



Sharana Patha

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**JSS MAHAVIDYAPEETHA
MYSURU**



H.H. Jagadguruji led the sadhaks of JSS Gurukula and members of other service groups to display the lighted lamps on 5.4.2020 at Sri Math, Mysuru, following the call given by Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi as part of the lamp lighting Abhiyan to fight Covid-19.



The model of the planned statue of Kempegowda to be installed at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, was unveiled on 27.6.2020 at Bengaluru. H.H. Jagadguruji, Jagadguru Sri Nirmalanandanatha Swamiji, Ministers Sri K.C. Narayanagowda, Sri Bhairati Basavaraju, Sri R. Ashok, Chief Minister Sri B.S. Yediyurappa, former Prime Minister Sri H.D. Devegowda, Dy. Chief Minister Sri Lakshman S. Savadi and others were present.

SHARANA PATHA

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From the Editor's Desk.....

Allama Prabhu, a saint of Himalayan magnitude calls Basaveshwara, in one of his Vachanas as the *yugada utsaha*, meaning the spirit of the aeon. Here *Yuga* does not mean an age or a life-time, but an aeon! No wonder Allama's outburst was the result his life time study and understanding of Basavanna. His opinion has been endorsed by scores of other contemporary Sharanas variously in their vachanas too. Similarly Basaveshwara's accomplishments have been the subject of many a literary classic, poetic compositions and prose works down the centuries. In this respect, they are candid, that Basava was and is nonpareil. What actually constituted his persona that doggedly persists to haunt and enthrall even the most jealous, contemptuous and resentful ones to nod their heads, may be privately, in approval of what he said and did, rather than merely preaching. He possessed a host of sterling characteristics. But the one, it appears, that made him what he became later was his irrational surd buttressed by his tenacity and courage to revolt even as a boy against injustice and inequality meted out to a bigger chunk in society.

Allama Prabhu who had travelled all over the land knew the divisive forces at work striking at the roots of a meaningful life. At the first sight itself of Basava he understood the immense possibilities already at work in him. Like Allama hundreds of thousands of men and women, largely victims of social evils, rallied round Basava who very soon became their icon, messiah, guiding light and their emancipating spirit. His words and deeds affected and moved them so much that soon perceptible changes for the better became a reality.

We do not know for certain the organizing skills of Basaveshwara. But he was busy and active in Kalyan, the capital of Bijjala II, that people moved in and out of the city in hundreds daily only to meet and hear him and get transfigured, transformed and switched to a new way of life of equality, brotherhood and fraternity. Anubhava Mantap came into existence where Sharanas, men and women, sat as equals and discoursed on issues mundane, temporal and spiritual resulting in the creation of a new literary genre in Kannada – the Vachanas. The spirit of Basava reigned supreme personifying the hopes and aspirations of the voiceless for ages. One of his Vachanas says:

*There is one earth to hold
The pariah colony, and God's temple,
One water for the closet and the ritual bath
One caste for those who know themselves
By means of the six fold mystic-way
The same deliverance for those who know Thee,
Lord Kudala Sangama.*

Prof. Chandrasekharaiah

Jagadguruji Writes....

'Conserve Nature and Protect Wildlife'

Today, the 'prakruthi vandanam' - salutation to nature - is being organized by Hindu Spiritual and Service Foundation and Initiative For Moral and Cultural Foundation is not only pertinent, but also salubrious, especially at these extraordinary times of human crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic, where the humanity is at the cross roads of its very existence. The civilization is staring at its own destruction by nature. The divine Nature is expressing its wrath through all these elements for merciless destruction. It appears that the humanity is yet too far from comprehending the art of understanding Nature. It is not the revenge of the Mother Earth, but repulsion against the cruel assault on the bountiful Nature. The pandemic is the clear signal of total destruction that the civilization is bound to face anytime soon. The programme 'Prakruthi Vandanam' is an attempt to restore sanity in the social structure to reset its goal of economic development without harming Nature. The conservation of forest and protection of wild life is one amongst its series of activities.

The Hindu civilization was acknowledged as the pinnacle of human achievement on the planet earth. The ancient rishis had intuitively grasped the secrets of life on earth and elsewhere, which the present scientific world is yet too far from understanding in its totality. Every creation, according to Hindu culture, both living and nonliving, at the elemental level, consisted of five elements called 'Pancha Bhoothas'. Nature is nothing but its own vivid expression in myriad forms, where human being is one small speck in the whole of creation. Hence, worshipping of Nature in us is an innate and inborn quality. Not only every plant, animal and insect an expression of divinity; but every river and mountain is sacred. Sacred texts have exemplified the power of Nature, worshipping it in every form needs to be replete with daily ritual for man.

The spiritual literature is full of descriptions of this uniqueness of Nature. Nature is an inseparable part of human life in India and reverence to it was the highest form of worship. In one of her Vachanas Akkamahadevi brings it out sensibly: water, earth and air are the same, but plants in their shape, colour, size, and flowers or fruits are infinitely different. If not God, who else can cause such infinite expression? Similarly, the idea of Nature worship was deep-rooted in the culture of our ancestors. Sri Basaveshwara, in his Vachana shows how deep is the devotion of man for Nature when he says: men would take a holy dip in every river they come across; they would circumambulate every tree they chanced upon. Thus God was seen in every element in Nature and life of man was inseparably bonded with Nature. Undoubtedly, man is dependent on Nature for his

very existence and survival, without Pancha Bhoothas life on earth is unimaginable; so shall be his reverence and responsibility towards Nature. He has to respect Nature to help himself.

But during the course of evolution human mind was exposed to corruption, and man thought that he was only body and mind. Thus began the decline of civilizations. Nature became the bounty of hunters' target for exploitation. The sacred Ganga got polluted, mountains became sources of raw material and trees became timber.

As Mahatma Gandhi said, 'Nature can satisfy all the needs of man, but not his greed'. The greed in man is the biggest viral attack on humanity, if not vaccinated soon it would devour the very humanity. Planting trees, as part reforestation, by everyone should be a ritual like the morning prayer. Gradual changes on earth cannot be prevented, but can be contained by these efforts. The global warming, ozone depletion, ocean rising, soil erosion, erratic rainfall etc., are planetary changes due to various disturbing activities of living organisms of the planet. If man learns to live with Nature rather than living off Nature, it bounces back with abundance. Henceforth, human beings must consider that they are a part of Nature and every other living and nonliving thing is a partner on the planet. And our mantra for existence is 'together we flourish, divided we perish'.

Serving the fellow living objects should become the inherited culture of human beings. The cause of 'Hindu Seva Prathisthana and Initiative For Moral and Cultural Foundation' through its 'prakruthi vandanam' is clear to everyone, and we urge everyone to be part of this blessed journey.

Save Nature to save humanity*

Om Tat Sat

Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji

*A teaser by Jagadguruji in connection with Hindu Spiritual and Service Foundation and Initiative for Moral and Cultural Training Foundation.

Shatsthala Vachanas of Allama Prabhu

In English Translation with Commentary

-Sri Siddheshwara Swamiji

BHAKTA-STHALA

Pinda-sthala

Sthala:

- Plane of consciousness. State of mind for manifestation of Shiva who is the support for everything, the primal source.

Pinda-sthala:

- Paramatman, the Supreme Reality is *nishkala* (indivisible); devoid of form and qualities. He rests in Himself as profound serenity, like silence in sound. He is the *Nishkala Linga* (illimitable source); *anadi* (beginningless); *chit-pinda* (spiritual substance). Recognition of this Supreme Reality as such is *Pinda-sthala*. This vast cosmos and the individual body, these are the two forms of matter (*Jada-pindas*). *Chaitanya-pinda* or spiritual substance underlies these two material forms. This realization is *Pinda-sthala*.

1

Like —

Fire in stone, reflection in water.

Tree in seed, silence in sound.

O Guheshwara, such is the relation

Between You and Sharana.

(1.3 Shileyolaganapavakanante*)

* Given in the brackets is the first line of the Vachana in Kannada, preceded by Vachana No. and the Page No. of the original Kannada work, “AllamaPrabhudevara -- Vachana-Nirvachana” by Sri Siddheshwar Swami.

PURPORT

Fire is present in stone as unseen; reflection in water is unattached; tree in seed is unmanifest; silence in sound is impenetrable. Similarly, in Sharana, in all living beings, in this vast universe, Parashiva is present. He is the essence of everything. He is unseen, unattached, unmanifested and also impenetrable. Senses fail to perceive Him. He is not affected by any object. Being devoid of qualities and activity, He is always unmanifest. No weapon or word has the power to penetrate into Him. He is the principle of tranquility that transcends mind and intellect.

COMMENTARY

Like fire in stone.

In stone fire is present unseen. So does Paramatman reside in the material world; He is the very light of consciousness.

Like reflection in water.

There is reflection in water. But it is not affected by the qualities of water – good or bad. It is detached. Likewise, Paramatman is present in the world which is prone to

change. He is not affected by any qualities or shortcomings of the world. Because, He is fully detached and a cosmic.

Like tree in seed.

A big tree is hidden in a small seed. Seed is visible, but not the tree. Even so God exists in the embodied Jiva, unseen.

Like silence in sound.

Sound can be heard by the sense of hearing. There is profound silence behind this sound. Like space, it is deep stillness. Sound waves rise and fall in this ocean of silence. It is least disturbed by the sound. No matter how thunderous the sound is, it cannot pierce the silence wee bit. Likewise, Paramatman is infinite tranquility. All the words, thoughts and feelings appear for a moment and then disappear like waves. In the background, there is eternal tranquility -- the divine. Millions and millions of stars may appear and disappear but this profound tranquility is not at all disturbed. It is silence, perfect silence.

O Guheshwara, such between You and Sharana.

Guheshwara = God who dwells in the cave of heart. Sharana = The seeker who aspires for God experience. Relation= The nature of relationship between the two, Paramatman and Jivatman; the way Paramatman exists in the world of living and non-living.

The word, 'Sharana' denotes all living beings and the universe. The first sense of 'I' that flashes (*Asmitasphurane*) from the divine principle is Sharana. This is the primordial principle from which the whole universe comes into existence. So, the word 'Sharana' denotes the entire world.

Paramatman is called *Mahat-pinda*, the enormous cosmic egg of Consciousness.

Four characteristics of this *Mahat-pinda* are mentioned here. He is unseen, unattached, unmanifest and impenetrable.

2

Does the fire hidden in stone burn?

Does the tree hidden in seed make rustling sound?

Not seen, not felt by anybody.

One who revels in God-experience alone

Can know Guheshwara's nature.

(2. 5 Kallolaganakicchuuriyaballude)

PURPORT

There is fire in the stone but it does not burn. There is tree in the seed, but it does not display itself. In the same way, God whose nature is consciousness, exists in the material world. But He remains always unseen. So subtle and so mysterious is His nature. He alone knows Him, who is spiritually enlightened and rejoices in himself.

COMMENTARY

Does the fire hidden in stone burn?

There is fire in the stone but it does not burn. So, in the material world exists God whose nature is consciousness. But He is not seen.

Does the tree hidden in seed make rustling sound?

There is tree in the seed, but it is not seen. It does not move or display itself. In the individual the great God exists. But He does not show Himself.

Not seen, not felt by anybody.

Though Paramatman fills every object, He is not seen by the worldly minded. His presence is not felt by anyone.

One who revels in can know Guheshwara's nature.

One who revels in God-experience (*Anubhavasukhi*) = The person who rejoices in God-experience.

The one who disassociates himself from body, mind and intellect rejoices resting in oneself. He who realizes the mysterious presence of Paramatman delights in himself.

3

The fire hidden in water burns it not
But exists as water itself.
If you look into its nature, it is not water.
Being in the body, an aggregate of five
elements,
He stands apart from it.
Who knows this truth?
O Guheshwara, you are inside and
outside.
Yet, you come not to sight.
Such is your nature.

(3.6 *Jaladolagirdakicchu*.)

PURPORT

There is fire in water. Yet it won't heat up the water. It exists being one with water. If you look for the truth, by nature, the fire is not water. Similarly, Paramatman exists in the body which is made of five elements. But He is not one with the body. Body is material and finite whereas Atman is non-material and infinite. By nature, they are quite different. Rare are the persons who know this truth. Who knows that their real nature is different from that of the body? Where are those who know Atman to be different from the body? He is inside and outside the body. Though He is within and without the world, He remains ungraspable and incomprehensible.

COMMENTARY

***The fire hidden
as water itself.***

The fire is in water, but it does not burn it. It appears to be water itself.

If you look into its nature, it is not water.

If you make an investigation into the nature of fire and water, you find that fire is not water, water is not fire.

***Being in the body
knows this truth?***

Stands apart = Different by nature.

This body, gross and subtle, is the formation of five elements. Atman who dwells in the body is like fire. As He is different from the body, He does not become one with it. Body is body and Atman is Atman. Most of the people do not know this truth. And they have no desire to know, and make no effort to know the truth.

***O Guheshwara, you are
Such is your nature.***

Atman, without being seen, fills this world from inside and outside, the individual as well as the universe. This is the true nature of Atman.

4

*Like the treasure hidden in the earth.
Like the lightning hidden in clouds.
Like the mirage hidden in the open area.
Like the lustre hidden in the eyes is
Your presence, O Guheshwara.*

(4.7 *Neladamareyaladagida*)

PURPORT

Treasure lies unseen in the earth. There is lightening hidden in clouds. There is a mirage concealed in the void. The lustre that shines over the world is hidden in the eyes. Likewise, Paramatman is present everywhere hidden from our external and internal senses.

COMMENTARY

Like the treasure hidden in the earth.

Eyes cannot see the treasure deep inside the earth.

Like the lightning hidden in clouds.

The lightning that flashes for a moment to show plains and forests is hidden in the clouds.

Like the mirage hidden in the open area.

Mirage = Strange forms such as water body seen in open deserts in the hot sun.

Mirage exists for a person who looks at it from a distance. But not for the one who is at the spot of the mirage. He sees only empty space. That does not mean there is no mirage. It exists unseen.

Like the lustre hidden in the eyes.

Lustre = Special power of the eyes that shows form; its light.

Eyes are endowed with a special power of seeing forms. But this power remains unseen.

Is your presence, O Guheshwara.

Such is the nature of Paramatman. The universe that extends in all directions endlessly is visible to the eyes. This whole universe is filled with the sense objects such as sound, touch etc. Hence this universe is perceived. God exists unseen in this vast universe. Eyes cannot see Him. Mind cannot feel Him. He is so subtle and invisible. If a person knows Him as such, it is *Pinda-sthala* and he is a *Pinda-sthali*. He is *Mahat-pinda*, the great spiritual truth.

About 14 billion years ago, the Universe materialized out of nothing for unknown reasons. Infinitely smaller than an atom to begin with the Universe expanded to a trillion kilometers across in under a second - an event called Big Bang!

Time came into existence when the Universe began, so the question, 'What happened before?' has no meaning. Space also came into existence. The Big Bang was not an explosion of matter through space - it was an expansion of space itself.

At first the universe consisted of pure energy, but within a trillionth of a second some of this energy turned into matter, forming a vast soup of subatomic particles (particles smaller than atoms). It took nearly 400,000 years for the particles to cool down enough to form atoms and then another 300 million years before the atoms formed planets, stars and galaxies. The expansion that began in the Big Bang continues to this day, and most scientists think it will carry on forever.

