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Durgeswar Kalita
Asstt. Teacher,
Rangia H.S. School,
Rangia, Assam, India

Influence of Vishnumriti in Sankardevas “Eka-Saran-Hari-Nama Dharma”

Durgeswar Kalita

Abstract

Dharmasastra is a collection of ancient Sanskrit texts which gives the codes of conduct and moral principles of dharma, for sanatana dharma. Dharmasastras are the sacred law books which prescribe moral laws and principles for religion. There are eighteen dharmasastras or smritisasras in sanatana religion. Some important of them are- Yajnavalkya smriti, Vishnumriti, parasara smriti, Gautamasmriti and Naradasmriti etc. These are sacred literature based on human memory as distinct from the vedas, which are considered to be shruti, literary “What is heard or the product of divine revelation most modern Hindus, however, have a greater familiarity with these smriti scriptures. In the North East i.e. Assam Sankaradeva preached the eka-sarana-hari-nama-dharma. Sankardeva studied various Hindu scriptures- Fourvedas, all philosophical scriptures, fourteen sastras, all puranas, dharmasastras i.e. smritisasras also. Sankardeva basically brought the essence of Vishnubhakti from Vishnumriti to preach his hari-nama-dharma. Vishnumriti has a strong bhakti orientation requiring daily aradhana to the God Vishnu. The Vishnumriti is divided into one hundred chapters, consisting mostly of prose text but including one or more verses at the end of each chapter. Vishnumriti is called the Vaishnava dharmasastra.

Keywords: vishnumriti, sankardevas, eka-saran-hari-nama dharma

Introduction

Dharmasastra is a collection of ancient Sanskrit texts which gives the codes of conduct and moral principles of dharma, for sanatana dharma. Dharmasastras are the sacred law books which prescribe moral laws and principles for religion. There are eighteen dharmasastras or smritisasras in sanatana religion. Some important of them are- Yajnavalkya smriti, Vishnumriti, parasara smriti, Gautamasmriti and Naradasmriti etc. These are sacred literature based on human memory as distinct from the vedas, which are considered to be shruti, literary “What is heard or the product of divine revelation most modern Hindus, however, have a greater familiarity with these smriti scriptures. In the North East i.e. Assam Sankaradeva preached the eka-sarana-hari-nama-dharma. Sankardeva studied various Hindu scriptures- Fourvedas, all philosophical scriptures, fourteen sastras, all puranas, dharmasastras i.e. smritisasras also. Sankardeva basically brought the essence of Vishnubhakti from Vishnumriti to preach his hari-nama-dharma. Vishnumriti has a strong bhakti orientation requiring daily aradhana to the God Vishnu. The Vishnumriti is divided into one hundred chapters, consisting mostly of prose text but including one or more verses at the end of each chapter. Vishnumriti is called the Vaishnava dharmasastra.

In Vishnumriti Vishnu Aradhana helps devotees to heard Vishnu to get free essay to complete devotional contents without having to search the the scriptures. In this smriti we have found these concepts- (1) Vishnu Arati (om Jai Jagadish Hare) (2) Vishnu Mantra (3) Vishnu Chalisa (4) Vishnu Sahasranama (5) Vishnu Shruti (6) Vishnu Mool Mantra.

In this paper I am going to discuss about the influence of Vishnu Smriti in Sankardeva’s eka-sarana-hari-nama-dharma.

Summary of the Vishnumriti

Vishnumriti is one of the latest Dharmasastra. According to this smritisasra Vishnu is the preserver in the world. In this sastra there are ten avatars of Vishnu is discussed here. The ten avatars are- (1) Matsya (the first Matsya is the first of Vishnu’s many avatars and was

Corresponding Author:
Durgeswar Kalita
Asstt. Teacher,
Rangia H.S. School,
Rangia, Assam, India

one of the first physical beings of the world. (2) Kurma (the tortoise) (3) Varaha (The Boar) (4) Narasimha (The lion man) (5) Vamana (The Dwarf) (6) Parashurama (The Lumberjack) (7) Rama (8) Hali Rama (9) Buddha & (10) Kalki. Moreover, there are discussed about Vishnusahasranamavrittanta respectively.

