

SHAIVISM AND ITS PASUPATA SECT

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Abstract: Saivism has its basic origin from Indus culture which includes both proto-historic and pre - Aryan. Phallicism (Lingam) was being covered under the umbrella of Saivism flourishes well in Kashmir and Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra in South India. Pashupata Saivism is a devotional and ascetic movement. Pashupata teachings were believed to have originated with Siva himself, reincarnated as the teacher Lakulin, hence the founder is Lakulin. Pashupata sect is the oldest sect in Saivism and considers Siva as god, an eternal, verifiable reality who attained self transformation and experienced austere effort. Ascetics adopted Siva to smear their bodies thrice a day with ashes, meditation, chanting mantra, etc. to reach moksha. Pashupata was the first Indian sect to throw caste barriers and increased its conformity with the practices of other ascetic sects. *Pasupata* was also acknowledged by its two branches namely *Kapalika* and *Kalamukha*. *Pasupata* flourishes and *Kalamukha* became extinct which has no text or doctrine. *Pasupata's* doctrine was its basis. Ascetics completely depend upon God's providence and grace. The contribution of *Saivism* to Indian life, culture, philosophy and religion stands on par with any other Indian religion and its philosophy has been typical of the entire range of *Hindu* thought. As it was referred from *Mahabharata*, several puranic materials should be examined further in more detail. One can adopt austere life along with service mind to move away from our worldly attachment and remain with God always for His glory to bring good to the society.

1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout India's history, religion has been an important part of the country's culture. During the pre Christian era, *Saivism* within the *Brahminical* framework took the sectarianism in opposition to *Vaisnavism* and *Vedism*. Shaivite *Hinduism* is known as *Shaivism*. An ancient and traditional, sophisticated *Vedic* culture worshipping *Rudra* earlier and later it is the religion which believed that god *Siva* is the Supreme Being. Wisdom and knowledge are the chief objects of *Saivas*. During the early medieval period, How did *Shaivism* become the dominant religious tradition of many *Hindu* regional kingdoms and practically functioned as a state religion in many areas of the Indian subcontinent? What is the need of it to deviate from *Hinduism*? This study will also facilitate to know the present status of it.

Shaivism is a very deep devotional and mystical denomination of *Hinduism*. It is a form of non-dual spiritual practice and philosophy originating in India.¹ Of the 108 *Upanishads* of the *Muktika* canon 14 are associated with *Shaivism*.¹ *Shaivism* is the religion of those who see in *Siva* the manifestation of the Supreme Being.² The earliest sect of *Saivism* seems to have been *Pasupatism*⁴ or *Pasupata* sect represents only a partial evolution of synthesis.⁴ *Pasupata* sects are ascetics founded by *Lakulisa* lived either during the 1st century⁸ or 2nd century.⁹ The earliest sect of *Saivism*, *Pasupata* and its real founder is in mystery but the profounder of the teachings of this sect is *Siva-Srikantha*.⁹ *Pasupata sutra* is the basic text of this sect and it has a commentary known as *Pancathabhasya* of *Kaundinya* who lived in 4th century BC.⁹ You can view the Origin and history, branches, philosophy, theology of *Saivism*, etymology, doctrine, *vrata*, ascetic life, *ganagarika* system, excluded caste system, *Kapalika* and *kalamukha* sects will be enlightened. Also how *Saivism* established in India with different methods of worshipping god, *Siva* such as in the *Linga* form, Anthropological and Zoomorphic forms. They also have developed their own philosophy. In 10th century *Saiva* exists as two radically opposed schools like a group of non-dualistic tradition i.e. *Trika* and *Krama* and the dualistic *Saiva Siddhanta*.

2 ORIGIN OF SAIIVISM:

The Indian religious history starts with *Vedic* (migrated *Aryan*, 1200-600 BCE) and non-*Vedic* (aboriginal) modes of *Brahminical* thoughts where *Siva* is the supreme.³ *Saivism* is the product of cross fertilization between the *Aryan* theoria and aboriginal praxis.⁴ In the *Rig Veda*, *Siva* is often called *Rudra*² and in *Mahabharata* (300 BCE-300

CE). In the beginning of the second century of the Common Era, *Saiva* sects appear with the *Pasupati* seals of the ancient pre-Aryan civilization centered in the Indus valley of Pakistan⁵ and existed during the period of the Mohenjo-Daro Harappa civilization way back to the Chalcolithic age.⁴ The age of Guptas (300-550 CE) seems to be the beginning of *Saiva* sects not in *Mahabharata* except *Pasupatas*. *Pasupata* became important in South India and *Kalamukhas* in Karnataka during 7th-14th century. Both the sects are now extinct giving way for *Saiva Siddhantins* in Cauvery river basin, Tamilnadu and *Virasaivas* in Karnataka in south and *Trika* or Kashmiri School in north India.⁵ Thus *Saivism* and *Pasupata* originated in India. *Lakulisa* was regarded as the founder of *Pasupata* and also an incarnation of *Siva* as he settled at Kayavarohana. *Pasupata* though existed in 1st CE, did thrive well between 7th and 14th century and deteriorated in 15th century. Ascetics lead an austere life and remained in solitude. It follows *Vedas* in life as well as opposes the caste barrier and deliberately gives everyone their status.

