

Dear Sirs,

The following is a reply sent to a relative of mine in response to certain literature sent by him on *Siddhantha Shikhamani*. I shall be thankful if there is a critical response to the content below for a better understanding of what is what.

Letter in response to *Siddhamatha Shikhamani*: 04.09.2017

Dear Sir,

The following is my response to *Siddhanatha Shikhamani* you have sent on Whatsapp some time ago.

(1) While writing the following reply, I have relied upon Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy by John Grimes for the meanings of the Sanskrit words given in the literature sent by you. Initially I thought of ignoring the “*bhashya*” or the commentary furnished under each of the stanza. The reason for this is that *bhashyakaras* (commentators) heavily rely upon their ideological position. Knowingly or unknowingly their prejudices creeps into their commentaries. This obviously results in loss of objectivity. I do not claim that I am free from prejudice. My prejudice, if at all it can be called a prejudice, is anchored in dignity and equality.

(2) We do come across commentaries deviating from the real meaning of what is said in the original text. Sometimes even wrong meaning is adduced to the original text. If any commentary is to be objective it should be founded only on the text, supported by the history of the times the text was composed.

(3) To my surprise, I am able to come upon why the word “*Veera*” was prefixed to the word “*Saivism*”. This is available in the commentary on the stanza 16 by way of a quotation from elsewhere. The narration or a blunt English translation of the verses is followed by my understanding along with my comments.

(4) We will discuss as an introduction to understand the words, Shiva, the Lord, the Ultimate Reality, the Brahman, Samadhi, etc. These words are used by mystics to name mystic experience or zero experience. Some of these words are also used in the verses of the literature sent by you as well. However, I would like to use the word **That** and **It** (with capital T and capital I) to name the zero experience, *Samadhi*, Ultimate Reality, the Lord, the Brahman, etc.

(5) Before proceeding further let us try to know what is **That**. In the course of the discussion we may also, if possible, tumble upon who is **That**, or why is **That**, how is **That**, where is **That**, etc. We all know how important the questions beginning with what, where, why, who, how, etc. have played in making our lives comfortable. If people like Socrates, Galileo Galilee and others had not questioned the received wisdom of their times, especially of the church, science and technology would not have progressed the way it has progressed and we would not have had the comfortable lives we are all having today.

(6) The experience of the Brahman or That and its knowledge is defined as mystic experience in anthropology and in theology (experience of the Brahman in Hinduism, Nirvana in Buddhism, I am not aware of the word used in Sufi tradition, Grace or Bliss in Christianity).

(7) What is mystic experience? Anthropologists as well as the scriptures, especially the Hindu scriptures, say that when there is mystic experience, one will not be able to differentiate between the subject (i.e. the experiencer) and the object (i.e. the experience) and that the experience is highly pleasurable or ecstatic. In other ecstatic experiences, such as orgasm, the individual will be able to discern himself (herself) not only from the experience of orgasm itself, but will also be able to see other objects around him (her) as different from himself (herself). But this is not the case with mystic experience.

(8) When a mystic is under the spell of That, he will not be able to see a chair in front of him as a different object; he will have a feeling that he is the chair in addition to he being himself; if he is cycling, it is the cycle which is cycling and not he, and that he himself is the cycle and the cycle is he; he will not find the difference from the chair he is sitting on and the chair itself; if he sees a person he will not be able to notice that the person he saw is different from himself; thus he sees himself and entire universe as One and not as different objects. Thus a mystic says that he and the universe are one and the same; they are not different entities. In addition to this there is the feeling of ecstasy; there is enjoyment. The difference between any other enjoyment or any other experience and zero experience is that, here there is no enjoyer or experiencer in zero experience; there is only enjoyment or experience, leading to complete loss or absence of the self, the ego. Absence of self or ego is eulogized in every religion.

