

VARIOUS SHAIVITE TRADITIONS

Spiritual friends are asking how many Shaiva traditions are normally there. Some are keen to know the general difference among each traditions.

I will try to give short description of each tradition. Kindly keep this in your cogitations as it will help in proper understanding of various systems. Of course, our main focus of learning in this forum is Kashmir Shaivism.

So let us start with ShaivaSiddhanta.

I have mentioned about the broad category of Shaiva traditions. As we try to study and interact, we want to have a broad idea of Shaiva spiritual creed.

Please remember my earlier message in which I have broadly categorized Shaiva traditions in 4 categories:

- 1) ShaivaSiddhanta
- 2) Veer Shaiva
- 3) AdvaitShaiva tradition of Shankara
- 4) Kashmir Shaivism

SHAIVA SIDDHANTA

The main difference between ShaivaSiddhanta and Kashmir Shaivism is that former believes in pure dualism. Human being is "pashu", the bonded soul and pati, the redeemer is Lord Shiva.

Kashmir Shaivism is purely non dualistic tradition. We are no less than Param Shiva. It is His own play to create mayashakti which makes us to see differently.

ShaivaSiddhanta provides the normative rites, cosmology and theological categories of Agamic and Vedic Shaivism combined.

Being a dualistic philosophy, the goal of ShaivaSiddhanta is to become an enlightened soul through Lord Shiva's Grace.

Let me conclude with few more lines on this tradition.

In South India ShaivaSiddhanta merged with the Tamil Shaiva movement expressed in the bhakti poetry of the Nayanars (name given to 63 saints of this tradition).

SaivaSiddhanta today is practiced widely among the Hindus of southern India and Sri Lanka, especially by members of the Vellalar community. It is also prevalent among Hindus of the Tamil diaspora around the world.

Prominent Siddhanta societies, temples and monasteries also exist in a number of other countries. The United States island of Kauai, a part of Hawaii, is home to the SaivaSiddhanta Church, an organization that promotes the union of worldwide Hindus, through a publication called Hinduism Today.

KASHMIR SHAIVISM means TOTALITY or ALL INCLUSIVENESS

Om NamahShivaye!

The principles of KS emphasize on the inclusiveness of everything. Nothing is left. And everything is consciousness. Avidya in KS is when the empirical being feels something different -by assuming that it is not shiv(consciousness) .

The avidya of advait is based on the theoey of negation or NetiNeti and Adhyasa. However it too is based on consciousness.

The two look different as their epistemology is based on different concepts. Yet there is a similarity in them. I have always felt that they basically complement each other.

The principle of inclusiveness and the principle of negation are basically lead to the same. Call it Brahman or Paramshiv.

Om NamahShivaye!

Positive vibes will lead to positive life.

Be positive and positive things will happen to you.

Change your thoughts and change your attitudes. The way we respond to circumstances, will definitely manifest our situation and our world.

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF KASHMIR SHAIVISM

Kashmir Shaivism is a universal spiritual philosophy based on the supreme unity of the individual self with the God.

It accepts all the aspects of life in totality and teaches the path of realization through Divine Grace.

Pleasep contemplate on 4 features of Kashmir Shaivism. Would love to elaborate.

1) Universal Spiritual Philosophy - beyond the considerations of caste, creed, gender, etc. Everybody is welcome.

2) Supreme Unity of the Individual Self with God - We and everybody have emanated

from Him and are just part of Him. Rev. Swami LaxmanJoo would explain Kashmir Shaivism as "Para Advaita", that encompasses and transcends all traditions.

3) Diversity - As I said Kashmir Shaivism accepts all the aspects of life in totality. No doubt, God has made everybody differently. We should respect diversity as divine.

4) Divine Grace (Anugrah) - it is independent of human efforts and the only way to transformation / realization. Grace can come on those whom He chooses. This is a very subtle aspect. What can humans do? Make effort to be worthy of receiving His Grace.

BIRTH OF TANTRA

The above picture is Lord Shiva appearing as Svachchandanatha in the beginning of Satyuga. He appeared with five heads and eighteen arms.

