
THE COMPLEMENTARY ROLES OF KĀMA AND SAṆKALPA IN THE PROGRESSION OF MANIFESTATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FOUR KASHMIR ŚAIVA TEXTS

***Arti Aniket Kolee, Dr. Kushagra Trivedi, Aniket Vinayak Kolee**

Department of Yoga, Lakulish Yoga University, Ahmedabad, India.

Article Received: 01 June 2026

*Corresponding Author: Arti Aniket Kolee

Article Revised: 21 June 2026

Department of Yoga, Lakulish Yoga University, Ahmedabad, India.

Published on: 10 July 2026

DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.6910>

ABSTRACT

Every thought passes through certain stages before it becomes real. A thought arises, gathers force, takes direction, and expresses itself in speech, action, or an event that determines the quality of life. The Śaiva texts of Kashmir describe this passage with care. They name the forces that drive it, kāma, desire, and saṅkalpa, resolve. This study asks how kāma and saṅkalpa work together to produce manifestation, understood here as abhivyakti, the outward expression of what lies within. This study is based on the review of each of the four Śaiva texts, the Śiva Sūtra, the Spanda Kārikā, the Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam, and the Vijñāna Bhairava. Each text has its own vocabulary and its own model of how thought unfolds into form. The study first defines kāma, saṅkalpa, and manifestation in each text. It then traces the progression of manifestation as each text describes it. It compares and contrasts the four accounts and subsequently draws them together into a single view.

The central finding is that kāma and saṅkalpa are complementary. Kāma supplies energy. Saṅkalpa supplies direction. Neither alone brings a thought to fruition. Desire without direction scatters. Direction without desire stays inert. Manifestation follows when the two align. The texts also distinguish desire and resolve by their moral orientation. A resolve rooted in truth, satya-saṅkalpa, bears different fruit from a resolve rooted in harm (pāpa-saṅkalpa). This distinction gives the account its practical weight. The study closes with practical application in human behaviour. If manifestation follows a known sequence, that sequence can be governed. The texts offer tools for this governance. They teach how to let noble thoughts ripen and how to still the noise of unwanted ones. This has direct bearing on mental well-being, on the roots of anxiety and low mood, and on the shaping of conduct.

These terms are often called Tantric. The study asks whether they belong to Yoga as well, and finds that the two are joined in the Śaiva view.

KEYWORDS: kāma, saṅkalpa, abhivyakti, manifestation, Kashmir Śaivism, Śiva Sūtra, Spanda Kārikā, Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam, Vijñāna Bhairava, satya-saṅkalpa.

1. INTRODUCTION

Every thought has a life of its own. It begins as a faint stir in the mind, gathers force, takes on a definite shape, and finally enters the world as a word, a deed, or a lasting change in the person who held it. This passage is familiar from ordinary experience, where a wish becomes a plan, a plan becomes an act, and a repeated act settles at last into the shape of a life. The Śaiva thinkers named the inner forces that carry a thought from its first stirring to its outward expression, and among these forces two ideas stand out as central. The first is kāma, desire, which supplies the heat that sets the movement going; the second is saṅkalpa, resolve, which supplies the direction that guides it toward a definite end.

This study asks how kāma and saṅkalpa work together to bring a thought to fruition, where that fruition is understood as abhivyakti, the outward expression of what already lies hidden within (Monier-Williams, 1899). Abhivyakti names the revealing of something already present like a musician playing brings the music forth, which is already within. Manifestation works in the same way, for consciousness does not fabricate the world so much as express outward what it already contains, allowing an intrinsic nature that was concealed by limitation to flourish into open expression (Watson et al., 2013).

Modern psychology approaches the study of mind through behaviour and its measurable correlates, while neuroscience approaches it through the structures and activity of the brain, and both have mapped the mind with great success from the outside by observing what it does. The classical Indian traditions took a different path, studying the mind from within through disciplined first-person attention and situating it within a wider account of consciousness itself (Krishnappa et al., 2020; Sedlmeier & Srinivas, 2019).

Kashmir Śaivism is among the richest of these traditions, having flowered between the ninth and eleventh centuries in the valley from which it takes its name (Chatterji, 1914; Dyczkowski, 1992a; Sanderson, 2007). It is a non-dual tradition, holding that a single consciousness, named Śiva, appears as the whole of the manifest world (Muller et al., 2021; Singh, 1982). This consciousness is never static, but pulses continually, moving outward into manifestation and withdrawing again into itself, and it is this pulse that the tradition takes as

the ground of all appearance (Dyczkowski, 1992a). Because it regards the entire universe as the manifestation of consciousness, the tradition examined the mechanics of manifestation. What holds for the cosmos holds equally for a single thought; the rising of a thought within a person mirrors the rising of a world within Śiva (Lawrence, 2018; Singh, 1980). This study is based on select commentaries of four texts from the tradition, Śiva Sūtra, Spanda Kārikā, Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam, and Vijñāna Bhairava. The study closes by turning this account toward the governance of thought and its bearing on mental well-being.

1.1 Research questions

The study pursues six questions:

1. How are *kāma*, *saṅkalpa*, and manifestation named, and what do they mean, in the selected Śaiva texts?
2. Do these terms belong only to Tantra, or do they belong to Yoga as well?
3. When, where, why, and how does manifestation occur in each text?
4. Do the terms *kāma* and *saṅkalpa* complement each other?
5. Taken together, across the texts, how do *kāma* and *saṅkalpa* jointly produce manifestation?
6. How can this help improve human behaviour?