What caused the Big Bang? We may never know for sure but some scientists have suggested that there may have been lots of Big Bangs, with the Universe expanding after each one and then shrinking again. This theory is called the Big Bounce. The process repeats itself.

-From Knowledge Encyclopedia

Shiva in Tulsidas' *Sri Ramcharitmanas*

-Sri K.S.Ram and Dr.Uma Ram

Tulsidas authored more than a dozen works. But his reputation rests almost entirely on *Sri Ramcharitmanas*. You would hardly find a household in the Hindi belt that does not have at least one copy of this work. In most houses, multiple copies are available – one for each member – for use during group recitation. In any religious event, a non-stop (*akhand*) recitation of the epic is common practice, followed by *bhandara*, mass-feast. In the month of Shravan, a monthly recitation; and during the two *navratris*, a nine-day recitation is done by many persons, individually or in groups. The *Manas* is now available in almost every Indianscript, including Kannada.

Sri Ramcharitmanas was published in 1577. The Moghul Emperor, Babar, had passed away in 1530. Tulsidas (b.1497) was in his thirties then. A question commonly asked (and this was asked in the Ram Janma Bhoomi case) is, how come Tulsidas nowhere refers to any Ram Temple being demolished in Ayodhya and a mosque being raised in its place? The answer to this, probably, lies in the fact that (a) Tulsidas never could have cared too deeply for any brick-and-mortar temple to glorify Rama, and (b) there were other conflicts in society that he sought to resolve, more urgent than Hindu-Islam politics. The most major of such conflicts related to Vaishnavites and

Shaivites being pitched one against the other. The other major rivalry raging at that time was *Sagun-vadi* (believers in God with attributes) versus *Nirgun-vadi* (believers in God without attributes). Bhakti versus ritualistic karma (*karma-kanda*) and *jnana* (knowledge) was yet another raging issue. Tulsidas felt that all these debates were essentially frivolous dogma and born of an error in understanding. *Ramcharitmanas* is his attempt to reconcile and put to rest these rivalries.

Ramcharitmanas is composed in Avadhi, the local tongue of Avadh, modern-day eastern Uttar Pradesh. The invocation to every *Kaanda* (Section) is in the form of *shlokas* composed in Sanskrit. There are some hymns in Sanskrit elsewhere also in the epic. There are more than half-a-dozen different meters employed. The bulk of the narrative is in quatrains called *choupai*. These are interspersed with two forms of couplets (*dohas* and *sorthas*) and a range of stanza forms, simply called *chhand*.

The two major sources for *Ramcharitmanas* were (a) the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, and (b) the *Adhyatma Ramayana*. Tulsidas acknowledges his debt to a third source, namely, the oral version narrated (multiple times, he says) by his Guru.

Structurally, *Ramcharitmanas* is a fabric that weaves four narrations: Yagyavalkya

narrating the story to Bharadwaja; Shiva narrating it to Parvati; the crow, Kakbhushundi narrating it to Garuda; and, Tulsidas narrating it to other sages in Prayag. These four narratives are criss-crossed together into one seamless work.

Shiva, as actor and narrator, is quite central to the work. Yagyavalkya narrates to Bharadwaja what he describes as the conversation that took place between Shiva and Parvati. While narrating the story to Parvati, Shiva tells her that his is the version followed by the crow while narrating the story to Garuda. Shiva thus has a role in three of the four narrations. Every Section opens with invocatory *shlokas* by Tulsidas. And every time Shiva is invoked alongside Rama.

Three of the narrations are occasioned by almost similar queries. Bharadwaja asks Yagyavalkya whether the Rama whose name is ceaselessly chanted by Shiva and others is the same as 'the prince of Ayodhya, who was distraught when his wife was abducted, and in a rage slayed Ravana'; or are the two Ramas different? Yagyavalkya says this query is similar to Sati's query to Shiva (the starting point of Shiva's narration to Parvati) and narrates their conversation. Shiva was once returning from the ashram of sage Kumbhaj, after a treat of Harikatha. Sati was with him. Shiva was walking chanting blissfully Rama's name and glory. This was in the Treta aeon when Mahavishnu had secretly taken human *avatar* as Rama, who, in deference to his father's command, had come to the Dandakaranya, where Sita had been abducted. Shiva was musing how he could get a glimpse of Rama. Just then he sees Rama and Lakshman in the forest, coming from the opposite direction in search of Sita. Shiva is thrilled, but he hides

his emotion, lest the secret of *avatar* get known. He discreetly greets Rama as 'Satchidananda' and as 'the world sanctifier'. Both, Rama and Shiva, cross each other and move on. Sati is astounded. Shiva is hailed by all as 'Jagdisha', lord of the world. Who, then, was this person who so thrilled Shiva and who he hailed as Satchidananda and the world-sanctifier? She finds Shiva still in a state of thrill. Shiva can read her mind, and tells her that this was Mahavishnu, born as Rama, his *ishta*, favourite. Sati finds it hard to believe that such a wan-looking human could be Mahavishnu. This, despite Shiva's repeated assertions. Shiva settles down to rest in the shade of a banyan tree, and asks her to go check for herself. She departs. She chooses to play a trick. Assuming the form of Sita, she walks towards the two brothers. Rama, the all-knowing, greets her with folded hands and asks her where Shiva is and why she is walking in the forest, alone. Sati is stunned. She is now sad that she did not trust Shiva's words and was foolhardy to test Rama. She turns to join Shiva, but sees Rama, Sita and Lakshmana walking ahead of her. She turns back, and sees the same spectacle. Turn where she may, she sees them everywhere. All the gods are seen doing service to Rama. Dazed, she closes her eyes and sits down. Instantly, the vision disappears. She rises and returns to Shiva, only in remorse, but trying to seem normal. When Shiva (who knows all that had transpired) asks her if she tested Rama and what the result was, she lies to him saying she simply bowed to Rama and returned.

Rather than be disappointed, Shiva is thrilled at the power of Hari's *maya* that made even Sati – the truthful – lie! However, he feels he can no more cohabit with her, since she had faked herself as Sita. They

reach their abode in silence, and Shiva goes and sits in deep and long *samadhi*, contemplation. Sati realizes her inequity and prays to the Supreme Lord for an easy release from this body. That shortly happens when she goes to Daksha's event in spite of Shiva's admonition not to go there uninvited. Her self-immolation in the *yagya* fire and all that happens thereafter is a story well-known. In time, Sati is reborn as Parvati in the house of King Himalaya. Narada happens to visit Himalaya. He is shown the young Parvati, because Himalaya is curious to know from the all-knowing sage as to what the future holds for his daughter. Narada studies and says she has great positives (*guna*), but there are some negatives (*avguna*) as well. She is fated to wed someone who is 'devoid of merit and dignity (*a-guna; a-maan*), without father or mother (*maatu-pitu hina*), an ascetic with no thought for anyone (*udasina*), an anchorite (*jogi*) with matted hair (*jatila*), and a heart devoid of all desires (*a-kama mann*), stark naked (*nagan*), and in inauspicious guise (*a-mangal bhesha*).' Himalaya and Maina are appalled. But Parvati is joyed. Narada comforts the parents, saying that the 'negatives' mentioned by him fit Shiva well and all negatives transmute into positives in association with him. Parvati must therefore do penance to win Shiva as her consort. She does that. And, eventually, after much persuasion by the gods, Shiva agrees to wed Parvati.

At the wedding, Shiva and Parvati first invoke Ganesh. Tulsi tells the readers not to be shocked about this. Because the gods are 'unborn and eternal'. This is Tulsi's way of deconstructing people's anthropomorphic mindset regarding gods. We treat the gods too much in human terms. How can a couple at their wedding propitiate their future son? Family-trees

cannot be constructed in respect of gods as they can be in respect of humans. The anthropomorphic conception of gods must be taken as merely notional. When this point is missed, and gods are seen too much as humans, religion becomes banal.

Likewise, to cut Rama from becoming a cult-figure, Tulsi pluralizes him. He says, Ramas are many: 'Hari is infinite (*ananta*); and Hari-*katha* (*Ramayanas*) are also infinite. Sages have from time to time heard and recited these tales in various ways (*bahubidhi*).' The crow, Kakbhushundi, another narrator, says 'every time Rama is born', he visits Ayodhya to witness the sports of toddler-Rama. Ayodhya, Rama, birth, Ramayana, Brahma, Shiva ... all are plural. It is foolish to try to confine them to the singular. And yet they are singular, and it is foolish to view them as many! This is the divine paradox one needs to grasp and appreciate.

When Rama is set to cross the sea to 'play' the battle in Lanka, he declares that the spot of their camp, Rameshwaram, is supremely beautiful (*param ramya*) and excellent (*uttam*) and its glory (*mahima*) defies expression. He therefore resolves to install Shambhu there. The needful accessories are instantly fetched by the monkeys and a *linga* is raised and pooja performed. Rama declares to all, that anyone who bathes the *linga* with the water from the Ganga shall effortlessly attain liberation through absorption in Him (*sayujya mukti*) by the grace of Shiva.

The relation between Rama and Shiva is special (*bisheshi*), defying definition (*barani na jahi*). Tulsi never employs specific terms in this regard. An interesting point is that when gods, the manes (Dasharatha), or even the Vedas in human form visit, they are visible to all beholders. But when Shiva

visits Rama at the coronation in Ayodhya, no one other than Rama can see him! Shiva hymns Rama's praise in a panegyric (*stotra*) that has become very popular: '*Jai Rama-rama-ramanam-samanam / Bhav'taapa-bhava'kul paahi janam*'.

Rama terms his regard for Shiva a mystery (*bhed*) no one can comprehend. He declares: 'Those who are devoted to Shankara (*Shankar-priya*) and are hostile to me (*mam-drohi*); and those who are opposed to Shiva (*Shiva-drohi*) but would fain to be my servants (*mam-daasa*), shall have their abode in the deepest hell for a full aeon.'

The message is very clear: Rama and Shiva are the same. Anyone who calls himself a devotee of one and insolently reviles the other, has missed the basic plot

and is in the reverse gear. Rama declares that such a person will suffer hell (*narak*) for an aeon (*kalpa*). The crucial point is that it is not about 'both or none'. To talk in terms of 'both' implies duality and constitutes a gross error. A true devotee of one necessarily, spontaneously, is a devotee of the other. If that be not the case, the devotion of the person to either Rama or Shiva is misplaced. This was the error of Ravana, who prided in his devotion to Shiva to the extent that he discounted Rama. As Mandodari laments, he got the dessert (*phala*) anyone who is counter to Rama ('*Rama-bimukh*') is doomed. Interestingly, even as he is slain, Ravana cries out 'Where is Rama?' And Rama accords him, the great devotee of Shiva, his own realm (*nij-dhaam*).

The quest of mankind ever since its birth has been to worship God, to unravel the mysteries behind outward appearances, and to grasp the fundamental truth. This is the genesis of religion. The worshiper has before his eyes the eternal bliss of paradise, or some similar view, which he aims at as his final approach. There have thus arisen religions in the world with their prescribed forms and rituals, based upon the personal practical experiences of their great founders. But after the lapse of thousands of years, when the entire surroundings have changed and life has undergone a radical transformation, the same old forms and principles are being adhered to the outer form alone now remains intact while the inner spirit has become hackneyed, and it will not be wrong to say that the present-day religion has become only a relic of the past or the bones of the dead.

-Sri Ram Chandra
(Founder, Ram Chandra Mission)

Spirituality in the poetry of **George Herbert and Shishunala Sharif**

-Prof. Varada Mohan Nikalje

Spirituality is that aspect of religion which transcends cultures and centuries. Although spirituality is linked with religion, it is quite distinct from religion. For, religion has definitive parameters: origin, tenets, and a name. Spirituality is comparatively a diffuse concept.

According to the Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1979), religion is a specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or sects; and generally includes the idea of the existence of a single being, a group of beings, an eternal entity that has created the world, that governs it, that controls its destinies, or that intervenes occasionally in the natural course of its history. Spirituality, however, is the process of continually transcending centricity (e.g., egocentricity) involving an increasing openness to exploring a relationship with an intangible and pervasive power or essence that exists far beyond human existence and rational human knowing.

Over the centuries, the world has had a mosaic of literary traditions in the prism of spiritual poetry. Although the rootedness of the poets in a particular religion or society does exert a powerful influence in their work, the spiritual nature of the poems ush-

ers in the universal. If one were to borrow the basic principle of the complexity theory from the field of science, it would perhaps throw some light on how spiritual poetry percolates down to the common man. It is in this context that the poems of George Herbert and Shishunala Sharif have a common ground.

One of the newest branches of study is the science of complexity. Complexity theory deals with the study of the organization of simple elements in nature into complicated structures, ranging from galaxies and ecosystems to the human brain. An examination of such organized structures shows that all complexity consists of two opposing functions supporting each other—*differentiation* and *unity*. When applied to the poetry of Herbert and Sharif, both create an understanding of spirituality by oscillating from simple to complex and back again.

One of the well-known poems of Herbert, titled 'The Pearl' is prefaced with an epigraph from the Bible – specifically, from the Book of Matthew, chapter 13, verse 45. That is to say, the reference is given, with the poet assuming that the reader knows the Bible chapter and verse, rather than providing the quotation himself.

The Pearl

MATTHEW *xiii*

*I know the ways of learning; both the head
And pipes that feed the press, and make it run;
All these stand open, or I have the keys:
Yet I love thee.*

*I know the ways of honour;
How many drams of spirit there must be
To sell my life unto my friends or foes:
Yet I love thee.*

*I know the ways of pleasure; the sweet strains
The lullings and the relishes of it;
I know the projects of unbridled store;
Yet I love thee.*

*I know all these and have them in my hand;
But thy silk twist let down from heav'n to me
Did both conduct and teach me how by it
To climb to thee.*

(Due to constraints of space, the whole poem is not given here.)

The quote from Matthew is 'the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls' (King James Version).

In this poem, Herbert tells us how he is well-acquainted with certain key pursuits and benefits in life – learning, honour, and pleasure – but that these things are nothing when laid beside the poet's love for God. The structure of each stanza of 'The Pearl' brings this out: Herbert's lengthy discussion of the various advantages of each of these ideals (learning, honour, pleasure) is lengthy and syntactically complex, unfolding across the first nine lines of the stanza in iambic pentameter. The final line is short and strikingly simple: 'Yet I love thee.' These four monosyllables are repeated at the end of the first three stanzas, suggesting God's constant nature.

The repetition of the words in the last

line of each verse also conveys a sense of suppressed passion with its repeated stress. It makes it clear that the genesis of poet's love for God is not because he is unacquainted with worldly things; on the contrary, he is familiar with these materialistic things and events and can appreciate their power, what we would call *maya*, but *rejects them* in favour of God. The idea that the upward progression of the soul is not a simple and easy process is reemphasized.

Further, Herbert states that it is not his own 'groveling wit' that enables him to know that God is better than the attractions of the world: instead, he gives thanks to the guidance of God, who throws down a tied silken sheet from heaven, which the poet may use to climb up to heaven and to God.

