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## Knowing Oneself – Bringing together Kashmir Shaivism and Bhoja's guṇas-based Aesthetics

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**Abstract** - Kashmir Shaivism strives to answer two fundamental, inter-related questions: firstly, who am 'I'? and secondly, how to attain the True 'I'? In Kashmir Shaivism, 'I' is synonymous with Pure Consciousness (*Śiva*-hood). The school propounds a theistic, idealistic, and monistic philosophy within the *Śaiva* tradition. In this paper, we not only explicate the answers to these questions by resorting to the metaphysics of Kashmir Shaivism but employ textual analysis and interpretation to examine how an aesthetic model proposed by Bhoja and based on the three guṇas can help us to place this metaphysics in the context of the second question.

**Keywords** - Śiva-hood, Jīva, guṇas, upāyas, puruṣārthas, Bhojā

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**Abstract** - Kashmir Shaivism strives to answer two fundamental, inter-related questions: firstly, who am 'I'? and secondly, how to attain the True 'I'? In Kashmir Shaivism, 'I' is synonymous with Pure Consciousness (*Śiva*-hood). The school propounds a theistic, idealistic, and monistic philosophy within the *Śaiva* tradition. In this paper, we not only explicate the answers to these questions by resorting to the metaphysics of Kashmir Shaivism but employ textual analysis and interpretation to examine how an aesthetic model proposed by Bhoja and based on the three guṇas can help us to place this metaphysics in the context of the second question.

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### Introduction:

*Pratyabhijñā-darśana* (Kashmir Shaivism) strives to answer two fundamental, inter-related questions: firstly, who am 'I'? and secondly, how to attain the True 'I'. In Kashmir Shaivism, 'I' is synonymous with Pure Consciousness<sup>1</sup>. The journey from being an ignorant self towards realisation of Pure Consciousness is the intent of this Tantric school. The school was founded in Kashmir around the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. by Vasugupta to whom the Truth was revealed in the form of *Śiva śūtras*. Kashmir Shaivism takes a distinct approach while delving into the aforementioned questions by propounding a theistic, idealistic, and monistic philosophy within the *Śaiva* tradition. In the subsequent sections of this paper, we not only explicate the answers to these questions by resorting to the metaphysics of Kashmir Shaivism but also examine how an aesthetic model proposed by Bhoja and based on the three guṇas can help us to place the Kashmir Saivism metaphysics in the context of the second question through textual analysis and interpretation. The school pursues these fundamental questions by emphasizing spiritual, Yoga-based practice – *Sādhana* - within a metaphysical framework. Kashmir Shaivism is one of the sixty-four schools of the *Śaiva* cult that appears to have

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<sup>1</sup> Caitanyamātmā (*Siva Sūtras 1.1*, Singh 2017)

1 enriched itself by extensively borrowing philosophical ideas from the *Vaidika-s*, the *Śaiva-s*,  
2 the *Śākta-s*, the *Vaiyākaraṇa-s*, the *Sāṃkhya-s*, the *Naiyāyika-s*, the *Vedantins*, and the  
3 upholders of the Yoga system (Kaw, 1967).  
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## 7 **Who am 'I'?**

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10 To answer the first question, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the metaphysics  
11 propounded by Kashmir Shaivism. In this system, the Ultimate Reality ('*Parāsamvit*' or *Śiva*)  
12 is described as *śuddha-cit-svabhāva* (Pure Consciousness). It is endowed with the twin  
13 natures of *prakāśa*, and *vimarśa*. *Prakāśa* is the Pure Illumination through which everything  
14 appears. *Vimarśa* is the non-relational, immediate awareness of "I"<sup>2</sup>. It is due to *vimarśa* that  
15 the Divine manifests, sustains, and destroys. *Prakāśa* is incomplete without *vimarśa*, as *Śiva*  
16 is without *Śakti*. Without *Vimarśa*, the Ultimate Reality is reduced to not-Self, similar to a  
17 jar. According to Kashmir Shaivism, everything is consciousness and everything resides in it.  
18 In fact, the very meaning of a distinction between externality and internality ceases when we  
19 deal with Consciousness. (Ratié 2011).  
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30 In the text *Vijñānabhairava*, *Bhairava's* (*Śiva's*) essential characteristic is his *svātantrya*  
31 (absolute freedom) which is uncovered in *icchā* (desire), *jñāna* (knowledge) and *kriyā*  
32 (knowledge). The highest state of *Bhairava* is explained in *Vijñānabhairava* as follows:  
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35 "The highest state of *Bhairava* is free of all notions pertaining to direction, time, nor can that  
36 be particularized, by some definite space or designation. In verity that can neither be  
37 indicated nor described in words. One can be aware of that only when one is completely free  
38 of all thought-constructs. One can have an experience of that bliss in his own inmost Self  
39 (Divine I – consciousness). That state of *Bhairava* which is full of the bliss of non-difference  
40 from the entire world (*bharitākārā*) is alone *Bhairavī* or *Śakti* of *Bhairava*."<sup>3</sup> (Singh 2019,  
41 xii).  
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54 <sup>2</sup> *akṛtrimāham iti visphuraṇam* (Parāprāveśikā - p.2)