2. Review of Literature

2.1 The ancient lineage of the terms

Each of the three terms at the center descends from a long prior tradition, and the Śaiva thinkers continued to work on them. To read the four texts well, one must first see what they inherited. *Kāma* is among the oldest concepts in Indian thought. In the Nāsadīya Sūkta of the Ṛgveda, desire is the first stir of creation, the seed of mind by which the one became the many:

कामस्तदग्रे समवर्तताधि मनसो रेतः प्रथमं यदासीत्

kāmas tad agre samavartatādhi manaso retaḥ prathamam yad āsīt (Ṛgveda 10.129.4)

“In the beginning desire arose upon that” (Jamison & Brereton, 2014). Here *kāma* is cosmogonic, the force by which the unmanifest turns toward manifestation. The Atharvaveda carries the theme further, treating *Kāma* as a cosmic power older than the gods (Bloomfield, 1897). This early sense, desire as the origin of movement from the hidden to the shown, survives into the Śaiva account of manifestation and gives it its deepest root.

In the ritual literature *saṅkalpa* names the formal statement of intention with which a rite begins, the declared resolve that gives an act its direction and its fruit (Kane, 1941). The Upaniṣads then draw the term inward, from rite to mind. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad places *saṅkalpa* above mind itself in its ascent of faculties, for one first resolves and then thinks (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.4)(Olivelle, 1998). It also describes the liberated self as *satya-kāma* and *satya-saṅkalpa*, one whose desires are true and whose resolves are true (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.1.5)(Olivelle, 1998). The moral coloring of desire and resolve, their capacity to be true or false, noble or harmful, is thus already present in the Upaniṣadic inheritance.

The link between the two terms is drawn most sharply in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, in a passage that anticipates the whole argument of this study:

स यथाकामो भवति तत्क्रतुर्भवति, यत्क्रतुर्भवति तत्कर्म कुरुते, यत्कर्म कुरुते तदभिसंपद्यते ॥

sa yathākāmo bhavati tatkraturbhavati, yatkraturbhavati tatkarma kurute, yatkarma kurute tadabhisampadyate (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.5)

“You are what your deep desire is. As your desire is, so is your resolve. As your resolve is, so is your deed. As your deed is, so is your destiny” (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.5) (Olivelle, 1998). Desire, resolve, deed, destiny stand here in a single chain.

The Bhagavadgītā takes up the same pair and gives it an ethical turn, presenting desire as divine when aligned with *dharma*, “I am that desire which is not contrary to *dharma*” (Bhagavadgītā 7.11)(Radhakrishna et al., 2010), while also naming ungoverned desire as the enemy that clouds judgment (Bhagavadgītā 3.37–43). Resolve, in turn, is what the Gītā asks the seeker to make firm and single (Bhagavadgītā 2.41).

Manifestation, the third term, is philosophically the most refined. The word *abhivyakti* means the bringing of a latent thing into open expression, as distinct from *vyakti*, the individuated thing itself (Monier-Williams, 1899). The Sāṃkhya tradition made *abhivyakti* central to its theory of causation, holding that an effect is made manifest from a cause in which it already lay hidden, the doctrine of *satkāryavāda* (Larson, 1979). On this view creation is an expression. The Śaiva authors inherited this frame and transformed it, placing the whole process within consciousness rather than within insentient nature (Singh, 1982). A later Śaiva source states the sense precisely, describing *abhivyakti* as the flourishing of an intrinsic nature that was formerly concealed by limitation, once that limitation is removed (Watson et al., 2013). Manifestation is revelation, the coming-forth of what was always there.

Figure 1 shows that the Śaiva account received desire, resolve, and manifestation from sources like Vedic hymns, Upaniṣadic tradition, and various aspects of Indian philosophy, and it wove the three into a single account of how consciousness expresses itself as world and as thought.



Figure 1: The source of the three terms in Śaiva texts.

2.2 Modern scholarship consulted

The present study draws on several bodies of modern scholarship. Four kinds of sources proved most useful. This study first refers to annotated editions of Jaideva Singh, whose translations of the Śiva Sūtra, the Spanda Kārikā, the Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam, and the Vijñāna Bhairava supply both the Sanskrit and a careful rendering into English (Singh, 1979a, 1979b, 1980, 1982).

Second is the interpretive scholarship on Śaiva philosophy. For the doctrine of vibration, the study consults the analysis by Dyczkowski and his translation of the Spanda Kārikā with its commentaries (Dyczkowski, 1992b). For the recognition philosophy, Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam, this study draws on the philological work of Torella and the detailed study by Ratié (Ratié, 2011; Torella, 2002). For the energetic and practical dimension, Vijñāna Bhairava, this study consults Silburn (Silburn, 1988), and for the wider tantric setting it draws on Sanderson (Sanderson, 2007) and Wallis (Wallis, 2013). These works inform the reading of technical terms and guard against misreading them in isolation.

Third is the scholarship on the terms themselves as they appear across Indian thought. For the prior meanings of kāma, saṅkalpa, and abhivyakti the study consults the standard lexical and philosophical sources, including Monier-Williams for lexical range (Monier-Williams, 1899), Olivelle for the Upaniṣadic usage (Olivelle, 1998), and Larson for the Sāṃkhya theory of manifestation (Larson, 1979). These sources fix the inherited meaning of the terms before the Śaiva texts reshape them.

Fourth is the emerging literature that brings the Indian contemplative traditions into conversation with psychology and the study of the mind (Krishnappa et al., 2020; Sedlmeier & Srinivas, 2019). The study consults this literature for its framing of the practical question, namely what these traditions can offer to a modern understanding of attention, intention, and well-being. This body of work orients the applied portion of the study in Section 5.