It's worth recalling that Herbert began 'The Pearl' with a reference to a biblical quotation about a *merchant* searching for pearls to sell. Buying and selling is something that the common people can easily relate to; and their interest is retained in the stanzas that follow, with their references to 'stock and surplus' (stanza one); 'returns' and 'gains' (stanza two); 'the projects of unbridled store' (stanza three); and in the final stanza, 'the main sale, and the commodities' as well as the 'rate and price'. But what started out in the realm of financial transactions ends up being used to refer to Herbert's heavenly relationship with God: the pearl.

A similar spurning of *maya*, and disgust of a mind that craves it, is expressed by the saint-poet Shishunala Sharif, in a more vehement manner:

The Fickle Mind

*Your craving mind
That is attracted to the false glitter*

*Of gold, of riches and of wealth –
Chastise it! Hit it with your slipper!*

*Your unfocussed mind
That is caught in the coils of an illusory world,
Forgetful of Lord Shishunaladheesha –
Chastise it! Hit it with your slipper!*

As may be seen, both Herbert and Sharif use language relatively accessible to the common man. Yet, seemingly straightforward though they are, they possess an intellectual depth which shows both to be astute analysts of the world they live in. Rooted in the life and beliefs of the common people, using similes from their everyday existence, the songs have a universal appeal. As Herbert himself stated, 'The true beauty and love of God are perfect and ready to be copied out; it does not need quaint words and trim invention'.

Herbert applied this principle earnestly in all his poems. One such example is below:

The Altar

A heart alone

*Is such a stone,
As nothing but
Thy pow'r doth cut.
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame,
To praise thy name:*

There is hope of renewal and transformation as the poet calls on God to turn the 'broken heart' into something new, and different.

Many of Sharif's poems too, have a resonating religious or spiritual drive. Situated in the context of rural life, his songs established an immediate connect with the com-

mon people, and facilitated a movement between the mundane and the metaphysical.

BEHOLD THE TEMPLE

*Behold the temple.
Behold the body that is the temple.
Behold that within which God resides,
Brightness undimmed.*

*Listening to the drum, bugle and conch,
Moving beyond the music to experience
The calmness of utter bliss,
When the body does not merely reflect the
inner light
But itself becomes luminous,
Behold the temple that is the light.*

Both poets were significant in recreating philosophy through vernacular language. Each listener could interpret a common core of symbolic and cultural elements within his/her cognitive framework. As Sufi Shah Niaz Ahmad has stated, "The nightingale's melodious songs raise hundreds of notes, and every time it is a new tune, but it comes from the same throat, the same beak".

Devotional verse need not always be sedately contemplative, it may, at times, display an upsurge of startling images and the technique of paradox that energizes the readers/ audience. Both the poets have used this to great advantage:

The Collar

*Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no bays to crown it,
No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?
All wasted?*

*But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, Child!
And I replied My Lord.*

The poem begins with the speaker stating that he will not tolerate his present life any more. It is time for him to make a change and he intends to resurrect the parts of himself lost in his youth. He declares that he will not reflect on right or wrong. The final lines bring the speaker back to his religious reality. The voice of God penetrates through his “raving” and calms his ardour.

As one mellows, and gains deeper understanding of concepts, layers of meaning begin to emerge. The collar can be interpreted:

- * Literally, as the piece of clothing worn by a member of the clergy.
- * Metaphorically, as representing submission
- * Symbolically, connotations of control

Grace

Let me be worthless, with no trade or profession,

*Let my intellect be dead within me,
Let me be killed, with a dose of poison,
Let vultures and crows tear at me.*

*Let no tongue, or cult, exist in me,
Let the world look at me jeeringly,
But may the grace of Lord
Shishunaladheesha,
Be bestowed on my bowed head eternally.*

In similar fashion, Sharif’s compositions uses a series of strong statements to explore

the idea that, the jibes and jealousies of the world mean nothing, using the metaphor of killing and death to convey the concept of everlasting peace and the love of God.

As stated in the beginning of this article, complexity is broken down into simpler elements for better understanding, and when compiled and brought together again, fruitfully evolves into new orders of structure, with each successive element contributing to a *whole*. Swedenborg showed that this scheme displayed God’s divine nature and character because *Truth* distinguishes and *Love* unites. The realization of the unification of these two factors results in utmost humility and surrender, which is the cornerstone of all that is spiritual.

The Ego

*I have mastered many disciplines,
But the pride of having mastered them,
The ‘I’, did not disappear.*
(Sherif)

The Elixir

*Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything
To do it as for Thee.*
(Herbert)

Ultimately, humility is the fundamental essence of all religions that contributes to spiritual fulfillment.

Even if the goal of true communion with God is achieved only intermittently, it justifies the discipline, the routine, even the long periods when the heart is silent though the lips move, when God seems absent though his name is repeated time and again.

-Rabbi Robert Gordis

Thus Spake Vemana

-Prof. N. Narasimha Rao

Vemana is a Telugu poet and philosopher of the 17th century. It is not certain that he lived in the 17th century or much earlier. There are different views held regarding his parentage and place of birth. He lived in the midst of society though a yogi. He watched life at close quarters and had given expression to his thoughts and feelings. His poems, some of which are extant today were written in a prosodic scheme called 'Ataveladi'. They are four-line short poems ending with a refrain which is very popular.

Vemana's poems bear testimony to his keen powers of observation of the men and manners of his time. Though written truth centuries earlier they have the ring of truth even today. The one thing that is striking about his attitude towards life is the idol worship. At a time when people undertake long and arduous journey to places of worship to catch a glimpse of their favourite deity, Vemana calls them fools. Here one may not agree with him. Then it is considered that each one to himself Vemana expresses himself rather too strongly against idolaters. He is not alone in this. There are few thinkers the here against temples as abodes of god according to Vemana. God lives in one's own heart. One only has to look inwards to see Him. There is no need for him to imagine Him in idols. Temples are dark places which are wrongly believed to be houses of god. Vemana puts emphasis on the purity of heart. Without pure heart mere rituals, however elaborate they are mean-

ingless. It is just like cooking something delicious in a vessel not made clean earlier.

Vemana does not recommend renunciations. He does not want a person to desert his family, friends and close relatives in order to live like a recluse. He does not speak in favour of those who leave home and their villages and harden their minds to live by themselves in the forest. By leaving the family and overcoming simple desires of the body they can't attain heavenly bliss. Vemana speaks promisingly of hard labour. Those who work in the fields for long hours deserve a word of praise. There is nobody viler than those who look down upon physical labour. The caste one belongs to is of no importance.

Truth and wisdom go hand in hand. A man who possesses both shall be considered a man of virtue. Mere searches are in vain in the forest or without being pure of heart one cannot hope to reach a higher plane of life. The soul should be free from all bondage to realize the goal. Age is no restriction on the mind, young or old. A man is fit to hold a spiritual lamp at any age. Once a man is free from the blemish of contamination he can see a reflection of God everywhere; the darkness of ignorance gives place to the light of knowledge. His realization is like an axe which clears the forest of false ideas and lights his way to salvation. The mind free from wrong impression is better than ritual offerings. The man's character is more than the caste he belongs to though a man of low birth, he

ceases to be low when he has the ability to concentrate on his spiritual goal. God becomes visible to him who overcomes his sensual pleasures. It's wrong of him to lose himself in the pursuit of lustful emotions. Vemana calls him a yogi who he rises above his attraction to women and wealth. Otherwise he will be in for disappointment after meeting the object of his desire and a brief enjoyment.

A man should be like a lamp protected from the fury of winds by the glass chimney placed around it. His wisdom will continue to protect him in all adverse circumstances. Vemana talks of transient nature of life. People responsible for our birth and those we have given birth to all will die. None is immortal. Forgiveness is a virtue difficult to practice. But the poet urges all to be kind to an enemy and let him go without doing any harm to him.

Vemana lays emphasis on leading a righteous life. The good deeds done in the previous life will not fail to stand one in good stead in the present one. Without doing anything meritorious in the past it is foolish to long for comfort and wealth now. It's not enough if one has a desire for comfort in life. He's very much like the thoughtless fish which is caught in the metal hook when it tries to swallow the delicious bait. Sometimes a man turns a renegade and embraces another religion or he makes it a practice to run down other religions while he extols his own. He's clearly in the wrong. Vemana speaks well of a man who is steadfast in his own religion while he desists from criticizing other religions. He will lead a continued life if he does not yield to the pleasures of life. Knowledge which does not make for wisdom does not change a man's nature. He's like a piece of coal which does not cease to be black though washed with milk several times.

A countless number of people look for shortcomings in others while they turn a

blind eye to their own. A ripe fig fruit appears very attractive tempting one to eat it. But if you open it there will be worms inside. A man of no worth appears in the same way to be of any importance. Once tested he will be found to be useless. Where a man dies, he leaves behind all the wealth accumulated by him. When he is born again he does not find his former wealth. He has to begin again the process of amassing a fortune. A good man born in a community will bring laurels to the people around. He's like a sandal tree growing in a forest making it fragrant.

There are home truths expressed by Vemana apart from the philosophical content of his short poems. It's wrong to postpone doing something good. On the other hand nothing should be done in haste. An unripe fruit when plucked too early will never become ripe. God alone knows what is good and what is bad. It's just like water flowing downwards or a mother knowing who is her child. Salt and camphor look alike. When you taste them you will know the difference. In the same way all men look alike when, but known personally you will realise who is truly virtuous and who is worthless. Vemana gives the example of a crocodile to illustrate the importance of one's own place. When he is in water a crocodile can catch hold of an elephant and make it struggle to free itself. Out of water, the crocodile is helpless when dogs attack it. The strength of the crocodile is deadly when in its elements.

A devout man who is free from worldly desires knows where a true spiritual master can be found. He's like a honey bee that never fails to find the way to its hive or like a dragonfly that knows which flowers are a source of the sweet sap. It's a wasted effort to sink a well in a rocky terrain. It's useful to the entire community when the same effort is made in a low lying ground full of soft soils holding plenty of life giving water.

The Dialogue between **Akka Mahadevi and Allama**

-Dr. C.R. Yaravintelimath

Despite Akkamahadevi revealed the identity of her husband who was none but the Supreme Reality, Chennamallikarjuna, Allama seemed to be not satisfied with her answers. He remarked:

"However, though you laid on the worldling Kaushika the reproach of not accepting Veershaivism and as such not wearing the Linga, and came here in a semi-nude state, your self-consciousness is not yet shed since you wear your hair as a garment to screen your nudity. How do you justify your wearing the hair-cloth?

You say that God loves you and you love God:

*What does it mean?
Casting off your garment,
When your spirit is pure,
Why do you clothe yourself in hair?
The shame of your heart thus shows outside.
This will not please Guheshwaralinga."*

To this reaction of Allamaprabhu, Mahadeviyakka gives her reasons for covering her body with hair:

*"... With the intent that lest the sight of the
seal of cupid
should hurt you, I have covered it up(with
my hair).
Why should it hurt you?
Pray, do not trouble me, who has submitted
herself
To Chennamallikarjuna , God of gods.*

Then Allamaprabhu is puzzled at her statement that she has submitted herself to God and hence she has no body to be called her own. He sees a sharp contradiction in her statement. So he asks her: "You still hold on to the body which is the abode of lust, anger, senses, etc. Tell me how and when did you submit yourself to God."

To that Mahadeviyakka says that her body is like a burnt corpse or burnt rope which shows some form but it has shed all its properties:

*"Does one who is
Verily a corpse, consigned to fire;
like a puppet whose wire is cut;
like a tank whose water has dried up,
like a cord burnt completely, and
who has made Chennamallikarjuna's body
her abode,
retain the trace of her former body?"*

And she also says:

*"I loved a handsome youth,
Formless, deathless, and beyond destruction.
I loved a handsome youth
Placeless, infinite, entire and without a
sign, O mothers!
loved a handsome youth,,
Who is birth-less and fearless, and bold
I loved a youth, who being boundless is im-
measurable.
O Mothers, I loved my husband
Chennamallikarjuna passionately.*

Then Allamaprabhu points out the sharp contradiction again in her argument and says—that the form dissolves and the formless does not. Then how can there be marriage between the one with form and the formless?

*“Destruction awaits form, not the formless.
Tell me how form and the formless get together?
It is a bond that cannot be bound.
As long as there is natural taint of body
and sense,
You cannot reach Guheshwaralinga, listen
O mother!”*

Mahadeviyakka says that when the taint of the body is removed and the senses are subdued, the body and mind become pure, and then nothing comes in her way of meeting with her lord Chennamalikarjuna, which becomes easy. Allamaprabhu leaves no stone unturned to test Mahadeviyakka. So he puts his next question seeking further explanation:

*“When you have understood the body, the mind
ought to be purified.
When you have understood the mind, sense
ought to be purified.
Hear me, O Mother:
Until the body, mind and senses
Are made pure and tranquil, and
Turned Lingaward,
You cannot make a prayer to Guheshwara!”*

To this Mahadeviyakka gives a convincing explanation:

*“My body became pure by eating
The left-over of what the Shiva-devotees
had tasted
My mind became pure
by remembering innumerable saints.
My eyes became pure
by seeing the whole cohorts of Ganas.
My ears became pure
by hearing their praise.*

*This feeling is vital to me. O Linga father!
By worshipping you,
My mind being in direct contact with you,
I made the wheel of birth stand still,
O Chennamalikarjuna!”*

She also adds: “Seeing Basava’s feet, my body has come to nought; seeing Chennabasavanna’s feet, my life too has become void. O Prabhu, bowing to your holy feet, my consciousness has come to me. Now that I have earned the mercy of your Sharanas, there is nothing more I want, O Prabhu.” Prabhu, who is still unconvinced, seeks further explanation from her so that everybody can understand her tall stature of renunciation:

*“If you say your body has become pure,
Linga does not stay firm in you.
If you say your life-breath has become pure,
Linga does not stay firm in you.
If you say your will has become pure,
Linga does not stay firm in you.
If you say you have become pure and calm,
Reality cannot be realized,
in Guheshwaralinga, listen, O Mother!*

To this Mahadeviyakka’s reply is very revealing:

*“Within my body, there is a bodiless state.
Within my life there is a lifeless state.
Within my will, there is a will-less state.
The Absolute has filled my mind.
Because you have looked after me.
Seeing my womanly form with locks of hair
and breasts,
I have become Chennamalikarjuna’s maid
of mercy.”*

Then Allamaprabhu shoots one more question at Mahadeviyakka, who remains dauntless:

*(i) “O Mother,
What is the way of merging in the Absolute
which does not permit merging in?”*

*In the way you spell it out, there appears
some flaw in it.
Tell me how to merge in Guheshwaralinga
and yet to keep Him apart!*

*(i) "It is a miracle,
Tell Guheshwaralinga
where to find joy without body, and will
without life."*

Observe carefully how Mahadeviyakka, who is least perturbed by Allamaprabhu's baffling questions and how, without losing her calm, she answers all questions:

*"When a person falls asleep
Oblivious of himself,
And babbles something in dream,
It's as it were the dead waking.
The milk curdled turns into frozen ghee,
tastes sweet again.
Why find fault in this.
O brothers of Chennamallikarjuna, God of
gods?"*

Then Allamaprabhu agrees with her most satisfactory answer, and expresses his full satisfaction and joy as follows:

*"This is all right.
The spirit of Guheshwara is the same, --
Whether it is a unit added to a full account, or
A thief hiding behind an installed Linga, or
a bird flying over an inlet of the sea."*

Mahadeviyakka finally appeals to Allamaprabhu to forgive her bygone mistakes and accept her as his household daughter as she will not give up her true quality and humility, like sandal wood, gold or sugar cane, which do not give up their true nature under any circumstance, come what may:

*"Did ever the sandal wood lose its fragrance,
Because it was cut, sawn and rubbed?
Did ever gold lose its lustre when heated,*

*because it was cut and whetted?
Did ever sugar cane lose its sweet taste
Because it was hurt when it was cut into pieces,
Crushed and boiled to make sugar?
If you collect all my bygone sins
And cast them into my face, the loss is yours.
I'll never cease to say, "I bow to you"
Even if you slay me, O father
Chennamallikarjuna!*

We will be pleased to know Allamaprabhu's response to this Vachana which reflects Mahadeviyakka's innermost heart:

*"The body has assumed woman's form.
The mind is one with the spirit of the Thing.
You came with a purpose, and
You have achieved that, O my sister!
You have shed the sense of twain
In Guheshwarlinga, O sister mine.*

Then Mahadeviyakka too expresses her joy as follows which sounds like an answer to all her riddles : "While still in body's company, I have become Linga's companion, and while in Linga's company, I am body's companion, and transcending the company of both I have attained peace. After forgetting this cluster of words what if one lives an integral life. Once I am joined to Chennamallikarjuna, I do not recognize myself as anything."

