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## ANCESTRAL BRILLIANCE OF KASHMIR: THE PROFOUND INTERSECTION OF PRATIBIGNYA SHASTRA AND MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

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Almost two decades back, while working for IBM, I had the opportunity of travelling to Singapore and getting certified on Herman Brain Dominance Instrument, popularly known as HBDI. Eventually I became the certified trainer in the year 2005. As a certified HBDI trainer, I had the privilege of training and guiding more than 5000 individuals on their journey of self-awareness. I found HBDI as an amazing research based psychometric instrument used to assess human preferences that deepens one's self-awareness. HBDI is based on the empirical research of the renowned brain scientist, Dr Roger Sperry, who gave the world split brain theory of Left and Right Brain, that says each side or hemisphere of our brain has its job to complete.

This research was taken up further by Ned Hermann, who translated this split-brain theory into Hermann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) Model. His research is based on understanding the preferences of the left and right brain. The research has found that the Right brain is more empathetic and intuitive while the Left brain is about analytical and structured preferences of an individual. Perhaps, some of us would have noticed many times an ironic phenomenon where often we find some individuals exhibiting remarkable sharpness in certain situations but astonishingly clumsy in other. For example, when I was working at IBM, I recall that we had a highly skilled software engineer working for a leading tech client. In his role, he excelled in writing complex code, debugging software, and problem-solving within the structured environment of programming. His left-brain dominance was evident in his ability to analyse algorithms, identify logical errors, and streamline workflows efficiently. However, when he was tasked with brainstorming creative solutions for user interface design or conceptualizing innovative software features, he would always find himself struggling. His right brain tendencies, such as creativity and intuition, were less pronounced, leading to difficulties in envisioning novel solutions beyond the realm of structured programming. This apparent contradiction finds its roots in the differential dominance of the left and right brain hemispheres.

Perhaps HBDI has gained an immense popularity in last few decades and is used by individuals, organizations and corporations for helping people to enhance their self-awareness and facilitate resolution of the problems related to communication, problem-solving, team work, strategy building, growth, innovation, negotiation and personal growth. The area of self-awareness has also gained a significant movement in last few years since it is believed that higher levels of awareness is a panacea to many human problems be it personal or professional. While I have been a practitioner of Self Awareness myself, and by virtue of my expertise developed as an HBDI Coach I was attracted to read more research in this field. It happened some months back when I developed interest in reading and understanding Pratibignya Shastra of Kashmir where I uncovered interesting similarities between HBDI and Pratibignya that provoked me to explore the relationship between brain and conscious experience and deeper self-awareness. I noticed that Brain experiences and conscious awareness approaches seem to be correlated

In my exploration of Pratibignya , many amazing realities got unfolded. Pratibignya, which is an essential part of Kashmiri Shaivism and an essential pillar of Trika Philosophy, has been propounded by Acharya Somananda and later developed by Acharya Utpaldeva, Acharya Abhinavgupta and Acharya Khemraj. Pratibignya philosophy primarily delves into questions surrounding understanding of consciousness, self-awareness, and the nature of reality.

Pratibignya can be understood as the fundamental belief or assumption one holds about their identity, purpose, and potential. It is the conscious awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and actions, as well as the recognition of the interconnectedness between oneself and the surrounding world. Pratibignya encourages individuals to examine their core beliefs, values, and perceptions about themselves and their existence. It prompts introspective inquiries such as "Who am I?" and "What do I believe about myself and the world around me?" By critically evaluating these initial propositions,



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individuals become deeply aware of themselves and gain insights into their self-perception, uncover limiting beliefs or biases, and explore avenues for growth and transformation. In practical terms, defining Pratibignya in the context of self-awareness and consciousness involves fostering mindfulness, introspection, and self-inquiry practices. Pratibignya further elaborates the concepts of Prakasha (illumination) and Vimarsha (reflection) that sheds light on the nature of consciousness and the process of self-awareness. Prakasha represents the inherent luminosity of the mind—the pure awareness that illuminates our thoughts and experiences. Vimarsha, on the other hand, symbolizes the reflective nature of consciousness—the dynamic interplay of perception and reflection that gives rise to our sense of self and the world around us.

Shiva and Shakti are further seen as two inseparable dimensions of consciousness in Kashmir Shaivism that further resonate with Prakash and Vimarsh as advocated in Pratibignya. Shiva symbolizes the unchanging, eternal source of consciousness and stability within the individual while Shakti embodies dynamic creative power, the force that brings about transformation, expression, and innovation. The harmonious union of Shiva and Shakti leads to a holistic existence, balancing stability and dynamism. In fact, on a closer examination, I feel that there appears to be a further interconnectedness of Shiva - Shakti concept with Ardhnateshwar, Ida -Pingala and Left Brain and Right Brain. Perhaps, that requires further research and I will not dell into that here.

However, my quest for deeper understanding of our timeless wisdom of Kashmir Shaivism and its interconnectedness with contemporary philosophies including HBDI has significantly increased. There is a dire need to study the nature of consciousness and self-awareness and their dynamic interplay of light and reflection within mind and draw parallels between these ancient concepts and the modern framework of the HBDI model. While integrating these perspectives, i have uncovered interesting similarities between left and right brain with Prakasha and Vimarsha. Both have the reference towards the individuals understanding and journey of self-discovery and transformation.