2.3 The gap

The doctrine of vibration has received a full-length study (Dyczkowski, 1992b), the recognition philosophy has been analyzed with philological rigor (Ratié, 2011; Torella, 2002), and the energetics of the tradition have been traced through the frame of kuṇḍalinī (Silburn, 1988), while the place of desire in Śaiva texts has been examined from several directions (Wallis, 2013). Each text carries its own vocabulary and its own picture of how thought unfolds into form. No existing study takes kāma and saṅkalpa as a complementary pair and asks how, together, they drive the process of abhivyakti i.e. manifestation across these texts. The two terms appear frequently in the literature, but their joint role in the progression of thought is yet to be researched. This study attempts to address that gap, and it does so by treating each text as an independent voice first before comparing them.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study is qualitative and interpretive. It reads the primary texts closely in the original Sanskrit, supported throughout by established critical editions and translations, and it draws its definitions from the texts themselves rather than from later summary. Where a Sanskrit passage carries the weight of the argument, it is given in Devanāgarī with transliteration and translation; where terms from the wider Indian tradition are invoked, they serve to define the meaning of these terms.

3.1 Research design

This study employs a qualitative, hermeneutic approach to explore the mechanics of consciousness in Kashmir Śaiva philosophy and to trace the conceptual development of kāma and saṅkalpa across primary source literature. This research relies on comparative textual analysis, which is a standard methodology for philological and philosophical inquiry.

3.2 Corpus selection and data collection

The study focuses on four foundational texts: the Śiva Sūtra, Spanda Kārikā, Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam, and Vijñāna Bhairava. These were selected due to their coverage of the Spanda (vibration) and Pratyabhijñā (recognition) schools together with the practical Āgamic

literature, providing a representative cross-section of the Tantric Āgamas. Primary source material is sourced from established critical editions to ensure philological accuracy.

3.3 Analytical procedure

The analysis proceeds through a three-stage process. The first two stages are reported in the Analysis (Section 4) and the third in the Discussion (Section 5).

1. **Philological Definition:** Each text is subjected to a close reading to identify, define, and contextualize the specific usage of *kāma*, *saṅkalpa*, and *abhivyakti*.
2. **Comparative Mapping:** Once defined, these terms are cross-referenced across the four texts to identify shared patterns versus text-specific idiosyncrasies, particularly in how they describe the progression of manifestation.
3. **Thematic Synthesis:** Finally, the findings are synthesized into a unified model of cognitive governance. This stage reconciles the “Tantric” definitions of these forces with their “Yogic” aim, addressing the research questions regarding the intersection of these two traditions.

4. ANALYSIS

Before the progression of manifestation can be traced, this section draws each definition from the four texts themselves along with their alternative names.

4.1 Philological definition

4.1.1 Kāma: desire as the first movement

Kāma in the Śaiva texts is the first movement of consciousness toward an object, the initial inclination by which the undifferentiated turns toward the particular. The texts rarely use the bare word *kāma* when they speak at the deepest level. They prefer *icchā*, will, the term for the primal urge of Śiva to become manifest. In the Trika analysis of the powers of consciousness, *icchā* is the first of the three, preceding knowledge and action (Singh, 1982; Torella, 2002). Desire, at its root, is this *icchā-śakti*, the power by which consciousness first leans toward expression.

Kāma is preceded by *vāsanā*, the residual impression carried from prior experience, which inclines consciousness toward a particular arising before the desire itself is felt. *Kāma* has an orientation. It can bind or it can liberate. In its contracted form, turned toward objects and grasped as personal craving, it is the *rāga* that binds, one of the limitations that veil consciousness (Singh, 1982). In its expanded form, recognized as the creative urge of consciousness itself, it is *icchā*, the divine will that manifests worlds. The same force binds or

frees according to how it is met. Terms like *sprhā*, the yearning, and *abhilāṣa*, the longing toward a fixed object, are also mentioned across texts.

4.1.2 Saṅkalpa: resolve as direction

If *kāma* is the heat that begins the movement, *saṅkalpa* is the direction that shapes it. *Saṅkalpa* is the formed intention, the resolve that takes a diffuse desire and gives it a definite end. The word derives from *saṃ* and *klp*, to arrange or make ready together, and it carries the sense of a mind gathered toward a single aim (Monier-Williams, 1899). The Upaniṣads also use a Vedic term, *kratu*, which is a resolve behind an act.

In the Śaiva texts *saṅkalpa* is closely tied to the power of consciousness to determine itself. The *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* describes consciousness as free, able to assume any form by its own will, *svecchā* (Singh, 1982). *Saṅkalpa* is preceded by *vicāra*, the deliberation that weighs a rising impulse and opens the way toward a definite resolve. At the universal level this self-determining resolve is *svātantrya*, the absolute freedom of Śiva. At the individual level it appears as *saṅkalpa*, the resolve by which a person directs the mind toward one object rather than another. The two are the same power at different scales, cosmic freedom contracted into individual intention.

A resolve can be true or false, noble or harmful. The tradition inherits from the Upaniṣads the ideal of *satya-saṅkalpa*, the resolve rooted in truth, whose fruit is real and lasting (Olivelle, 1998). Against it stands the resolve rooted in harm or falsehood, which the tradition marks as *pāpa-saṅkalpa*. *Saṅkalpa* gives desire its direction; the moral quality of the resolve determines the moral quality of what is manifested. A true resolve carries a desire toward a wholesome end. A harmful resolve carries the same energy toward a destructive one. The steering of manifestation, which Section 5.4 takes up in full, turns on this distinction.

4.1.3 Abhivyakti: manifestation as expression

Manifestation is the coming-forth of what was hidden. The precise term is *abhivyakti*, which names the revealing of a latent thing, as distinct from *vyakti*, the individuated thing that is revealed (Monier-Williams, 1899). As music is latent in the musician until playing brings it forth, so *abhivyakti* is expression. Consciousness holds the world within itself; manifestation expresses it outward (Watson et al., 2013).

