

LIBERATION (*MOKṢA*) AS EXPERIENCE OF POWER (*SIDDHI*), AND ABSOLUTE FREEDOM (*SVĀTANTRYA*) IN TRIKA ŚAIVA PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to understand the nature of liberation (*mokṣa*) in non-dual Trika¹ Śaivism of Kashmir. First, we shall take a brief look at the concept of liberation in the main Indian philosophical systems and see how Trika conception of liberation is different from the other systems of Indian thought. Then we shall look at how the idea of liberation (*mokṣa*) in the non-dual Trika philosophy is different from non-dual Advaita Vedanta philosophy. Finally, we shall closely analyse the concept of *mokṣa* (liberation) in Trika system with reference to the first chapter of *Tantrāloka* of Ācārya Abhinavagupta² (fl.ca.950/60-1025AD). The *Tantrāloka* is a compendium of Tantras that covers the ancient Tantric discipline dispersed in the revealed scriptural texts known as the Āgmas. It philosophically exposit the Trika Śaivism from non-dual perspective but also maintains Trika Śaivism's original theistic paradigm. The first chapter (*prathamāhnik*)³ of the *Tantrāloka* is chosen here because it provides not only a nuanced description of *mokṣa* (liberation) within the Trika tradition but also establishes that *mokṣa* is the state of a perfected self — a 'svayam siddha'. *Mokṣa* is nothing but complete freedom of self in which the individual self knows itself in absolute consonance with Universal Self. In this state the individual gains unhindered powers of knowledge and creative action.

Keywords: Liberation (*mokṣa*), freedom (*svātantrya*), *tantrāloka*, Trika Philosophy, Śaivism,

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Concept of Liberation (Mokṣa) in Indian Philosophical Systems

First, we shall consider how liberation is conceived in the main schools of Indian philosophical thought. In the theistic systems, the *Mīmāṃsakas* believe that by propitiation of gods through ritual-action (*karma-kānda*) one can attain happiness in this world and in the other world called heaven. The attainment of heaven (*Svarga*), a place of perpetual pleasure, is closest to the idea of liberation for the *Mīmāṃsakas*. This is a philosophy of theistic-materialism.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school (*Ārambhavāda*), also a theistic school, conceives the Supreme Being as the *Paramātmā*. Here, the *Paramātmā* creates the world so that the individual beings can work out their *karmas* in order to gradually vanquish the beginning-less ignorance (*ānādi-avidya*). This is attained through acquiring of the real-knowledge (*yathārtha-vidyā*). The attainment of knowledge about the *Paramātmā* leads to a state of complete tranquility and equilibrium (*Apvarga*). This state is ultimate liberation for the followers of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school.

The Sāṃkhya (*Parīṇāmavāda*) and Yoga schools conceive liberation as a state of separation of Individual soul, *Puruṣa*, from transformational fabric of *Prakṛiti* that creates the entire world. Here, the world is created primarily for the *Puruṣa* who can partake of fruit of his actions (*karama-phala-bhoga*). However, gradually the *Puruṣa* with his *viveka-khyāti* (discriminatory-wisdom) attained through yoga subsequently, realizes its separation from *Prakṛiti*. Therefore, *Prakṛiti* creates disequilibrium in its three *guṇas* (that is *sattava*, *rajas* and *tamas*) to transform itself into the world mainly for *Puruṣa*'s sake. Then through yoga and discriminatory-wisdom comes the equilibrium in the three *guṇas*. This equilibrium dissolves *Puruṣa*'s indiscrimination and ignorance (*aviveka* and *avidyā*). The state of equilibrium in the *guṇas* is a state of liberation for *Puruṣa*. This is the state of *Kaivalya* — a state of absolute aloofness of the pure Consciousness.

The Vedāntins consider the manifest universe as an illusion (*Māyā*) and liberation is freedom from this illusion. When the individual soul (*jīva*) gains pure knowledge of the Absolute Brahman, it attains liberation.

The Cārvākas are extreme atheists and materialists who follow the teachings of Bṛhaspati. According to these teachings, there is no heaven, no liberation, no soul and no other world (*Na svargonāpvargovānaivātmāpāralaukikaḥ* (Joshi, 2015: 11). Cārvākas believe in the world of senses. For them, there is nothing to be liberated from as there are no future worlds, and once this body dies, it doesn't return.⁴ For the Cārvākas, out of the four purposes

(*Puruṣārthas*) of human life, viz. *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*, only *artha* and *kāma* are significant.

Similarly, although the Buddhist school of philosophy is also an atheist school, but, like the Vedāntins, it does not believe in the reality of the manifest world. Buddhists believe that universe is nothing but a succession of ideas juxtaposed in the consciousness and that consciousness in itself is empty (*Śūnya*). These successions form an egotistical reality for the self, known as the soul. Buddhists don't believe in any unified reality of the soul, hence they are called *Anatmavadins*. Here, when the self empties itself of these chains of successive impressions then what remains is a pure and empty self. This state of emptiness is the state of liberation that is known as *Nirvāṇa* in Buddhism⁵.