(9) Anthropological literature says that not all human beings have mystic experience. Some have and others do not. Why all cannot is not known. Aghananda Bharati, a well-known mystic says that it is difficult to subject mystic experience to scientific investigation. Generally mystics are secluded people. They do not mingle with others. They are aloof. They do not talk about **That** with others. If at all they talk, they talk about **It** only to other mystics or those who are very close to them. I read the book about mysticism (Light at the Center – Context and Pretext of Mysticism by Aghananda Bharati) when I was young; mystic experience had not yet been subjected to scientific investigation then. I do not know the position now.

(10) There are chances that certain drugs (like LSD) may induce the experience in some. This however does not mean that all who take to drugs will have mystic experience. Many sadhus on the plains of the Himalayas pursue **That** with the help of drugs. Not all. In monasteries some pursue **That** their entire life. Again some may have, and many without having the experience of **That** even once.

(11) Mystics have recorded that when one has **That** experience for the first time or without having heard that there is such an experience, they may get totally scared and would try to get out of the experience, by indulging in too much physical activity. However, once **It** is experienced and Its knowledge is remembered one would wish to continue to have the experience frequently and for a length of time. Mystic experience is a most pleasurable experience. This makes mystics seek it frequently. Sri Ramakrishna used to cry, if the experience did not recur. This has been recorded by his followers.

(12) India has had, and now also has, many mystics. Ramana Maharshi, Ma Amritananda Mayi, Adi Sankara, Jiddu Krishnamurthi, etc. Ma Amritananda Mayi is one who is alive. It is not known whether Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev and Sri Sri Ravishankar are mystics. Their statements are similar to those of mystics.

(13) Statements of mystics are full of metaphors and allegories (e.g. of Allama's). Sometimes they are contradictory and most of the time confusing. This may be due to lack of development of suitable vocabulary for mystic experience. However, language of the mystics has been used by people like Sri Sri Ravishankar and Jaggi Vasudev to confuse gullible audiences or to cover up their own lack of clarity.

(14) Lord Krishna creates immense confusion in Arjuna in the *Bhagavat Gita*. Certainly the Bhagavat Gita confuses more than clarifying. This does not mean that the Gita is to be derided. The Gita is one of the finest literary texts, if not for its content. It has to be read as a piece of literature for enjoyment and not as a sacred text. We have innumerable commentaries on the Gita either to clarify or to confuse. Any objectivist will vouch that the commentaries are more confusing than the Gita itself; each commentary, including Dr Radhakrishnan's, confusing the other and all confusing the whole population.

(15) Generally a mystic has disregard for and discards all material things in life (like Allama did), including name and fame; such is the nature of mystics; however, there may be deviants who may pursue material things, like Jaggi Vasudev. It is not known whether the known mystic Ma Amritananda Mayi has vigorously denounced her supporters and followers not to praise her. It is pertinent to point out that mystics are wary about talking about it. Any probing will make them a recluse.

(16) Scholars consider the Vedas, Saiva Agamas, Puranas and Vachanas of Basava and others as the sacred texts of Veerasaivism; whereas, for Saiva Siddhantins, in addition to Saiva Agamas and the Vedas and a host of scriptures originated in Tamil Nadu are considered as sacred texts. We will try to know why the word *veera* is prefixed to *Saiva* to name it as *Veera Saiva* later. The word Lingayat is a general term referred to those who are followers of *Veera Saivism*; this again is according to the dictionary on Indian Philosophy already quoted.

(17) Only today i.e. 04.09.2017 I came to know that *veera saivism* originated in 13-14 century CE while reading an article by Jamadara SM in Prajavani. He also narrates how it came about from *Araadhya Brahmins* who got converted to **Lingayat** sect, but could not get rid of *Vaidika* principles and practices. It is needless to say that *Vaidika* principles and practices vehemently want continuation of *varnashrama*, the graded caste system, like the wealthy of the yore wanted continuation of slavery. They were against abolition of slavery and were disillusioned when slavery was abolished 200 years ago. Similarly the upper castes do not want abolition of caste system, which is immoral. Gandhi and many other leaders of the Congress wanted continuation of caste system. Now the entire Sangh parivar and its off shoot BJP wants its continuation The caste system in India is so beautifully constructed that every caste has some other caste below it to dominate.