The *Spanda Kārikā* calls it *spanda*, the subtle pulse or vibration of consciousness, the throb by which the still consciousness stirs into appearance and withdraws again (Dyczkowski, 1992b; Singh, 1980). The *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* calls it *ābhāsa*, the shining-forth, the appearance of the world as a reflection within the mirror of consciousness (Singh, 1982). The Śiva Sūtra and *Spanda Kārikā* point to it through the opening and unfolding of awareness, the

unmeṣa by which the world becomes present (Singh, 1979a, 1980). The Vijñāna Bhairava is less concerned with naming the cosmic process and more with the moment of manifestation in direct experience, the sphurattā or flashing-forth felt in the instant of perception (Bäumer, 2019). These represent the outward expression of consciousness as world and as thought.

Underlying all four names is the single sense of abhivyakti. Manifestation does not add anything to consciousness. It reveals what consciousness already is. What was folded becomes unfolded. What was latent becomes patent.

4.2 Progression in each text and comparative mapping

Each of the four texts approaches the movement from consciousness to expression from its own angle. The Śiva Sūtra give foundational crisp aphorisms. The Spanda Kārikā gives a doctrine of the pulse. The Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam gives a graded descent and return. The Vijñāna Bhairava gives methods of practice. This section reads each in turn, drawing out how it understands the progression and where kāma and saṅkalpa stand within it.

4.2.1 The Śiva Sūtra: arising and mastery

The Śiva Sūtra are the seed text of the tradition, revealed to Vasugupta and cast as short aphorisms in three sections, called awakenings (Dyczkowski, 1992a; Singh, 1979a). They do not lay out a sequential model of manifestation. They point to the nature of consciousness and to the states of bondage and freedom. From these pointings a view of the progression can be drawn. The text names will as a power of consciousness. In the first awakening it identifies the power of will with the goddess:

इच्छाशक्तिरुमा कुमारी

icchāśaktir umā kumārī

“The power of will is Umā, the virgin.” (Śiva Sūtra 1.13)(Singh, 1979a) Will, icchā, is a divine power in its purest form, the first leaning of consciousness toward manifestation. It aspires to be united with Śiva but keeps waiting, which makes it virgin. Desire in its root form is this power. When the aspirant recognizes it as such, desire is no longer a bond but an expression of Śiva's own nature.

The Śiva Sūtra make a further point that desires and thoughts arise on their own. The bound person is carried by them, but the awakened person is not. The difference lies not in the absence of arising but in the mastery over it. The one established in awareness watches thought rise and does not become its servant. This mastery is the seed of the whole practical

teaching. If arising is spontaneous but mastery is possible, then the progression of thought can be governed at the point where arising meets response.

Manifestation, for the Śiva Sūtra, is the unfolding of awareness itself. The term is *unmeṣa*, the opening of the eye, the moment the world becomes present to consciousness. The progression they imply runs from the will that stirs, through the thoughts that arise, to either bondage or mastery, depending on whether the arising is recognized. The Śiva Sūtra thus give the two ends of the process, the primal will and the final mastery, and leave the middle to be filled by the texts that follow.

4.2.2 The Spanda Kārikā: the pulse

The Spanda Kārikā takes up the middle that the Śiva Sūtra leave open. Its subject is *spanda*, the subtle pulse or vibration of consciousness, the throb by which the still consciousness stirs into appearance and withdraws again (Dyczkowski, 1992b; Singh, 1980). The text opens with this pulse:

यस्योन्मेषनिमेषाभ्यां जगतः प्रलयोदयौ । तं शक्तिचक्रविभवप्रभवं शङ्करं स्तुमः ॥

yasyonmeṣanimeṣābhyāṃ jagataḥ pralayodayau, taṃ śakticakravibhavaprabhavaṃ śaṅkaraṃ stumaḥ

“We praise that Śaṅkara by whose opening and closing of the eye the world dissolves and arises, the source of the glorious wheel of powers.” (Spanda Kārikā 1.1)(Singh, 1980)

Unmeṣa is the opening, the outward pulse by which the world arises. *Nimeṣa* is the closing, the inward pulse by which it withdraws. Manifestation is the outward stroke of a rhythm that never stops. The world is not made once and left standing. It is pulsed into being at every moment, as the eye opens, and drawn back as it closes.

For the Spanda Kārikā, desire and resolve are moments within this pulse. The stir of will is the beginning of the outward stroke. The direction that will takes is the shaping of the stroke toward a particular appearance. The text teaches that the one who holds steady to the pulse, who catches the *spanda* at its root, is not carried away by the particular thoughts it throws up (Dyczkowski, 1992b). Here the practical thread of the Śiva Sūtra reappears in a new form. Mastery is holding to the pulse rather than being scattered by its outcomes.

The Spanda Kārikā also marks the moment where manifestation can be caught. In the junction between two thoughts, in the gap where one has ceased and the next has not yet risen, the underlying pulse becomes briefly available (Dyczkowski, 1992b; Singh, 1980). This gap is the seam of manifestation. Attention placed there reaches the source from which

thoughts arise. This teaching, subtle in the Spanda Kārikā, becomes an explicit method in the Vijñāna Bhairava.

4.2.3 The Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam: descent and recognition

The Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam, the work of Kṣemarāja, gives the most systematic account of the four texts. Its title means the heart of recognition, and it compresses the whole recognition philosophy into twenty sūtras with the author's own commentary (Singh, 1982). It offers both a descent, how consciousness becomes the bound individual, and a return, how the individual recognizes itself as consciousness. The descent begins from freedom. The first sūtra states the ground:

चितिः स्वतन्त्रा विश्वसिद्धिहेतुः

citiḥ svatantrā viśvasiddhihetuḥ

“Consciousness, free and independent, is the cause of the accomplishment of the universe.” (Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam 1)(Singh, 1982)

Consciousness is free. This freedom, svātantrya, is the root of saṅkalpa. What appears in a person as the resolve to direct the mind is, at the source, this same absolute freedom. The second sūtra shows how the free consciousness manifests:

स्वेच्छया स्वभित्तौ विश्वमुन्मीलयति

svecchayā svabhittau viśvam unmīlayati

“By her own will she unfolds the universe upon her own screen.” (Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam 2)(Singh, 1982)

Three things stand in this line. Svecchā, own-will, is desire at the cosmic scale, the icchā by which manifestation begins. Unmīlayati, unfolds, is manifestation as the opening of what was closed. Svabhitti, her own screen, is the place of manifestation, which is consciousness itself and nothing outside it. The world appears within consciousness, as an image appears in a mirror, not as a thing built outside it.