The above description reveals that these systems of thought — be they theistic like Vedānta, or nihilistic like Buddhism — are essentially dualistic because the very idea of liberation presupposes dualism. In these schools, the concept of liberation is based on two entities. One is *hey*, that which is 'to be avoided', and the other is *upādeya*, that which is 'to be chosen'.

Trika Śaivism, on the other hand, is an absolutely non-dual system of theistic philosophy in which there is neither *hey* nor *upādeya* because there is nothing that is outside of Light of Supreme Consciousness. This light of Supreme Consciousness is conceived as *Paramaśiva*⁶. In *Trika* philosophy, everything is a manifestation within the Light of Consciousness; hence there is nothing to be liberated from. The *Trika* principles of *Sarvamsarvātmakam* (*everything is everything else*) and *Sarvaśivatā* (*everything is Śiva*) established by Kashmir Śaivācārya Somānanda (*fl.c.875/900-925-950*)⁷ aptly express the absolute non-dualism of this system.

Non-dualism (*Advayavāda*) of Kashmir *Trika* Śaivism and non-dualism of *Advaita Vedānta* of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya with relation to Liberation

The *Trika* masters acknowledged Buddhists as their chief antecedents (*pūrvapakṣha*) in the philosophical debate. Therefore, they did not give much space to *Advaita Vedānta* school of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya (788-820 AD). However, subsequently, these two philosophical systems were often compared because both take the title of '*advaita*' and due to that there is a presumed affinity between them as monistic schools. For the basic premise, they both accept only one Absolute Reality, the Pure Consciousness and consider ignorance to be the

cause of bondage, but these similarities are limited and when we look deeper into the core concepts of these schools we see that the two systems differ greatly from each other.

In the *Trika* philosophy, the Universal Reality is purely non-dual and is conceived as a phenomena arising from a coordinated play within the Universal Self. This play of the Supreme Self within its own self is accomplished with its own Power⁸. Theistically it is described as ‘Śiva-Śakti *Sāmrasya*’. In metaphysical terms, it can be explained as a concurrence of Consciousness and Energy⁹. In other words, the universe is revealed through a synchronicity between Consciousness and Energy. Here, Śiva as Consciousness is of the form of Light or luminousness, and Śaktias Energy is Power of creative action. These are defined as *Prakāśa* and *Vimarśa* respectively in the *Trika* system. *Prakāśa* implies innate luminousness of Supreme Consciousness that makes everything to come into being by making it shine in its luminousness. When everything gets perceived in that luminousness only then everything ‘becomes’ or comes into being. This self-perceiving aspect of the Consciousness is known as *Vimarśa* (reflective-awareness), and it is innate aspect of the Supreme Consciousness. It is a dynamic acknowledgement of all that shines in the Consciousness. Here, we must make a note of the other *Trika* concepts that correspond with Śiva-Śakti besides *Prakāśa-Vimarśa* (luminousness-reflective awareness). These are: Consciousness-Bliss (*Cit-Ānanda*), Subjectivity-Objectivity (*Purnāhamṭā-Idamṭā*) and Transcendent-Immanent (*Viśvottīrṇa-Viśvamaya*). Each pair of concepts mentioned above corresponds with Śiva-Śakti and is like obverse and inverse aspect of a unified whole which is Supreme Consciousness (*Samvit*) or Paramaśiva.

The reality or existence in itself is purely non-dual in nature.¹⁰ The diverse formations of the objective reality of the manifest universe are nothing but reflections in the Pure Consciousness (Paramaśiva) just like images reflected in a mirror. And just as all the diverse images in a mirror reflection appear to be different from the mirror, and also appear to be different from each other in spite of the fact that they are not different from the mirror. In the same way¹¹, the universe appears to be diverse and all objects appear to be different from the Supreme as well as from each other but in reality, they are nothing different from the Supreme Consciousness or *Paramaśiva*.

The *Advaita Vedānta* thought is also a non-dual philosophical system developed by the 9th century saint-philosopher Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. It proclaims that the existence of the manifest world (*saṃsāra*)¹² is an illusion (*Jaganmithyā*). Ādi Śaṅkarācārya concedes that the Universal

Reality is Absolute Pure Consciousness known as Brahman; however, he considers the manifest world to be a false superimposition on this Pure Consciousness. This is known as *Vivartavāda*. According to Śaṅkara's *Advaita* doctrine, the world that we perceive through our senses is *māyā* (an illusion). The world only 'appears to' exist due to fanciful imagination of something unreal overlaid on the Real Brahman (for example, snake superimposed on a rope due to delusion). This, for instance, is clearly stated in Śaṅkarācārya's commentary on the first verse of *Īśāvāsya Upanishad*¹³. The first verse declares that 'everything in this world, whether stationary or moving, is pervaded by *Īśavara* (Universal consciousness), and one should experience the world with a feeling of detachment without harboring any desire for wealth' (the word 'wealth' here represents all material desires). In his commentary, Ācārya Śaṅkara, on the one hand, emphasizes that one must live in the world with the feeling that this whole world is pervaded by the one's own Ātman. On the other hand, he also says that one should renounce material desires (*evamtyaktaīṣaṇastvaṃmāgrdhaḥ...*) in this visible world because the world is false (*anṛtam*) (Gita Press, 1992: 14-16).

