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Jabali Upanishad

The Jabali Upanishad belongs to the Sama veda. It deals with many concepts of Saivism, in the form of a conversation between Sage Pippalada and Sage Jabali. Sage Pippalada raises questions regarding some fundamental aspects of Saivism such as Pati, pasu, pasa, jiva and the liberation of jiva. In the very beginning of the Upanishad jiva is equated with Siva. Jiva is the pasu, the animal with an ego, who can attain Siva through knowledge and inner transformation. Siva enacts the five roles of creation, namely preservation, concealment, destruction and suppression. Sambava penance is described as the means for the liberation of the jivas, which involves ritual chanting of five mantras using the holy ash. The importance of wearing holy ash is also explained. It removes the sins and makes one fit for worship.

The Sage Pippalada approached Sage Jabali and asked him, "Oh God like sage, please teach me the secret of the absolute philosophy. What is Tattva (principle)? Who is Jiva (being)? What is Pasu? Who is Ishwara? And what is the method for salvation?" Thus asked sage Jabali explained to him everything as follows:

Jiva (being) is nothing but God (the Lord of all beings - Pasupathi) himself who is acting the role of egoism. That Jiva (being) is the Pasu. Pasupathi is he who knows everything, who does the five jobs like creation, and who is the Lord of all beings. Pasu (in common parlance) are those animals which eat grass, which do not have viveka (knowledge to differentiate), which are driven by others, which are made to work in jobs like agriculture and which undergo lot of sufferings. Similar to the owner of such animals is the God Pasupathi who rules over all beings.

To the question, "What trick is there to acquire such knowledge?". Jabali replied, "By wearing of the holy ash". He further told, "After taking the holy ash in hand by reciting the five Brahma mantras starting with 'Sathyojatham', and chanting "Agnirithi Bhasma (Holy ash is fire)", mix it with water by chanting, "Manasthoke" and then wear the holy ash in head, forehead and shoulders in sets of three lines chanting the three mantras "trayayusham". Further wear these by chanting the three mantras starting with "Trayayusham" and the mantra "Tryambakam" is called Sambhava penance. Those with knowledge of Veda say that this has been told in all Vedas. For avoiding rebirth, the people with eternal wisdom, should adopt this.

Among the three lines, the first one is Garhapatya (the domestic fire), the letter Aa, the quality of Rajas, earth, Jivathma (soul of beings), the power of creation, Rigveda, time of dawn and its God is Lord Brahma. The second line is Dakshinagni (Fire of the south), the letter Uu, the quality of Sathva, atmosphere, the soul inside the body, the power of desire, Yajurveda, the time of noon, and its God is Lord Vishnu. The third line is the Ahavaneeya agni (the fire of the Sun), the letter Ma, the quality of Thamas, the place of Gods, the Paramatma, the power of knowledge, Samaveda, the time of dusk and its God is Shiva. That individual, who wears holy ash, whether he is a Brahmachari or Sanyasi, gets rid of great as well as minor sins. He becomes fit to worship all gods; he becomes one who has taken bath in all holy waters and the one who has chanted all the Rudra mantras. He does not have rebirth. This Upanishad tells that, it is sworn that he will not have rebirth.

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