55 <sup>3</sup> *Dikkālakalanonmuktā deśoddeśāviśeṣiṇī* /

56 *Vyapadeṣṭum aśakyāsav akathyā paramārthataḥ // 14*

57 *Antaḥ svānubhavānandā vikalponmuktagocarā /*

58 *Yāvasthā bharitākārā bhairavī bhairavātmanaḥ // 15*  
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1 The self-awareness of *Cit*<sup>4</sup> or Consciousness is *ānanda*<sup>5</sup>, i.e. bliss or delight<sup>6</sup>. After *ānanda*  
2 arises *icchā*<sup>7</sup> or the desire to know the hidden infinite wealth within oneself. *Ichchā* leads to  
3 *jñāna*<sup>8</sup> or knowledge of the manifestations around. And, finally *kriyā*<sup>9</sup> or action starts to  
4 actualise what was ideal in the state of *jñāna*. So, the five facets of Reality/Śiva are *cit*,  
5 *ānanda*, *icchā*, *jñāna*, and *kriyā*. By positing these five aspects of Reality, Kashmir Shaivism  
6 endeavours to show that creation or manifestation is nothing but the self-projection of *Cit* or  
7 consciousness. That which was within, compressed within oneself as one focal point (*bindu*)  
8 is bifurcated and brought outside (*visarga*). Consciousness is eternally free by nature and this  
9 freedom lies in its power (*śakti*). It is free to limit itself, show itself as the 'other' and it is  
10 again free to draw into itself the other which it had projected outside wilfully.  
11 (Mukhopadhyaya 1967, pg 233) By exteriorizing the universe through the act of creation,  
12 Universal Consciousness hides from the subjects created by it the fact that they are in reality  
13 not different from it. This ability to hide reality is its *māyāśakti*.

14 It is further important to comprehend the process, as understood in Kashmir Shaivism, by  
15 which the world manifests since this can help us to define the boundaries of an individual and  
16 inspire us to explore the unbounded. The process by which *Parama Śiva* manifests as the  
17 world is explained through the 36 *tattvas* (principles) in Kashmir Shaivism metaphysics as  
18 contrasted with the explanatory twenty-five principled evolutionary process of *Prakṛti* in  
19 Sāṅkhya metaphysics. The first five *tattvas* are *Śiva*<sup>10</sup>, *Śakti*<sup>11</sup>, *Sadāśiva*<sup>12</sup>, *Īśvara*<sup>13</sup>, and  
20 *Śuddhavidyā*<sup>14</sup>. The next six are *Māyā*<sup>15</sup>, *Kalā*<sup>16</sup>, *Vidyā*<sup>17</sup>, *Rāga*<sup>18</sup>, *Kāla*<sup>19</sup> and *Niyati*<sup>20</sup>. The

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<sup>4</sup> Power of Self-revelation, the changeless principle of all changes which is denoted as Śiva in this aspect - Singh, Jaideva. *Pratyabhijnahrdayam: The secret of self-recognition. Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1982 pg 7.*

<sup>5</sup> Absolute bliss. Also denoted as svātantrya and Śakti in this aspect. Singh, Jaideva. *Pratyabhijnahrdayam: The secret of self-recognition. Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1982 pg 7.*

<sup>6</sup> Cit and ānanda are the essence or svarūpa of Parama Śiva. Rest can be treated as his Śakti-s.