In Śaṅkara *Vedānta*, desire or attachment to the world is caused by an unexplainable ignorance (*anirvacanīyaavidyā*), and only *jñāna* (knowledge) can remove the ignorance (*avidyā*). Further, Brahman alone is the Universal Reality and every individual being (*ātma*) is identical with Brahman. Firm realisation of this knowledge is liberation. Accordingly, here liberation (*mokṣa*) that is also known as *jīvanmukti* (liberation while still in the body) can take place only when the ignorance (*avidyā*) is removed by a consistent pursuit of pure knowledge through *jñāna-yoga*. *Jñāna-yoga* that consists of the three-fold process of *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* is considered necessary to gain Pure knowledge about the Self (that is self-realisation). Here, *śravaṇa* is listening to the *śrutis* (for example, *The Upanishads*, *The Bhagavad Gīta*, and *The Brahma Sūtras*); *manana* is contemplation on the teachings from the *śrutis*; and *nididhyāsana* is profound meditation on the identity of Brahman and *ātma*¹⁴. This training is essential for liberation. So the self (*ātma*) should not be caught in the world of senses (*saṃsāra*) created by *māyā* (illusion) and *avidyā* (ignorance).

Māyā and *avidyā* are equivalent categories. From the transcendental perspective of Brahman, *māyā* creates the *saṃsāra*, and from the empirical individual (*jīva*) perspective, *avidyā* (ignorance) creates the seeds of *saṃsāra*. In order to attain liberation, the individual soul (*jīvātma*) must get rid of *avidyā* which itself is *saṃsāra*. This implies

that liberation includes abandoning of the world or at the least detachment from the world. In fact, in *Advaita Vedānta* complete denial of the world of senses is one of the four conditions (*sādhana-catustya*) for liberation. This is confirmed by Sadānanda in his famous *Vedāntasāra*¹⁵ where he clearly states that there must be ‘renunciation of enjoyment of objects in this and the other world’ (*‘Thāmutrārthaphala bhoga virāgaḥ’*). Thus, *mokṣa* or liberation is association of ātmā (the individual self) with Brahman (the Universal Self) and dissociation of ātmā (the individual self) from *bhoga* (sense-enjoyment). So, the *bhoga* and *mokṣa* stand in opposition as avoidable and desirable (that is *heya* and *upādeya*) categories respectively. Further, the Brahman is conceptualized as Śāntabrahman (the tranquil Universal), so that it is totally inert and does not act. Hence, it has nothing to do with the *samsāra* (world).

Therefore, first, since the pure Brahman of Śāṅkara *Vedānta* is absolutely inactive, it is appraised as inert (*jada*) like a pot by the Śaiva. Secondly, because the world visible to the senses (*samsāra*) is only *māyā* (and not Brahman), the world of senses is considered as a thing to be avoided (*heya*) in the *Vedānta* philosophy. In this manner, the duo of the *Māyā* and the Brahman constitute the *heya* (to be avoided) and the *upādeya* (to be chosen) respectively. Thus, correspondingly *bhoga* as sense enjoyment and *mokṣa* as liberation from world of senses also become *heya* (‘not to be desired’) and *upādeya* (‘to be desired’) respectively. In other words, sense-enjoyment is to be avoided (*heya*) and complete detachment from the world of senses, which amounts to liberation, is to be chosen (*upādeya*) in the *Advaita Vedānta*.

According to the *Trika* Śaivism, the *Advaita Vedānta* is not absolutely non-dualistic because it envisages two categories, each one of which excludes the other. Thus, the main difference between Śāṅkarācārya’s non-dual *Vedānta* and the *Trika*’s non-dual Śaivism lies in the fact that unlike in *Advaita Vedānta*, liberation (*mokṣa*) in *Trika* Śaivism does not involve rejection of the world of senses. In fact, there is no rejection of any kind. There is rather an inclusion of everything as Śiva in the *Trika* Śaivism and philosophy. This is demonstrated in the famous *Trika* principle of *Sarvamsarvātmaṅgam* (*everything is everything else*) mentioned above. In fact, *mokṣa* in *Trika* is not in opposition to *bhoga*. *Bhoga* is self-affirmative engagement of the individual with the world of senses. This relates *bhoga* to the idea of *vimarśa*, which is an aspect of Śakti. In other words, when an empirical being engages in *bhoga* in the world, s/he does the *vimarśan* (reflective-awareness of self) of the divine Śakti through the doors of

his/her senses. And when an empirical individual turns within to the consciousness, s/he experiences the Fullness of I-consciousness (that is, Śiva).