Then Basavanna, who was witnessing all that with immense absorption, addresses Mahadeviyakka intending to test her further:

*"... Here me, O mother! Shiva loves
A union where the woman becomes man.
If you would unite yourself
With Kudala Sangama, you must without
A sense of difference be a valiant man: that
is so!"*

Also here is her final submission to Basavanna :

*"I conquered Kama by your grace,
O Basavanna.
I will make Somadhara a captive
By your grace, O Basavanna.
What if I am a woman for name's sake?
I am a man in will,
By your grace, O Basavanna.
Putting shackles to lusty
Chennamallikarjuna
And knowing no duality, I became one with
Him,
By your grace, O Basava!"*

Then Basavanna pleased expresses his full throated appreciation:

*"Behold the body of the woman-child,
O ancients!
Behold the innocent form, O ancients!"*

*Behold her, wearers of the Linga,
Who lives by means of chastity,
In self forgetfulness!
Establishing herself within her Self,
The life she lives
Without infringement of her pledge
Has come to be,
In Lord Kudala Sangama,
For our Mahadeviyakka!"*

After getting through the ordeal, Mahadeviyakka was admitted into the Anubhava Mantapa. Mahadeviyakka stays in Kalyaana for quite some time, taking active part in the discourses conducted at the Anubhava Mantapa, relishing the spiritual company of all the great Sharanas.

The Kalamukha Acharyas attached to the Mathas or monasteries were great educationists. They were probably followers of Bhakti Cult. Their names had terminal endings as *Shakti* as such they were known as Shivashakti, Rudrashakti, Vamashakti, Ishvarashakti, Vishwashakti. *Rashi* and *Abharana* seem to have been affixed to their names. Though the Kalamukha Mathas were pre-eminently religious institutions, from the comprehensive scheme of studies accepted and taught by them and the distinction which some acharyas claimed in grammar and literature one can see that secular learning also was imparted in them. The curriculum of studies included among others grammar, philosophy, Lakula Siddhanta, Yoga, Dharmashastras, Puranas, poetry, drama, polity, logic, music and painting.

-Dr. M.V. Krishna Rao
(Glimpses of Karnataka)

Basaveshwara and Mahatma Gandhi

A Comparison

-Dr. Basavaraj Naikar

Grace of God:

Basaveshwara easily resembles Bhagavan Buddha in teaching the necessity and extraordinary importance of compassion for all the living creatures of the world. He had to highlight the importance of compassion against the background of animal sacrifice and inhuman treatment of *sudras* by the high-caste Hindus. He, therefore, said that compassion is the very foundation of all religions. In his famous *vachana* he says:

*What sort of religion can it be
Without compassion?
Compassion needs must be
Towards all living things;
Compassion is the root
Of all religious faiths;
Lord Kudala Sanga does not care
For what is not like this.*

Like Basaveshwara, Gandhi also taught the importance of compassion for all the helpless people in the world. In his view the principle of *ahimsa* or non-violence is closely connected with compassion. While he was engaged in his *Satyagraha*, he clarified his views on compassion and *ahimsa* as follows: “*Ahimsa* is a comprehensive principle. We are helpless mortals caught in the conflagration of *himsa*. The saying

that life lives in life has a deep meaning in it. Men cannot for a moment live without consciously or unconsciously committing outward *himsa*...” Though both the thinkers used different words, they meant the same thing. Whereas Basavanna highlighted to positive side Gandhi highlighted the Negative side of the same ideas.

Both Basaveshwara and Gandhi were men of God having their ultimate aim in bringing the kingdom of heaven upon earth. They believed in the grace of God and their faith enabled them to fight for Truth and struggle against injustice. Basaveshwara expresses his belief in the grace of God in his famous *vachana*:

*O Lord, with Your grace
Even a dry log of wood would burgeon forth;
O Lord, with Your grace even a barren cow
will become a mulch cow;
O Lord, with Your grace even poison will
turn into nectar;
O Lord, with Your grace, all the gifts will
be heaped up before me;
O Lord Kudala-Sangama!*

Everything he did in his life was in the name of his personal God, Lord Kudala-Sangama, which happens to be his signature in all the *vachanas* that he composed. Whereas Basaveshwara has offered a

broader definition of God, Gandhi has personalized his faith in the grace of God. Although Gandhi is widely known for his great work in politics and social reforms he was essentially a man of religion. His aim was to attain deliverance (*moksa*) through the service of humanity. "I claim to be a man of faith and prayer, and even if I was cut to pieces, God would give me the strength not to deny Him but to assert that he is".

Like Basaveshwara, Gandhi also believed in the grace of God. He says that he had made a rule that the inmates of the Sabaramati Ashram should not kill the snakes, which may easily enter the building accidentally. He followed it for more than twenty five years in his life only because of the grace of God that he must have enjoyed. "The rule of not killing venomous reptiles has been practiced for the most part at Phoenix, Tolstoy Farm and Sabaramati. At each of these places we had to settle on waste lands. We have had, however, no loss of life occasioned by snake bite. I see, with the eye of faith, in this circumstance the hand of God of Mercy... Even if it be a superstition to believe that complete immunity from harm for twenty five years in spite of a fairly regular practice of non-killing is not a fortuitous accident, but a grace of God. I should still hug that superstition". Gandhi obviously shows how the grace of God has helped him to maintain his vow of not killing any snakes or other animals. But Basaveshwara's belief in the grace was more comprehensive than Gandhi's, which was rather personal than philosophically universal. Likewise, Gandhi believed in the efficacy of *Ramanama*, which had been taught him by his nurse in his boyhood to ward off his fear of spirits and ghosts. As he grew older, his belief in the efficacy of *Ramanama* grew more and more powerful.

For example, speaking about his success in maintaining *brahmacharya*, he confesses and attributes it to the efficacy of *Ramanama* and grace of God. "Saints and seers have left their experiences for us, but they have given us no infallible and universal prescriptions. For perfection or freedom from error comes only from grace, and so seekers after God have left us mantras, such as *Ramanama* hallowed by their own austerities to His grace, complete mastery over thought is impossible. This is the teaching of every great book of religion, and I am realizing the truth of it every moment of my striving after that perfect *brahmacharya*". This holds mirror to Gandhi's firm belief in the grace of God. His belief in *Ramanama* is equivalent to Basaveshwara's belief in Lord Kudala-Sangama.

But what is significant is that both of them believed in a higher power of God, which would help them to follow the path of morality and acknowledge it gratefully.

Vegetarianism:

Basaveshwara strongly opposed the animal sacrifice during the twelfth century, because of his rational and compassionate attitude to life. His opposition to the animal sacrifice presupposes vegetarianism. He indirectly pleads for vegetarian diet, although it was not necessary for him to make it explicit as Gandhi did. All the *sharanas* were supposed to practice non-violence to both men and birds and beasts. That is why Basaveshwara says in one of his famous *Vachana* that an untouchable is one who kills the animals; that an untouchable is one who eats the dirty flesh and that the *sharanas* are all known for their compassion to man, bird and beast.

But in the case of Gandhi, vegetarianism becomes an important issue because of

his encounter with British culture in England where he had to continue his education in Law. He was surrounded by the British people who were used to eating meat and drinking liquor. But Gandhi could not force himself to eat meat or touch wine or woman as he had promised his mother that he would not touch those things. But when he read Mr. Salt's book, *Plea for Vegetarianism* he was extremely pleased and emboldened by it to practice his vegetarian diet with a great firmness of mind. He not only practiced it himself but also persuaded others to follow the vegetarian diet. He strongly believed that non-vegetarian food is not necessary for human sustenance. "I read Salt's book from cover to cover and was very much impressed by it. From the date of reading this book, I may claim to have become a vegetarian by choice. I blessed the day on which I had taken the vow before my mother. I had all along abstained from meat in the interests of truth and of the vow I had taken, but had wished at the same time that every Indian should be a meat-eater, and had looked forward to being one myself freely and openly some day, and to enlisting others in the cause. The choice was now made in favour of vegetarianism, the spread of which henceforward became my mission" (*Auto*, p.35). One may easily see how the same idea is expressed differently by Basaveshwara and Gandhi. Whereas vegetarianism is implicit in Basaveshwara's opposition to killing animals, in Gandhi's plea for vegetarianism, violence to animals is implicit.

Sacred Thread:

Another conspicuous similarity between Basaveshwara and Gandhi is that both of them rebelled against the traditional ritualistic practices like wearing the sacred thread and growing tuft on their heads.

Basaveshwara, though born in a Kamme Brahmin caste in the twelfth century, rebelled against the wearing of the sacred thread when he was a boy of about twelve years. Being a precocious child he had an original thinking and a radical approach to life. When his parents asked him to undergo the ritual of wearing the sacred thread across his chest, he boldly rebelled against it by tearing off the sacred thread and by describing it as a 'creeper of karma' and a symbol of dehumanization and exploiting and dividing the society. He was so independent in his approach to life that he did not oblige his parents at all to undergo the ritualistic ceremony. On the contrary he left home and went to Kudala-Sangama to pursue his liberal education in the school there.

Though Gandhi, being a Vaisya by birth, wore the sacred thread in India, he dispensed with it when he had to tour around in the world. When he went to different countries like England and South Africa, he gave up the wearing of the sacred thread and growing a tuft on his head, because he realized that the external symbols are irrelevant once a man internalizes their spirit and meaning. When a *sanyasi* in Hrishikesh accosted him and enquired about whether Gandhi wore the sacred thread and the tuft on his head, Gandhi replied in the negative thereby disappointing the *sanyasi*. "As I grew up several well-meaning attempts were made both in India and South Africa to re-invest me with the sacred thread, but with little success. If the *shudras* may not wear it, I argued, what right have the other *varnas* to do so? And I saw no adequate reason for adopting what was to me an unnecessary custom. I had no objection to the thread as such, but the reasons for wearing it were lacking". Then Gandhi replied to the *sanyasi* in clear terms, "I will not wear the

sacred thread, for I see no necessity for it, when countless Hindus can go without it and yet remain Hindus. Moreover, the sacred thread should be a symbol of spiritual regeneration, presupposing a deliberate attempt on the part of the wearer at a higher and purer life. I doubt whether in the present state of Hinduism and of India, Hindus can vindicate the right to wear a symbol charged with such a meaning. That right can come only after Hinduism has purged itself of untouchability, has removed all distinctions of superiority and inferiority, and shed a host of other evils and shams that have become rampant in it. My mind therefore rebels against the idea of wearing the sacred thread. But I am sure your suggestion about the *sikha* is worth considering. I once used to have it, and I discarded it from a false sense of shame...I shall discuss the matter with my comrades". One may easily see the similarity between Basaveshwara and Gandhi as far as their rationality and rebellious spirit are concerned, in regard to the meaninglessness of the rituals.

Internal and External Purity:

Both Basaveshwara and Gandhi pleaded for the achievement of inner purity as well as external purity in man's life. Basaveshwara severely attacked the fake believers, who followed the path of achieving external purity in terms of taking bath twice or thrice a day and performing the rituals like the worshipping of the symbol (*ishtalinga*) on their left palm and wearing it on their chest or treating the *jangamas* rather peremptorily, without realizing the deep truth hidden behind them. He insisted on the unity of being and strongly advocated the harmonization of inner purity and external purity. In one of his famous *vachanas* he says:

*Thou shall not steal or kill;
Nor speak a lie;
Be angry with no one;
Nor scorn another man;
Nor glory in thyself;
Nor others hold to blame;
This is your inward purity;
This is your outward purity;
This is the way to win our Lord
Kudala-Sangama.*

Here Basaveshwara has offered five moral commandments to be followed by all people to lead a happy and noble life. These five commandments form the very essence of all the religions of the world. They help man to harmonize his inner purity with his outward purity. It is only the believer who has achieved the harmony between the two, who can achieve union with God or God-realization. Although Basaveshwara taught this principle in the religious context, it is supposed to be observed in all walks of life.

Like Basaveshwara, Gandhi also pleads for self-purification, which is connected with his concept of *ahimsa*. Gandhi makes this observation at the end of his autobiography. One may easily notice how his political life has attained the height of spirituality: "Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification; without self-purification the observance of the law of Ahimsa must remain an empty dream; God can never be realized by one who is not pure of heart. Self-purification therefore must mean purification in all the walks of life. And purification being highly infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one's surroundings. But the path of self-purification is hard and steep. To attain to perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposing currents of love and

hatred, attachment and repulsion. I know that I have not in me as yet that triple purity, in spite of constant striving for it. That is why the world's praise fails to move me, indeed it very often stings me.... The experiences and experiments have sustained me and give me great joy. But I know that I have still before me a difficult path to traverse. I must reduce myself to zero. So long as a man does not of his own free will put himself last among his fellow creatures, there is no salvation for him. Ahimsa is the farthest limit of humility". One may easily see how Gandhi has made his entire political life a part of religion and spirituality as testified to by his own words. His desire to be considered as the last among the fellow creatures is parallel to Basaveshwara's declaration that none is smaller than him and none, greater than the *sharanas*. Both of them have clearly shown the extraordinary importance of the harmony between inner purity and external purity and affirmed the principle of unity of life, which enables them to achieve self realization which is identical with God-realization.

Both Basaveshwara and Gandhi believe in the view that morality is the basis of all the religions of the world. They want to be

away from the path of evil. Basaveshwara says in his famous *vacana* as follows:

*Make me, O Father, a crippled man
Who will not wander here and there.
Make me, O Father a sightless man
Whose glances will not rove astray.
Make me, O Father hard of ear
Lest I should hear of aught but Thee.
O Lord Kudala-Sangama,
Keep me from all enticements free,
But what will draw me to Thy feet.*

He requests his personal God to make him a cripple so that he may not wander about in search of sensuous pleasure. He requests Him to make him a blind man so that he may not see anything evil. Likewise he requests Him to make him a deaf man so that he may not hear anything blasphemous. A similar message is conveyed by Gandhi's keeping a doll of triple faces on his mantle-piece. One face has closed its eyes so that he may not see anything evil; another face has closed its ears so that he may not hear anything evil; and the third face has closed his mouth so that he may not talk anything evil. Thus there is a close correspondence of ideas between Basaveshwara and Gandhi.

