

purview of his senses, white with the light of consciousness. From this bowl he drinks the wine of the essence (*rasa*) of the universe.³⁸ Absorbed in the contemplation of the fire of his own consciousness (*citi*), he enters the cremation ground of his own body, terrible with the funeral pyres (*citi*) in which all the latent traces of his past actions (*krama*) are burnt to ashes.³⁹ Abhinava writes:

“[The body] is the support of all the gods, the cremation ground frightening with the pyre [of consciousness, *citi*, which destroys all things]. Attended by siddhas and yoginīs, it is their awesome (*mahā-raudra*) playground wherein all embodied forms (*vigraha*) come to an end. Full of the countless pyres [of the senses] and pervaded by the halos of their rays, the flux of the darkness [of duality] is destroyed and, free of all thought-constructs, it is the sole abode of bliss. Entering this [body], the cremation ground of emptiness—who does not achieve perfection?”⁴⁰

All Tantric traditions, including those of Kashmiri Śaivism, teach that the senses, along with the body, should be venerated as manifestations of the sacred power of consciousness which emits them as the sun does its rays.⁴¹ Accordingly, the senses can be personified and worshipped as deities that surround and attend upon the god (or goddess) who is their master. According to Kṣemarāja, although the senses and their presiding deities do not in fact differ, the Spanda teachings distinguish between them. The physical senses are merely the external expansion (*viṣṭambha*) of the body of consciousness (*viṣṭānadeha*) which belongs to the deities of the senses. The Supreme Lord and inner master of the Circle (*cakradevatā*) is the universal subject (*mahāpramātr*) Who, endowed with the sacred power of the senses, is seated in the Heart of consciousness within the sacred abode (*piṭha*) of the body,⁴² and there playfully rotates the wheels of their powers.⁴³

The forms and names ascribed to the deities of the senses vary considerably in different traditions and even in different Tantras belonging to the same tradition. The reason for this, according to Abhinava, is largely due to the ritual context in which they are venerated and the functions ascribed to them. The activities of the senses are altered by the emotions generated by consciousness, and so the character of their presiding deities changes accordingly. Thus, in rites performed in anger with the aim of killing an enemy, the deities are represented in a wrathful (*raudra*) attitude. Rites intended to bring peace and prosperity are attended by deities of a peaceful (*saumya*) disposition.⁴⁴

The original rites described in the Tantras have no place in the yogic teachings of the Spanda school; even so, the esoteric philosophy (*rahasyadr̥ṣṭi*) at the root of their symbolic significance has been retained. This makes sense because the spiritual, cosmic body is more ‘internal’ than the lower-order body through which the rites are performed. It is one with the universal consciousness residing in the Centre, the pulsing Heart (*hr̥daya*) of pure ‘I’ consciousness, the ‘great abode of the universe’⁴⁵ in which everything rests⁴⁶ and which gives life and being to all things. Jayaratha quotes:

Although [the Light] pervades all the body and senses, even so, its supreme abode is the core of the Lotus of the Heart.⁴⁷

This same inwardness is shared by the sacred circle of the senses of this Divine Body. It is the inner circle of the goddesses of the senses (*karaṇadevatā*). Kṣemarāja, expounding the Doctrine of Vibration, says that they are the “circle of the rays of the glory of the Self” which presides over and gives life to the outer circle of the physical senses.⁴⁸ In his “Hymn to the Circle of Deities in the Body” (*Dehasthadevatā-cakrastotra*), Abhinava describes the goddesses of the senses. Although this hymn belongs to the Krama tradition, not to Spanda, it is clear that Kṣemarāja understood the nature of these divine powers essentially in the way Abhinava describes them here. He portrays the goddesses of the senses as seated on the petals of the lotus of the Heart arrayed around the Divine Couple, Ānandabhairava and Ānandabhairavī, Who are in the calix. The goddesses move restlessly hither and thither in search of the most pleasing sensations to offer in worship to the Couple in the Centre. Abhinava begins by saluting Gaṇeśa and Vaṭuka, the inhaled and exhaled breaths (*apāna* and *prāṇa*). He then praises Ānandabhairava, the true teacher (*sadguru*) Who is the yogi’s attentive awareness (*avadhāna*) that illumines Śiva’s Path—the universe—by the power of His intellect (*dhī*). Meanwhile His consort, Ānandabhairavī, playfully gives rise (*udaya*) to the universe, manifests it (*avabhāsana*) and relishes its pure conscious nature (*carvaṇa*). Around them are Brahmāṇī, the intellect (*buddhī*), who offers the flowers of certainty (*nīścaya*); Śāmbhavī, the ego (*ahaṃkāra*), who offers the flowers of egoity; Kaumārī, the mind (*manas*) who offers her flowers of thought (*vikalpa*); Vaiṣṇavī, the ear, offering sounds; Vārāhī, the skin, offering tactile sensations; Indrāṇī, sight, offering forms; Cāmuṇḍā, the tongue, offering tastes; and Mahālakṣmī, the nose, who offers smell. After rendering homage to the Self, replete with all the categories of existence, Abhinava concludes with the words:

I venerate in this way the circle of deities eternally active (*satatodita*) in my own body, ever present in all beings and the essence of the radiant pulsation of experience (*sphuradamubhava*).⁴⁹

At the lower level of consciousness, the physical senses are hardly more than unconscious instruments of perception. They are extroverted and operate in relation to external objects. At the higher level, when 'the island of embodied consciousness' has been destroyed and submerged into the ocean of pure consciousness, the senses perceive reality in a new, timeless mode.⁵⁰ They are introverted in the sense that they are recognised to be spiritual forces operating within sacred consciousness. Plunged in Bhairava's Great Light, the senses are divinised and their activity leads the yogi to the higher reaches of consciousness even as they perceive their objects. The senses thus illumine the yogi after having themselves been illumined by Śiva and he realises in this way that the senses are the pure Spanda energy of consciousness which perceives the Divine manifest as sensations.

Śiva manifests His freedom in the joy (*āhlāda*) he feels as the subject who perceives the world through the pulsing activity of the senses. He sports in the garden of His universe delighting in the five flowers of smell, taste, sight, touch and sound.⁵¹ At the same time Śiva rests in His own nature. The repose He thus enjoys is the source of His bliss and the foundation of His freedom. Embracing the diversity of things in the oneness of His nature, Śiva is content. The yogi must seek to imitate Śiva, the archetype of Fully Awakened (*suprabuddha*) consciousness. The yogi's experience conforms to Śiva's blissfully unifying vision to the degree in which he succeeds in maintaining a state of authentic self-awareness. The perfected yogi is always established in himself, reflecting on his true and uncreated (*akṛtrima*) nature. But although self-absorbed, he is never abstracted from the world. In fact, by being constantly mindful of himself, he sees and hears with greater clarity and understanding, and, with his senses and mind thus actively in touch with the world, his meditation matures and becomes perfect.

The Spanda teachings, accordingly, instruct the yogi to observe the movement of the senses, mindful that their activity is an extension of the activity of Śiva—the universal consciousness which is the yogi's true nature.⁵² In this way he comes to recognise himself to be full of the Spanda energy which impels the operation of the senses.⁵³ Sensations of all sorts thus ultimately lead him to recognise himself to be the pervasive experience of the Great Light (*mahāprakāśa*) of consciousness, filling both his individual subjectivity and his environment.⁵⁴ Consequent-

ly, although many spiritual paths seek to curb and discipline the senses, seeing in them one of the principle sources of bondage (*samsāra*), the Spanda teachings, and Kashmiri Śaivism in general, maintain, on the contrary, that they can serve both initially as a means to self-realisation and, ultimately, are the very bliss of liberation itself.⁵⁵ Utpaladeva, the great exponent of the philosophy of recognition, repeatedly dwells on this theme in his hymns to Śiva. Realising his authentic Śiva-nature and thus inspired by the spirit of the highest form of devotion (*parabhakti*), Utpaladeva exclaims:

May the outpourings of the activity of my senses fall on their respective objects. May I, O Lord, never be so rash as to lose, even for a moment, the joy of my oneness with You, however slightly.⁵⁶

The yogi can take pleasure in sense objects; indeed he is specifically instructed to do so,⁵⁷ if he maintains an awakened, mindful attitude (*prabuddhabhāva*) and does not just blindly follow his natural inclinations as does an animal with a bare minimum of self-awareness. The pleasure we derive from physical objects is, in reality, the repose we enjoy when the activity of the mind is momentarily arrested and delights one-pointedly in the source of pleasure. All pleasure, in other words, is essentially spiritual. It is a state the subject experiences and not a property of the object. It is 'a drop from the ocean of Śiva's bliss',⁵⁸ a small wave or pulse in the universal vibration of consciousness. The yogi must fix his attention on the source of pleasure, freeing his mind of all disturbing thoughts and so make the transition to a state of awareness in which his personal concerns are transcended in the pervasive experience of consciousness. This yogi is no hedonist. He is free of the false notion that the body is the Self and so does not crave for the pleasures of the senses, although he does make use of them as springboards to project him beyond the realms of physical, transitory objectivity into the eternal sphere of consciousness.

If the connection between 'worldly' pleasure and spiritual bliss is strong, the link between aesthetic experience and the rapturous delight (*camatkāra*) of consciousness is even more so. Sweet song, a pleasing picture, the sight of a beautiful woman, all these are full of a 'juice' (*rasa*) which the senses relish or 'taste' and which, like food, feeds consciousness with delight and wonder (*camatkāra*). The senses are the organs of this 'tasting' (*āsvadana*, *rasanā*) and a state of aroused consciousness is the fruit. Abhinava writes:

Once one has overcome distraction, the pleasure one enjoys

The SUNY Series in the Shaiva Traditions of Kashmir
Harvey P. Alper, Editor

Editorial Board

Edward Dimock, Wilhelm Halbfass, Gerald J. Larson,
Wendy D. O'Flaherty, Andre Padoux, Navjivan Rastogi,
Ludo Rocher, Alexis Sanderson.

The
Doctrine of Vibration

An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices
of Kashmir Shaivism

MARK S. G. DYCZKOWSKI

State University of New York Press