Now, we shall further see how *mokṣa* is conceptualized as an empowered self-consciousness in *Trika* philosophy with reference to *Tantrāloka* (chapter one).

Liberation (*mokṣa*) in *Trika* System with reference to
the *Pratham Āhnik* (chapter one) of the *Tantrāloka*¹⁶

In other philosophical systems, *mokṣa* is liberation from the world of cyclical existence (*saṃsāra*). It involves avoidance of *bhoga* or sensual engagement with the *saṃsāra*, but in *Trika* philosophy, *mokṣa* and *bhoga* exist in an equation of balance. In *Trika*, *mokṣa* is an expansion of individual's I-Consciousness to the Fullness of Universal I-Consciousness. The Supreme Consciousness is perceived as *Paramaśiva*. Further, *bhoga* in other systems is enjoyment or indulgence in the objective world, but in *Trika*, *bhoga* is engaging with powers (*śaktis*) of the self that are contracted form of Śiva's own Power (*Śakti*). In this manner, the universe is an expansion of Śiva's *Śakti* and destruction (*saṃhāra*) of the universe is contraction of Śiva's *Śakti*. It must be noted that in *Trika* framework there is no destruction of the universe but only withdrawal or re-absorption of objective universe into the Subjective Supreme Consciousness. Kṣemaraja (fl. ca. 11th century), the distinguished disciple of Ācārya Abhinavagupta states this clearly in his famous book *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*¹⁷. He says that *Paramaśiva*'s *Citi*¹⁸ *Śakti*, the Absolute power of his Consciousness with its own Free Will (*Svātantrya*) is the cause of the manifestation of this universe. *Citi Śakti* creates the universe on its own screen of Consciousness. The idea is that the Free Will (*Svātantrya*) of *Paramaśiva* in the form of *Citi Śakti* is the substratum as well as the cause of the universe. So the manifestation of the universe is expression of *Śakti* and withdrawal of the universe is contraction of *Śaktis* from objective universe back into Śiva's Subjective Pure I-Consciousness (*Purṇahamṭā*). Kṣemaraja says in the subsequent *sūtras* of the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* that 'the universal consciousness (*Citi*) itself descending from the state of un-contracted consciousness (*cetana*) becomes individual consciousness (*citta*)...' and later that 'Acquiring the full knowledge of (five-fold acts of the Self¹⁹) the individual consciousness itself by inward movement becomes Universal Consciousness by rising [back] to the status of un-contracted consciousness' (Singh 1982: 59, 85).

Therefore, *mokṣa* is bliss and delight of experience of the one's own self in the fullness of Universal Consciousness as Śiva. And *bhoga* is enjoyment or experience of world of objects (*saṃsāra*) in the form of Śakti. The difference is just that in the manifest universe, the Supreme I-Consciousness (that is Śiva) has veiled Its Own Fullness and has willingly objectified Itself through its Śakti.

Thus, on the one hand, the Self experiences itself as Full and Free Consciousness, and on the other hand, it experiences its own self as limited empirical being with separate identities by veiling Itself. Using the analogy of theatre, one may say that in one make-up the same actor is Śiva and in another make-up, the same actor is Śakti. Experience of Śiva is *mokṣa*, and experience of Śakti is *bhoga*. It is common experience that without the power or Śakti that sustains our senses no individual being can act in the world, leave alone the enjoyment. It is Śakti that does the *bhoga* through the senses and other faculties.

In other words, Śiva is the Supreme Experience, the Supreme Knower (*Parāpramātā*) and He is in Pure I-Consciousness (*Pūrṇahantā*) state. When Śiva veils this Pure I-Consciousness through His own objectification (*Idamntā*) by use of His Śakti, then He emanates the Universe from within this Fullness. Thus, the veiling of Universal I-Consciousness results in formation of objectification of Supreme Self (that is Śiva). Now, one of the most defining ideas of *Trika* Philosophy is that the Supreme Consciousness or Supreme Subject and Knower performs this divine objectification of its own Self out of Its Own Absolute Freedom (*Svātantrya*). In other words, *Paramaśiva* acts out of His own *Svātantrya* (Absolute Freedom) and emanates the universe.