His five heads came into manifestation through his five great energies: cit, ananda, iccha, jnana and kriya.

To illuminate the universe, five energies in the five mouths as isana, Tatpurusa, Sadyojata, Vamadeva and Aghora.

These five energies in five mouths manifested tantras to enlighten the universe.

These tantras are manifested in three ways:

Shiv Tantras

This was initial manifestation. These are dualistic (dvaita) and ten in number. These expound dualism. It means a total separation with Almighty.

RudraTantras

Next eighteen tantras came into existence which were permeated with thought of monistic dualism (bhedabheda). You can understand it like relation between God and human is just like spark and fire.

BhairavaTantras

Finally these sixty four tantras manifested which are filled with only monistic thought (abheda).

Kashmir Shaivism is connected with BhairavTantras. Here Lord Shiva is shown predominant everywhere. In everything He is there fully and completely.

Om NamahShivaye.

SAGE DURVASA RISHI

In Kaliyuga Lord Shiva appeared at Kailasamountain in the form of Srikanthanatha and initiated Sage Durvasa Rishi into BhairavaTantras.

The sage was ordained to expound the BhairavaTantras to all, without the restriction of caste, creed or colour.

Manas Putra (mind born son)

Om NamahShivaye!

Please remember the desired initiation into BhairavTantra was unique. We can call it practical initiation in which disciple gets enlightened instaneously. He or she acquires thought and practice simultaneously, without doing any practice or yoga.

Sage Durvasa was disappointed as he could not find a worthy disciple who could be fully capable. Being a great disciple of Lord Shiva with divine mental powers, he created one mind born son - Tryambakanatha.

Sage Durvasa Completely initiated Tryambakanatha.

Practice spirituality as daily routine.

All spirituality is a journey from gross to subtle, from ignorance to full awareness.

Try to be aware of every breath, every thought, every situation and every action. Awareness can only come when you are subtle, when you have a calm mind, when you have some spaciousness inside.

In between your daily routine have breaks for observing silence, speak only when necessary, eat Satvik food if available, observe your thought patterns, don't try to control your mind just step aside and watch it.

When you will start becoming subtle you will also start understanding the real nature of things and situations around you.□

SPIRITUALITY & HUMAN VALUES

Om NamahShivaye!

Human values is an important goal of spirityality. Great sages / saints have emphasised by their own spiritual journey.

We do not require special knowledge / techniques to learn human values.

Let us resolve to imbibe upto maximum extent: Humility - Love - Compassion.

How we can have divine realization?

Only by Shaktipath, that is, descent of Divine Grace. This is independent of human effort.

What can humans do? We can make effort to be worthy of His grace. These are called Upayas. Please remember grace is in everybody but the degree varies. So degree of Shaktipath depends on the degree of grace in a human being.

That is why Upayas are classified as under:

Anupaya - extreme grace due to Anand Shakti of Lord Shiva. Here hardly any effort is required by individual. That is how great saints, avatars, come.

Shambavopaya - mere divine will on part of aspirant. This is level of very high sages and saints. Remember "ajapajap" when things happen on its own.

Shaktopaya - the inner gyaan (knowledge). This is beyond action and field of contemplation. Please think of silence, deep contemplation, inner awakening (kundalini), etc.

Anvopaya - the field of kriya (action), also called inferior means as it is for lower aspirants. Here yoga, meditation, breathing techniques are involved.

Om NamahShivaye!

Om NamahShivaye!

Deep within myself no external situation can touch.

Let everything happen only on the surface. I may react to the situation; I laugh and cry. Inside, I remain silent and composed - stable, not involved, a non-participant.

This is possible as we seek divinity within.

Meditation Techniques of Kashmir Shaivism

VighanBhairavTantra gives 112 techniques of God realization which are ultimate, internal, beyond rituals and depend on Anugrah (Divine Grace).

Goddess Parvati has created this philosophy of divine techniques by making a serious inquiry to Lord Shiva....