*Reasoning, introspection and contemplation,
Prayers, rituals and singing,
Self-discipline, meditation and control,
Dispassion, selflessness and rigour,
Are all but the roads to reach Him.
But forget not, after the whole distance is traversed,
There rest the gates of Infinite Patience and Trust,
Without passing these, most ways are treacherous.*

-Sri Shivananda

SURRENDER!

-Sri N Krishna Rao

"SURRENDER!!!" How simple and direct it sounds. There seems to be no mystical implications about it. But I. What is SURRENDER?

2. What are we to SURRENDER and to whom?

3. What would be the outcome of such a SURRENDER?

These questions put us on track to explore the very purpose of our life. Certainly this would be the most challenging task that man could ever take up. So what appears to be a simple suggestion for attaining the heights of spirituality, turns out to be an arduous journey into the very depths of our being.

There is an innate thirst in every man to get the best of what life has in store for him. Naturally he struggles hard to rise higher and higher. Whatever be the field that he chooses, the basic driving force is to get ahead of others. Consciously or unconsciously we all get into an unending race, trying to excel one another. This starts at the individual level and gets shifted to a group with which he finds an identity. Depending on one's social, cultural, and religious backgrounds, one carries various identities that are ingrained in one's psyche.

What we call society today is nothing but an amalgamation of peoples having diverse identities in the name of caste, creed, race, religion, nationality, etc. - all vying with one

another for attaining supremacy. Invariably we find ourselves in a perpetual conflict that keeps us restless all the time. There is a haunting fear of being overtaken by others. We are caught up in the grip of a competitive world. The struggle goes on. And the stress that man is put to proves to be too great to cope with. An ambitious Macbeth goes berserk with a reckless butchering of his rivals. In a moment of frustration, he blurts out a few philosophic words about the futility of life that is given to success :

*"Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."*

Shakespeare, the genius, creates an occasion here for reflection with a fresh mind about what exactly life would mean.

A sense of purposelessness leads us to a life of boredom, emptiness, etc. The enormous stress that one faces at the work place, at times, becomes unmanageable. Of late WHO identified a new kind of health issue and termed it as 'burnout'. It is a psychological ailment that debilitates one's cognitive abilities. This is what an inhospitable work environment does to us.

'To be or not to be' has ever been an intriguing question. One is often shaken by a thousand and odd ills 'that flesh is heir to'. A state of crisis emanates. One has got to

open up to the fact of one's-existence. The threat of war is always there. A trivial issue may provoke nations to unleash their nuclear arsenal. The rising levels of pollution and the accompanying-climate change have begun to alter the very conditions of our living. With all the wonders that science has created, life is perched on a precarious level.

It appears as though the very tenor of our life has been that of suffering. A great many thinkers, poets, philosophers, sages of all ages and provinces have dwelt on it. Matthew Arnold, in his Dover Beach, reflects on the sad plight of man:

*"And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle
and flight
Where ignorant armies clash by night."*

The ancient seer could see it long back and forewarned of the impending disaster:

*"when one knows truth, it shines forth.
When not known the destruction that
could be wrought would become
immeasurable."*

-Kathopanishad

Patanjali, the illustrious founding father of yoga, puts it in an aphoristic statement:

*"A man of wisdom would find life
being entirely riddled with suffering."*

The Upanishadic seers pondered over the basic questions of life. When they could arrive at an answer, they were wonder-struck. They could find no words to convey the wisdom that dawned on them:

*"The eyes won't go there; the speech
won't go there, nor does the mind. We
know not any means by which it could be
passed on to others."*

The revelation was so great and glori-

ous that any description of it would only be misleading. Yet the seers went on to speak out their insights that took the form of MANTRAS. They have not approved the general ritualistic practices. They say that it is BRAHMAN which is the ultimate source of our being. Our cognitive ability is confined to time and space. What is said to be transcendental as well as immanent simply remains inconceivable to us.

It is at this stage that Bhagavad Gita comes to our rescue. Lost in philosophical abstractions, we are caught in doubt. A clarification is needed to throw light on what is what. Lord Krishna lifts us literally from this confused state. The Bhagavad Gita simplifies the abstract philosophic thought. It encompasses the entire gamut of our life-activity. The different paths that appeal to different types of personalities are lucidly presented.

It doesn't stop there. It exhorts us to act without any fear and hesitation. What is needed is just a single-minded dedication to what we do. It would be appropriate in this context to take up the questions we have raised at the outset.

1. What is SURRENDER?

It means to let go things that we hold on to. It could also mean to give up our sense of possessiveness. It amounts to an unconscious admittance of a higher power operating through our day to day affairs.

*" Whatsoever that moves on earth
should be covered by Lord (The Supreme
Ruler). Hence, having given up attachment,
one can rest assured of shelter - (the principle being) not to covet anybody's wealth."*

- Ishavasyopanishad

This is what SURRENDER is - a with-

drawal of our stubborn resistance to things that go against our expectations.

2. What are we to SURRENDER and to whom?

Here we have to see what we have to surrender. We are self centered. What ever we do, we do in order to gratify ourselves. This is the ego that gets strengthened in every act that we do. We get puffed up with our successes and build up an image for ourselves. This false image is the false ego which is entirely our own creation. There arise moments when we are called upon to humble ourselves and accept the bare facts of life.

Our ancient epics (puranas) are full of stories that highlight this point. The story of Gajendra is one such. He feels that he is invincible. But when caught by a crocodile, he has to struggle on and on for years. Realization dawns on him when he arrives at the final moment of collapse. His heart opens up. With all the humility he cries out uttering the name of God. When there is that total SURRENDER, God comes to his rescue.

Mahabharatha, the great epic, depicts a court scene where Draupathi is put to an excruciatingly humiliating situation. But in an absolute self-surrender to God, praying with all her heart, she throws her arms up. The divine help comes in time to safeguard her and put to shame all those that were present there.

Surrendering is not that simple as it appears to be. The tenacity to hold onto things is there all the time. We are carried away by a sense of doership. "The world is too much with us." A decisive 'U turn' has to be made. An uphill task it is, but the answer lies in our prayerful submission to God.

"This is my prayer to my lord... Give me the strength to bear lightly my joys and sorrows.

And give me the strength to SURRENDER my strength to thy will with love." (Gitanjali-Tagore)

3. What is the outcome of such a SURRENDER?

Our consciousness is trapped in things that lay a grip on us. A realization that they soon vanish like passing shadows has to dawn on us. The episodes don't just point to the help that we get in our tough times. They only symbolize the Truth, that which is the Ultimate. The liberated consciousness admits no divisions, but merges into the Oneness of Being

"When I was there thou wert not, now thou art there, I am not. The love - lane is very narrow and cannot contain two." **Kabir**

Namdev glorifies the Name that is all - absorbing.

"None can realize the Name by practice of knowledge, meditation or austerity. SURRENDER yourself at the feet of Guru and learn to know that I myself is that Name. After finding the source of that I, merge your individuality in that oneness....The name is PARA BRAHMAN itself." **Namdev**

For the humanity to evolve and merge into the Oneness of Being, the one- word wisdom that the sages have passed on to us is, SURRENDER!

Brushing aside all philosophic speculations, Lord Krishna, at the end of Bhagavad Gita, condenses the ancient wisdom into one single word, SURRENDER!!

"(Arjuna), I will grant you the salvation and liberate you from all sins and suffering, you set aside all your duties, and unto 'Me' alone, SURRENDER!!!"

Lesser Known Vachanakaras **KUGINA MARITANDE**

-Dr. C.S. Nanjundaiah

Kugina Maritande is an interesting vachanakara of 12th century. He is said to have lived in Kalyana around 1160 AD. Many of his life's deeds are recorded in Parvatesha's *Chaturacharya Purana*. He was a regular, active participant of *Shivanubhava ghostis* arranged at the city of Kalyana by Basavanna, Allama and others. That participation enriched his life's experiences and enabled him to write vachanas. Also he understood the essence of various Veerashaiva tenets which made him understand the correlation between *ishtalinga* worship and *bhakti*. In his vachanas he gave his own interpretation of a true Shiva bhakta, meaning and relevance of *Shatsthala*, and how the worldly desires that obstruct the way to God realization and such other aspects.

Like the other Maritandes we discussed in earlier issues, this vachanakara also pursued a vocation which became a part of his name. He was brave and courageous. He joined the Sharana Association that was later forced to face the army of Bijjala. His job then was to warn the sharanas of the impending attack by the enemy army. That vocation of warning by shouting gave him a distinct position among the Sharanas. For this reason, the word *KUGU* was prefixed to his name only to differentiate him from ther Maritandes.

In the complete set of vachanas published by the Department of Kannada and Culture we are given 11 vachanas of Maritande. His *antika* is *Mahamahima Mareshwara*. In making his point clear, Kugina Maritande makes use of brain-teasing words and phrases which offer layers of meanings to his *vachanas*.

*A stone may be polished to shine bright.
Can one polish the wave of brightness of a
gemstone?
Only the wordly person has passion and
hatred.
A true lingangi whose mind stays in Mahat
How can he be bothered by duality?
Mahamahima Mareshwara dwells with
such a one.*

For him a true Shivabhakta is one who concentrates on and keeps his mind *in that* which is eternal and everlasting. Observe the way in which he uses the metaphor of polishing in relation to *ekagrathe*, concentration of mind. In another vachana, Kugina Maritande writes:

*As the string and stick did bend together
there was scope for arrow to move
As bhakti and virakti got united
it was possible to become the body that
knows the thing
The thing when it once pierced the three
qualities
these three qualities are destroyed.*

*In that destruction five organs were undone
Seven elements and eightfold arrogance too.
Sixteen services, twenty five principles
and the feelings were no more.
The smell of caste which resides in all this
got its way lost.
Once it is understood who I am
the cry of caste is no more.
as one knows Mahamahima Mareshwara.*

Observe how he enumerates the idea of God realization by shunning the man made caste discrimination. The three qualities he mentions are *mind* (Manas), *promise* (vachana) and *body* (kaya). The five organs of the body, he mentions are well known. The seven elements are *husi* (falsehood), *kalavu* (thieving), *veshyagamana* (going to prostitute), *paradara* (adultery), *paradravya* (other's wealth), *paraninde* (blaming others). The eightfold arrogance he records are *kulamada* (pride of caste), *chalamada* (one's pride in achieving), *dhanamada* (pride of money), *roopamada* (beauty obsession), *youvanamada* (pride of youth), *vidyamada* (pride of education), *rajamada* (pride of power), *tapomada* (pride of one's penance). Reference to sixteen and twenty-five are related to the ways of worshipping Shiva.

Kugina Maritande exhibits his wide knowledge of different ways of achieving God realization. The examples that he selects are all from day today experiences.

One finds his attempt to be novel and new 'in telling' and 'in showing' the use of metaphors to justify his viewpoint.

True to his vocation, Kugina Maritande has said all his vachanas in loud voice so that men and women of his age could change their styles, ways of life and become true devotees of Shiva. In some of his vachanas he uses question-answer method. He puts a question as we see in this vachana.

*Can we etch a soft stone with the stone
cutter's chisel?
Can we write with the edge of a burning wax?
Can we enter a river in a boat made of mud?*

These are impossible things in life. Then he answers them in his own characteristic way. From interrogatives, he leads to heights of understanding the true mind of a devotee. If proper instruments are used, he tells us, a flower comes out of a rock. The true Shivabhakta can find his true spirit.

Kugina Maritande's vachanas are usually labelled 'difficult', 'tough' for 'reading' and 'comprehension'. One has to struggle to get a true understanding, true sense and true meaning. But for a conscientious reader, his vachanas offer myriad meanings and experiences.

*Even as the sun is the seed
For all the motions of the world
So is the mind that seeds the senses
The mind I have but one
When that is lost in Thee
Chennamallikarjuna
Would I be born again?*

-Sri Akka Mahadevi

Lingayat Studies

How Does it Matter to the Present?

-Dr. N.S. Gundur

Our historical inquiries should not ignore two fundamental aspects: one, our life is historically constituted in the sense that our present is shaped by past events, interpretations, narratives, perceptions, and so on; two, the task of a historical inquiry at present is to make past events, interpretations, narratives, perceptions, and so on relevant to the present. Ultimately, its goal is to shape the present by going back to the past (s).

Giving an account of past events, understanding past interpretations, exploring the logic behind past narratives, perceptions, and so on should be directed to make sense of the present reality and solve contemporary problems. Therefore, the study of an epoch or past textual culture is not a one-time event. We need to reopen questions raised in the past, raise new questions in the present about what happened in the past and rethink of what is already thought. In this respect, inquiries into Lingayat Studies should probe the genealogy of Lingayat way of life in order to shape the present Lingayatway of life. Hence, one of the leading questions at present should be: How to lead (a good) life as a Lingayat in the twenty-first century? Such a question will not lead us to unearth certain facts about the Lingayat Movement and person-

alities associated with it, and such a question, instead of landing us in polemics, will draw our attention to the art of living well. To live well, we need certain forms of life, and 'Lingayata' is a form of life discovered at a particular historical moment to lead life in a particular way. At present, it is to be conceived more as an alternative way of life than a movement against other ways of life. In other words, whatever its historical origin, we have to conceptualize it at present differently; in the past it might have abandoned ritualistic or Vedic practices, but for the present what should matter for a Lingayat is to lead his life in this particular way (leading a life of Lingayata), instead of simply looking at it what it stood for in the past. People following two or more different ways of life, with contradictory beliefs and practices, may live together. They should be conceived as independent, not antagonistic.

We are historically determined. If we are born in a family that follows Lingayatsampradaya, we have to live the life of a Lingayata. It is not a communal argument. It is like asking a question like this: how to lead life as a scholar, if you happen to be a university teacher? As long as you are a university teacher, this question is important, because excellence is the tar-

get—the be-all and the end-all-- of a university teacher. Hence, the question of leading life as a Lingayata needs to be raised within the context of Lingayata community. Following the university-teacher analogy, as long as you are a Lingayata, this question of leading life as a Lingayata becomes pertinent. If you are an athlete, the question is -- how to be a good athlete, or how to achieve excellence as an athlete. In the same way, the vast literature of Lingayat tradition implicitly shows how to achieve excellence in living the life of a Lingayata. If we read the predicates associated with the sharanas as found in the vachanas, we can reconstruct what it was meant to be a

sharana. Leading any form of life involves observance of certain practices and concepts. Hence, an inquiry into Lingayata Studies should make one understand the practices and concepts involved in the Lingayata way of life, not in order to trace the historical authenticity, but to make them relevant today. How to make the practices concerning the Lingayata way of life relevant today? This should be a leading question for anybody interested in making enquiries into the field of Lingayat Studies. The task at our hand is to rethink, reconstruct and re-read the Sharana Movement a fresh.

