 states: ***Mahabodhasamavesat Punyapapasambandhah***

The literal translation would be:

By entering in the state of Supreme God Consciousness one totally surpasses the limitations of good and evil

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<sup>58</sup> Eliade M, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom* p.28

<sup>59</sup> *Vatulnatha Sutra with an exposition of aphorisms in English by Swami Lakshmana Joo, Ed by N.K Gurtoo and M.L. Kukiloo, Ishwar Ashram Trust, Kashmir, 1996*

The Sutra has been explained by Swami Lakshmana Joo<sup>60</sup> to mean that in our mundane lives it is very important for us to know what is right and wrong, otherwise there will be a total degradation. But for a realized soul who is established in God-Consciousness all sort of dualities vanish. So what is considered bad or shameful for a lay person will have no such meaning for a true ascetic.

Irrespective of all the seeming irrational behavior such ascetics have been part of Indian folk culture since ages. The figure of the *jogi* with all his idiosyncrasies appeared persistently and ubiquitously in Sanskrit as well as regional literatures and various folklore genres of India. Although a renouncer of the world and worldly pleasures, he often interfered in the affairs of the householders to whom he went for alms, helping them to solve their problems or to have their mundane wishes fulfilled through his mysterious supernatural powers. These included, among other things, the powers to bestow a child, more often a son, to infertile couples and to restore the dead to life. In many folktales related to the Jogis, we see those performing miraculous feats in a matter of fact manner, which made them favourite characters of the common people.

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid* p.24