

The Systematic Exposition of Haṃsaḥ through Śāmbhavoyoga and Āṇavoyoga

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ABSTRACT: This paper undertakes two upāya or Yoga of Kashmir Śaivism to interpret the Haṃsaḥ mantra. Because there are no watertight distinctions of upāya-s of Kashmir Śaivism; the exposition of aphorism comes to be multi-faced. Sometimes it complicates the understanding. So, this paper is an attempt to simplify the interpretation of 'Haṃsaḥ' with the support of Śāmbhavoyoga and Āṇavoyoga. I have interpreted Haṃsaḥ mantra in two senses - a) Ajapājapa i.e., spontaneous awareness of automatic recitation of Haṃsaḥ b) Japa i.e., conscious contemplation of recitation of Haṃsaḥ. Both the ways are adequate for pratyabhijñā (self-recognition) for a spiritual aspirant.

KEYWORDS: Ajapājapa, Choiceless Awareness, Conscious Contemplation, Śāmbhavopāya, Āṇavopāya, Pratyabhijñā.

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I. INTRODUCTION

'Haṃsaḥ' is constituted from the three sounds ha, ṃ, saḥ. The sound ha is produced in inhalation, the sound saḥ is generated in exhalation and at the junction of inhalation and exhalation there occurs the sound of ṃ. In the very word Haṃsaḥ, "All the three main elements of Trika philosophy. viz, Śiva, Śakti; and Nara are included." [1] In Haṃsaḥ ha symbolizes Śiva, saḥ depicts Śakti and ṃ represents Nara.

In *The Garland of Letters*, Woodroffe says that Haṃsaḥ is 'puruṣa-prakṛti-tattva', thus the matrix of the universe is Haṃsaḥ -pair (Haṃsaḥ-dvānda). Haṃsaḥ represents the bird Haṃsa which is temporally expressed by a swan or 'brāhminī duck'. Hakāra is one wing and Sakāra is another. The bird is forever floating in the psyche of Great who is captivated by the eternal consciousness. [2] The Haṃsaḥ as a bird is depicted in Sanskrit literature as a swan or brāhminī duck which is an emblem for Prāṇa and the essential Self that is the highest Prāṇa.

According to Purāṇic understanding, the Haṃsaḥ is the carriage for Lord Brahma, the Creator, and his consort Devī Sarasvatī as the deity of knowledge. "Yet Haṃsaḥ has other meanings and there are many forms of Haṃsaḥ back to the Ṛg Veda where the Haṃsa is primarily a solar symbol, the bird of light. Haṃsa is also the Śyena, the hawk or falcon that steals the Soma and takes it up from the Earth to enjoy it in the freedom of the highest Heaven." [3]

There are four upāya-s or Yoga-s in Kashmir Śaivism. These upāya-s are spiritual disciplines one abides oneself to enhance their worth to be fit for Śaktipāta, the descent of Divine Śakti or anugraha (Divine Grace). This spiritual discipline is known as Yoga.

The upāya-s are as follows-

- (1) Anupāya,
- (2) Śāmbhavopāya
- (3) Śāktopāya and
- (4) Āṇavopāya.

Anupāya- According to Swami Sarvapriyananda Anupāya is "no paths path". [4] It's not the way which can be practised by human beings on its own. It's a direct awakening by the grace of Guru. "When through extreme Śaktipāta, only by once hearing a word from the guru (the spiritual director), the aspirant realizes the real Self and gets absorbed in the divine consciousness without any particular effort, one is said to have attained Self-realization through Anupāya." [5]

Śāmbhavopāya- This term is made of two words – a) Śāmbhū and b) Upāya. The etymological meaning of the term is 'the way of Śiva/Śāmbhū.' Swami Sarvapriyananda says that the Śāmbhavopāya is very much like

Jñānyoga of *Advaita Vedānta*. [6] Accordingly, there is no place of any effort or discipline in *Śāmbhavopāya* to attain self-recognition (*Pratyabhijñā*).

In *Mālinivijaya Tantra*, Abhinavagupta defines *Śāmbhavopāya* as the *upāya* where the seeker attains supreme consciousness just by the grace of his *Guru*, without adopting any technique. The aspirant does not subscribe to any *dhyāna*, *mantra* or any additional training of meditation. [7] It is recognized as '*icchopāya*' or '*icchā-Yoga*'. When there is the sheer orientation of the Will, *icchā Yoga* happens. It is also understood as *abhedopāya*, "a *Yoga* in which there is complete identification of 'I' and *Śiva*, in which the idea of the so-called 'I' which is only a psycho-physical complex, a mere *nāma-rupa* disappears and *Śiva* alone is experienced as the real I, as the real Self." [8]

According to Singh, *Śāmbhava Yoga* is that

- (1) in which there is a sudden flash of the I-consciousness of *Śiva*
- (2) in which all ideation ceases completely
- (3) which occurs to those whose entire consciousness is absorbed in the inner Bhairava principle.

