

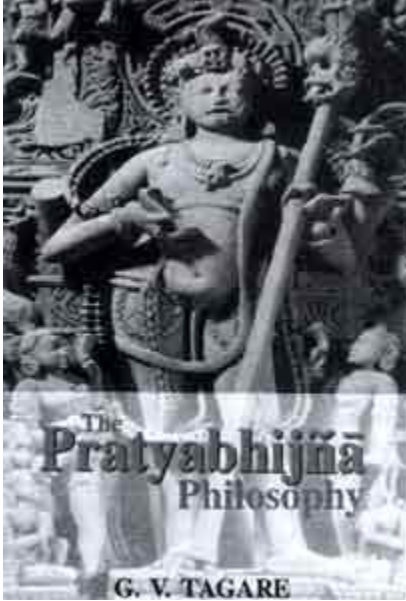
## BOOK REVIEW

---

### THE PRATYABHIJNA PHILOSOPHY

By Dr. Advaitavadini Kaul

Published in Vihangama - 2003 Vol. I (March - April)



*yovikalpamidamarthamandalam  
pashyatisha nikhilam bhavadvapuh  
svatmapakshaparipurite jagat  
yasya nitya sukhinah kuto bhayam  
(Shivastotravali XIII.16)*

"O Lord one who sees (recognizes) this entire objective world as non-relational pure consciousness. Thus, identifying individual consciousness with Universal Consciousness and (hence) attaining Divine Bliss, from where or from whom should one get scared?"

The unique message of Kashmir Saiva philosophy is to have a positive approach towards each and every aspect of this world. This philosophy is meant for all human beings irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex. Since it aims at enabling an individual to rise from individuality to universality, it is a practical philosophy that helps a human being to know his inner being i.e. the Self.

Kashmir Saiva philosophy popularly known as *Trika* philosophy comprises four methods/theories known as *Pratyabhijna* i.e. realizing individual self as Universal Self; *Kula* i.e. realizing the totality of universe; *Krama* i.e. the successive realization of an individual and *Spanda* i.e. recognizing that all existence depends on Vibration. All these methods/theories have been developed on the basis of the same Saiva scriptures known as *Agamas*. Basically their goal is the same i.e. to help individuals to rise on the spiritual path. Various methods and theories got developed keeping in view individual capacities with varied degrees of capabilities.

*Pratyabhijna* seems to have enjoyed maximum recognition even outside Kashmir. Reference may be made of the *Sarvadarshansamgraha* in which Madhavacharya the great Vedantin scholar (14th century AD) has reviewed Kashmir Saiva philosophy basing it on *Pratyabhijna darsana*.

The *Pratyabhijna Philosophy* written by a senior scholar and Mahapandit from Maharashtra Dr. Ganesh Vasudeva Tagare has its title adopted from the above mentioned Madhavacharya's review of Kashmir Saiva philosophy as expressed by the author himself. Dr. Tagare has already written two books on Kashmir Saivism titled *Vasagupta's Spanda Karika* and *Saiva Philosophy*. This is his third book on the subject which is a welcome addition to the compendiums on Kashmir Saiva philosophy in general. It is specially a hand book on the *Pratyabhijnaphilosophy* in which the learned author has tried to accommodate all information on *Pratyabhijna* at one place. The introduction to the book prepares the ground by giving a brief account of the prevalence of Saiva faith in Kashmir along with other faiths

particularly Buddhism. The main body of the book is divided into five chapters followed by an epilogue.

The first chapter starts with historical developments under which the *Pratyabhijna* theory evolved through the teachings of various preceptors. Hence the chapter has been appropriately title as the 'Teachers of the *Pratyabhijna Doctrine*'. While drawing a line of the teachers the author has ably made use of genealogical tables and has presented the view point of each teacher on the *Pratyabhijna*. It was Somananda, the disciple of Vasugupta who formulated the *Pratybhijna* theory by studying deeply the *Saiva Agamas*. Following Sommananda, Utpalacharya, Abhinvagupta and Kshemaraja formed a line of teachers who developed the doctrine and its practices systematically. Here, Dr. Tagare also takes into account the great Madhavacharya's review on Kashmir Saiva philosophy (*Pratyabhijna*).

