

Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Philosophy of Shivasharanas

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Abstract: Mahatma Basaveshwara was the founder of Lingayat /Virasaiva religion in Karnataka in India. He was a social- economic, religious, and political, culture and literature reformer of 12th century. He was the founder of Anubhava Mantapa (First World Parliament) in Kalyana (now called as Basavakalya). And wrote Vachanas (prose-poetry literature) in Kannada. His period also called as the Vachana Yuga. Along with him other 770 Vachanakaras (those who wrote Vachanas) and 33 women Vachanakartis wrote Vachanas and enriched the Kannada literature and culture. Most of the Vachanakaras Vachanas focuses on welfare of all human beings. While studying Vachanas we also found the those focuses on against caste system, emancipation of women, upliftment of Dalits and untouchability, mystical and spiritual knowledge, Istalinga worship, Virasaiva tenets and practices by devotees. Even these Vachana Sahitya is unique in Indian Literature and Culture. It has its own form, characteristics, and methods. While studying the Vachanas one has to balance the spiritual and material life. While I am studying Vachanakaras Vachanas I found that many Vachanakaras focuses on the morality, non-violence, truth, inner and outer purity, mind concentration and welfare of all humanbeings. In this paper selected Vachanakaras (Shivasharanas) focuses on mental health and wellbeing Vachanas considered for study. The eminent Vachanakaras like Basaveshwara, Allamaprabhu, Akkamahadevi , Siddharameshwara and Chennabasaveshwaras, Jedara Dasimaya, Urlilinga , Molige Marayya, Nuliya Candayya, Revamma, Akkama, Madivala Machideva, Sakalesha Maadarasa, Sarvadya Vachana's reviewed for this research work. These Shivasharanas Vachanas help us to purify our mental, spiritual, social, economic, and cultural self.

Keywords: Basaveshwara, Vachana Sahitya, Shivasharanas, Anubhava Mantapa, Mental health

INTRODUCTION

Basaveshwara's Vachanas guided many people not only in the 12th century but in present time also. Basaveshwara established Anubhava Mantapa at Kalyana. (Uttagi:1989) Many Shivasharanas participated there. Almost all saints have sung their realization in different strains and expressed their views and opinions on men and society in varied sayings. The collection of these sayings is known as the Vachana Sahitya, the scripture of the Virasaiva faith.(Malwad, 1980).

The founding of the Anubhava Mantapa was really an outstanding work of Mahatma Basaveshwara. All congregated in the Anubhava Mantapa for the purpose of advancement of spiritual knowledge and discussed their individual experiences. It was after deliberations that they used to reach conclusion. The Sharanas used to carry the same to the people. One could

not envisage a more effective or more democratic process of understanding each other's views than the members of the Anubhava Mantapa. (Halakati , 1935).

The Sharanas, who made spirituality, their way of life, used it as background, for everything they did. The Sharanas who welfare of every living creature, brought many progressive ideas, such as, labour, honest and pure: dignity of labour; equality to woman (with men); economic equality; removal of difference based on caste; condemnation of sacrifices involving the killing of animals etc.

The Vachanas of the Sharanas are spontaneous outpourings of heart. As such the body of Vachanas is good literature. In the Vachanas, Sharanas have expressed their views on individual as well as social problems. As eternal principles are discussed there, the Vachanas are called Vachana Shastra also. There is intimacy as well as sublimity in the Vachanas. There is vast body of Vachana literature enriched by so many Sharanas.(Malwad , 1980).

Vachanas are a unique text that delivers valuable message to entire mankind. Experiences of life is shared and compiled in few lines of Vachana. Sharanas recited such verses and led their life with devotion and spirituality. These Vachanas are priceless gift to the entire mankind ,Mr. Jatti said. The Sharanas practiced what they preached and tried to bring in social harmony and equality.(Arvind Jatti, 2014).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- To study the Lingayat Religion from a historical perspective.
- To study the cultural and social contribution made by Shivasharanas (saints) of the Lingayat Religion.
- To study the Shivasharanas Philosophy and Its Relevance to Mental Health and Wellbeing.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study will be a descriptive and an analytical one. By and large historical approach has been adopted in the description. All the writings and documents of Vachana Sahitya in Kannada and other languages constitute the primary sources. Books, Research articles and critical evaluations by experts and other scholar's opinions constitute the secondary sources.