The descent proceeds as consciousness contracts. The free and universal awareness limits itself, forgets its own nature, and becomes the bound individual who takes the body and mind for the self (Singh, 1982). This contraction is the forgetting. The return is the recognition, pratyabhijñā, the sudden knowing again of what was always the case. When the individual recognizes that its own awareness is the universal consciousness, the contraction releases. Here the Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam gives the full arc that the other texts give in part. Desire begins

the outward movement as *svecchā*. Manifestation unfolds it as *ābhāsa*, the shining-forth upon the screen. Recognition completes the return.

4.2.4 The Vijñāna Bhairava: manifestation in experience

The Vijñāna Bhairava is cast as a dialogue in which the Goddess asks how the highest reality may be reached, and Bhairava answers with a series of methods, traditionally counted as one hundred and twelve (Bäumer, 2019; Singh, 1979b). Each method is a way to catch consciousness in the act of manifesting, in the midst of ordinary experience.

The text is less concerned with naming the cosmic process and more with the felt moment of manifestation, the flash of awareness in perception. Its methods work on the seams of experience, the places where manifestation can be caught. Several take the gap between two states as their doorway, the junction between waking and sleep, between one breath and the next, between one thought and another. In these gaps the constructed world thins, and the underlying consciousness shows itself.

Most striking for this study is the use the text makes of desire. Where other traditions treat desire as an obstacle, the Vijñāna Bhairava treats it as a vehicle. It takes the energy of desire at its height and turns attention to the joy itself rather than to its object. In that joy, held and entered, the underlying consciousness is found (Bäumer, 2019; Singh, 1979b). Desire, met this way, does not bind. It reveals. This is the practical proof of the point made in Section 4.1, that *kāma* is not evil in itself, that its orientation determines its fruit. The same energy that binds when spent on the object liberates when turned toward its own root.

For the Vijñāna Bhairava, then, the progression of manifestation is a movement to be caught in the act. Manifestation happens at every moment, in every perception, in every rising desire. The methods teach the aspirant to catch it there, at the seam, and to trace it back to its source.

4.2.5 Comparative mapping

Read on their own terms, the four texts give four accounts of manifestation. Three agreements run across all of them. First, manifestation is expression, not fabrication. None of the texts holds that consciousness makes a world outside itself. All hold that consciousness reveals, upon its own ground, what it already contains. The screen of the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, the pulse of the *Spanda Kārikā*, the unfolding of the *Śiva Sūtra*, and the flash of the Vijñāna Bhairava are four names for one movement, the coming-forth of the latent into the patent. This is the shared meaning of *abhivyakti*. Second, desire is the beginning of the movement. In each text the outward stroke starts with a stir of will. The *Śiva Sūtra* name it *icchā-śakti*. The *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* names it *svecchā*. The stir is not a flaw. It is the first motion of manifestation, divine at its root. Third, mastery is possible. Each text

holds that a person need not be carried helplessly by the thoughts and desires that arise. The Śiva Sūtra teach mastery over arising. The Spanda Kārikā teaches steadiness in the pulse. The Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam teaches recognition. The Vijñāna Bhairava teaches methods. All four agree that the progression of thought can be met with awareness rather than suffered in bondage.

As shown in Figure 2 below, the differences are differences of vantage, not of doctrine. The Śiva Sūtra speak in seed form. They give the ends of the process, will and mastery, and leave the middle implicit. Their power is compression. Their limit, for a study of the progression, is that they do not lay the stages out. The Spanda Kārikā gives the dynamic principle, the pulse, but it is less concerned with the descent into individuality. It tells how consciousness throbs into appearance. It says less about how the appearance becomes a bound person who forgets its source. The Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam gives what the others leave out, the full graded arc of descent and return. It is the most complete map. Its emphasis falls on recognition, the return, more than on the management of desire in daily life. The Vijñāna Bhairava gives what none of the doctrinal texts give, a set of usable methods. It is the least systematic and the most practical. It does not argue. It instructs.

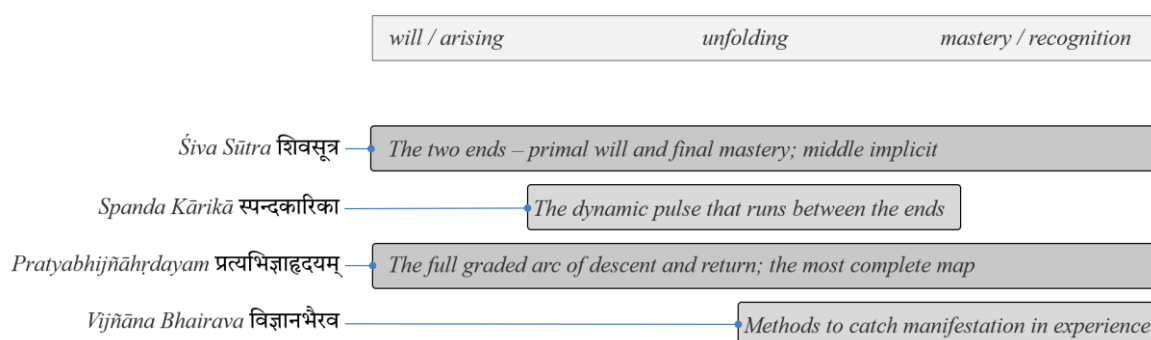


Figure 2: The four models side by side.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 The unified model of manifestation

Drawn together, the four accounts compose a single model that no one text gives alone. The Śiva Sūtra supply the frame, will at the start and mastery at the end. The Spanda Kārikā supplies the motion within the frame, the pulse. The Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam supplies the full path of that motion, descent into the individual and return to the source. The Vijñāna Bhairava supplies the means to walk the path.