*Will there be poverty for the devout?
Will there be death for the eonian?
Thinking that the devout are poor
If said I've helped!
Nay, poverty will never strike them until the day
When Marayyapriya Amaleshwaralinga would become dead.*
- **Aydakki, Lakkamma**

*Come, my Way, my Truth, my life!
Such a way as gives us breath,
Such a truth as ends all strife,
Such a life as killeth death.*

*Come, my Light, my Feast, My strength!
Such a light as shows a feast
Such a feast as mends in length
Such a strength as makes his guest.*

*Come my Joy, my Love, my Heart!
Such a joy as none can move,
Such a love as none can part,
Such a heart as joyes in love.*

- **George Herbert.**

The Veerashaiva Cult in Telangana

-Sri K. Venkateshwara Rao

The Basava campaign gathered momentum gradually to become a mass movement in the country in which not only Daliths but also right thinking citizens, cutting across classes and castes, even contentious Brahmins participated actively. It was a Universalist movement, aiming at the welfare of the world becoming one single family. Sainly souls congregated at Kalyana not only from Kannada country but also from remote Kashmir, to fuse a new society under the leadership of Basava. But his revolution had to overcome many hurdles, as the diehard conservative and casteist elements had started smear campaign against him. Basava was instrumental in arranging the marriage between Haralayya's son (an untouchable) with Madhuvarasa's daughter (a Brahmin) after initiating them into Veerashaivism. His rivals took this as a shocking alliance and complained to King Bijjala against Basava and thus poisoned his ears. The King who was played into the hands of such vily intriguers awarded death punishment to Haralayya and Madhuvayya. This paved the way for a great uproar in Kalyana. As a result, the king's soldiers went after the Sharanas and killed several of them. The remaining Sharanas fled from Kalyana to save their lives and to protect the Vachana literature.

In this background many Sharanas fled to the neighboring Telugu country which was under the rule of the Kakatiyas of

Warangal. They took shelter in the present undivided districts of Nizamabad, Medak, Mehboob Nagar. They carried with them the Vachana literature which taught the tenets of love, equality and brotherhood. Telugu people welcomed them and thus the Sharanas settled in Telangana region. Many Veerashaiva Maths came up in the above areas where the Sharanas were given shelter by the local people. The Veerashaiva Maths started propagating Veerashaiva principles and its literature in subsequent centuries. Later the followers procured lands, settled doing agriculture, business or other jobs and services. Subsequently the statues of Basaveshwara on horseback have been installed in several towns and villages. Basaveshwara circles came up in cities and people started celebrating the Jayanthi of Basava. The Veerashaiva Maths have been managing educational institutions. The Veerashaiva literature influenced Telugu poets during Kakatiya and Vijayanagara periods.

During the Shaiva Kavi Yugam (the era of Shaiva poets), Mallikarjuna Panditharadhya, was a great Shaivite poet in Telugu, who laid a strong foundation to Shaivite literature. He was regarded as Brahma of Veerashaivism in Telugu country. He wrote *Shiva Thathvasara* and was a great worshipper of Shiva. For him Shiva was Parabrahma, Manthra was panchakshari and Bhasma was his Raksha

Kavacham. His influence on Shaiva literature has gifted great personalities like Palkurike Somanatha in Telugu literature. Palkurike Somanatha emerged as an unparalleled, powerful poet and has played a key role in spreading the teachings of Basava. He lived in 13th-14th century AD and followed Basava Philosophy whole heartedly. Basava's word was final word for him. Somanatha or Somana as he was also called became a part and parcel of Veerashaivism during his days. He was a great scholar and did lot of work for Shaivism. He wrote '*Basava Puranamu* in Telugu dealing with the life of Basaveshwara. This work was a sensation during those days. He did a great job by focusing on Shaiva devotees. Kavi Sarvabhauma Sreenatha wrote several books on Shaivism. For example, *Eshwararchana Kalasela*, *Shivarathri Mahathmya*, *Haravilasa* etc., Another poet Pothana was a Shaiva by birth and Veerashaiva by faith. Another great contemporary, a Jnanapeetha Awardee Viswanatha Satyanarayana was also a Shivopasaka. He authored several books of which *Veyipadagalu* (Thousand hoods) and *Ramayana Kalpavriksha* are important works in Telugu literature.

Though there were only a few Veerashaiva poets in Telugu literature, yet they were very powerful poets. Mallikarjuna Panditharadhya was a contemporary of Basaveshwara. He was deeply immersed in the teachings of Basava and wanted to meet him. When he was on his way to Kalyana, he heard the sad news of lingaikhya of Basava at Kudala Sangama. With a heavy heart he went back and died at Shrisaila.

Kaviraya Sikhamani Nanne Choda was another important Veerashaiva poet in Telugu literature. He authored *Kumara*

Sambhava, which is a great Prabhanda Kavya in Telugu literature. During Vijayanagara rule another important poet was Dhoorjati who wrote *Kalahasthi Mahatmya* and *Kalahasteeshwara Sathaka* and dedicated them to Shiva. Sri Krishnadevaraya honored him as his court poet. There were some less important poets who wrote books on Lord Shiva.

During the rule of the Kakatiyas Veerashaiva cult spread to several interior areas of Telangana. The Kakatiya rulers patronized Shaivism and also built several Shaiva temples in their vast empire. The names of rulers like Rudradeva, Rudramadevi, Ganapatideva, Pratapa Rudra indicate their close affiliation to Veerashaivism. Some of the villages were also named after Shiva, Rudra, Ganapathi, Parvati etc., Besides Palkuriki Somana, several other poets authored books on Shaivism. The kings have made several donations to the Shaiva temples for their Nitya, Dhoopa, Deepa and Nyvedya. The thousand pillared temple at Warangal, Ramappa temple at Pamphlet and at several other places are the best examples. They also issued several copper plates, granite and stone inscriptions alluding their faith to Lord Shiva. Their vassals, nobles and other prominent persons have built Shaiva temples at different places. The Ganapeshwara temple built at Ganapavaram in 1231 AD by Jayapa later expanded under Ganapatideva, the ruler of Velanadu is best example. Common people also named their children as Shivayya, Shivamma, Rudraiah, Rudramma, Lingaiah, Lingamma, Ganesha, Vinayaka etc.,

There is a close affinity between the words, Linga and Trilinga. Trilinga in Telugu country refers to three famous

Lingas such as of Shrishaila (present Royalseema), Draksharam (coastal Andhra) and Kaleshwaram (Telangana). Ptolemy and Taranath are of the strong opinion that the word Trilinga has been found in Buddhist literature as well as in Prakrit language. They have substantiated it with historical evidences. In Sanskrit it is Trilinga and in Telugu it is corrupted as Telungu, Tenugu. Vidyanath, a poet during the regime of Kakatiya king Prataparudra mentioned in one of his works that the regions of Srishaila, Kaleshwaram and Draksharamam as Trilingadesa. In Veerashaiva literature Guru, Linga, Jangama are prominent words and they are three attributes of Lord Shiva being represented in Draksharama, in Kaleshwaram and in Srishailam. Palkuriki Somanatha used the word Telugu in his

Basavapuramu. Sri Krishnadevaraya in his monumental work *Amukthamalyada* records that *Deva Bhasha Landu Telugu Less*" meaning Telugu is the best language in the country. It is a practice that the children are given "Om Namah Shivaya" at the beginning of their Aksharabhyasa. From birth to death Shivasmarana is in vogue. There is a close relation between religion and literature that one can see the religion and culture through literature. The poet Yerrana was given the title of Sambhu Das.

As can be seen above the influence of Veerashaiva cult and Shaiva literature swept the whole of Telugu country during and after Basaveshwara. They influence the way of the life, tradition and culture of Telugu people even today.

*Mere adulation or adoration isn't observance
Mere articulation of a spell or a charm isn't observance
Mere burning of incense or waving a lamp isn't observance
Never coveting others', wealth, others' women and other gods is observance
Look, Ye brothers, such are the observances in Shambhu Jakkeshwara*

-Sathyakka

Complete knowledge includes knowledge of the phenomenal world, the spirit behind it, and the source of both of them. This is transcendental knowledge. Therefore one should be intelligent enough to know the source of all knowledge. Who is the cause of all causes and the only object for meditation in all types of yoga practice? When the cause of all causes becomes known, then everything knowable becomes known, and nothing remains unknown.

- The Bhagavadgeeta

ASHVAGHOSHA

An Ancient Buddhist Sanskrit Poet

-Dr. H.V. Nagaraja Rao

Gautama Buddha, arguably one of the greatest human beings, was a revolutionary who changed the view of life of many generations. He rebelled against the traditional rituals and taught that a good way of life is enough to gain salvation. His message traversed the oceans and transformed the life of many lands. Even today, he is worshipped in many countries and his teachings are studied in various schools and universities. Many events of his illustrious life have been recorded in the *Tripitakas*, which are in a language known as Pali. It is the sacred language for Buddhists.

After a few centuries past the demise of the Buddha, the Buddhist scholars felt the need to write in Sanskrit which was the lingua franca of India in those days. Many Buddhist philosophers and logicians wrote valuable treatises in Sanskrit so that the followers of other religions could study and understand the outlines and essentials of Buddhism. Some poets wrote works to describe the life of the Buddha in Sanskrit and Ashvaghosha appears to be the most eminent among them.

We do not have any definite evidence about Ashvaghosha's date. According to a Buddhist tradition, he was a teacher of Emperor Kanishka. So Ashvaghosha may be

said to have lived in the first or second century C.E. There can be no doubt about the fact that he flourished before the fifth century C.E. because Chinese and Tibetan translations of his works done in that century are available. In the colophons of his works, we are told that Ashvaghosha's mother was Suvarnakshi, and, he resided in Saketa. He was respectfully called as Acharya, Bhadanta, Mahapandita and Mahavadi. From his works, we can infer that he was well-versed in the philosophies of the Sankhyas, Jains, Vaisheshikas and Materialists. He also knew the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas of the Hindus.

Ashvagosha's works

The two works that are very well-known are, the *Buddhacharita* and the *Saundarananda*. Both these are considered as Mahakavyas. If Kalidasa lived, as many scholars believe, in the Gupta age, Ashvaghosha was his predecessor and he should also be respected as a pioneer in writing Mahakavyas. His other work *Sharikaputrprakarana* is available only in fragments. It is a social drama and so we can say that it is the earliest available Sanskrit play. However, if Kalidasa is accepted as a poet in the court of King Vikramaditya of the first century B.C., Ashvaghosha will

have to be considered as a successor of Bhasa, Kalidasa etc.,

Ashvaghosha's another work *Sutralankara* depicts Buddha's philosophy. The original Sanskrit work is now lost and only its Tibetan translation is available. *Mahayana Shraddhotpada*, *Vajrasuchi* and *Gandistotragatha* are also ascribed to Ashvaghosha. It is also said that he had written another drama known as *Rashtrapalanataka* and it was staged in the city of Pataliputra.

The Buddhacharita

As the title itself indicates, this work describes the life of Sarvarthasiddha (Siddhartha), who later became the Buddha. The work contained twentyfour Sargas (chapters) originally, but now only the first fourteen Sargas are available. Starting from the birth of the hero as the son of king Shuddhodana, the story goes up to the attainment of Buddhahood in the extant fourteen Sargas. It cannot be said that the incidents are depicted historically. The poet uses his fertile imagination to raise the stature of the Buddha even in his childhood. He says that divine beings like Yakshas and gods came from their celestial abodes to see and bless the child. The poet also states that the sun shone more brightly on the child's birthday. Further it is said that a sage named Asita came to see the child and told the king that he was divinely ordained to have a look at the child which was supposed to save the whole humanity. The sage also predicted that the prince may leave the kingdom and go to the forest to obtain higher knowledge.

Later too, according to Ashvaghosha, it was the gods that caused the appearance of a suffering patient, an old and weak man

and also a corpse in order to draw the attention of the prince towards the sorrowfulness of the world. After Siddhartha abandons the palace and goes to the forest in search of true knowledge (Bodhi), his meeting with the king of Rajagriha etc. are described dramatically. The prince's visit to the hermitage of sage Arada and the debates that follow give the poet ample opportunity to exhibit his mastery on several branches of philosophy. Siddhartha's penance and Mara's attempts to disturb it and his failure are also described by Ashvaghosha vividly. The attainment of Bodhi by Siddhartha and his compassion for the whole universe have been painted in glorious colours by the poet.

In short, *Buddhacharita* is not a narration of historical facts; it is a poetic rendering of the life of a divine personality.

The Saundarananda

Fortunately, this work containing eighteen chapters is available in full. Description of Kapilavastu, the capital city of king Shuddhodana, the king's administration, birth of Sarvarthasiddha (Siddhartha), his going to the forest and gaining of Buddhahood are described in this work briefly. However, the main story is that of Saundarananda, Buddha's cousin. Saundarananda loves his wife extremely and does not like to be separated from her even for a moment. The Buddha wants to eradicate Saundarananda's fascination for the woman and to draw him to the faith. For that purpose Saundarananda is taken to paradise where he sees the most beautiful celestial damsels and becomes convinced that his pride about his wife's beauty is baseless. He converts him to Buddhism and he becomes a monk.

Poetry and Religion

For Ashvaghosha, poetry and drama were only tools for propagation of religion. He openly states at the end of the *Saundarananda* that the poem has been written with the purpose of bringing tranquillity to the minds of readers and the poetic presentation is only to attract them. In his view, the poem is like a medicine wrapped in sweet sugar covering so that the people can gulp it happily. In other words, poetry is made a servant of religion for the propagation of the latter. According to Ashvaghosha, Moksha is the ultimate goal and everything should be utilised to attain it.

Ashvaghosha has been ignored

In spite of his poetic merits, Ashvaghosha has not received the recog-

nition he richly deserved. Many poets and also rhetoricians have ignored him. Bana mentions many poets in the introduction to his *Harshacharita* viz., Vyasa, Bhattara Harichandra, Satavahana, Pravarasena, Bhasa, Kalidasa and Adhyaraja. But Ashvaghosha is left out. Mammata and other writers on poetics quote profusely from Kalidasa, Bharavi, Magha etc., but not a single verse of Ashvaghosha. Were they prejudiced against him just because he was Buddhist, or, were the works of Ashvaghosha not easily accessible for study and criticism? Even in the collections of witty and wise sayings like the *Subhashitaratnabhandagara*, Ashvaghosha has not received due attention. Actually his *Buddhacharita* is a mine of *Subhashitas*. Bias should not make us blind to the literary gems.

*Is the master of the house gone out,
Or is he in?
Upon the threshold grasses sprout;
The house is just
A bowl of dust:
Is the master of the house gone out
Or is he in?
When falsehood does infect your flesh
And your heart is a sensuous mesh,
The master of the house
Cannot be in,
Kudala Sangama Lord!*

-Sri Basaveshwara

A Scintillating Biography of a Veteran Actor

-Dr. C. Naganna

Actually, the title of this article should have been: 'A Scintillating Biography of a great theatre Actor of Yester Years'. The biographer is Prof. K.B. Prabhuprasad, who was a teacher of English and writer in his own right. He is approaching ninety summers. *Ranga Antaranga* is the title of the book under review. It saw the light of the day in 1998, exactly three decades after it was serialised in a Kannada Weekly, 'Sudha'. Prof. Prasad thanks E.R. Sethuram and K.B. Singh who were in charge of this weekly magazine for persuading him to write on Kotturappa, the veteran stage actor of yesteryears. By then many actors' lives had been covered under this series in the said magazine.

Prof. Prabhuprasad gladly accepted the assignment since Kotturappa was living in Mysuru; to that it was easy for the former to sit with his subject over a period of time and write. Prof. Prasad assiduously took down notes even as Kotturappa went on narrating his life in the theatre. But Prabhuprasad has not called his writing a biography because he has retained the autobiographical tone and tenor. When he expressed his intention to Kotturappa that the narration would be in an autobiographical strain the great actor approved it after going through a sample. Prof. Prasad remembers this incident with a relish.