Along, Survey, method will be adopted in this research. The questionnaire is filled by Mathadhishas, scholars, and devotees. Besides this, whenever necessary, research will be done, theoretically. Observation technique is adopted to collect the primary data.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Purity of mind is essential since it is the root cause for all activities of the world. *Sharanas* focused on this point for spiritual practice “Pure mind is the abode of God” this was a conclusion arrived out of their own experience. Mind trust due to evil thoughts and bad conduct and causes to forget our divine origin. Good conduct cleans it and leads to an understanding of the Reality. Bronze out of which utensils and mirrors are made is the same. Only cleaned and polished surface of this metal can be used as a mirror and polished surface of this metal can be used as a mirror and we can see our face in it and not in an ordinary bronze. Similarly it is possible to see God through pure mind. Basavanna set forth seven codes of conduct to purify mind namely steal not, kill not, speak not lie, be not angry, scorn not others, praise not the self and blame not others. Practice of these codes of conduct will lead towards life divine and realization of God. This is the essence of all the religions in the world. Humanity should march on this path to evolve a better world order. **Basava** says (Deverappa, 1967):

Thou shall not steal nor 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

Akkamahadevi Vachanas underline the fact the spiritual freedom is achieved through victory over physical desire. Akkamahadevi emphasized the purity of body because she speaks as a woman to think that the body was the province of her power. Akkamahadevi rejects this patriarchal proposition in a spiritual sense and highlights the need to achieve loss of the shame of body and stand before the Divine Reality in the 'nudity of pure being'. Basaveshwara praising **Akkamahadevi** in one of his Vachanas testifies to the fact that her spiritual enlightenment had reached this very level. In her own haunting Vachanas she articulates her values and attitudes; some excerpts are useful to make the point (Vijaya Guttal, 2003):

Illusion of body's shame lost

Love of life's shame lost

Memory of mind's shame burnt

Knowing that mind's merging

Is to stand nude before God

Shedding eagerness,

Affection and commerce

Lord Kudala Sanagamadeva

This is the mother Mahadevi's stance

The following Vachana support the philosophical, inner purity, righteous path and self service, Kayaka and Dasoha expressed by **Akkamahadevi** (Raghshanka Bhatambra,2016):

Pure Behaviour, Pure Talk

Pure Body, Pure Mind,

Pure thought, swimming in the five-lakes

Equal importance is given to purity of mind and the avoidance of pretence. The polluted mind and pretence are disqualifications for anyone to undertake the task of Dasoha. **Nuliya Candayya** who is known for his strict observance of Kayaka rules is of the opinion that

offering things with purity of mind is equivalent to worshipping the Lord Shiva. Listen to him (Shivanna, 2008):

“From whatever kind of work it comes,
To offer it with purity of heart
To Guru, Lina and Jangama, that is
Worship of Siva; will it not
Be welcome to Candesvaralinga,
O Madivalayya?”

Kannadi Kayakada Revamma belongs to the barber community, another low-caste community. Kannadi Kayaka means hair-dressing, beautifying, etc. She has left behind only one Vachana which bears the ankita ‘Sadguru Sanga Nirangalinga’. She is a staunch Shivasharane, who is Kayaka-bound and who displays her firm faith in Guru, Linga and Jangama worship. Kannadi is a meaningful metaphor for mind and Linga. One’s mind should be as clean as a mirror, for only a clean mind can reflect a clear image of the Self. She burns with indignation against the violators of vow. (Yaravintelimath, 2006,) . She asks the violators of vows a blunt question:

Why not look into the mirror when the mirror
Is in your own hand?
Why not kill those who err in respect of
The prasada of Linga and Jangama?

Not taking the others food and avoid more salt which causes the many disease says **Akkama** in one her Vachana (Yaravintelimath, 2006):

Not eating other’s food is one kind of Vrata.
Not eating salt, saying it is a forbidden thing, is another Vrata.