There is forgetfulness of Reality in our mundane existence. *Śāmbhava Yoga* attempts to remind us without the help of efforts. This method is of total surrender of the mind.

Śāktopāya- The literal meaning of *Śāktopāya* is 'the way of divine mother/*Śakti*'. It is the conventional method to attain realisation. It includes efforts and stages. In the words of Swami Lakshmanjoo, in this *upāya* "aspirant achieves mystical entry (*samāveśa*) through contemplation of the mental object that cannot be spoken or recited." [9] *Śāktopāya* is also known as *Śākta Yoga*, *Jñānopāya*, *Jñānayoga*, *Bhāvanopāya*, *Mantrōadya*.

To attain the Reality through *Śāmbhavopāya* is impossible for everyone, given the fact that to be without mental constructs is not for the general seeker. In *Śāktopāya*, it is allowed to stick to one *śuddha vikalpa* to attain liberation. *Śuddha vikalpa* works in three ways:

- (1) by *mantra-śakti mantra-śakti*,
- (2) by *sat-tarka* leading to bhavana and
- (3) by *Śuddha Vidyā*.

These three pure mental constructs appear different but are interconnected.

Āṇavopāya- The etymological meaning of an opera is the method of the *aṇu* (little one) i.e., *Nara* (humans). "It is defined as the *upāya* where mystical entry takes place through concentration on parts of the body (*sthāna-prakalpanā*), contemplation (*dhyāna*), recitation (*varṇa*), taking the support of the breath (*uccāra*), and *mantra-s*." [10] Due to the fact that the breath is exhaled with the sound sa and then inhaled with the sound ha. The *Haṃsaḥ* is recited by every individual automatically. That is why it's called *ajapājapa*. It's without effort and training. Thus, *Haṃsaḥ* must come under *Śāmbhavoyoga* or *Śāmbhavopāya*. However, if *Haṃsaḥ* is recited as a *mantra* or it is contemplated by the spiritual aspirants, the method would fall in *Āṇavoyoga* or *Āṇavopāya*. Consequently, the *Pratyabhijñā* of *Bhairava* can be accomplished with help of *Haṃsaḥ* by two *Yoga-s* or methods of Kashmir *Śaivism*.

The paper is divided into two sections accordingly:

II. HAṂSAḤ OF ŚĀMBHAVOYOGA

In *Śāmbhava Yoga*, any type of mentation or thought construct is not required for the identification of oneself with *Śiva*. Only by an intensive direction of *icchā Śakti* towards inner reality *Śāmbhava Yoga* is practised.

The ultimate reality or *Param Śiva* is eternally present within us. Because it is not *sādhyā*; it cannot be generated by any type of training. Neither it is captured by our construction of mind. When there is unconditional calmness of mind, reality dawns upon us. So, the aspirant of *Śāmbhava Yoga* is not advised to follow any external or internal path. They are rather advised to be aware of themselves without effort. J. Krishnamurti called it 'choiceless awareness'. Since the way of *Śāmbhavoyoga* exists in *icchā Śakti* of the spiritual seeker towards the ultimate Reality. It's without efforts and *vikalpa* or mental constructs. One can comprehend the first *dhāraṇa* of *Vijñānabhairava Tantra* in the backdrop of *Śāmbhavoyoga* where the *Haṃsaḥ* is communicated by *Bhairava* in its absoluteness.

“ऊर्ध्वं प्राणो ह्यधो जीवो विसर्गात्मा परोच्चरेत्।

उत्पत्तिद्वितीयस्थाने, भ्रणाद्भारिता स्थितिः” (VBT, 24)

Breathing goes on continuously between two points. One is *dvādaśānta* or distance of twelve fingers in the outer space where exhalation ceases. And, the other exists in the centre inside the body or *hr̥dyā* where inhalation culminates. There is a suspension rather throb of the breath for a split second known as *viśrānti* at the junction of every breath. When the seeker is aware of this fact, just by awareness of the inhalation, the halt and the exhalation of the breath the aspirant can attain the bhairava. As this practice is without any support of *vikalpa*, it is *Śāmbhavopāya*. [11] *Haṃsaḥ* is repeated by every individual automatically in every cycle of breath. As the incoming breath produces the sound ha and the outgoing breath produces the sound saḥ spontaneously. And, the sound of m is produced at the junction of every breath where inhalation ends and exhalation begins. It is *ajapājapa* because; it is recited innately in a natural way without any conscious exercises.