<sup>7</sup> Will. Known as Sadāśiva in this aspect - Singh, Jaideva. *Pratyabhijnahrdayam: The secret of self-recognition. Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1982 pg 7.*

<sup>8</sup> Knowledge. Also referred to as Īśvara in this aspect - Singh, Jaideva. *Pratyabhijnahrdayam: The secret of self-recognition. Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1982 pg 7.*

<sup>9</sup> Power of assuming any and every form. Known as Sadvidyā or Śuddha Vidyā in this aspect - Singh, Jaideva. *Pratyabhijnahrdayam: The secret of self-recognition. Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1982 pg 7.*

<sup>10</sup> immanent or creative aspect of Parama Śiva.

<sup>11</sup> Śiva's intentness to manifest who sharply divides the Consciousness into Subject (*Aham or I*) and Object (*Idam or This*).

<sup>12</sup> Will to manifest (I am This).

<sup>13</sup> The experience of "This" is defined and deep.

<sup>14</sup> Balance between I and This. The Divine's real nature is veiled.

<sup>15</sup> Differentiation and limitation of I from This and vice-versa.

<sup>16</sup> Reduction of Universal authorship.

<sup>17</sup> Reduction of omniscience.

1 two tattvas that follow coincide with the *Puruṣa*<sup>21</sup> and *Prakṛti*<sup>22</sup> of Sāṅkhya metaphysics.  
2 *Prakṛti* is defined as one and universal for all the *Puruṣa*-s in Sāṅkhya whereas Kashmir  
3 Shaivism believes that each *Puruṣa* has a different *Prakṛti* as the matrix of all objectivity.  
4 *Prakṛti* has three guṇas (constituents) viz., *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* is characterised by  
5 brightness, lightness, transparency, joy, peace, and goodness, *rajas* by activity, craving,  
6 passion, ambition and avarice, and *tamas* by darkness, inertness, dullness, delusion, dejection,  
7 degradation and debasement. In Kashmir Śaivism, there is perfect non-dualism, and not the  
8 dualism of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, as seen in Sāṅkhya philosophy (Singh 2017, pp xxvi-xxvii).  
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17 The real nature of *Jīva* (Individual self) is that of *Śiva* (Universal Self). Innate ignorance  
18 (*āṇava mala*<sup>23</sup>) reduces the Universal Consciousness into a limited being (*aṇu*). The *jīva*  
19 considers itself completely separate from *Śiva*, thus resulting in self-limitation and  
20 imperfection. *Māyā* further limits the individual. The mind, which is conditioned by habits of  
21 previous life (*vāsanā*), must be deconditioned by *Sādhanā*.  
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### 28 **How to attain the True 'I'?**

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31 According to Kashmir Shaivism, liberation or unboundedness is attained through the  
32 recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) of one's true nature. The attainment of Ultimate Reality where the  
33 universe is just in the form of I (*Śiva*) is through *anugraha* (Grace) or Divine *Śakti*  
34 (*Śaktipāta*). Divine Grace is the key to unravel Reality. The *Śiva Sūtras* and *Vijñānabhairava*  
35 elucidate four *upāyas* (means) and the 112 *dhāraṇās* (yogic practices) respectively to earn  
36 this Divine Grace. *Dhāraṇās* make use of all the traditional techniques such as yogic  
37 postures, gestures, *japa* (recital of words of power or sacred formulae), devotion, meditation,  
38 and creative contemplation. The school also propagates techniques which are non-formal in  
39 nature, such as looking vacantly at the dark night and watching the condition of  
40 consciousness before falling asleep. Every aspirant can proceed with any suitable technique.  
41 The essence of Yoga involves the following:  
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53 <sup>18</sup> Reduction of all-satisfaction.

54 <sup>19</sup> Reduction of eternity.

55 <sup>20</sup> Reduction of freedom and ubiquity.

56 <sup>21</sup> Individual Subject (*aṇu*) or subjective manifestation who is *Śiva* with limited universal knowledge,  
57 power and perfection.

58 <sup>22</sup> Objective manifestation of *Śiva*.

59 <sup>23</sup> It is a limiting condition.  
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- 2 1. Perfect interiorization so that one is absorbed in the heart of the Supreme.
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- 4 2. Passing from the stage of dichotomizing thought-construct to the stage of thought-
- 5 free, non-relational awareness.
- 6
- 7 3. Disappearance of the limited pseudo-I and the emergence of the Real Universal I.
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- 9 4. Dissolution of the individual mind into Universal Consciousness.
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11 (Singh 2019, pp xii- xiv)

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14 *Upāyas* are fourfold: *Āṇava - upāya*, *Śākta - upāya*, *Śāmbhava - upāya*, and *Anupāya*. The  
15 first three are definite techniques.