The Power of the Vishnu in Vishnumriti

Vishnu is the preserver among the trio the other two being. Brahma is the creator and Rudra the destroyer. According to the Vaishnavas (Devotees of lord Vishnu) Vishnu or Narayana the supreme is the supreme being. His power have no limit. He is considered as the origin of all that is present. In Vishnumriti Vishnu is one of the three supreme Hindu duties, along with Brahma and Shiva. Vishnu's role is to protect human's and to restore's order to the world. Preserver is found in every object and force in creation and some Hindu's recognise him as the divine being from which all things come. In Vishnumriti Vishnu is the responsible for the creation and destruction of the world. In Vaishnavism God Vishnu is personified as male God. In this smriti Buddha is adopted as the ninth avatar of Vishnu, by tradition within Hinduism. But the Buddhists traditionally do not accept the Buddha to be a Vishnuavatar.

Vishnubhakti in Vishnumriti

In Vishnumriti Vishnu is one of the principal duties of Hinduism and the supreme being or Brahman in Sanatana dharma. In Vaishnavism (Vaishnava dharma) is one of the major traditions within Hinduism along with shaivism, shaktism and smarthism. It is also called Vishnuism (Paternal).

Its followers are called Vaishnava's (maternal) and it considers Vishnu as the supreme Lord.

In Vishnumriti Vishnu holds a Padma (Lotus Flower) in his lower left hand, Kaumodoki Gada (mace) in his lower hand, Panchajanya Shankha (conch) in his upper left hand and the Sudarshana chakra (discus) in his upper right hand. In this respect we have found that God Vishnu has vast power among all the duties.

In Vishnumriti we have found his 1000 (thousands names) Vishnusahasranama. Bhisma might have learnt from Vyasa and he repeated the thousand names to Yudhisthira on the bed of arrows created by his Grandson, Arjuna, Pita Maha Bheeshma composed the great hymn Vishnu sahasranama.

In Vishnusahasranama the 1000 names are distributed over 108 slokas. This is followed by Phala-sruti and other supplementary prayer slokas. That concludes Vishnu Sahasranama stotram. Vishnusahasranama means the thousand names of Vishnu. The main source of Vishnusahasranama is the Anushasana parva of the Mahabharata. Every Men should have chanting all the slokas of Vishnusahasranama then can attain the liberation in life. Vishnu is a part of the trinity and plays the role of preserver. He has taken ten incarnations to save the planet and the good people from the hands of evils or demons. They are many mantras to please lord vishnu. Few of them are- Shanta aakaaram Bhujaga-shayanam padmanaabham sureswam.

Vishva-aadharam Gagana- Sadrsham Meghavarna-shubhaanggam/ Laksmii-kaantam-kamala-nayanam yogibhir-dhyaava Gamyam.

Vande-Visnnum Bhava-Bhaya Haram Sarvalokaeka-Naatham.

Meaning: Salutations to Sri Vishnu who has a serene Appearance. Who rests on a serpent, who has a lotus on his Navel and who is the Lord of the Devas. Who sustains the universe, who is boundless and infinite like the sky, whose colour is like the cloud and who has a beautiful and Auspicious Body. Who is the husband of Devi Lakshmi, Whose eyes are like Lotus and who is attainable to the Yogis by meditation, Salutations to that Vishnu who Remove the fear to worldly existence and who is the Lord of all the Lokas.

This Vishnu Mantra grants one transcendental bliss. It will clam his restless mind and he will find losing joy which will make him healthier and happier.

Narayana Mantra is called the Vishnu Mool Mantra: It is a simple yet powerful mantra to please the preserver, Lord Vishnu and also known as Vishnu Mool Mantra. "Om Namō Narayana"

Meaning: "I bow before the Almighty," benefit whoever chants the Mantra reaches the ultimate goal of Vaikuntha planet where one attains eternal blissful life. Vaikuntha means no desires and it is supreme spiritual abode. It is said that there is nothing that exists beyond Vaikuntha.

Chanting this Mantra to Lord Vishnu frees one from material and physical attachments. He will no longer be afraid of loss, aging and death.

Mukti (Liberation) Mantra

Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya is called the Mukti (Liberation) Mantra. This twelve letters Mantra is also known the liberation Mantra as it is believed to relieve the person who is chanting this Mantra from all the hardship of life.

I bow to the Lord who lives in the hearts of all. Chanting this Mantra develops compassion. The divine light awakens kindness and love within the one who recites and helps him to overcome challenges easily.