Hence, we can say that since *mokṣa* is the state of Supreme Consciousness, it is also a state of complete Freedom and Fullness (*Svātantrya*)²⁰. Ācārya Abhinavagupta

describes this idea in the first chapter of his *Tantrāloka*. He says that *mokṣa* is not named by any separate name, it is nothing but the Free Self and is something 'neither insignificant nor significant' — neither *tuccha* nor *atuccha*. (*Tantrāloka* 31). In the *Trika* system, the very awareness of the unity of limited self and the Supreme Self is considered as *mokṣa*. Ācārya Abhinavagupta states in the *Tantrāloka* that liberation is the name of realization of true nature of the one's own self which is nothing but one's own consciousness (*Mokṣo hi nāma nairvānya svarūpaprathanaṃ hi saḥ/ svarūpaṃcātmanahsaṃvit...//. Tantrāloka.I.156.*)²¹

To know one's own consciousness (which is same expansive Supreme Consciousness) as one's true self does not require rejection of the *saṃsāra* (world), it merely needs recognition (*Pratyabhijñā*).²² The concept of *Pratyabhijñā* in *Trika* philosophy is a very specific one and the term is used for recognition of the true nature of the self. *Pratyabhijñā* is defined as 'coming face to face with something that was always there and recognising it again.'²³ This recognition enables the self to experience the *saṃsāra* as an emanation and expansion of one's own consciousness. At the same time, it is recognition that one's own individual consciousness is same as Universal Consciousness (*Caitanyam Ātmā*)²⁴.

So we may say that *mokṣa* is *Pratyabhijñā* or recognition. *Mokṣa* is to recognize everything as an emission of the Absolute Self. In *Trika*, *mokṣa* is desirable, not because the *bhoga* (that is *saṃsāra*) is undesirable but because *mokṣa* allows for a realization of one's full potential that is an experience of expansion of the self into the Universal Self. It is a state of Absolute Freedom, which means that it allows experience of completeness of knowledge, will, and action.

In the absence of this re-cognition (*Pratyabhijñā*) an empirical individual perceives the world as full of divisions and diversity (*Bheda*) and perceives separateness from everything else. The separation is felt as a constriction of self. The idea is that those who feel constriction and bondage have a choice to seek *Mokṣa* or liberation from feeling of bondage. At the same time, those who don't feel the bondage and feel content and blissful in whichever way the existence unfolds for them, they don't need to pursue anything. Ācārya Abhinavagupta states the same idea very succinctly in his short composition called *Anuttarāṣṭikā* (Mishra, 1999: 586). He says that there is nothing to be done and nowhere to go to attain *mokṣa*, the self must stay joyfully content in whichever state it is stationed²⁵.

However, for the seekers of Freedom (*Svātantrya*) and Fullness (*Pūrṇatā*), the concept and process of *Mokṣa* is explained in the non-dual *Trika Śaivā* scriptures (*Bhairavāgamas*) and these have been expounded by the ācāryas of Kashmir Śaivism.

Trika philosophy expounds that the experience of constriction and limitation in an empirical being is a result of ignorance (*Ajñāna*). We have already noted that the *Ajñāna* (ignorance) in *Trika* is different from *Ajñāna* (ignorance) in Śāṅkara *Vedānta*.²⁶ In *Trika*, it is not absence of knowledge but presence of 'limited' knowledge.

Now, we will look into the idea of 'Ajñāna' 'limited' knowledge as it is conceived in the *Trika* philosophy.

Ajñāna as as limited knowledge (*Apūrṇa-Jñāna*)²⁷

According to *Trika* philosophy, an empirical being experiences limitations due to contraction of Śakti. The same Śakti that is omnipotent (*sarvakartṛtva*), omniscience (*sarvajñātṛtva*), fullness, perfection (*pūrṇatva*), eternity (*nityatva*) and all-pervasiveness (*vyāpakatva*) in the Supreme Self of *Paramaśiva* becomes limited in the individual empirical self. So that in comparison to the Supreme Lord *Paramaśiva*, the individual being feels the bondage in terms of action, knowledge, desire, time, and space respectively. In other words, individual being experiences limited knowledge so it cannot know everything. It experiences limited creativity so it cannot create everything. It experiences only sequential time in the form of past present and future, therefore it cannot experience eternity. The death and mortality are also a result of experience of limited time. Further, the empirical being cannot experience completeness, which is unity with the entire creation. It experiences itself as a separate being from everything else. Hence, it can also not experience fullness, which is experience of unified self. Fullness and completeness is experience of unity with everything in the universe. Further, the individual self cannot be present everywhere and therefore it experiences restriction in terms of space.

Trika explains these limitations to be the volitional veiling of the Fullness of Supreme Consciousness, which is part of His absolute Freedom (*Svātantrya Śakti*). The Supreme Self chooses to cover itself by coverings created by his own Śakti.²⁸ This causes innate feeling of constriction and limitations in the individual empirical self. These constrictions lead to ‘limited self-knowledge’ in the individual being. *Trika* philosophy categorizes three kinds of limited knowledge.