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- 19 1. *Anupāya* - the attainment of Self-realization is said to result from *Anupāya* when the  
20 individual realizes the true nature of Consciousness through extreme *Śaktipāta*, (just  
21 by hearing one word from the spiritual director). *Anupāya* does not involve any  
22 specific yogic practice<sup>24</sup>.
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- 27 2. *Śāmbhavopāya* (*icchopāya*, *icchā-yoga*<sup>25</sup>, *abhedopāya*<sup>26</sup>, *nirvikalpaka yoga*<sup>27</sup>) - It is  
28 said to occur when there is identification with *Śiva* without any mentation or thought-  
29 process, merely by an intensive orientation of Will power towards the inner Reality.  
30 The realization of *Śāmbhavopāya* is the highest, and that is the goal of all the *upāyas*.
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- 33 3. *Śāktopāya* (*Śākta-yoga*, *jñānopāya*, *jñānayoga*, *bhāvanopāya*, *mantropāya*) - For this  
34 *upāya*, one has to resort to *jñāna-śakti* or *Vimarśa-śakti* (the Divine I-consciousness)  
35 for realization. Here, *citta* is the means of approach to Divine. The practitioner  
36 considers the I-consciousness to be the source of everything. *Śāktopāya* naturally  
37 terminates in *Śāmbhavopāya* in which I-consciousness is not simply an expression of  
38 *Śiva* but is also inclusive of the universe, which is simply an expansion of His *Śakti*.
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- 49 4. *Āṇavopāya* - Here *aṇu*, the limited, conditioned individual takes up some limited  
50 aspect such as *buddhi*, *prāṇa*<sup>28</sup>, body, or some object in space from which he starts his  
51 yogic practice. *Āṇavopāya* must necessarily lead to *Śāktopāya* and thence to  
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55 <sup>24</sup> Transcends all yogic practices.

56 <sup>25</sup> it occurs by a mere orientation of *icchā*.

57 <sup>26</sup> Complete identification of I (psycho-physical complex) and *Śiva* (real I)

58 <sup>27</sup> Experience of complete cessation of all thought-constructs.

59 <sup>28</sup> Refers to 1. Life-force 2. Various biological functions 3. Sense of breath.

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*Śāmbhavopāya*. Even when something different from the Self is worshipped as an aspect or expression of the Divine, it finally terminates in *Śaktopāya*. (Singh 2017, pp xxxi-1)

## Connecting Bhoja's guṇa-based aesthetic model with the metaphysics of Kashmir Shaivism

Coming back to the guṇas, it is interesting to note that Bhoja, the 11<sup>th</sup> century aesthetician, makes a connection between the three *guṇas* and the fourfold goals of human life as understood in the Indian tradition (*puruṣārthas*). The fourfold goals are *artha* (acquisition of material objects), *kāma* (deriving pleasure through the enjoyment of material objects), *dharma* (earning unseen merit, known as “*punya*”, by realizing *artha* and *kāma* ethically), and *mokṣa* understood as the eternal cessation of pain). Though Bhoja's theory is centred around literary characters, it is equally useful in understanding real-life individuals too, derived as it is from Sāṅkhya philosophy whose concern is the mundane world of matter and the means to free oneself from it.

In Bhoja's theory, characters are classified on the basis of their predominant guṇa into the *tāmasa*, *rājasa*, *sāttvika*, and *sattvodrikta* (characterized by excessive *sattva*) types that pursue the life goals of *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma*, and *mokṣa* respectively.<sup>29</sup> The characters and the life-goals they pursue are placed along a hierarchy with the *artha*-oriented *tāmasa* placed lowermost and the *mokṣa*-oriented *sattvodrikta* placed uppermost. As an individual being rises along this hierarchy, not only does he/she come closer to his/her “true” nature but also experiences fewer displeasurable mental states and many more pleasurable ones.