In the combined view, manifestation moves through a sequence. It begins in the resting fullness of consciousness, undivided and at peace. A stir arises, the first motion of will, which

is *kāma* in its root form as *icchā*. This stir has energy but not yet direction. *Saṅkalpa* gives it direction, gathering the diffuse urge toward a definite end. The directed urge then takes form through the shaping power of consciousness and appears, unfolded upon the screen of awareness, as a thought, a word, a deed, or a world. This appearance is *abhivyakti*. The movement can then be recognized for what it is, and in that recognition the whole sequence is seen as the play of one consciousness. Figure 3 sets out this combined progression, with *kāma* and *saṅkalpa* marked at their places.

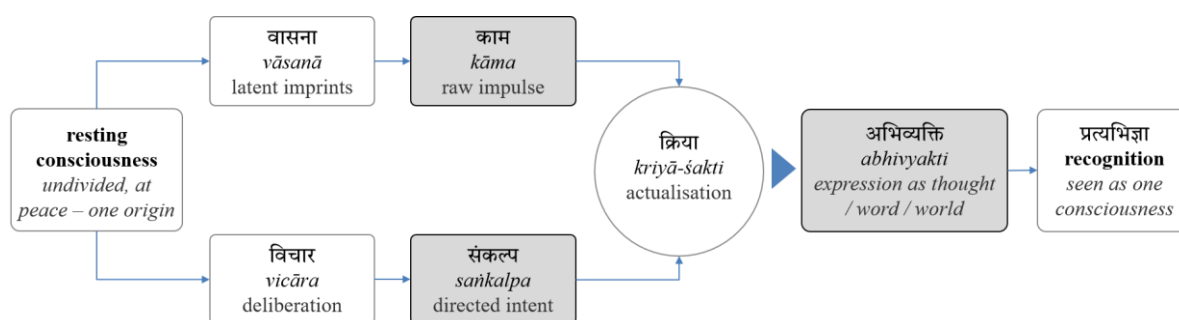


Figure 3: The combined progression.

5.2 Complementarity of *kāma* and *saṅkalpa*

The fourth research question asks whether *kāma* and *saṅkalpa* complement each other. As depicted in Figure 4, they do, and the combined progression shows why. *Kāma* is energy. *Saṅkalpa* is direction. Energy without direction scatters. A desire that arises and is not gathered by resolve dissipates into agitation and leaves no lasting mark, or worse, deepens the grooves of old habit and binds the person further. Direction without energy stays inert. A resolve formed without the heat of desire behind it remains a wish on paper, correct but lifeless, and never crosses into act.

The union of *kāma* and *saṅkalpa* manifests. When the energy of *kāma* is taken up and steered by *saṅkalpa*, the movement completes. The desire has force to move and a course to follow. This is the sufficient condition for manifestation. Neither term alone will do. The texts, each in its own idiom, converge on this single structural point.

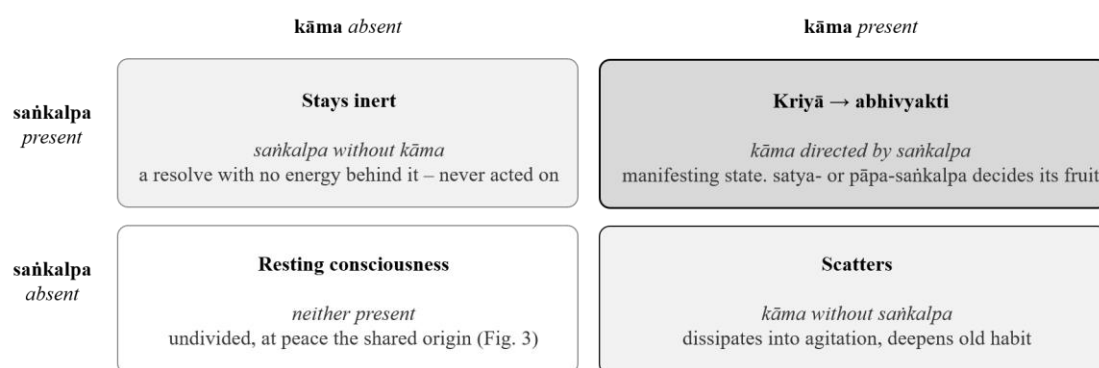


Figure 4: The complementary role.

5.3 The moral orientation of desire and resolve

The synthesis adds a dimension that the mechanics alone do not carry. Both *kāma* and *saṅkalpa* have orientation. Desire may be turned toward the object and grasped, in which case it binds, or turned toward its own root and recognized, in which case it frees. Resolve may be rooted in truth, *satya-saṅkalpa*, or rooted in harm, *pāpa-saṅkalpa*. Because *saṅkalpa* gives desire its direction, the orientation of the resolve decides the orientation of the whole movement. A true resolve carries desire's energy toward a wholesome manifestation. A harmful resolve carries the same energy toward a destructive one. The texts do not ask for the destruction of desire but for its right orientation. The *Vijñāna Bhairava* makes this a method, taking the energy of a strong desire and turning attention to the felt joy at its root rather than to the object that seemed to cause it. The energy is not suppressed. It is redirected inward, where it reveals its source. A person may thus work with desire rather than against it, using its own force to reach the awareness beneath it. The moral dimension says that the quality of the direction determines the quality of the fruit, and this is the bridge to the practical teaching that follows.