There are two parts in the book. Part one consists of some thirtytwo petite

chapters which are nothing but the most memorable episodes in the very illustrious life of Kotturappa. The second part is the author's recollection of Kotturappa's family members and a reverential assessment of his personality. It is a very elegant summing up of the life of an extraordinary actor of company theatre.

The entire book moves at a pace reflecting the calm and serene approach of the author. As Kotturappa was already an octogenarian leading a life of retirement after donning myriad roles of great significance, he was in a very ideal situation to recollect the bygone glory in tranquillity.

'From where shall I begin?' is the loaded question asked by Kotturappa and the author is very ambitious in indicating. 'Begin from the beginning!' Both of them knew that to hold a long and illustrious career of Kotturappa within the small canvas was a near impossible thing. Therefore he narrates some episodes which he considered to be important and lively from the readers' point of view.

Thus, we gather that Kotturappa was born in the year 1892 at a village called Soge in Bellari district. His father was Karkimathada Rudraiyya and mother Gurubasamma. They belonged to the Jangama sub-sect and his father taught him songs from Nijaguna Shivayogi, Sarpabhusana Swamy, Shishunala Shariff and the ones from Bayalota.

Kotturappa had to move to Hirehadagali to work in a household and also to learn Sanskrit. But the Sanskrit teacher over there, Veerappa Sastry, was more interested in teaching stage plays than teaching Sanskrit. Since Kotturappa and his class-fellow Chennayya were good looking with very impressive voice they both decided to join a company theatre and as such their next destination was Shirahatti where Venkobarao Huligekar had his theatre company. Both Kotturappa and Chennayya attracted the attention of theatre goers because of their successful performances in the play 'Padmavathi Parinaya'.

Prof. Prabhuprasad takes the opportunity to introduce the readers to various companies that were active during those days and how they tried to snatch or swap successful actors by offering them better royalty and emoluments than their respective proprietors. Each company vied with its rivals to introduce new things by way of scenery and lighting to attract the spectators. The actors had to excel in both acting and singing and Kotturappa was blessed on both counts and therefore very many companies tried to swap him to their fold. By and large he was loyal to those companies which gave him a foothold and extended all encouragement to him to shine as an actor and earn name and fame.

Through this very warm narrative we get a glimpse of the lives of gifted actors-cum-proprietors like Venkobarao, Kalaburgimathada Shivamurthayya, Vamanrao Master and so on. Venkobarao preferred to encourage local luminaries to write plays and thus we have 'Indira' by Gururao Mamadapur; 'Shani Prabhava' and 'Parvathi Sathvapareekshe' by Adabaddi Master; 'Ramanjaneya Yuddha' by

Thoranagal Rajarao; 'Divya Prema' by Ilakal Kanti and 'Kittura Chennamma' by Govindaraju. When Kotturappa accompanied the company to Mysuru he played different roles in the plays 'Prahlada', 'Lankadahana', 'Krishna Leela' and many other plays. His first circuit included places like Bijapur, Bagalakote, Gadag, Dharwad, Hubballi, Harihara, Davanagere, Tumkur, Bangalore, Mysuru, Udupi and Mangalore. The second circuit took him to Adavani, Rayachur, Kalburgi, Solapur, Kolhapur, Athani, Mudhol, Sankeshwar, Gokak, Belagavi and Goa.

Kotturappa was greatly benefited by his stay in Solapur because there he picked up the finer points of Marathi theatre. He acted with aplomb the roles in historical and social plays after mythological ones. Lokamanya Thilak happened to be a spectator for one of the plays. He had said he would spend a couple of minutes but sat through the whole play because of the acting and the theme of the play ('Indira').

Hariram Master played on the harmonium and after he went away Kotturappa became the harmonium master. But the proprietor Venkobarao never shared the profit with the artistes and Kotturappa was very much disappointed by his attitude and hence he left his company. He decided to live in Bangalore. He taught music to the daughter of one Thammanna Jois who was a relative of Bidaram Krishnappa. This contact with Bidaram Krishnappa bore fruit later on when Kotturappa learnt music under his tutelage in Mysuru. Because of Bidaram, Kotturappa shifted his residence to Mysuru and joined 'Sri Chamarajendra Sangeetha Nataka Sabha' as Bidaram was its chief convener. Chamaraja Wadiyar was a great patron of theatre which was continued by Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar.

In this narrative there is a repeated reference to Sardar Gopalaraje Urs who was an officer in the palace and very close to the Maharaja. Sardar Urs was a real connoisseur and it was he who scrutinized the plays before they were staged before His Highness. Even the musicians had to sing before him and get his nod of approval.

Kotturappa, as a young householder, after marrying his sister's daughter Shantamma (1913) balanced his life as an artiste and as a family man to the best of his abilities. There are very many unexpected and unanticipated incidents during the course of this narrative which have added elegance and value to the work. One such episode is pertaining to a musical concert in which there was a spontaneous competition between two giants in the field like Bhaskar Rao and Abdul Karim Khan. At the end of the concert, Bhaskar Rao voluntarily declares that the prize should go Karim Khan. But all of a sudden there emerged a person from the audience requesting them to lend their ears for a couple of minutes even as he sang. He sang the raga rendered by Karim Khan and he lifted it to a newer height of glory. As such Karim Khan declared that 'the prize should go to that person and not to him'. But Kotturappa expresses his sadness that this wonderful singer, Rahimath Khan was working in a circus and died an inglorious death becoming a victim of opium.

The episode dealing with how Kotturappa left the palace company and joined Chamundeshwari Company is very poignant as it brings out the dilemma of a creative artiste who wants to be loyal to the old company but at the same time, he cannot brush aside the lure of a greener pasture. It speaks volumes of his talent that they always offered him plum parts, the Abhimanyu in 'Veera Abhimanyu',

Shahjahan in 'Noor Jahan' and Mana Simha in 'Mana Simha'.

As the history of Kannada company theatre has recorded indelibly. Kotturappa acted the role of Karna which was etched in the minds of the spectators all over Karnataka. M.S. Ramaswamy, who was the Principal of Maharaja's College had written the play 'Danashoor Karna'. After Rachappa had died of heart attack Nagendra Rao played the role of Arjuna and Kotturappa donned as Karna. Again M.S. Ramaswamy penned the play 'Santa Thukaram'. As Thukaram, Kotturappa once again won the hearts of the spectators everywhere. He was honoured for this role in places like Thiruchirapalli and Kumbakonam. The period of 'Santa Thukaram' and 'Danashoor Karna' dramas was 1927-28.

Kotturappa was never a spendthrift. In fact his thrifty approach to life made him rich by any standard. Theatre people are not normally known for financial discipline. They make merry when the wind blows favourably and recede into background in adverse circumstances. Because of his disciplined life Kotturappa did not encounter financial difficulties after attaining some stature. He is proud of another fact and that is his moral rectitude concerning women.

After Chamundeshwari Company showed signs of decline Kotturappa was persuaded to join the association 'Sutturina Nataka Kalavilasigalu'. He was already getting old and also he did not want to associate himself with any amateur troupes after having seen the glory of the company theatre. He imposed an impossible demand to the enthusiasts that he would play the role of Karna (the organisers were very particular that he played that role) if they brought him a bag of rice (of hundred kgs

and more). They brought the bag of rice and he played the role.

Kotturappa's autobiography reads like a saga of a successful actor who enjoyed the bounties of theatre. He profusely thanks the spectators of Karnataka that they welcomed his roles even when he was old and ought to have led a retired life. This was a great source of satisfaction for him that the spectators have kept the theatre alive and kicking which is a sure sign of a superior culture. Prof. Prabhuprasad played the role of Kotturappa in the first part (thirtytwo episode chapters) as a biographer (but he had to give the stage to the actor to narrate his life), but in the second part he appears on stage and takes stock of Kotturappa's life and concludes that it is a life that's blessed beyond doubt. Kotturappa had married Shantamma in 1913 and her sister Gangamma in 1919 - both of them happened to be daughters of his elder sister. Gangamma had no issues while Shanthamma had a son Somasundar and a daughter Vasantha.

It is really unfortunate that such a giant of an actor that none of Kotturappa's descendants has entered and made a mark in the field of theatre (Kotturappa also had acted in cinema) to perpetuate his memory. We have heard the stories of how great

scholars' children are found selling their parents' books by their weight soon after their passing away. But the grateful *rasikas* of Karnataka have always cherished the name of Kotturappa for his extraordinary contribution to the theatre.

Prof. Prabhuprasad deserves our deep gratitude for sculpting the life of Kotturappa for the benefit of posterity. His prose is lucid and crystal clear. He has carried out very assiduously the instruction given by Kotturappa at the outset that the narration should be true to his (Kotturappa's) personality without unnecessary embellishment. The reader is thankful to both the actor and the writer as they have enriched our culture by playing their respective roles ably and nobly. The Book Authority of the Government of Karnataka deserves our thanks for publishing this important book when the Nataka Academy procrastinated needlessly and missed the bus. But it is quite revealing and also redeeming that the then Chairman of the Nataka Academy Dr. K. Marulasiddappa became instrumental in getting the book published by the Book Authority through its Chairman, Nelamane Devegowda, a person of great warmth and understanding.

*Shiva, the lord will make his devotees beg and entreat!
He'll rub them like gold for purity on touch stone?
Wet-grind them like sandal-wood!
Press them in crusher sugarcane like!
If they remain steady and sure
Ramantha will lift them up by the hand.*

- Jedara Dashimayya.

News Round-up

1. '*Shivapada Ratnakosha*' a monumental work in Kannada was released online on 28.7.2020 in the gracious presence of H.H. Jagadguru Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji at Mysuru and simultaneously at Bengaluru by Sri B.S. Yediyurappa, Chief Minister of Karnataka. The function at Mysuru was attended by scholars like Dr. T.V. Venkatachala Shastry, Vidwan Dr. H.V. Nagaraja Rao, Dr. C. Shivakumaraswamy, Dr. N.S. Taranath, Dr. M.N. Nandish Hanche, the Swamiji of Kanakapura Math, Sri Pratap Simha, M.P., Dr. C.G. Betsurmata and others. Speaking on the occasion Jagadguruji observed that this work is a boon to those who love religio-cultural history of the land, since it is a mine of explanatory information while at the same time giving appropriate meanings to thousands of technical words in the vast literature covering both Veerashaiva and Shaiva religious panorama. Describing the work as invaluable Sri Siddheshwara Swamiji of Jnanayogashrama, Vijayapura, observed that '*Shivapada Ratnakosha*' is an authentic compendium that introduces Shaiva Siddhanta, Culture and the philosophical concepts of religion as a whole. Speaking about the work Sri B.S. Yediyurappa said that this work published by JSS Granthamale is one among the finest works brought out by Sri Suttur Math. The work reflects just one among the many ambitious projects executed by JSS Mahavidyapeetha being steered by the vi-

sionary saint Jagadguru Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji. The function at Bengaluru was also attended by Sri C.T. Ravi and Sri Basavaraja S. Bommai, both ministers in the Karnataka Government. Sri C.T. Ravi said that this work is a rare gift given to Kannada language and culture. Sri Bommai said that this work is a guiding light in the hands of seekers of wisdom and knowledge. While speaking on this work both Dr. Nirmalanandanatha Swamiji of Adi Chunchanagiri Math and Sri Siddhalinga Swamiji of Sri Siddhaganga Math paid rich tributes to it which they said is of great use to both general readers and scholars and particularly to research scholars.

2. Speaking on the occasion of releasing an immunity increasing kit on 10.8.2020 brought out by JSS Ayurveda Medical College, Mysuru, at Sri Math, Mysuru, Jagadguruji said that the kit assumes significance in the backdrop of Covid-19 pandemic. His Holiness observed that the efficacy of Ayurvedic medicines is time tested since the preparations are based on herbs and other natural elements which hardly have any side effect. Indian medical system is as old as the land primarily guided by the principles of immunity development in human body. Ayurvedic medicines cure the disease as well as develop immunity to resist diseases simultaneously, the Swamiji said. Both Dr. N. Krishnaprasad, Medical officer in the col-

lege and Dr. Sarbeshwarkar, Principal of the college, speaking on the occasion revealed the contents in the kits- Chyavanapras, Haridrarasa, Kashaya Choorna, Rakshnoghna Dhoopa, Anutaila, Snuff and Swamala mixture. They said that these contents if taken as directed will surely increase ones immunity to diseases. Dr. C.G. Betsurmth, Sri Jayarajendra, Sri S. Shivakumaraswamy, Dean Dr. Rajesh Udupudi and others were present.

3. In the gracious presence of Jagadguruji, various associations, trusts and organizations in Mysuru and elsewhere distributed food and essential kits to thousands of families affected by Covid-19 which had put them into terrible hardship. Sri Suttur Math as directed by His Holiness took the initiative in this regard. The organizations which distributed such kits in the presence of Jagadguruji are: 1) Sri Suttur Math and JSS Mahavidyapeetha, 2) Mysuru Citizens Forum, Mysuru, at Mysuru 3) Ex-MLA Sri Vasu family 4) Citizens Forum, Mysuru, at Mysuru 5) Mysuru Citizens Forum, Mysuru, at Nanjangud 5) Sri C.M. Shailendra and Smt. Sunitha Shailendra of Dr. C.N. Mruthyunjayappa family, at Mysuru 6) Dr. C.N. Mruthyunjayappa Family and Moolchand Nahar Charitable Trust, Bengaluru at Mysuru 7) Mysuru Citizens Forum, Mysuru at Mysuru 8) Kaveri Kannada Sangha, America and Moolchand Charitable Trust, Bengaluru at Mysuru, 9) Kaveri Kannada Sangha, America and Moolchand Nahar Charitable Trust, Bengaluru at Mysuru. The beneficiaries are Municipal workers, Tonga Drivers, Street Vendors, Poor families, theatre artists and musicians, journalists, artists of Fine Arts schools and its senior students, temple priests and thousands of other families who had lost their jobs.

Apart from the above as wished by Jagadguruji, 1) Sri Suttur Math and JSS Mahavidyapeetha gave Rs. 5 lakh through cheque to the Mysuru Zoo to take care of animals there 2) Rs. 20 lakh through cheque to the Chief Minister's Covid-19 Relief fund and 3) Rs. 2.50 lakh through cheque to the Chief Minister's Covid-19 Relief Fund by JSS Hostels Senior Students' House Building Co-operative Society, Mysuru and also 4) The Veerashaiva Pontiffs' Association of Mysuru and Chamarajanagar Dist. contributed Rs. 1.50 lakh to the Chief Minister's Covid-19 fund in the presence of Jagadguruji, and the Swamijis of Hosamath, Nilakanthaswamy Math, Harave Math and Kundur Math.

4. Water Resources Minister Sri Ramesh Jarkiholi who visited Suttur Srikshetra on 29.5.2020 and offered puja at the shrine of Adi Jagadguru Sri Shivarathreeshwara Shivayogi in the presence of Jagadguruji and after having a discussion with the Swamiji inspected the progress of work under the scheme of filling river water to irrigation tanks in the region. He later assured that the completion of work will be over soon and the tanks will get water at the earliest. Ex-ministers Sri N. Mahesh, Sri C.P. Yogeshwar, MLAs Dr. Yathindra Siddaramaiah, Sri B. Harshavardhan, Sri C.S. Niranjan Kumar and Sri S.P. Manjunath, Sri Shivakumaraswamy, Sri S.P. Udayashankar and others were present.