Mentally giving up a tasteless food is yet another Vrata.

For a person who is ever occupied with these three Vratas

There is no time for any other Vrata.

There is no room for abundant speech.

They are free, each to follow his own Vrata.

You yourself know it.,

O Acarave Pranavada Ramesvaralinga !

Good mind and positive thing and purity gave assurance to family relations say **Urilingadeva** in his Vachana:

Just as water washes pollution

you wash clean the darkness of mind

and stay like reflection in mirror,

Urilingapeddipriya Visveshwara.

Natural instincts, which make us to have them, should be elevated to the divine level and accept them as Prasada of God as sanctioned by moral and religious rules.

Siddharameshwara says (Virupakshappa, 2001):

If a devotee has a wish for a woman

Let him marry and get her

If a devotee has a wish for land

Let him purchase it and build a house,

If a devotee has wish for money

Let him labour for it and get it,

O, Kapila Siddhamallikarjuna.

In this Vachana too Basava calls his devotees to have a determined steadfast mind in their pursuit of spirituality. He says one should have great courage to cast aside another's wife or property.

The Sarana must have the constancy to say,

'I will not have another's wealth';

The Sarana must have the constancy to say,

'I will not have another's wife';

The Sarana must have the constancy to say,

I will not have another's god:

The Sarana must have the constancy to say,

Linga and Jangama are one

The Sarana must have the constancy to say,

Prasada is the Truth

Lord Kudalasangama disdains

Such men as have no constancy.

Thus, according to the ethics of Virasaiva religion, suppression of physical impulse, energy and mental desires is sinful and results in various kinds of social disorders and pathos. The utilization of human impulses in proper moral and socially –approved way is not against God and religion.(Suryakant Ghughare, 1995) According to Basaveshwara, ascetic life should not be imposed on someone against his will, unless he chooses it spontaneously.

Sakalesha Maadarasa stated that one should obey his own mind and heart and practice what preached in one of his Vachana" (Kalburgi, 2012):

I am not true in my mind

Then, what I gain by worshipping?

I have one thing in my mind, another in my speech, look.

My body is a devotee, but my mind is worldly,
Sakaleshwaradeva.

Good character is necessary for good family life. Mind must be control and not to disturb after seeing the other's wife. In family life husband and wife both are faithful to each other says **Madivala Maachideva** in one of his Vachana:

Creatures should not be killed,
others should not be abused,
words should not hurt,
seeing other's wives mind should not be disturbed.
Then the shivaloka is in one's palm
said Kalidevaradeva.
Palm said Kalidevaradeva.

Education for life or education relevant to life is one which helps the development of both interior and exterior of man. Life for education provides equal opportunities for the development of material and spiritual aspect of man's life.

Knowledge without action is meaningless like the pounding of husk. **Chennabasavanna** describes the importance of action in clear – cut terms (Hiremath, 1978):

Action is knowledge,
And that knowledge is action.
Knowledge means to understand,
Action means to act as understood.
Not to commit adultery
With other women is knowledge,
To put that into practice is action.

Failing to act accordingly is ignorance,
O, Kudala Chennasangama Lord!

Therefore, real knowledge is to convert whatever we know into action; otherwise it is as bad ignorance.

The famous Kannada poet **Sarvajna** states in one of his Vachanas (Virupakshappa, 2001):

Do not think that your
Eyes, tongue and
Minds are yours';
Do not say that others
Can harm you;
It is these sense organs of yours
Which can harm you, O Sarvajna.

Therefore control your sense organs, particularly the mind which is the seed for all activities. If we could engage our mind in right thinking and in right actions no catastrophe can fall on us. This is the immortal message of the *Sharanas*. We have to evolve our personality in the light of this message.

Jedara Dasimayya in his Vachana for mental peace spirituality is also important said in one of his Vachana (Ramanujan ,1973),:

Without spiritual practice this body has grown weak.
Spiritual practice is the support for this body.
Those who are with the spiritually experienced
have no rebirth Raamanaatha.