(18) It is common knowledge that man (also woman) takes out his anger on somebody else; it is in his nature to dominate or subjugate others, especially when there is anger or a fear of losing one's position or privilege. The Hindu scriptures sanction discriminations. Any sanctioned discrimination surely lends support to domination and subjugation normalizing it. In the caste system, you will

invariably find a caste below yours to dominate and subjugate. This meets the requirements of the nature of human beings, where the powerful will find someone vulnerable to subjugate, which is sanctioned by 'sacred' texts and practice, if not by law. Caste system is immoral. A religion which favours caste system is an immoral religion.

(19) The caste system beautifully meets the nature of human beings; and the nature of human beings is guided by the pleasure principle. What is pleasure principle? (I do not know who the author of the pleasure principle is). According to pleasure principle thoughts and actions of man are always either in the direction of pursuit of pleasure or avoidance of pain. If we can objectively observe our own self, this becomes amply clear. This can be observed in others also. So is it with societies or communities. Jiddu Krishnamurti once said that a society is an extension of an individual. Even behavior of nation states is guided by pleasure principle.

(20) The caste system grants certain privileges on account of which and on account of the nature of interactions we have amongst different castes makes an upper caste man to look down upon a lower caste man and a lower caste man to look upon the upper caste man. The child observes this and the idea becomes a sort of innate in it. Similar is the case of the relationship between the wealthy and the poor. No individual would like to discard such a privilege inherited either by way of caste or by way of wealth, which comes free of cost and with no effort. The inheritor of the caste gets the privilege free of his own effort. The inheritor of wealth gets it, though immorally, without contributing anything for creation of wealth, only because the law purports. Inherited wealth thus is unearned and is stolen from those who contributed for it, including the labour. Profit of Adam Smith and surplus value of Marx can rightly be called stolen assets hence immoral.

Now the verses of the text sent by you:

(21) Stanza 14: While taking into account *kama* (desire) and considering the later part of the treatise (viz, Agamas), it can certainly be said that Shiva, the Ultimate Reality, the Lord has himself has said *Veera Saivism* is a great religion. Here, Lord Shiva is considered as having the form of a human being. Stanza 15 says '*vidyaayaam shivaroopayaam*', meaning that one who is educating himself in understanding **That** which is in the form of Lord Shiva and spends much of his time and resources (body and mind) in having, or undergoing, or being, or gaining, or attaining, or earning in the experience of **That** and has it. The words earning, gaining and attaining are wrong words while relating to **That**. Kannada language uses the word *shoonya sampadane*. The word *sampadane*, according to me is wholly wrong, while relating to zero experience, for **That cannot be earned, cannot be gained, cannot be attained**, but has to grace itself, has to descend itself on the person pursuing it. Thus *sampadane* is a misnomer. It is hoped that the learned in this field will substitute a suitable word for *sampadane*. An important element to be called a mystic is that it has to be his vocation to pursue to be in the experience of **That**.

(22) Viswhanathan Anand's vocation is playing and teaching chess; Anil Kumble's vocation is playing and teaching cricket. The vocation of a trader is to trade, the vocation of a doctor is to examine patient and administer medicine, the vocation of a lawyer is to pursue law and courts for his clients, etc. We find that it is not the vocation of 99 percent of *veera saivas* to take the vocation of pursuing **That** and being in experience of **That** most of their life. It cannot be the vocation of an entire population be they *veera saivas*, or saivas, or any sect or religion which exhorts to pursue **That** and be in the experience of **That** all their life. **That** seems to be the pinnacle of the teachings of the *Veera Saivism*. Such exhortations are found the Gita also. Late Swami Chinmayananda used

exhort his audiences to pursue **That** during his *Geeta Gnana Ygnana* discourses, which I used to attend very ardently. In fact, I attended a short course conducted by one of his disciples when I was young. Swami Chinmayananda was not a mystic, though he pretended to be one.