In Vishnumriti we have found some praiseable verse about Lord Vishnu. In this Smritisatra Vishnu is called the Aschyuta or Purusottama. He is the Ayyata, Svaswata and he has vast capacity to destroy this universe. Some noteworthy verse of Vishnumriti are mentioned below-

Tamaksaran param brahma nirguna tamasha/ Chaturvedyam param dhama brahmadi kamalobhavam/ In this verse Narada said to Bheesma about Lord Vishnu. According to Narada Vishnu is aksaram, nirguna and param brahma. Moreover, we have found some gunanama in Vishnu smriti as mentioned below-

Caracaravistastu so'hosyuta purusattamah
Avyaktam sasvatam devaprabham pursottamam
Prapadye pranjalirivisnum ksyayam bhaktavatsalam
Puranam purusam divyamadbhutam lokapabanam
Prapadye pundarikaksham devam narayanam Harim
lokanatham sahasrakshmakshram param padam
Bhagavantam prapannohasmi bhutabhavya
prabhumbibhum
Srastaram sarbalakanamanantam Viswatomukham.
Padmanavam hrisikesam prapadye svatamaschyuta
Hiranyagarvam amritam bhugarbham paratoparam.

In our above discussion we have found about the existence of Vishnu in Vishnumriti.

Sankardevas Eka-Saranam-Hari-Nama-Dharma

According to Sankardeva the Brahman is the cause, the creator, the sustainer, the destroyer, the omnipotent and omniscient being. He has brought the concept of Vishnu mantra from Vishnumriti i.e. Narayana. He translate into his own language. The verse run thus- namo Narayana, Jagata karana, khandio samsara-bhaya. (Kirtana verse 641) O Narayana, the cause of the world, I bow (to you) remove my fear for the world. In sankardevas eka-Sarana-Hari-nama-dharma Narayana, Vasudeva, Vishnu and Krishna are the same name. Sankardeva says that God Krishna sustains the world again and again-Kalarupi Krishna yito jagata-adhara karanta lilaye pache sristika samhara. Navasidahasamveda v.113 (i.e Krishna, the container of the world, sportingly destroys the creation in the form of time). namo paripurna brahma anantasakti Janme Janme tava pave thakoka bhakati (Bhagavat 10th ch. verse-1895) (i.e. o perfect Brahman, the omnipotent let there be devotion to your feet in each birth). Sankardeva again praised the lord Krishna thus-Srastaro Srasta, tumi sarvadrasta, Uddhari dharila bhumi. You are the creator of the creator, and the omniscient and you lifted the world up from the transcendental standpoint Sankardeva believes in the Brahman devoid of all distinctions. Mayatase dekhaya bibidha pariecheda

Svarupta tomara nahike kichu bheda (Kirtana v.2101) It is because of maya that various distinctions are seen you. In truth you have no distinction at all. In Bhagavata Purana Sankardeva says in tenth chapter thus- there is one eternal, spotless and self-evident Atman (Brahman). It seen as amny due to maya and qualities- nitya niranjana svaprakasa atma eka/ maya upadhira pade dekhiya aneka/ (Bhagavata 10. verse 511) According to Sankardeva the world is not real- Tumi Satya Brahma micha jagata srajana (bhagavata 10. v.488) ("Om Brhama, you are the real and the creation of the world unreal) In Vishnumriti, Bhagavata Purana and Sankardeva's Kritana Ghosa we have found about the concept of Vishnu or Lord Krishna. Sankardeva discussed the concept of sahasranama of Vishnu in his kirtana ghosa in detail. In the North East India i.e. Assam, The Vaishnava Bhakti dharma preached by Sankardeva for the people. This new creed of faith started by Srimanta Sankardeva is officially known as eka-sarana-Hari-nama-dharma. He was a social reformer, who set aside all caste barriers and preached this bhakti dharma from srutis and smritis. In his dharma the recitation or remembering of the names of the one deity whose name is Vishnu or Krishna as the principal form of worship. Sankardeva bring the concept of worship to lord Vishnu from Vishnumriti, Bhagavata Puran and he referes to the eka-sarana conclusion of the Bhagavat Gita. Thus we have found the influence of Vishnu Smriti in Sankardevas dharma.

Conclusion

In Assam the neo-Vaishnavism of Srimanta Sankardeva there is no room for worship of Lord Vishnus or Krishnas image, either in the community prayer house, popular known as the namghara or in the individual private house holds. We should always read this smritisashtra to obtain liberation.

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