5. Vice-President of India Sri M. Venkayyanaidu had a detailed telephonic talk with Jagadguruji on 14.5.2020 as to how the spread of Covid-19 could be kept under check in and around Mysuru. Explaining the situation the Swamiji observed that steps being taken by the Central Government under the guidance of Prime Minis-

ter Sri Narendra Modi have greatly helped to limit the disease from further expansion. Similarly, Sri Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala, Governor of Karnataka, on 2.4.2020 and Sri Bandara Dattatreya, Governor of Himachal Pradesh, on 14.5.2020 made telephonic calls to Jagadguruji and sought his guidance and blessings for success in combating covid-19. Jagadguruji told them that people, in particular, need to fully cooperate with the efforts of the Government departments to register success. The Swamiji observed the personnel involved in the war against covid-19 were indeed performing their duties unmindful of their personal safety. Sri Suttur math, JSS Mahavidyapeetha and various service organizations in Mysuru have on their part volunteered to contribute money, materials, medicines, food and essential kits to the needy and poor, the Swamiji explained.

6. Buddha Jayanthi was celebrated at Sri Suttur math, Mysuru, on 7.5.2020 in the gracious presence of Jagadguruji. Speaking on the occasion Sri Jayarajendra said that the Buddha's teachings are universal that they should not remain as mere words. They need to be put into practise and only then all can move from ignorance to knowledge. Sri Basavalinga Deshikendra Swamy, Sri Immadi Murughi Swamy, Sri Kumara Devaru, Sri Rudrayya Devaru, Sri Shivakumara Devaru and Sri Channrasekhar Swamy including the service personnel at Sri Math were present.

7. Chief Minister Sri B.S. Yediyurappa inaugurated Covid-19 Testing Laboratory, at JSS Hospital, Mysuru, in the graceful presence of Jagadguruji on 29.6.2020. Inaugurating the Laboratory online Sri Yediyurappa said that the disease continues to spread unabated from day to day that all need to take precautionary measures in

full swing. Private hospitals in the State have extended their support to the Governmental efforts to combat the scourge. In this context, establishing this Testing Lab is timely and most welcome. Sri Suttur Math known for its yeoman services has through its health services initiatives in JSS Hospital is doing commendable service, the Chief Minister said. Speaking on the occasion Medical Education Minister Dr. R. Sudhakar said that Sri Suttur Math well known for education, health and Dasoha has been in the forefront of doing good to society. Establishing the latest virology Lab at JSS Hospital is really most welcome and timely. In his benedictory address Jagadguruji called upon the people to remain confident, cautious, and careful which alone will help tide over this national calamity. Cooperation and District in-charge Minister Sri S.T. Somasekhar, MLAs Sri S.A. Ramadas and Sri L. Nagendra spoke on the occasion. Sri S.P. Manjunath, Dr. C.G. Betsurmata, Dr. B. Suresh, Dr. Surender Singh, Dr. B. Manjunath, Dr. P.A. Kushalappa, Dr. H. Basavannagowdappa, Col. Dr. B. Dayanand, Dr. H. Guruswamy and others were present.

8. Following the call given by All India Veerashaiva Mahasabha and Basava Samithi, Bengaluru, Mass Istalinga worship, led by H.H. Jagadguruji was performed at Sri Math, Mysuru, on 13.4.2020 for peace, health, welfare, and happiness of all and praying for strength and courage to overcome the crisis created by the pandemic in the country.

9. Speaking at the 20th Mahakumbhabhisheka ceremony of Sri Kalabhairaveshwara Swamy temple at Adi Chunchanagiri, on 4.3.2020 H.H. Jagadguru Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji, who graced the occasion, observed that any number of

material possessions will not assure happiness let alone enduring peace and well being. Only spiritual endeavours, if inculcated and practised in life will surely promise the desired ends and goals. And this is made possible if one leads god-conscious life, he stated. Recalling the spiritual eminence of Dr. Sri Balaganga-dharanatha Swamiji, Jagadguruji observed, he was a great guru who has left behind the impression of his motherly love on the populace and whose life was dedicated to the well being of all and sundry in society. Speaking on the occasion Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade, Dharmadhikari, Sriksheetra, Dharmasthala, said that all monasteries and Maths of South India have continued to serve mankind since ages, a matter of pride and remembrance. Dr. Sri Nirmalanandanatha Mahaswamiji, pontiff of Adi Chunchanagiri Math, said that the country is facing many problems which science and technology alone cannot solve. People need to become responsive and responsible that individual accountability is the need of the time, the Swamiji opined. Swasthisri Charukeerthi Bhattaraka Swamiji and Sri Shivananda Bharathi Swamiji graced the occasion. Former Chief Minister Sri H.D. Kumara Swamy, MLAs Sri C.S. Puttaraju, Sri Sa.Ra. Mahesh, Sri Murugesh Nirani, Sri K. Sureshgowda, Sri Sharath Bachchegowda, Sri L. Shivaramgowda and others were present.

10. Inaugurating the 30th anniversary celebrations of Bharath Cancer Hospital, Mysuru on 29.2.2020, Jagadguruji observed that health of a person alone will help him achieve goals in life. In this context Bharath Cancer Hospital has already served thousands in its glorious existence of 30 years and will do so in the years to come. Dr. Ajay Kumar, Chief of the Hospital

said that the Hospital has served sincerely over 60000 patients so far and will do so in the coming years with dedication and commitment. Rev. Dr. K.A. William, Bishop of Mysuru, Sri Jaffer Mohiddin, Dr. M.S. Vishweshwara, Smt. Anjali Ajaykumar and others were present in the function.

11. In connection with the 105th Jayanthi Celebrations of Jagadguru Dr. Sri Shivarathri Rajendra Mahaswamiji, the Annual Oration and the Teachers' Day were celebrated at Sri Rajendra Centenary Auditorium, JSS Hospital, online on 5.9.2020 in the gracious presence of Jagadguru Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji. The Annual Oration was delivered by Dr. Randeep Guleria, Director, AIIMS, New Delhi and moderated by Dr. B. Suresh, Pro-Chancellor, JSS AHER and Dr. K.S. Satish, President, Karnataka Pulmonology Association. The function was attended by a host of dignitaries. Giving his benedictory address Jagadguruji said that the Oration given by Dr. Randeep Guleria on the occasion was timely and relevant. Recalling the services of the late Jagadguruji and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, former President of India and a great teacher, the Swamiji said that Dr. Randeep Guleria's views on the present crisis created by Covid-19 should guide one and all in combating the disease. Any amount of discussion or interactions will hardly work. But concerted action alone will put an end to the crisis, Jagadguruji said. Dr. C.G. Betsurmath, Dr. Surinder Singh, Dr. B. Manjunatha, Dr. Col. Dayananda, M., Dr.H. Basavana Gowdappa, Dr. B.J. Sharath Chandra, Dr. Subramaniyan and others were present.



PHOTO GALLERY



H.H. Jagadguru Dr. Sri Shivarathri Rajendra Mahaswamiji's 105th Birthday Celebration was inaugurated on 29.8.2020 by Sri Rajanath Singh, Defence Minister, Govt. of India, online from Delhi. Present in the picture at Mysuru are Jagadguruji, Minister Sri S.T. Somashekar, MLC Sri Adagur H. Vishwanath, M.P. Sri Pratap Simha, Prof.. Mallepuram G. Venkatesh, Sri S.P. Manjunath and Dr. C.G. Betsurmath.



The 105th Jayanthi Celebration of Jagadguru Dr. Sri Shivarathri Rajendra Mahaswamiji was inaugurated online by Sri Rajanath Singh, Defence Minister, Govt. of India on 29.8.2020 from Delhi. Chief Minister Sri B.S. Yediyurappa, MoS for Railways Sri Suresh Angadi, MPs, Former Prime Minister Sri H.D. Devegowda, Dy. Chief Minister Sri C.N. Ashwath Narayan and Opposition Party Leader Sri Siddaramaiah are in the picture at Bengaluru.



In connection with 105th Birthday Celebration of H.H. Jagadguru Dr. Sri Shivarathri Rajendra Mahaswamiji an online interaction on 'Covid-19: Challenges & the Management' was arranged on 29.8.2020. Jagadguruji, Sri D. Veerendra Heggade, Dharmadhikari, Dharmasthala, Dr. Manoj Sinha, Governor, Jammu & Kashmir, Smt. Sudha Murthy, Minister Dr. K. Sudhakar, Film Actor Sri Darshan, Dr. B. Suresh, Sri H.V. Rajiv, Sri S.P. Manjunath, Dr. H. Basavanagowdappa, Dr. Surinder Singh and Dr. M. Nandish Hanche took part in the programme.



Jagadguruji is blessing Film Actor Sri Darshan Tugudeepa on 29.8.2020 when he visited Sri Math in connection with 105th Jayanthi Celebration of Jagadguru Dr. Sri Shivarathri Rajendra Mahaswamiji.



Jagadguruji is honouring R.S.S. Pramukh Sri Mohan Bhaagavat with his blessings who visited Sri Math at Mysuru on 17.3.2020.



The Swamijis of Sri Hosamath, Sri Harave Math, Sri Nilakanthaswamy Math and Sri Kunduru Math as members of Mysuru-Chamarajanagar District Pontiffs' Association are seen presenting a cheque for Rs. 1.50 Lakh to Corona-19 Relief Fund on 11.4.2020 to Sri S.T. Somasekhar, Mysuru-District-in charge and Co-Operation Minister in the gracious presence of H.H. Jagadguruji, at Sri Suttur Math, Mysuru. Agriculture Minister Sri B.C. Patil, former Minister Sri Adaguru H. Vishwanath, Sri Pratap Simha, M.P. and others were present.



A simple Basava Jayanthi in the backdrop of Covid-19 was celebrated in the gracious presence of H.H. Jagadguruji at Sri Math, Mysuru, on 26.4.2020 attended by the sadhaks of JSS Gurukula and others.



Jagadguruji is presenting a cheque for Rs five lakh gifted by Sri Math and JSS Mahavidyapeetha to Sri B.P. Ravi, Member Secretary, and Sri Ajith M. Kulkarni, Executive Director, Mysuru Zoo Authority for animal welfare through Ministers Sri Jagadish Shettar, Sri S.T. Somashekar and Sri Bhairati Basavaraj on 8.5.2020. Smt. Tasnim, Mayor, Sri Pratap Simha, M.P., Sri B. Harshavardhan, MLA, Sri M.K. Somashekhar, Ex-MLA and others were present.



Jagadguruji is seen amid the members of the team from JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research and Ideas Unlimited who invented moveable ICU, Dental Chair Sanitizer and other equipments on display on 8.5.2020. Dr. B. Manjunath, Dr. S. Balasubramaniam, Dr. B. Nandalal, Dr. Sreenivasamurthy, Dr. B. Suresh, Sri S.P. Manjunath, Sri Nagendra R. Shetty, Dr. C.G. Betsurmamath, Sri R. Mahesh and others were present.



To Municipal workers, Tonga operators and others affected by Covid-19 food-kits were distributed by Mysuru Citizens Forum in the gracious presence of H.H. Jagadguru Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji on 8.5.2020. Ministers Sri Jagadeesh Shettar, Sri S.T. Somashekhar, Sri Bhairati Basavaraj, Sri Pratap Simha, M.P., MLAs Sri S.A. Ramadas, Sri G.T. Devegowda, Sri B. Harshavardhan, Ex-MLAs Sri M.K. Somashekar, Mayor Smt. Tasnim, Dy. Mayor Sri C. Sridhar, Commissioner Sri Gurudatta Hegade, Sri R. Vasudeva Bhat, Dr. R. Balasubramanya, Sri R. Narendra, Smt. Rashmi Koti, Sri C.G. Betsurmamath, Sri S.P. Manjunath and others were present.



Jagadguruji is felicitating Minister Sri K.S. Ishwarappa when he visited Sri Math at Mysuru on 21.5.2020 seeking his blessings. Sri Jayarajendra, Sri S.P. Manjunath, Dr. C.G. Betsurmath and others were present.



Home Minister Sri Basavaraj Bommai is being felicitated and blessed by Jagadguruji when he visited Sri Math at Mysuru on 22.5.2020. Sri Jayarajendra, Sri S.P. Manjunath and others were present.



In the gracious presence of H.H. Jagadguruji the family of Ex-MLA Sri Vasu distributed food grains and other essential items kit to 3000 poor families on 17.5.2020 at Sri Mahadeshwara Kalyana Mantap, Paduvarahalli, Mysuru. Jagadguru Dr. Sri Nirmalanandanatha Swamiji of Adi Chunchanagiri Math, Sri Somanatha Swamiji, Sri Vasu, Dr. C. Naganna, Prof. M. Krishnegowda and others were present.



The 24th Mahaprayan day of the 10th guru of Therapanth, Acharya Sri Tulasi, was celebrated in the gracious presence of H.H. Jagadguruji at Suttur Srikshetra on 7.6.2020. Sri Jayarajendra, Sri Arhanth Muniji, Sri Bharath Muniji and devotees were present.



On the occasion of Sri Kempegowda's 511th Jayanthi Celebrations on 27.6.2020 foundation laying puja ceremony for installing his bronze statue and establishing central park around it in the premises of Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru was held. Jagadguru Dr. Sri Nirmalanandanatha Swamiji of Adi Chunchanagiri Math, H.H. Jagadguruji, Sri Siddhalinga Swamiji of Sri Siddhaganga Math, former Prime Minister Sri H.D. Devegowda, Chief Minister Sri B.S. Yediyurappa, Dy. Chief Minister Dr. C.N. Ashwath Narayan, Sri D.K. Shivakumar, Sri Govinda Karajola, Sri S.R. Vishwanath and others were present.



In the gracious presence of H.H. Jagadguruji the book *Shivapada Ratnakosha* was released online on 28.7.2020 at Sri Math, Mysuru. Dr. C.G. Betsurmath, Sri Pratap Simha, Dr. Nandish Hanche, Swamiji of Kanakapura, Dr. T.V. Venkatachala Shastry, Vidwan H.V. Nagaraja Rao, Dr. N.S. Taranath, Dr. C. Shivakumara Swamy and others were present.



On the occasion of celebrating World Environmental Day at Sri Math, Mysuru on 5.6.2020 by planting fruit bearing trees and other plants H.H. Jagadguruji is seen watering a plant. Sri R.S. Chinnappa, Sri S. Shivashankarappa, Kannada Book Authority president Dr. Nandish Hanche and Dr. Sri Rudramunidevaru of Alamatti Sri Puravara Hiremath were present.



Chief Minister Sri B.S. Yediyurappa is releasing the book *Shivapada Rathanakosha*, published by JSS Granthamale, Mysuru, online, on 28.7.2020 at Bengaluru. Home Minister Sri Basavaraja S. Bommai, Dy. Chief Minister Sri Govinda Karajola and Kannada, Culture and Tourism Minister Sri C.T. Ravi were present.

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A View of the Adi Jagadguruji Shrine Complex at Suttur flooded by the waters of the river Kapila, this season.

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