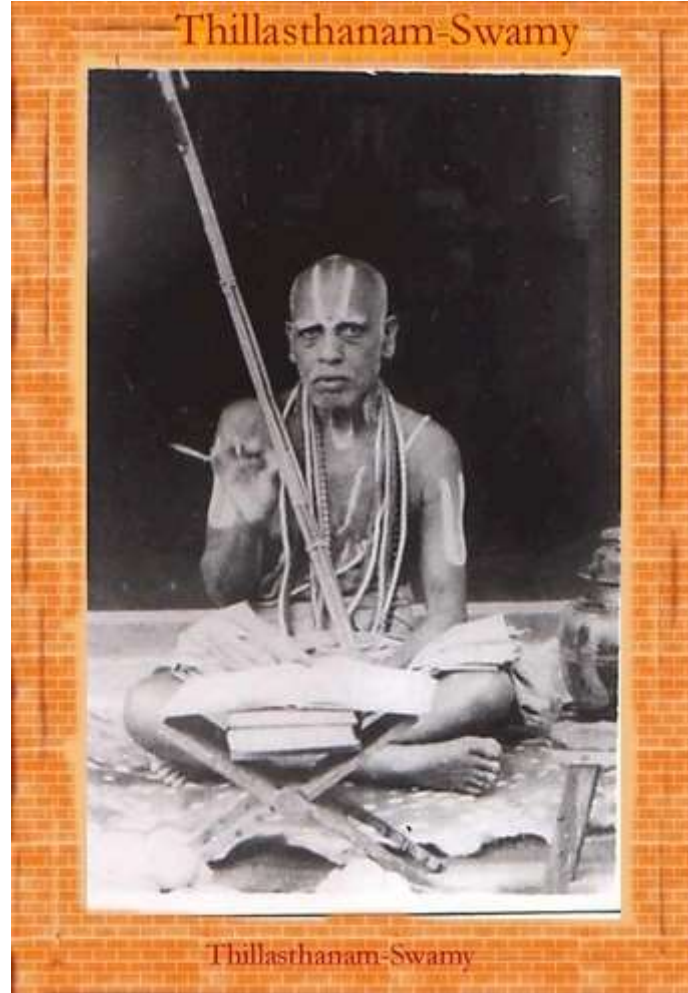


Srivaishnavism

(An extract from the Web Site)



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Srivaishnavism

Vedas present an approach to universe and also relationship of man vis a vis universe.

Vedic approach is that our planet is part of our universe and systems of universe have an influence on the life in our planet. Meditation and other activities emphasized in vedas is essentially to attract beneficial cosmic radiation's to our planet , which inturn help to form an environment conducive to healthy development of body and mind of human.

Vedic approach centres around "God or Parabrahman" who is responsible for creation, progress and destruction of the universe.. Further he regulates every action of the universe.

With the advent of cosmic and space research, this vedic approach is gaining recognition. Frank.J.Tipler, Prof. of Mathematical physics , in his book "The physics of immortality" discusses various theories of cosmology (omega point theory) and points out that the present observations are based on visible universe which is only a small fraction of the total universe.. By defining the universe as the totality of all that exists (including the invisible portion of the universe), he points out the existence of a person / force/ source that is omnipotent (unlimited power) omniscient (knowing everything) and omnipresent (present everywhere). In this way he supports the vedic concept of God.

Vedic approach that time is cyclic in character , also finds scientific support. Vedic concept is that one " Chaturyuga " - comprising of " Kaliyuga " , " Dwaparayuga " , "Tretayuga " and "Satyayuga " -is the basic cycle on which wheel of time moves.(This is approximately 4.32 million human years) . 1008 cycles of chaturyuga constitutes "One day " at the ultimate source of creation.This is referred to as " Kalpa " .The creation begins at the beginning of a Kalpa (called Laya) and there will be complete destruction at the end of "Kalpa" (called Pralaya).Creation and destruction are continuous process , not only in our planet but also in the entire universe.

Vedas are starting point of all Indian philosophies . Ramanuja has also based " Srivaishnavism" on vedic principles. Srivaishnavism is as old as veda itself ." Alwars" , Supreme devotees of Lord Vishnu , are foremost amongst the Srivaishnava teachers .They are overwhelmed by the desire for incessant communion with the lord. They remain immersed in singing the divine glories of the Lord. The songs composed and sung by them are known as "Divya Prabhandam " .There are in all 4000 songs all in Tamil. These songs bring out " Saranagathi " (or surrender) approach to god realization. These songs bring out the essence of Vedas and hence are also referred to as "Tamil Vedas". There are 12 Alwars who spread Vishnu Bhakti Cult and surrender. Swamy Ramanuja gave a scientific explanation of Srivaishnavism and hence has become synonymous with Vishishtadvaita.