Is it possible to link the *upāyas* of Pratyabhijñā philosophy with the *guṇas* and thereby with the *puruṣārthas*? In other words, do individuals in whom specific *guṇas* dominate and who largely pursue specific *puruṣārthas* qualify as the ideal beneficiaries of specific *upāyas*? To answer this question, let us look at a few correspondences –

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<sup>29</sup> S.P, Ch. 18-21

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1. *Āṇavopāya*, *śāktopāya*, and *śāmbhavopāya* are linked to *kriyāśakti*, *jñānaśakti*, and *icchāśakti* respectively.<sup>30</sup>

2. It was described above that *Māyāśakti*, *kriyāśakti*, *jñānaśakti*, and *icchāśakti* belong to the following principles – *Māyā*, *Īswara*, *Sadāśiva*, and *Śakti* - respectively.<sup>31</sup> To *Śuddhavidyā* belongs both *kriyāśakti* and *jñānaśakti*. This correspondence is rooted in a theoretical stance. However, from the perspective of practice (*sādhana*), a different equation holds good. Here, *kriyāśakti*, *jñānaśakti*, and *icchāśakti* belong respectively to *Śuddhavidyā*, *Īswara*, and *Sadāśiva*.<sup>32</sup> And to *Śakti* belongs *ānandaśakti* (which from a theoretical viewpoint belongs to *Śiva*).<sup>33</sup>

3. The three *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* correspond to *jñānaśakti*, *kriyāśakti*, and *māyāśakti* respectively.<sup>34</sup> Those very *guṇas* that, as part and parcel of *prakṛti*, bind a being in the state of *puruṣa* become its powers when it transcends *prakṛti*. Limited knowledge is replaced by omniscience, limited agency by omnipotence, and ignorance by the ability to conceal reality (This can be contrasted with the liberation afforded by Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophy wherein one is only stripped of the *guṇas* and not endowed with *śaktis* as a replacement to those *guṇas*).

4. Those in whom *śaktipāta* is intense (*tīvra*), moderate (*madhya*), and mild (*manda*) are suited for initiation (*dīkṣā*) through *āṇavopāya*, *śāktopāya*, and *śāmbhavopāya* respectively (Sharma, 1983).

5. Practitioners on the path leading to Śiva-hood (*sādhakas*) are of two types – those desirous of liberation (*mumukṣu*) and those of enjoyment (*bubhukṣu*). *Bubhukṣus* and *mumukṣus* are suited for initiation through *āṇavopāya* and *śāmbhavopāya* respectively. In

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<sup>30</sup>sopāyatve'pi icchā vā, jñānaṃ vā, kriyā vā abhyupāya iti traividhyaṃ śāmbhavaśāktāṇavabhedena samāveśasya (T.S, Āhnika 1, p.5)

<sup>31</sup> māyātattvābhāsakāriṇī pārameśvarī śaktirapi māyākhyā (EKS, part 2, p. 532); jñānaśakterbahirabhivyaktiḥ sadāśivatattvaṃ, kriyāśakteśceśvaratvaṃ (EKS, part 2, p. 240)

<sup>32</sup> yattu tantrāloke tantrasāre ca kriyāśaktimayatvaṃ vidyātattvasya, jñānaśaktimayatvaṃ ceśvarasyiktaṃ - - - tadupāsanakramadr̥ṣṭyā - - -| anayaiva nītyā tattvakrameṇārohaṇaṃ kurvan sādhaḥ paryante paraśivatāṃ sākṣātkurvan - - - | (EKS, part 1, p. 180)

<sup>33</sup> cidānandeṣaṇājñānakriyāṇāṃ susphuṭatvataḥ | śivaśaktisadeśānavidyākhyāṃ tattvapañcakam || (T.A, 9.50-51)

<sup>34</sup> svāṅgarūpeṣu bhāveṣu patyurjñānaṃ kriyā ca yā | māyātṛṭīye te eva paśoḥ sattvaṃ rajastamaḥ || (I.P.K, 4.1.4)