5.4 Governing the progression of thought

If manifestation follows a known sequence, and if that sequence has points where it can be met with awareness, then the progression of thought can be governed. This section and 5.6 draw the practical teaching from the texts, answering the sixth research question, how a person may cultivate noble thoughts, quiet unwanted ones, and by what techniques. The combined progression has three points where it can be governed.

The first is the point of arising. The *Śiva Sūtra* teach that desires arise on their own. They cannot all be prevented. But the relation taken toward an arising can be chosen. A rising thought met with awareness, rather than seized and fed, loses its compulsion. This is the first and most delicate leverage point, the moment between arising and response.

The second is the point of resolve. Once a desire has arisen, saṅkalpa decides its fate. To withhold resolve from a harmful desire is to deny it the direction it needs to manifest. To grant resolve to a noble desire is to give it course. Here the distinction between satya-saṅkalpa and pāpa-saṅkalpa becomes a practical instrument. The aspirant learns to align resolve with truth and to refuse it to harm. Desire supplies the energy either way. Resolve chooses where the energy goes.

The third is the point of the gap. The Spanda Kārikā and the Vijñāna Bhairava both teach that in the gap between two thoughts the underlying consciousness shows itself. Attention placed in that gap reaches beneath the stream of thought to its source. From that source, the stream is governed more easily, because the aspirant is no longer inside it but aware of it.

As shown in Figure 5, the texts offer concrete means, which the tradition organizes as ways or methods. The Vijñāna Bhairava supplies the widest set, its many methods for catching consciousness in the act. Among them are attention to the breath and its turning points, attention to the gap between thoughts, attention to the felt joy at the root of desire, and attention to the space of awareness itself. The Spanda Kārikā supplies the practice of holding to the pulse, remaining steady at the source while thoughts rise and fall. The Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam supplies the practice of recognition, the repeated turning of awareness back upon itself until it knows its own nature. The Śiva Sūtra supply the ground, the cultivation of unbroken awareness in which arisings are witnessed rather than obeyed.

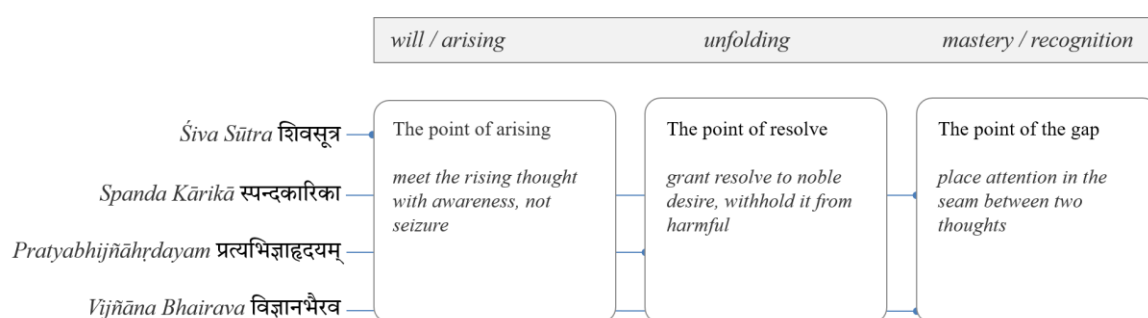


Figure 5: The leverage points and their tools. (sample)

5.5 Tantra in method, Yoga in aim

The second research question asks whether kāma, saṅkalpa, and manifestation, as these texts treat them, belong only to Tantra, or to Yoga as well. The question matters because the texts are usually classed as Tantric, and the classification can obscure how much they share with Yoga. The four texts are Tantric in lineage. They belong to the Āgamic stream, and they carry the marks of Tantric method, the use of energy, the direct approach to consciousness, the

transformation of experience rather than its renunciation (Sanderson, 2007; Wallis, 2013). In this sense the classification is correct.

Yet the texts are also texts of Yoga, in more than name. The word yoga means union, the joining of the individual with the ultimate, and this union is precisely their aim. The Śiva Sūtra are traditionally received as a teaching of yoga, the yoga of the supreme identity, in which the individual recognizes itself as Śiva (Singh, 1979a). The Vijñāna Bhairava is a manual of yogic method, its many practices being techniques of attention and breath that would be recognized as yoga in any tradition (Bäumer, 2019; Singh, 1979b). The Spanda Kārikā teaches a discipline of holding to the source that is yoga in substance. The classical definition of yoga as the stilling of the movements of the mind describes what these texts aim at, approached from their own side.

The conclusion is that the two are joined in the Śaiva view. The texts are Tantric in their means and Yogic in their aim. They use the methods of Tantra, the direct engagement with energy and experience, to reach the goal of Yoga, the union of the individual with consciousness. The terms studied here belong to both. Kāma, saṅkalpa, and manifestation are Tantric in their setting and Yogic in their purpose, and the division between the two traditions, sharp in later classification, is not sharp in these texts themselves.

5.6 Implications for human behaviour

These teachings bear directly on mental well-being. Much distress arises when unwanted thoughts are fed by resolve and allowed to manifest as rumination, anxiety, or destructive action. The account given here suggests a path. Met with awareness at the points already described, an unwanted thought need not be seized, resolve can be withheld from it, and attention placed in the gap loosens its grip, while the energy of desire, turned toward its root, is freed from the objects that trouble it. This is not the suppression of thought, which the texts nowhere counsel, but the skillful governance of its progression. A mind trained in these means is less at the mercy of its own risings. It cultivates what is noble and lets the rest subside. The practical promise of the tradition is a life in which the progression of thought is increasingly one's own to shape.