God is the absolute reality , endowed with all auspicious and excellent attributes which are unsurpassable. He is the inner ruler of matter (a non-sensuous thing or Achit) as well as Souls or Atman (a sensuous thing or Chit). In the state of cosmic dissolution (Pralaya) which occurs at the end of a kalpa (cycles of four yugas), the matter and soul exist in a subtle state in Him possessing none of the qualities which make them objects of experience or cognizing subjects. From this subtle state , creation evolves by the will of God. Subtle matter (Achit) develop into gross form and will be of 24 types such as "Prakriti " , etc. Mixture of the various types of Achit is our world and body of living things. Souls (Chit) expand their consciousness ,entering into connection with bodies appropriate to their past Karmas (Actions) and continue the cycle of births and deaths , known as "Sansara". Out of compassion for the souls , God also teaches vedas - a treatise discussing nature of souls, prakriti or nature, God or Paramatman, causes of samsara and ways to get out of samsara etc- through Brahma and a lineage of sages . Srivaishnavism explains Saranagathi approach to cross samsara.

Three realities :

Srivaishnavism recognizes three realities - namely

- Chit (Sensuous objects)
- Achit (Non Sensuous objects) and
- Eshwara (God) .

This is referred to as "Tatwa Thraya" . Achit is of 24 types , such as Prakriti , etc . Achit has no capacity to show itself . It is dependent on Chit for this purpose . Both Chit and Achit are subordinate to Eshwara.

Saranagathi is the main process for "Moksha "- that is redeeming of Samsara. Thus , according to Srivaishnavism , every individual in this world is an inseparable combination of Soul (Chit) , Prakriti (Achit) and Eshwara (Antaryami). Every soul gets a body (evolved out of Prakriti) in accordance with his Karmas. The soul and body are inseparable and interdependent in an individual. Eshwara (Antaryami) resides in the body but does not take part in the worldly activities of the body . However , His help is available for the soul to cross the Samsara.

Srivaishnavism Book Preview :

In regard to protection of individuals , Swamy Vedanta Desika says " Pradanahethuhu Swatantrya Vishitaa Karuna Hari " meaning Grace of God is the main factor . The question is how to get his Grace ?? Bhagwan Ramanuja has addressed this from the point of view of ordinary people and has expounded the Saranagathi approach - basis of Srivaishnavism.

With the advent of science ,vedic approach to universe is gaining recognition. Meditation is no longer considered a mere ritual. The vedic approach has been that our planet (Earth) is a part of the universe and the systems of the universe have influence on the life in our planet.The human beings have a major role to play in this regard. All vedic philosophies aim at this objective.

Srivaishnavism aims to God -Realisation within the frame work of our normal worldly activities.This aspect has been effectively brought out in this book.This book brings out in a simple language the elements of Srivaishnavism for Layman , elaborating various points discussed under the subject of Srivaishnavism .

The emphasis is on practical aspects as the main objective of Srivaishnavism is to earn the grace of the Lord by an individual . It is modelled as a basic instructor for use by persons who do not have much specialized knowledge. Starting from the lineage of teachers ,the book discusses Tatwa Thraya (three realities) , Karmas , Forms of Eshwara , Pancha Samskara , Rahasya Thraya mantras , How to do Saranagathi , Path to Moksha etc .

The book also discusses daily routine of a Srivaishnava . The daily routines have been simplified to a minimum level. It will enable a beginner to make a beginning in right earnest and gradually improve. Appendix-1 gives the daily meditation procedure and will help one to practice daily meditation. Appendix-2 gives a simplified version of Saligrama Aradhana .

The presentation also covers a comparative study of Vedic approach and modern scientific researches .The examples and references to scientific studies including the ECG to assess the impact of Srivaishnava mantras on individuals and presentation has been such as to create an interest in an individual to follow the principles of Srivaishnavism.

It is hoped that this book will create interest in a number of persons and help them to follow the path of Srivaishnavism.The book has been popular with those who want to practice the concepts of Srivaishnavism and elevate one's personality. Presentation of this book as a gift on various occasions is also common . The book is nominally priced at Rs 50/- in India and US \$ 5 abroad . Copies are available with Sri Thillasthanam Swamy Kainkarya Sabha , e-Mail : tsksabha@yahoo.com / tsksabha@thillasthanam-swamy-sabha.in