3 BRANCHES OF SAIVISM :

There are nine branches of *Saivism*, existing with ascetic (monistic) and dualistic form⁶ that flourished in India. They are as follows:

3.1 *Saiva Siddhanta*:

It is an important medieval system of *Saiva* thought which refers to a set of *Saiva* theologies written in Sanskrit and Tamil in South India. It is an essence of *Vedanta*⁷ which depends on the grace of *Siva*. It accepts the 28 Sanskrit *Saiva* and *raudra Agamas*,⁷ the 12 *Tirumurai* and the 14 *Meykantasastras* during 13th and 14th century.⁵

3.2 *Virasaivas*:

It is a reformist *Saiva* known as *Jangama*⁶ or *Lingayats* (bearer of a linga in a tube fastened to the neck or arm) in 12th century in Maharashtra and Karnataka founded by Basava (1106-1167).^{5,2,6} *Virasaivas* believe in reincarnation and the 5 letter mantra, *Na ma si va ya*.⁵ Through *bakti* one can obtain the grace of god.⁴

3.3 *Nayanars*:

They include 63 *Nayanars* (c500-750 CE) who are leaders and canonized saints of the Tamil *Saivas* who follow vernacular *bhakti* tradition in *Hinduism*. Tamil hymns, the *Tevaram* helped to drive *Buddhism* and *Jainism* out of Tamil region and established Tamil *Saivism* as the national religion of the Tamils patronized by the kings and practiced by the masses.⁵

3.4 *Krama Saivism*:

It is the mystical cult of the goddess *Kali* and her emanations, originated in Uddiyana and Kashmir before 9th century, exerted a decisive influence on the *Trika* and then on *Srividya*.⁵ *Trika* contains *Krama* as their essence.⁵

3.5 *Trika Saivism*:

It is a system of ritual, non-dualist idealism that flourished in Kashmir during 900 CE and its goal is the assimilation of the power of a triad (*triika*) of goddesses, *Para*, *Parapara* and *Apara*.⁵ The III phase of the *Trika* is a key to all *Saiva* traditions both orthodox and heterodox.⁵

3.6 *Kashmir Saivism*:

The non-dualistic tradition with neutral metaphysics is called as *Kashmir Saivism* during 10th and 11th century and its school as *Trika*.⁴ There exists competition between the *Saiva Siddhanta* and *Trika* or *Krama*. So the third new non-dualism entered the *Kaula* cult of the goddess *Tripurasundari* or *Srividya* which rose to eminence during 11th century with extinction of nondual *Saiva* doctrine.⁵

3.7 *Pratyabhijna*:

This system of thought is part of *Kashmir Saivism* which in non-dualist forms flourished between 9th and 13th centuries in Kashmir. The main Indian philosophical works, *pratyabhijna* is translated as “recognition”. It is the knowledge of the self with Supreme source.⁵ The highest cosmic bliss is experienced before death.⁵

3.8 *Kapalikas*

It is the heterodox *Saiva* sect, otherwise called as *Kapalins* or *Mahavratins* flourished in South India and bearer of human skulls as a begging bowl, their bodies smeared with ashes, wearing skull ornaments and loin cloths of animal skin with their hair in matted locks.²

3.9 *Pasupatas*

It is the earliest, most influential sect in western India dedicated to the god *Siva*. The founder of this sect was *Lakulisa* and believed that the grace of god is essential for salvation.⁵

4 Philosophy and Theology of Saivism :

Saivism is monistic theism¹ and all *saivas* made the *Vedic* mind to merge philosophy and religion into one.⁶ It moved from strict ancient and traditional conservatism to liberal⁶ and worship *Siva*,⁵ linga form and in anthropological and zoomorphic forms⁶ and adored by all irrespective of castes. *Saivism* as a philosophy has been cultivated first in Kashmir, next in Tamilnadu and third one is *Lingayata* sect by Prince Vasava which includes women.⁶

5 Origin and History of *Pasupata* sect :

Ramanuja describes 4 sects following the doctrine of *Pasupati* as the *Kapala*, the *Kalamukha*, the *Pasupata* and *Saiva*.⁸ The oldest of the four and earliest sect of *Saivism* is the *Pasupata* sect.⁴ The *Saiva* sects are classified as *Siddhantins*, *Agamic* school and *Pasupata*. *Pasupatas* have two branches namely *Kapalika* and *Kalamukha*⁴ the former known as *Atimargika* which means school away from the path and the latter as the *Saivas* or *Siddhanta* School.¹⁰ *Pasupatas* have existed from the 1st century CE¹¹ while Gavin Flood dates them to around 2nd century CE.¹² Banerjee strengthened the *Pasupata* religion originated even before Buddha and Mahavir.¹³ The *Pashupata* movement was influential in South India in the period between the 7th and 14th century.⁸ *Pasupata* sect seems to be died out by the end of 15th century.¹⁴ The worshipers of *Rudra Siva* from the hilly region was dressed with the skin of wild beasts and carried iron clubs in their hands which is the characteristic of *Pasupata*.⁴ Banerjee interprets that Brahmanical *Ajivikas* may be considered as the predecessors of the *Pasupatas* as they also smeared their bodies with ashes, dust etc.⁴