Three kinds of limited or vitiated knowledge
(*Mala-Traya*) in *Trika*

Due to volitional veiling of the Supreme Self a primary limiting condition arises. It is an intrinsic limitation consequent to formulation of a form (or body). This is known as *Āṇava-mala*.²⁹ Then the coverings produced by Śiva’s Śakti in the form of *Māyā* cause an innate sense of difference and separation from other forms and beings. This is *Māyīya-mala* or limitation caused by *Māyā*. The word ‘*Māyā*’ comes from the root ‘*Meyā*’ literally ‘to measure’. In other words, *Māyā*’limits everything as it measures everything. Along with its five appendages of *kalā* (limited creativity), *vidyā* (limited knowledge), *rāga* (limited desire), *kāla* (limited time) and *niyati*

(limited space), the *Māyā-Śakti* together makes six-coverings (*Ṣaṭ-kañcukas*) and gives the experience of limitations to the individual being and makes him an empirical being.

The *Māyīya-mala* or empirical limitation gives rise to gross body (i.e. the visible form), and subtle body (i.e. the inner instrument consisting of mind, intellect, ego and intelligence — *manas, buddhi, ahaṃkāra and citta*). With the formation of gross body, the sense of separation from everything else arises, and with the formation of the subtle body sense of discrimination arises. Further, the perception of discrimination between good and bad, pure and impure and auspicious and inauspicious, etc., leads to perception of actions as good and bad. This is called *Kārma-mala*, the limitation pertaining to actions.

As stated above, these limitations are due to ‘limited knowledge’ (*Apūrṇa-Jñāna*). The ‘limited knowledge’ is further categorized into two kinds. The one which is intrinsic to being in the individual empirical form is known as *Pauruṣa Ajñāna* (intrinsic ignorance), and the one caused by the intellect is known as *Bauddha Ajñāna* (intellect born ignorance).³⁰ The first one can be removed only by *dikṣā* (that is initiation by a spiritual master). The second one is removed by the study of *śāstras* (scriptures). When the individual being (*aṇu*) perceives reality through differentiated intellect in a manner like “I am like this”, or “I know this”, etc., then this is *Bauddha Ajñāna*³¹ which arises because the individual being (*Puruṣa*) is caught in the six-coverings of *Māyā* mentioned above. The *Pauruṣa Ajñāna* nourishes and strengthens the *Bauddha Ajñāna*, and *Bauddha Ajñāna* nourishes and strengthens the *Pauruṣa Ajñāna*.³² When the perception of limitation becomes weak by divine grace or by other spiritual means like *dikṣā* (which are also part of grace), then the ‘all round shining’ of the real self happens and *Pauruṣa Jñāna* (intrinsic-knowledge) is born. This knowledge gives rise to non-differentiated awareness (*nirvikalpaka*) in which there are no thought-constructs and the consciousness is unified with expansive consciousness of the Supreme. This *Pauruṣa Jñāna* (intrinsic-knowledge) strengthens the *Bauddha Jñāna* (complete intellectual-knowledge) and vice-versa.³³

However, although through grace or initiation the *Pauruṣa Jñāna* (knowledge) arises and *Pauruṣa Ajñāna* that is ignorance or limited knowledge vanishes, still, the fruit of this knowledge fructifies only at the time of dissolution of the body (that is death). Further, if the *Pauruṣa Jñāna* has been attained and the *Bauddha Jñāna* has also arisen through study of scriptures, then the liberation (*Mokṣa*) as *jīvanmukti* (embodied-liberation) presents itself instantaneously.³⁴ Therefore, the importance of *śāstras* (scriptures) and removal of

intellect-born ignorance (*Bauddha Ajñāna*) are emphasised in the *Trika* philosophy. The śāstras (scriptures) here imply non-dual *Trika* scriptural texts that lay down the knowledge as well as the spiritual discipline to attain oneness with the Supreme Consciousness.

Here, we must mention that *Trika* philosophy describes four means to attain the absorption (*samāveśa*) into Supreme State. These are *Anupāya*, the no-means method, the Śāmbhavopāya, the means of Awareness, the Śāktopāya, the means of Energy and the Āṇavopāya, the means of body etc.³⁵ Absorption (*samāveśa*) into Śīva state is liberation.

Thus, as Ācārya Utpaladeva says in his Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā and *Vṛitti*, that both, the bound being as well as the liberated being face this cognizable reality of the universe but the ‘bound soul knows it as absolutely differentiated and the liberated soul [knows it] as the body of his very self. But when the cognizable is entirely dissolved within him [that is within his consciousness] and there is full consciousness of the I, the state of Śīva (the Supreme Consciousness) is attained. Having thus recognized his own self as Lord full of infinite powers of knowledge and action, and once the signs of recognition represented by the powers have come to light, he sees and creates all things at will’ (Torella, 1994: 218).