(23) *Advait, Dvaita*, or any other religious philosophies which are really grand and beautiful are to be limited for studying and enjoying the beauty of it, and surely not for an entire population to follow. They should not be thrust on an entire population. The Gita is to be read, or studied, only to appreciate for its poetic excellence and to find out truth or falsity in what it says and surely not to follow. The Mahabharata and Ramayana are to be read and studied for beautiful stories in them and not to discern moral ideals or moral codes in them. Needless to say that Indian moral code is inadequate to meet the needs of man and hence of the society. This does not mean that the moral code of the West is any better. Surely Western moral code is much more adequate than that of the Indian for it gives more leeway to individuals.

(24) Morality which is easy to understand and see whether one has or has not, can be found in simple precepts like those given by Basava, and surely not Allama (my knowledge of Allama is limited to a couple of *vachanas* of his). One need not know Einstein's theory of relativity or law of thermodynamics to lead a happy and peaceful life. It is ridiculous to ask an entire population to learn and understand Einstein's theory of relativity or law of thermodynamics and telling them without understanding them they cannot attain salvation or lead a happy and peaceful life. Similarly, the experience of **That** and its knowledge is not essential for happy and harmonious life.

(25) Anthropologists and mystics themselves, unlike religionists, have found that **That** experience is not amenable to all. Pursuing **That** entire life may not result in experiencing **That** even once. It may be that only those who have a certain genetic code in them experience it. Only further scientific investigation should tell. Moreover, **That** experience is unessential for a happy and harmonious life of man and society, as what is most required for happiness is something like the manifesto of Basava, viz, *kalabeda kolabeda*. Hence, thrusting **That** on an entire population is a heinous crime, which has been committed by religions and religionists, thousands of years and is being committed and will continue to be committed in the future, so long as ordinary people understand that **That** is unessential for a happy and harmonious life.

(26) Now who is this ordinary man and why does he follow what an elite says brings us to the discipline of sociology and of values, which we will not discuss.

(27) Stanza: 15: It is those men who are too immersed in the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality, Shiva, the Lord, it is for that reason they are called *Veera Saivas*. But, most of us are too immersed in non-religious (secular) transactions in life and not what is said in the stanza; whatever little time we devote towards prayer or puja is spent in uttering *shlokas* or *vachanas* either loudly or silently in the mind, in addition to pleading for a better life for oneself and one's family. Undoubtedly, such a supplication, as Jiddu Krishnamurti said, is a self centered activity and is hardly a meditation immersed in the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality or **That**.

(28) Stanza 16: It is this word (meaning *Veera Saiva*) that points to those who experience in the knowledge of the happiness (happiness is not an equal word for *Ananda*; even English word bliss is not equivalent to *Ananda*) they are called *Veera Saivas*. Further rereading of the texts and research in history is needed to find out the causes that led to prefixing *Veera* to *Saivism*. The word *veera* denotes courage. What is required to pursue mystic experience surely is not courage, but

perseverance. Thus the word *veer saivism* itself is a **misnomer**. It may be that there was an actual war or war like situation during 13-14th century which might have exhorted the followers to fight courageously for the cause of *Saivism*, which in effect must have led to prefixing the word *Veera* to *Saivism*. This is only a conjecture.