1 other words, those in whom *śaktipāta* is mild qualify as *bubhukṣus* whereas those in  
2 whom it is intense qualify as *mumuṣus*.<sup>35</sup>  
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4 6. As mentioned earlier, personalities dominated by *sattvodreka* (excess of *sattva*),  
5 *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* can be associated with the pursuit of specific *puruṣārthas* -  
6 *mokṣa*, *dharma*, *kāma*, and *artha* respectively. Clearly, those closer to the *sattvodreka* end  
7 of this hierarchy are *mumuṣus* and those closer to the *rajas-tamas* end are *bubhukṣus*.  
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10 An individual who is suited for initiation through *āṇavopāya* (based on actions, *kriyā*) can be  
11 described in terms of *guṇas* as probably *rājasa-tāmasa*. His/her *puruṣārtha* is likely to be  
12 *kāma* and *artha* predominantly. He/she is a *bubhukṣu* with mild *śaktipāta*. He/she that veers  
13 more towards the *tāmasa* side may be amenable to *āṇavopāya* practices that are  
14 hierarchically lower than others<sup>36</sup>, while he/she that veers more towards the *rājasa* end might  
15 benefit from hierarchically higher practices<sup>37</sup>. By successfully adopting *āṇavopāya*, he/she  
16 becomes capable of enjoying pleasures in this world across several life times or is born in  
17 higher realms to enjoy pleasures and attains liberation after a long time (in comparison to  
18 those that are suited for *śāktopāya* and *śāmbhavopāya*). He/she ascends possibly to the realm  
19 of *Śuddhavidyā*, above the principle of *Māyā*, wherein his/her *guṇas* of *rajas* and *tamas* are  
20 transformed into the powers of *kriyāśakti* and *mahāmāyāśakti* (a higher form of *māyāśakti*)  
21 and he/she becomes one among beings referred to as Mantras.  
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36 An individual who is suited for initiation through *śāktopāya* (based on knowledge, *jñāna*) can  
37 be described in terms of *guṇas* as probably *sāttvika*. His/her *puruṣārtha* is likely to be dharma  
38 predominantly. He/she falls in between the *bubhukṣu* and *mumuṣu* and is a recipient of  
39 moderate *śaktipāta*. By successfully adopting *śāktopāya*, he/she is able to attain liberation  
40 after death, enjoy pleasures in this world and then attain liberation after death, or be born in  
41 higher realms to enjoy pleasures and then proceed towards liberation. He/she possibly  
42 ascends to the realm of *Īswara* where his/her *sattva guṇa* is transformed into the power of  
43 *jñānaśakti* and he/she becomes one among beings referred to as *Mantreśvaras*.  
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51 An individual who is suited for initiation through *śāmbhavopāya* (based on will, *icchā*) can  
52 be described in terms of *guṇas* as probably *sattvodrikta*. His/her *puruṣārtha* is likely to be  
53 *mokṣa* predominantly. He/she is a *mumuṣu* and, in some cases, *bubhukṣu* to a very less  
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58 <sup>35</sup> tīvramande madhyamande mandamande bubhukṣatā || (T.A, 13.245)

59 <sup>36</sup> As for example, *sthānakalpanāyoga*,

60 <sup>37</sup> As for example, *buddhiyoga*  
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1 degree. He is a recipient of intense *śaktipāta*. By successfully adopting *śāmbhavopāya*,  
 2 he/she is able to attain instant liberation or be born in a higher realm after death to enjoy  
 3 pleasure. In the latter case, he/she possibly ascends to the realm of *Sadāśiva* wherein his/her  
 4 excess of sattva is transformed into the power of pure *icchāśakti* and he/she becomes one  
 5 among beings referred to as *Mantramaheśvaras*.  
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10 Though individuals initiated through *āṇavopāya*, *śāktopāya*, and *śāmbhavopāya* ascend to  
 11 higher realms, it must be appreciated that the realms they reach are also hierarchically placed  
 12 with respect to the highest state of *Śiva*. The realm of *Śuddhavidyā*, reached by those initiated  
 13 in *āṇavopāya* is farther from the highest state than the realm of *Sadāśiva*. This means it is  
 14 easier for the being situated in the realm of *Sadāśiva* to reach *Śiva*-hood therefrom than it is  
 15 for a being situated in the realm of *Śuddhavidyā*.  
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22 A tabular representation of the aforescribed conjectures is provided below.  
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25 Upāya	26 Sādhaka suited for 27 upāya	28 Guṇa- based 29 nature of 30 sādha- 31 ka	32 Life- goal	33 Nature of śakti- 34 pāta	35 Śakti which guṇa is 36 transforme 37 d into	38 Realm reached 39 through 40 upāya	41 Type of being which 42 the sādha- 43 ka 44 becomes
45 Āṇava	46 Bubhuṅṣu	47 Rājasa- 48 tāmasa	49 Kāma 50 Artha	51 Manda	52 Kriyā 53 Mahāmāyā	54 Śuddha- 55 vidyā	56 Mantra
57 Śākta	58 Bubhuṅṣu + 59 Mumukṣu	60 Sāttvika	61 Dharma	62 Madhya	63 Jñāna	64 Īsvara	65 Mantreśvara
66 Śāmbhava	67 Mumukṣu	68 Sattvo- 69 drikta	70 Mokṣa	71 Tīvra	72 Icchā	73 Sadā-śiva	74 Mantra- 75 maheśvara