Finally, I would like to end the paper with a verse from Ācārya Utpaladeva’s Śīvastotrāvalī, which sheds light on the juxtaposition of *bhoga* and *mokṣha* in the play of Śīva and Śakti:

“May my desire for the objects of the senses be intense, O Blessed One, like that of all other men, but may I see them as though they are my own body, with the thought of differentiation gone” (VIII.3).³⁶ May I aspire to liberation by worshipping You, without withdrawing from experience and the world, and without even seeking the dominion [extraordinary powers], but becoming intoxicated with the abundant liquor of devotion.”³⁷ (XV.4.)

Notes

1. *Trika Śaiva Darśana* reached its culmination in Kashmir between 9th and 11th /13th centuries in the valley of Kashmir. It became famous as Kashmir Śaivism after the publication of J.C. Chatterjee’s book of the same name in 1918. In the conceptualisation of universe, the term *Trika* denotes the three goddesses —*Parā*, the Supreme (Transcendent Energy), *Parāparā*, the supreme cum non-supreme (transcendent-cum non-transcendent Energy), *Aparā*, the non-supreme (Immanent Energy). These are related to Absolute non-dual, dual cum non-dual, and dual states respectively. Theistically, the *Trika* also represents the Triad of Śīva, Śakti and *Nara*.
2. 10th century Śaivācārya Abhinavagupta’s *Tantrāloka* (Lit. Light of/on *Tantras*)

is considered to be an epochal work on the *Tantras*. It is a compendium of *Tantras* as well as an exegetical work on *Trika* philosophy and religion. It has thirty-seven chapters and the first chapter serves as a blue-print of the entire work.

3. *Tantrāloka* consists of 37 āhnik-s. Ācārya Abhinavagupta categorises these 36 āhnik-s in relation to the 36 *tattvas* (principles or categories of origination) in Śaivism. Besides, the number 37 in 37 āhniks denotes the idea of *Paramaśiva* who transcends all the 36 categories. [*Paramaśiva* can't be a category and no word is appropriate for It.]
4. *Yāvajjīvaṃ sukhaṃ jīven nastimrtyogocaraḥ / Bhaṣmībhūtas yadehasya pūnarāgamanaṃ kutah //*
While life is yours live joyously; none can escape death's searching eye/
When this frame of yours they burn; how shall it ever return//. *Sarva-Darśan-Saṃgraha of Madhavācārya*, ed. K.L. Joshi (2015: 3)
5. For the discussion on other systems of Indian philosophy, the references used are: the *Aspects of Kashmir Saivism* by B.N. Pandit and the *Sarva-Darśan-Saṃgraha of Mādhavācārya*.
6. To quote Ācārya Abhinavagupta from his Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī: "The object that is outside the light of consciousness has never shone in any way. Therefore, its existence cannot be established even by inference." [IPVI.V.8-9] K.C. Pandey (1998:66).
7. The author of Śivadriṣṭi, Ācārya Somānanda is founder of the *Pratyabhijñā* school of *Trika* Śaivism. See. Śivadriṣṭi. V. 107. KSTS No. LIV. p. 194.
8. The *Svātantrya* Śakti is the main power of *Paramaśiva* and it takes form of other powers.
9. The great saint-philosophers of Kashmir between the 9th and 11th centuries AD did an exegetical exposition of non-dualist *Trika* philosophy. Some of the main texts that include logical philosophical exposition of the main principles of *Trika* by these Śaiva Ācāryas begin from Somānanda's Śivadriṣṭi, Utpaladeva's Īśvarapratyabhijñānikārikā and *Vṛtti*, and Abhinavagupta's Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī and Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛttivimarśinī.
10. For further understanding, one may refer Raffaele Torella's *The Īśvarapratyabhijñānikārikā of Utpaladeva with the Author's Vṛtti*.
11. 'Jaladarpaṇavattenasarvaṃ vyaptam carācaram' // 66b//. *Tantrāloka*. I.66. KSTS. pp. 104-5.
Cf. 'Darpaṇbimbeyadvannagaragrāmādicitramavibhagi...'. *Parmārthasāra*. Verse. 12,13.
12. The word 'Saṃsāra' which is associated with Sanskrit roots 'Samsaraṇa' and 'Saṃsāratī' which means 'to come and go' or 'to be in the cycles of coming and going'. In other words, Samsara' means to be bound in the cycles of birth and death and cycles of joy and sorrow that are consequent to it.
13. Īśāvāsyamidamaṣarvaṃ yatkiñcī jagatyām jagat
tenatyaktenabhūñjētha mā grāhaḥ kasyachiddhanam //1// Gīta Press, (1992: 14)
14. Meditation on the four Great Sentences (*Mahāvākyas*), which are: 1. *Prajñānaṃ Brahman* (Brahman is Supreme Intelligence), 2. *Ayamātmā Brahman* (This soul is Brahman), 3. *Tat Tvam Asi* (You are That Supreme Essence), and 4. *Ahaṃ Brahmāsmi* (I am Brahman). These are from the *Aitṛeya*, *Māndukya*, *Chādogya* and *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishads* respectively.
15. "The objects of enjoyment hereafter, such as immortality etc., being transitory, the enjoyment of such earthly objects as garland of flowers, sandal paste,

and sexual pleasures, which are transitory — being results of action, an utter disregard for all of them is renunciation of the enjoyment of fruits of action in this world and hereafter.” *Vedāntasāra. Section 17.* Swami Nikhilananda (1931:10).