(29) On commentary under stanza 16: The second Para of the commentary on the 1st page is a narration of what is known in Hinduism as the experience of the Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, the Lord, etc. Such experience is known as *Ananda* (which is not happiness, but something more; more than ecstasy). Such an experience is extolled and forcefully stated by Shankara in *Advaita Vedanta*. It is not known where “*Shivajeevaikya prbhodhikaayam....*” is quoted from. Surely it gives not only a clue of why the word “*veera*” was prefixed to *Saiva*, but also forms the foundational basis for it. That is, a person who follows precepts of what is said in the stanza 15 and 16 being called a *Veera Saiva*. The precepts of what is said in the stanzas should be the core of *Veera Saivism*, which hardly is the case with those who profess that they are followers of *veera saivism*. There is no mention of this in the present discussions that are going on between **M.B. Patil** and others. Though it is difficult to make the laity understand this, we are missing an opportunity to make them know that there is something like **That**. The clergy of *Veera Saivism* and the elite must be deliberately keeping the laity in the dark on **That**. Once the nature or attributes of **That** is made known to the laity, they surely will understand that **That** is not essential for a happy and harmonious life. They then will abandon its religion. May be it is how **Basava abandoned Brahminism and Hinduism** associated with it. This may be the fear of the clergy. The clergy and the elite are hand in glove here, like the church and the elite were hand in glove in the West in the yore, similar to the elite and the clergy in the Islamic world.

(30) The word “*ramisu*” clearly and correctly says that one who enjoys the experience of the Ultimate Reality, the Lord, the Brahman, (and unfortunately says is a *veera*, instead of using a word equivalent to perseverance); one who saw the Ultimate Reality, had the *darshana* of Shiva and therefore he is a Mahatma. He is a *Ananda leela vihaari, brahmagnani*; it is not a merely learned man or a *pandit* who say this, but those who have self-knowledge. It is reminded that there shall be no enjoyer during the course of experience; there shall only be the enjoyment or the experience.

(31) A couple of weeks back I attended a lecture on Vachana and Vachana Sahitya by a Kannada and Sanskrit professor Sri Mallepuram G Venkatesh at the Indian Institute of World Culture on BP Wadia Road, Bangalore. What he said was that sayings of Basava are easy to understand, which surely is, and is directly related to day to day life; but that of Allama is difficult and confusing. Allama’s vachanas center on the Ultimate Reality. Some scholars eulogize Allama, like the professor did. The reason is not hard to seek. It is in our culture to eulogize one who does something that is difficult to do or practise or obtain, e.g. celibacy. Unlike the Gita or the Allama, Basava, as everybody knows, is down to earth and can be understood by the learned and laity alike.

(32) Let us see why Basava is more important than Allama. We have discussed about the mystic experience, but not the nature or other attributes of the mystic; no other properties or other attributes of the mystic. Agehananda Bharati says that there is absolutely no difference in the nature of a mystic and a non-mystic. The mystic by nature may be short tempered, or humble, or egoistic and so on. The fact that he had the mystic experience does not change him. What however may happen is that after the first or a couple of experiences, some mystics may become oblivious to societal norms and morals and may lose interest in all that is sought after by ordinary people in life. The reason for

this is not hard to see. The mystic experience is more than ecstasy. Obviously anybody will pursue it with all energy and attention. But it must be known that **It** may not grace!

(33) I do not know how many mystics are there in the world. There may be hundreds or thousands. But known ones are countable. As mystics are reclusive and do not talk about their experience, it is difficult to conclude whether there are a large number of mystics on the earth. Only anthropologists should tell. Of course we do not read of their presence in news papers. We may assume that their numbers is minute to have an impelling effect on any society. However, it is the trick of the texts like the Gita or the vachanas of Allama which has hypnotized (including me) generation after generation, of course, supported by other religious texts, rituals, traditions and commentaries.

(34) What had been of urgency and imperative for ordinary folk from time immemorial and now is not mystic experience so beautifully stated by Allama or Shankara or the *Bhagavat Gita*. It cannot be denied that the Ultimate Reality, the Brahman, the zero experience, is eloquently expressed by these luminaries and texts exhorting people to pursue it. However, these texts hardly make people understand vagaries of human nature (jealousy, hatred, desire, ego, etc.) and manage them, if not get rid of them; especially the vagaries in one's own self, if not those in others. Worse, the Gita says that you have to do the duties assigned to your caste and not seek its results for your personal happiness, but leave it to the Lord. Such exhortations of the Gita are obnoxious and misleading. Hammering of such thoughts centuries upon centuries has lead Indians to fatalism. Thus Indians do not have the habit of analyzing the causes of failure of their effort in any venture and understand various factors, including their own limitations and take plausible rectificatory steps for future ventures, whether such ventures are in the realm of business or emotion. Instead we find 'failures' going to astrologers encouraged by *Hindutva* and mass media.