6 Etymology:

Pasupati means the lord of beasts.⁹ *Siva* means lord of cattle. *Lakulisa* means *isa*, the lord *lakula*, who bears a club. *Lakulisa* was the last incarnation of *Shiva* in human form and founder of *Pasupata* system. He is also known by other names such as *Nakulisa*, *lakulesa*, *lakulin* etc.¹⁵ It recognizes 3 realities such as *Pati* means (God), *Pasu*, beings and *Pasa*, fetters or bonds.^{16, 3} *Pashu* in *Pashupati* refers to the effect (or created world), *Pati* means the cause (or principium), the word designates the Lord, who is the cause of the universe, the *pati*, or the ruler.¹⁷

7 Doctrine in *Pasupata* :

The basic text of the *Pasupata* sect is *Pasupatasutra* authored by Lakuli and its' commentary called *Panchartabhasya* of kaundinya¹³ who lived in 4th century AD.⁴ *Pashupatism* consists of 5 main fundamental doctrine⁴ or philosophical or theological categories, namely cause (*Karan*), effect (*Karya*), *yoga* (Discipline), ritual (*Vidhi*, rules) and liberation (*Dhukhanta*).⁹ According to *Pashupatas*, spirits possess the attributes of the Supreme Deity when they become liberated from the 'germ of every pain'.¹⁷ In this system the cessation of pain is of two kinds, impersonal and personal. Impersonal consists of the absolute cessation of all pains, whereas the personal consists of development of visual and active powers like swiftness of thought, assuming forms at will etc. The Lord is held to be the possessor of infinite, visual, and active powers.¹⁷ Practice of *Pasupatayoga* for 12 years leads to achieve liberation.⁴

8 *Pasupata Vrata* :

Popular rituals or penances of this sect were *Pasupata vrata* or Vow, which is a lifelong vow, consists of 5 stages and is named as Great vow or *Mahavrata*. First stage is called as marked (*vyakta*), second is unmarked (*avyakta*), third is victory (*jaya*), fourth is cutting (*cheda*) and the final stage is the cessation stage (*nishta*).¹⁵

9 Ascetic Life:

A layman is expected to recite the simple mantra while worshipping *Siva* whereas *Pasupata* ascetics must walk like a lame, live in cremation ground and are supposed to observe the ritual of five fires.⁴ After having cleaned his teeth and bathing, ascetic has to smear his body with ashes, muttering of mantras, and break the process of worship by laughing, singing and dancing to the tune of dum dum.⁹

10 *Ganakarika* system:

This system teaches eight groups of fivefold practice or eight pentads, to qualify a person to be the guide to lead the followers on the path. The eight pentads are enlisted as the attainments, the impurities, the expedients, the localities, the perseverance, the purification, the initiations and the powers.¹⁵

11 *Pasupata* and Caste System:

Unlike other *Saiva* groups, *Pasupata* did not completely reject *Vedic* values but leads to the fulfillment of *Vedic* life and it is the first Indian sect to throw all their caste barriers and consider equal status to all.¹⁵

12 *Kapalika* and *Kalamukha*:

These are the two extreme schools developed from *Pasupata*. *Pasupata* was the spiritual parent of the *Kalamukha*. Ascetics of both bear similar name and pilgrimage to Kedarath and Sriparvata.⁸ *Kalamukha* (Sanskrit) means 'black-faced' and *Kapalika* means 'bearer of the skull bowl'. The skull is used as a vessel for begging to eat and drink imitating *Shiva* as penance, and this *Kapalika* sect is prevalent in Ujjain. No *Kalamukha* text is available and

is known only indirectly carrying clubs and wearing matted hair. It is migrated to Bijapur from Kashmir, the place of origin.⁸ These groups flourished between the fifth and thirteenth centuries C.E.⁸

13. CONCLUSION:

Indus religion transformed into *Hinduism* by *Aryans* invasion and many religions bifurcated from it especially Saivism with its branches established highly in Kashmir and mostly in south India region, and in western India. From the 7th century onwards a definite knowledge becomes possible about the various sects of *Saivism*, follower of *Siva*. Ramanuja gives the order of the sects as *Kapala*, *Kalamukha*, *Pasupata* and *Saiva*. *Pasupata* again exists as the two lost *Saivite* sect, the *Kapalikas* and *Kalamukhas*. *Pasupata Saivism* is one of the ancient and ascetic sects of the Indian subcontinent. Followers of this sect followed the path of *Shiva* in word and deed thereby justifying the name *Pasupata* or the way of *Pasupati*. It stresses that a spiritual teacher is the one who knows the eight pentads and the three functions. As it follows significant principles, pentad, and great vow and includes every caste, it is able to survive and flourish highly as a revolutionary religion not only in north India but also to the south region. There is a great emphasis on cultivating commitment to *Shiva* to earn his grace. The sects, *Kapalika* and *Kalamukha* have disappeared, which may be due to the loss of patronage and uncertain missionary zeal.

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