Shivasharanas/ Virasaiva Movement upheld the dignity of women. Female body was no more a curse or hindrance to achieve spiritual heights. The conviction of the movement that man and woman are essentially equal formed the base for other gender related changes. The newly

emerging sense of equality brought in self awareness and confidence in women. The following Vachana of **Siddharamma** (Marulasiddaiah,1998) will summaries the attitude of the Virasaiva Movement towards women:

A Woman is not just a female;
A woman is not a demon either;
But a woman is really the eminent
Lord Kapilasiddha Mallikarjuna

Allamaprabhu , the another Shivasharana of Virashaiva movement was also of the opinion that, women is not an illusion, she is also a living being like that of man in every existence of nature to consider women as an illusion is nothing but having inferior feelings about women and their (male) self superiority feelings. It is nothing but the feeling the self aggrandizement of the male it is also unjust to blame women as an illusion and path to sin. That is why he exalted spiritual soul, who presided over Anubhava Mantapa observes the following Vachana (Basavaraju , 1969):

“They say that, women is an enticement
No, no she is not so
They say that, money is an enticement
No, no, it is not do
They say that landed property is an enticement
No, no it is not so,
The real enticement is the insatiable
Appetite of mind
Lord Guheshwara”

Therefore, Basaveshwara and other Shivasharanas also condemned the concept of women as an illusion instead of this, they expressed that, women is not illusion and even not responsible for the downfall of man or path to hell. So, women, money and property are not temptations.

But the main reason for the temptation is man's uncontrolled inner desires. Thus, Allamaprabhu said that, man die of woman, wealth and landed property. Every man gives more importance to three things than any other in his life. The main reason for these nothing but his lust to possess them.

Basaveshwara expounded his concept of equality out of his own experience. He was essentially a humanist and fought for humanity. According to him, "The spirit within the body knows neither difference of male and female nor that of master or servant." (Palekar ,1997).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

- Teaching Vachana Sahitya is beneficial to all. Teaching Vachana Sahitya to students will help them to build a good character; to scholars will increase more research work and new ideas will be known; to commoners people learn to value it and solve some social problems in the society.
- Work as worship becomes a revolutionary force in a period where the global economic system is based on the end to work. "Kayaka" in contemporary times can create new energies to end unemployment and inequality.
- These Vachanas unique in sense, it has the power of exerting a greater influence in promoting the welfare of the world. It has the great quality of elevating man to Godhood.
- It teaches moral values, how to behave in the society, judgment on rights or wrong – relationship between men and women; convey the message of dignity of labour.
- The attitude of men towards women and realization of social and moral responsibility towards women is given in Basaveshwara and Vachanakaras (Shivasharanas) literature, which is very necessary in the present world. Basaveshwara and Vachanakaras had heralded an age of honour, economic and social equality for women. Because of them till today also many Virasaiva women equally participated in many fields.
- These Vachanas unique in sense, it has the power of exerting a greater influence in promoting the welfare of the world. It has the great quality of elevating man to Godhood.

- The Shivasharanas thoughts should be introduce in the syllabus for primary to university level. Because of it personality development, communication skills and life skills lessons learnt by students in higher education institutions.
- The devotee follows the Vachanakaras thoughts and philosophy in their life.
- The common people respect and proud about the Vachana Sahitya, Vachanakaras and Basaveshwara's works for welfare of all.
- To understand the Anubhava Mantapa (World First People's Democracy) liberty, equality and fraternity found 900 years ago in India and its role model to all democratic countries of the world.

IMPLICATIONS

- AICTE promoted the taught the Basaveshwara's thoughts and philosophy in Indian colleges and universities for establishing the peoples democracy. So indirectly this project encourages the IKS, NEP-2020 for doing the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary study in higher education and research.
- The study wills Religion is one of the best medium to propagate our cultural values among people. It promote the aims of IKS among the Indian people about Lingayat religion, tenets, practices and mathas works in detail through this research work.
- The study will be helpful to respect our saint –poet's works and thoughts along with the respect for our culture.
- It also helps to the personality development of the people.
- It helps us to build unity and integrity in the society.

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