(35) What usually happens, on account of exhortation by the texts like the Gita and the Gurus is that life is spent in the purported aim of achieving the Highest, indulging in prayers and rituals, and carrying on secular transactions in life without giving an iota of attention to one's own attributes (e.g. jealousy, hatred, desire, ego, etc.) and see whether it is possible to manage them if not get rid of them. Getting rid of them surely is very important for harmonious life. Thus fatalism is disallowing even examining one's own abilities and shortcomings; we all know that examining them is extremely important for success in life.

(36) Basava's vachanas while are easy to understand and follow, they constantly ask us to question oneself about one's own jealousies, hatreds, desires, egos, etc. Of course, following Basava's teachings surely will not bring success in secular life. Success in secular life involves domination and manipulation of ideas, things and people. Basava's manifesto, viz, *kalabeda, kolabeda...* is patently against domination and manipulation. I do not know whether Basava talks of success in life, viz, the mundane success of earning name, fame and property. He surely stressed the importance of equality where dignity of human being and harmony in society and equanimity within (viz non-conflict within the self of the individual). What else can be the ultimate goal of any human being and that of the society he lives in?

(37) The commentary in the literature sent extols the one wearing *koupina* who has had mystic experience as a *veera saiva*; this creates a false notion that a *veera saiva* is eligible for the mystic experience, especially if he is frugal; and he can achieve It, and that it should be the ultimate goal in his life. A mystic is no better or worse than any other ordinary human being, ethically. A mystic can

be as jealous, as egoistic, as humane, and as affectionate as any other ordinary human being who is neither educated nor knowledgeable. In fact we find it is the educated and knowledgeable with their cunning manipulate, dominate and subjugate others for accumulation of power and property. It is their knowledge and education which enables them and enhances their ability to articulate to make fool of others.

(38) The last sentence of the second Para says that what *veera saiva* can achieve is not the opinion of those learned in the *shastras*, but that of those who have self-knowledge. This brings us to discuss about self-knowledge. We know what is knowledge, but what is self? The Oxford dictionary defines self as a person's essential being that distinguishes them from others, especially considered as the object of introspection or reflexive action; a person's particular nature or personality.

(39) The meaning of the word self can further be expanded thus. We learn about the properties of elements like oxygen, hydrogen in chemistry. So does man (woman) has properties like hatred, love, affection, care, jealousy, etc. The individual and his self may be having all of these in a certain proportion which is unique to the individual, emanating in certain proportions to different situations, depending upon how he perceives it and how and to what extent it adversely or favorably affects him, which again is related to the pleasure principle. Let us say that the self is a container, which contains everything that man thinks feels and acts (including inactions). Actions and inactions are a result of thinking and feeling. Shall we say that intensity of thoughts and feelings (viz, care, affection, love, jealousy, hatred, fear, death, etc) on various occasions and their accumulation are part of the self?

(40) Further discussion on this takes us to difficult area of values, which we shall not discuss here. Now, how does such a complete knowledge of one's own self is going to help one in one's life? Such a knowledge of one's own self can be used to, as stated earlier, to manage one's characteristics, or elements, or properties (viz, jealousy, hatred, love, affection, care, fear, etc), if not to get rid of them to find harmony in one's own self and amongst others, or to create dissension amongst people and accumulate and retain power and pelf. Well known leaders (be they political, business or social) in history surely had had a comprehensive knowledge of their own selves. Modi and Gandhi are examples. Surely, they have used such knowledge about themselves to manipulate and dominate others, one through violence and another through non-violence.

(41) The third Para continues with the difficult questions of who am I, where did I come from. Answers to them surely are not necessary for a harmonious life. Such questions may be reserved for philosophers. The statement that there shall be removal of ignorance and spread of light in the mind and ultimate *Shivadarshana*, suggests that the mystic experience would occur to the *Veerasaiva*. It is needless to say that mystic experience is unimportant for leading a moral and harmonious life.