For example, Prakasha corresponds to the functions associated with the right brain hemisphere, which is often considered holistic, intuitive, and creative. The right brain is involved in processing visual-spatial information, creativity, intuition, and holistic perception. It is responsible for tasks such as artistic expression, pattern recognition, and emotional processing. Prakasha reflects the inner illumination and self-awareness, similar to the holistic and intuitive processing of information associated with the right brain. On the other hand, Vimarsha corresponds to the functions associated with the left-brain hemisphere, which is often considered analytical, logical, and focused on detail-oriented tasks. The left brain is involved in processing language, logic, reasoning, and sequential thinking. It is responsible for tasks such as analytical problem-solving, mathematical calculations, and verbal communication. Vimarsha encompasses the perception and engagement with the external world, similar to the structured and analytical processing of information associated with the left brain.

Perhaps I am aware that there is a fundamental difference between eastern and western psychology. Contemporary Psychology of west believes that the Mind is the problem while as eastern philosophy, especially Pratibignya is of a strong opinion that “Mann” and “Buddhi” are not the true instruments to understand the world. Just like "chitta vritti nirodha" from the Yoga Sutras, which refers to the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind like "Svarupa-sunyam Iva Samadhih" that points to a state of realization where the individual transcends the fluctuations of the mind and recognizes their true nature or essence (Svarupa). This state of Samadhi in Pratibignya philosophy involves a profound recognition of the self as pure consciousness, beyond the limitations of individual identity and mental modifications.

In fact my detailed examination of the research paper titled “Concept of Manifestation Process in Kashmir Shaivism” published by aboriginals Mudasir Ahmad Tantray, Tariq Rafeeq and Ifrah Akhter, whose paper, “Concept of Manifestation Process in Kashmir Shaivism” have explained the concept of manifestation process in Kashmir Shaivism from Shiva tattva to Prithvi tattva and their transcendental and immanent predicates (Prakrti and Purusa). Their paper has also shown that the ultimate reality, Paramshiva, manifests itself into various forms which likely represent the theory of causation.



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Donald Hoffman, America's leading cognitive psychologist, is of the view that consciousness is more fundamental than the objects and patterns perceived by consciousness. We have conscious experiences because consciousness is posited as a fundamental aspect of reality. His views on consciousness bear some similarities to the concepts found in Pratibignya and Kashmir Shaivism. Hoffman's work also explores the idea that different conscious agents may perceive reality differently based on their perceptual capacities and evolutionary imperatives. This notion aligns with the understanding in Pratibignya philosophy that individual consciousnesses perceive and construct reality uniquely based on their karmic patterns (Samskaras) and mental dispositions. Hence self-awareness of HBDI need to transcend the mind and thought in order to reach ultimate awareness

While I will continue with my research efforts on this topic, I strongly feel there are profound possibilities of bridging the insights of modern neuroscience with the timeless wisdom of ancient philosophy that can empower ourselves to unlock the full potential of the mind and awaken the infinite possibilities that lie within us. In the convergence of these two worlds—the ancient wisdom of Kashmir Shaivism and the modern insights of the HBDI model, there seems to be a great opportunity to know about the nature of the mind and consciousness. It is a journey of discovery that transcends the limitations of language and culture, inviting all who dare to embark on a quest for truth, wisdom, and self-awareness.

The intersection of HBDI & contemporary psychology with Kashmir Shaivism is indeed an amazing find that will help the modern-day thinkers to connect with ancient Shaivist philosophy of Kashmir. Any research on the similarities and synergies between ancient Pratibignya. philosophy and the left brain-right brain model would also be an interesting interdisciplinary study combining neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, and perhaps other fields.

The integration of Pratibignya. philosophy with contemporary psychological frameworks such as the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) could indeed offer valuable insights and a sense of pride for Kashmiris and those interested in the rich intellectual heritage of Kashmir.

For Kashmiris, recognizing the deep philosophical roots of Pratibignya. in their cultural heritage can instil a sense of pride and connection to their intellectual legacy. By highlighting the parallels between ancient Kashmiri wisdom and modern psychological theories, every Kashmiri can celebrate the enduring relevance and sophistication of their cultural heritage in shaping contemporary thought.

Overall, integrating Pratibignya Kashmir Shaivism with modern science and psychology has the potential to enrich both fields and offer new insights into the nature of mind, consciousness, and human experience. By embracing an interdisciplinary approach, researchers can bridge the gap between Eastern and Western knowledge systems and foster greater understanding and collaboration across diverse cultural and philosophical traditions.

In conclusion, the exploration and showcasing of Pratibignya philosophy present a remarkable opportunity for India to assert the advanced thinking of our revered rishis and scholars. By delving into this profound ancient wisdom, we illuminate the timeless brilliance that has long characterized our cultural heritage. Moreover, in today's globalized world, the West stands to benefit greatly from the insights and perspectives offered by Eastern wisdom. Through the integration of Pratibignya philosophy into contemporary discourse, India can not only reclaim its intellectual legacy but also foster cross-cultural dialogue and mutual enrichment. As we continue to delve deeper into the depths of Pratibignya, let us embrace the richness of our heritage and forge a path toward a more enlightened future, where the wisdom of the East and West converge harmoniously for the betterment of all humanity.



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