According to verse 156 of *Vijñānabhairava*,

“षट्-शतानि दिवा रात्रौ सहस्राण्येकविंशतिः ।

जपो देव्याः समुद्भिष्टः सुलभो दुर्लभो जडैः” (VBT, 156)

The automatic recitation of the breath in one day and night occurs 21,600 times. This *ajapā* of the *Devi/Goddess* is effortless for everyone and tough for naïve. When one neither accept nor reject and just submit oneself to unconditional awareness of breathing, then there is an immediate, spontaneous sparkle of experience of our essential nature or the nature of Bhairava. This happens without any *vikalpa* or ideation. Here, in this *Śāmbhavoyoga*; there is unconditional silence of all *vikalpa* of mind or thought-constructs. Consequently, the experience of *avikalpa* or *nirvikalpa* happens. This *Śāmbhavopaya* is also known as *avikalpaka* or *nirvikalpaka yoga* or *upāya*. This is a *Yoga* in which there is no active process either of body or *prāṇa* or *manas* or *buddhi*. Because of the *ajapa* nature of *Haṃsaḥ*, it is also known as *ajapa Gāyatrī*.

III. HAṂSAḤ OF ĀṆAVOYOGA

It is the way of *Jīva* through varieties of external practices. The *anu*, the limited and conditioned individual adopts some particular practices such as *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā*, *sthāna-prakalpanā* and *uccāra*. “It is because this yoga starts from the standpoint of *anu* or the limited psychological, empirical self that it is called *Āṇava Yoga*.” [12] It is also known as *bhedopāya* means a method of something distinct from the fundamental or essential self. Because, in this *Yoga*, there is the fixation of the mind on something different from the essential self. *Mālinivijaya Tantra* characterizes *Āṇavayoga* into *uccāra*, *kāraṇa*, *dhyāna*, *varṇa*, and *sthāna-kalpanā*. These are the ways of *Āṇavayoga* for a seeker to attain the essential divine self. The practice of *Haṃsaḥ* Mantra is correlated to *uccāra* and *varṇa*. *Uccāra* is attached with *prāṇa* which means life-energy. The word *prāṇa* is adopted in two senses - subtle and specific. The subtle sense *prāṇa* is portrayed as *varṇa*. And, the specific *prāṇa* is *uccāra*. Verse 154 and 155 of *Vijñānabhairava* demonstrate the *Haṃsaḥ* mantra through the method of *Āṇavayoga*. By persistent contemplation of this *mantra*, one becomes identified with the Goddess *Kundalini*. And, hereafter, one realises the true nature of the essential divine self.

This *anusandhāna* or intensive awareness of this *mantra* is also understood as *Varṇa Yoga* or *Dhvani Yoga*. It is a very ancient form of *Yoga*. By mental awareness of this automatic process, exhalation and inhalation move into perpetual equanimity. After that, there is a rise of dormant *Kundalini*. The awakened *Kundalini* penetrates the *Brahmagranthi*. Then, she pierces the *Mūlādhāra Cakra*. Rising further, she pierces the *Svādhiṣṭhāna Cakra* and *Maṇipura Cakra*. Then she pierces the *Viṣṇugranthi* and the *Anāhata Cakra* and *Viśuddha Cakra*. Now, she pierces the *Rūdragranthi* and then *Ājñā Cakra*, and finally enters the *Sahasrāra Cakra*. The aspirant can now experience the ambrosia raining down from *Sahasrāra*. [13] *Haṃsaḥ* mantra means ‘I am he’ i.e. ‘I am Śiva’. When this *mantra* is intentionally and repeatedly contemplated on by the Spiritual seeker, it automatically becomes *So’ham* (That am I).

IV. CONCLUSION

The *Haṃsaḥ* is one of the key concepts in Vedic, Yogic and Tantric understanding. It carries abundant mysteries of deeper *Yoga* methods and practices along with the *Kundalini*. By continuous contemplation of this *mantra*, *Kundalini* rises and stretches upward. As there are no watertight distinctions of *upāya-s* in Kashmir *Śaivism*, the spiritual seeker either become spontaneously aware of breathing or do deliberate contemplation of *Haṃsaḥ* for *Pratyabhijñā* (self-recognition).

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