In the second chapter, the concept of *Pratyabhijna* has been placed in the frame of the fundamental concepts of Kashmir Saiva thought and a broader background of the main thought currents also has been presented which already prevailed in India. The author has discussed the fundamental concepts while giving technical explanation (very important for clear understanding) of each concept under ten headings as under: 1. *Pati: Para-Siva* (Ultimate Principle) 2. *Pasu: Jivatman* (individual consciousness/self/soul) 3. *Visva:* (The universe and its 36 components) 4. *Pasa: Mala; Bandha* (bondage) 5. *Upaya* (means of removing pasa) 6. *Diksa:* (initiation) or *Saktipata* (grace) 7. *Moksa:* (liberation from Samsara) 8. *Savatantvada* (doctrine of Fee Will) 9. *Abhasavada:* (all inclusive Universal Consciousness) 10. *Shadadhva:* (six fold way). The chapter gives preliminary understanding of the philosophy which is a pre-requisite for the next chapter (ch. 3) dealing with the literature on the *Pratyabhijna*.

The *Isvara Pratyabhijna Vimarsini* is a commentary written by Abhinvagupta on *Isvara Pratyabhijna* of Utpalacharya. According to Utpala *Pratyabhijna* is an easy and novel way to *moksa* (merging in the Universal Consciousness): *sugata esa margo navo* (IP IV.I.16). This way to *moksa* is believed to have been first noticed by Somananda who advocated a psychological cum spiritual method or attaining the state of Supreme Consciousness while keeping in view the difficulties of a common man in adopting the three *upayas* already prescribed by Vasugupta in his *Siva Sutras*. Utpala formulated this theory by composing his *Isvara Pratyabhijna*. It was Abhinavagupta who created a majestic structure of *Pratyabhijna* through his commentary on Utpala's text. The chapter presents a summary of Abinavagupta's commentary while incorporating all points from the commentator's text. A Roman transliteration of Utpala's original Sanskrit text alongwith English translation also of the commentary are given. Use has been made of important subheadings to make the reading understandable even for a lay reader.

The *Pratyabhijna-hrdaya* (Essence of *Pratyabhijna*) forms the subject matter of fourth chapter of the book. This treatise is a digest of *Pratyabhijna* compiled by the versatile aims at elucidating the main tenets of the *Pratyabhijna* lucidly and succinctly. He states at the very outset of his work "The truth of the teaching of *Pratyabhinjan* is explained briefly for those devoted people who aspire after *Samavesa* (getting merged in the Lord), but who have not studied different works on Logic and Dialectics and hence have not developed intellectual capacity to understand or grasp the *Pratyabhijna*". It presents a systematic exposition of *citi* (the power of the Absolute) in twenty sutras (aphorisms). The topic of each sutra has been listed in this chapter followed by translations of the *sutras*. The transliterated original *sutras* and Kshemaraja's expalnation is given by Dr. Tagare. Other interpretations also have been incorporated wherever found necessary.

Chapter five contains a free tarnaslation of Madhavacharya's review (of Kashmir Saivism) of which reference has already been made more than once. In his review the Vedantin Scholar has adopted a considerable number of passages from the *Isvara Pratyabhijna* and its commentary *vimarsini*.

The Epilogue explains very briefly the relevance of *Pratyabhijna* in 21st century which the author rightly

says "is a soothing factor if not a panacea to the suffering humanity". Here a brief survey of the *Pratyabhijna* is given in the beginning of the Epilogue. By appending a glossary of technical terms the author has really done a yeoman's job for it is next to impossible to understand any text in the absence of proper explanation the technical terms, which usually give varied meanings in different contexts. Inclusion of notes, bibliography and an index have made the work more comprehensive All over get up and printing of the book is also satisfactory. This is a useful book for specialists who can use as a reference book on the *Pratyabhijna* as also for lay readers who can use it to elevate their self.

*The Pratyabhijna Philosophy* by Dr. G.V. Tagare, pp xiii plus 165, Motilal Banarsidas Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 2002, Rs. 295/-