For details on *Sādhana-catustya* (four-fold spiritual means) and the *adhikārī* (one who deserves) Liberation, see sections 15 to 25 of *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda.

16. After the invocation and the first sentence (Ādivākya) of 21 verses, Ācārya Abhinavagupta discusses the concepts of ‘*Jñeyastattva*’-the Supreme Principle that is to be known, and liberation (*mokṣa*) from limited knowledge, from verse 22- to verse 45 in the first chapter of the *Tantrāloka*.
17. *Citiḥsvatantraviśvasiddhirhetuḥ. //1// Svecchayasvabhittauviśvamunmiliyati. //2//* Jaidev Singh, ed. 1963, 1st edition. p. 46, 51.
18. *Cit* is used in relation to Śiva and *Citi* is used in relation to Śakti. These are one and the same in *Trika* philosophy.
19. The Supreme Consciousness (*Paramaśiva*) performs five-fold acts (*Pañca-kṛtyas*), which are emanation (*śṛṣṭi*), maintenance of the world (*sthiti*), re-absorption of the world (*samhāra*), concealment (*vilaya*), dispensation of grace (*anugraha*). See. *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, Verse 10, in Jaideva Singh (1982: 73-74).
20. Svatantrātmātirikastutucchoatucchopikaścaṅ/
Na mokṣonamatannasyaṣṛithangnāmāpigṛhyate// Tantrāloka. I.31.
21. *Tantrāloka*. KSTS. No. XXIII, Vol. I. p.196.
22. *Pratyabhijñā-Darśana* or the ‘Philosophy of Recognition’ is a part of *Trika* Philosophy. In fact, Mādhavācārya in his *Sarva-Darśana-Saṃgraha* treats the *Trika* Philosophy under the nomenclature of *Pratyabhijñā-Darśana*. Detailed discussion of *Pratyabhijñā* is beyond the scope of this essay. See. Raffaele Torella.
23. Ācārya Abhinavagupta defines *Pratyabhijñā* (Prati+Abhi+ Jñā) in his Īśvara *Pratyabhijñā Vimarśinī* as, “Recognition means shining (*Jñā-jñāna*) as facing oneself (*ābhimukhyena*) of what was forgotten. *Pratīpaṃ* implies that it is not that the consciousness of the Self has never before been a fact of experience, because it always shines; but that, ... through His own power, it appears as though cut off, or limited.” K.C.Pandey(1998:7). Part Three.
24. Ref. Śiva *Sūtras*. I.1.
25. *Mākiñchītyajamāgrāṇavilassvasthoyathāvasthitah//2.b// Anuttarāstikā*
26. In Śaṅkara’s *AdvaitaVedānta*, *Ajñāna* is associated with *Avidyā* which is beginningless and incomprehensible (*anādi* and *anirvacanīya*). *Ajñāna* creates a divide between Jiva and Brahman. For liberation, *Ajñāna* must be removed. It is removed through consistent pursuit of *Vidyā* which comes from listening to the Śrutis (Śravaṇa), deep contemplation on the teachings (*Manana*) and profound and repeated meditation on the *Mahāvākyas* (*Nidhidhyāsana*).
27. *Ajñānamitinajñānabhāvaśca... Ajñānaśabdasyaapūrṇamajñānamarthah. Tantrāloka. KSTS, p. 57-58.*
28. The Supreme Self uses his *Māyā* Śakti to bring about the play of the world. In *Trika*, *Māyā* is conceived as a power as different from the Vedatins who consider *Māyā* as an illusion and ignorance.
29. The limited knowledge is conceptualized as three kinds of *malas*. *Mala* literally means impurity, but here in *Trika*, it is constriction or covering of true knowledge about the self.
30. *Tantrāloka*. I.36. KSTS. p. 73.
31. *Tantrāloka*. I.39. Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies. (KSTS) p. 76.

32. *Tantrāloka*. I.40. *ibid.* p. 76.
33. *Tantrāloka*. I.41-42. *ibid.* p. 78.
34. *Tantrāloka*. I.44. *ibid.* p. 81.
35. For detailed study on the four means, please see Śīva Sūtras, and *Tantrāloka*, I to IV.
36. Lakshmanjoo, ed. *SIVASTOTRAVALI of Utpaladevācārya*. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series. 1964. p. 103.
37. *Ibid.* p. 234

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