## Conclusion:

In this paper, an attempt has been made to integrate the approaches to self-transformation based on the practical implications of Kashmir Shaivism metaphysics encompassed in the term “*sāadhanā*” with the aesthetic *guṇa*-based theory postulated by Bhoja that brings the three *guṇas* and the fourfold goals of human life (*puruṣārthas*) within its ambit. Intra-textual studies that integrate Kashmir Shaivism and traditional Indian Aesthetics through textual analysis and interpretation can expand the horizons of both disciplines.

Liberation (*Śiva*-hood), as understood in Kashmir Shaivism, comprises not just the freedom of the conscious self from the 3 fetters (*guṇas*) – *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* – that characterize matter (*prakṛti*) but also includes attainment of progressively higher realms in which those fetters are transformed into positive powers (*śaktis*) such as *icchāśakti*, *jñānaśakti*, *kriyāśakti*, and *mahāmāyāśakti*. When this transformation is complete, the practitioner, now replete with powers, attains *Śiva*-hood. To achieve this, it is imperative that the practitioner also adopt a wide range of other means that take him/her to a state beyond mere freedom from the 3 fetters (*guṇas*). By integrating the metaphysics of Kashmir Shaivism with Bhoja’s model, this paper highlights the importance of the practitioner’s *guṇa*-based personality in adopting particular tailor-made approaches for self-transformation.

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### Abbreviations of Sanskrit texts:

E.K.S – Encyclopedia of Kāśmīra Śaivism (in Sanskrit)

I.P.K – Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā with Vimarśinī

S.P - Śṛṅgāraprakāśa

T.A – Tantrāloka

T.S – Tantrasāra

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**Re: ICPR-D-20-00136 - Ad Hoc from Author to Editorial Office - [EMID:3dd9de0d5caa44e3]**

Niharika Sharma &lt;niharikas@nias.res.in&gt;

Tue 13/09/2022 11:36

To: Jeyasri Varadarajan &lt;jeyasri.varadarajan@springernature.com&gt;

Respected madam,

Thank you so much for your email and information.

Thank you.

Regards,

Niharika

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**From:** Jeyasri Varadarajan <jeyasri.varadarajan@springernature.com>**Sent:** Tuesday, September 13, 2022 10:43:26 AM**To:** Niharika Sharma <niharikas@nias.res.in>**Subject:** Re: ICPR-D-20-00136 - Ad Hoc from Author to Editorial Office - [EMID:3dd9de0d5caa44e3]

Dear Dr. Sharma,

I would like to let you know that the editor is in the process of making decision. Once a decision is made you will get notified on the same.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,

Jeyasri

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On Mon, 12 Sep at 9:54 AM , Niharika Sharma &lt;niharikas@nias.res.in&gt; wrote:

**[External - Use Caution]**

Respected madam,

I hope you are doing well.

A gentle reminder regarding the status of the paper submitted to JICPR in September 2020.

According to the information on the JICPR website, the review process is completed on 30th July 2022.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you.

Regards,  
Niharika

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From: Jeyasri Varadarajan <jeyasri.varadarajan@springernature.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 18, 2022 11:55:58 AM  
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**Subject:** Re: ICPR-D-20-00136 - Ad Hoc from Author to Editorial Office - [EMID:3dd9de0d5caa44e3]

Dear Dr. Sharma,

I have forwarded your status inquiry email to the editor. Once a response is received, I will update you accordingly.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,  
Jeyasri

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On Wed, 17 Aug at 6:05 AM , Niharika Sharma <niharikas@nias.res.in> wrote:

[External - Use Caution]

Respected sir/madam,

I hope you are doing well.

This email is regarding the paper titled "Knowing Oneself – Bringing together Kashmir Shaivism and Bhoja's guṇas-based Aesthetics" (ICPR-D-20-00136) submitted to JICPR on 21 September 2020. We would be greatly obliged if you could let us know the current status of the paper regarding its acceptance or otherwise, whether it is still in the process of peer-review, and the time needed to inform us about the same.

Thank you.

Regards,

Authors

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