6. CONCLUSION

This study set out to trace how kāma and saṅkalpa work together to produce manifestation in four texts of Kashmir Śaivism. It defined the three terms from the texts, traced the progression of manifestation in each, compared the four accounts, drew them into one, and turned the result toward practical use.

The central finding is that kāma and saṅkalpa are complementary. Desire supplies energy. Resolve supplies direction. Neither alone brings a thought to fruition. Manifestation, understood as abhivyakti, the expression of what lies latent within consciousness, follows when the two align. This finding holds across all four texts, each of which gives a part of the whole. The Śiva Sūtra give the frame, the Spanda Kārikā the pulse, the Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam the full arc, and the Vijñāna Bhairava the means.

The account carries a moral dimension and a practical one. Both desire and resolve have orientation. A resolve rooted in truth carries desire toward a wholesome end. A resolve rooted in harm carries it toward a destructive one. Because the progression can be met with awareness at the points of arising, resolve, and the gap between thoughts, it can be governed. This governance bears directly on well-being, offering a path by which unwanted thoughts are quieted and noble ones cultivated, not by suppression but by skill.

Finally, the study finds that these terms belong to both Tantra and Yoga. The texts are Tantric in their means and Yogic in their aim, and the two traditions meet in them. The progression of thought, which every person lives without noticing, is in these texts laid bare and made workable. To know it is the beginning of shaping it.

6.1 Limitations and direction for further research

This study confines itself to four texts; the wider Śaiva corpus, including the Tantrāloka and the Parātriṃśikāvivarāṇa, likely holds further material on kāma and saṅkalpa that a broader study could recover. The resonance noted in this study between saṅkalpa and the psychological literature on implementation intentions is observed and interpreted from the texts but not tested. A study designed to examine the leverage points identified here, arising, resolve, and the gap, against contemplative or clinical outcomes would give the practical claims an empirical weight they do not yet carry. The tools drawn from the Vijñāna Bhairava and the Spanda Kārikā are described here as the texts present them. Translating them into a structured protocol and assessing their bearing on rumination or anxiety would move the practical implications of this study from proposal to evidence.

REFERENCES

1. Bäumer, B. (2019). *The Yoga of the Vijñāna Bhairava: Consciousness, Delight, Journey*. D. K. Printworld.
2. Bloomfield, M. (1897). *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda*. Clarendon Press.
3. Chatterji, J. C. (1914). *Kashmir Shaivism*. Research Department, Jammu and Kashmir State.

4. Dyczkowski, M. S. G. (1992a). *The Aphorisms of Śiva: The Śiva Sūtra with Bhāskara's Commentary, the Vārttika*. State University of New York Press.
5. Dyczkowski, M. S. G. (1992b). *The Stanzas on Vibration: The Spandakārikā with Four Commentaries*. State University of New York Press.
6. Jamison, S. W., & Brereton, J. P. (2014). *The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*. Oxford University Press.
7. Kane, P. V. (1941). *History of Dharmasāstra, Vol. II, Part I*. Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
8. Krishnappa, D., Sridhar, M., & Nagendra, H. R. (2020). Concept of Mind in Indian Philosophy, Western Philosophy, and Psychology. *Yoga Mimamsa*, 52(1), 25–28. https://doi.org/10.4103/ym.ym_24_19
9. Larson, G. J. (1979). *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of Its History and Meaning* (2nd ed.). Motilal Banarsidass.
10. Lawrence, D. P. (2018). The Recognition Philosophy of Kashmiri Śaivism. *Religion Compass*.
11. Monier-Williams, M. (1899). *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged*. Clarendon Press.
12. Muller, H., Mayrhofer, M. T., Van Veen, E.-B., & Holzinger, A. (2021). The Ten Commandments of Ethical Medical AI. *Computer*, 54(7), 119–123. <https://doi.org/10.1109/MC.2021.3074263>
13. Olivelle, P. (1998). *The Early Upaniṣads: Annotated Text and Translation*. Oxford University Press.
14. Radhakrishna, S., Nagarathna, R., & Nagendra, H. R. (2010). Integrated approach to yoga therapy and autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0975-9476.65089>
15. Ratié, I. (2011). *Le Soi et l'Autre: Identité, différence et altérité dans la philosophie de la Pratyabhijñā*. Brill.
16. Sanderson, A. (2007). The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir. In D. Goodall & A. Padoux (Eds.), *Mélanges tantriques à la mémoire d'Hélène Brunner*. Institut Français de Pondichéry.
17. Sedlmeier, P., & Srinivas, K. (2019). *Psychology of Meditation and Indian Psychology*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
18. Silburn, L. (1988). *Kuṇḍalinī: The Energy of the Depths*. State University of New York Press.

19. Singh, J. (1979a). *Śiva Sūtras: The Yoga of Supreme Identity*. Motilal Banarsidass.
20. Singh, J. (1979b). *Vijñāna Bhairava or Divine Consciousness: A Treasury of 112 Types of Yoga*. Motilal Banarsidass.
21. Singh, J. (1980). *Spanda-Kārikās: The Divine Creative Pulsation*. Motilal Banarsidass.
22. Singh, J. (1982). *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam: The Secret of Self-Recognition*. Motilal Banarsidass.
23. Torella, R. (2002). *The Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā of Utpaladeva with the Author's Vṛtti: Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*. Motilal Banarsidass.
24. Wallis, C. D. (2013). *Tantra Illuminated: The Philosophy, History, and Practice of a Timeless Tradition*. Mattamayura Press.
25. Watson, A., Goodall, D., & Sarma, S. L. P. A. (2013). *An Enquiry into the Nature of Liberation: Rāmakaṇṭha's Paramokṣanirāśakārikāvṛtti*. Institut Français de Pondichéry.