(42) The fourth Para says that *veera saiva* word does not represent a caste, a religion, or a tradition; it is Ultimate mystical experience; it is being in the state of That experience; it is having the awareness of the Ultimate Reality, i.e. the mystic experience and keeping it in the heart and such a person is a Brahmin. Even though the word Brahmin is derived from the word Brahman (i.e. **That**), they are two different things; one is a man of the highest caste and the other is an experience. Commentators tend to equate Brahmin and Brahman; in fact, a person who has the mystic experience regularly should rightly be called a Brahmin; but this is not case with Brahmins around us, who surely are not mystics, though some may pose as one; especially those knowledgeable about the Vedas, Upanishads, etc.

(43) Ten to fifteen couplets in Sanskrit appearing after the commentary to stanza 16 talk about avoidance of *kama* (desire and its corollaries) and adherence of *vairagya*. I do not know whether Basava has given such a great importance for *vairagya* and avoidance of *kama*. He however says what he says in “*kalabeda, kolabeda,....*” and similar vachanas that are sufficient for leading a happy and harmonious life.

(44) Stanza 17 and its commentary: The words ‘*vidyaayaam*’ (knowledge of **That**), ‘*ramathe*’ (experiencing the *Ananda*), ‘*heyam mayam*’ (e.g. *kama* and its corollaries), ‘*veeramaaheshawara*’ (assigning the word *veera* for one who experiences That, which is patently wrong), *veera*, ‘*shivjeevaikaya mahavidyeyalli*’ (immersed in the Brahman, immersed in That, immersed in the Lord) ‘*surya prabheya thejasside*’ (there are certain texts which say that while one is experiencing the Brahman, It would appear brighter than 1000 suns), ‘*tatvamasi*’ (Shankara’s saying, you are That), etc. in the stanza and the commentary indicate what has already been said in the earlier stanzas and commentary. It eulogizes one who pursues **That** and warns that one should not yield to mundane pleasures, i.e. *kama*.

(45) Stanza 18 and its commentary: The stanza clearly puts the Vedas at the top and says that one who immerses himself in the knowledge of the Vedas and whatever originates from it is a *veera*. This surely vindicates what **S.M. Jamadara** has said in his article published in the Prajavani; whereas Basava goes directly against the Vedas. We should not forget that Basava was born a Brahmin. He denounced and renounced *Brahminism* and wanted people to come out of the Hinduism which accords top priority to caste system. It will be in the fitness of things if the people who are vying for continuing the name of their caste or religion as *Veera Saiva* should discard whatever Basava says and get rid of the **Lingayat** name attached to their caste.

(46) The second one under stanza 19: It talks not about gaining knowledge but of the importance of conduct of *gnana yagna*. *Yagna* means sacrifice, sacrificial ceremony. Surely knowledge is more important than *yagna*. Who is gaining from *gnana yagna*, or for that matter from any *yagna*? It is the *Mahant* or the *purohit*, who is a Brahmin and not the one who has to expend his resources for conduct of the *yagna*. If this is not a trick of the Brahmins, whose else’s is this?

(47) It may not be necessary to go into the rest of the literature, as the same are repetition of what is already discussed.

(48) Conclusion: Basava’s teaching came at a time when slavery and bonded labour was a norm and it was the privilege of the wealthy. Like now the wealthy then utilized every idea, every tradition, every custom, every religious precept, which was favourable to them to remain in the privileged position. The central locus of Hinduism is That and pursuit of That, which has been pushed under the carpet. Instead the peripherals of Hinduism, e.g., *Manusmriti* and its *varnashrma*, the *puranas* had been and is the main agenda. This gave and is giving immoral power to some subjugate others. Thus people of Indian subcontinent have suffered for thousands of years and continue to suffer indignity and inequality.

(49) We may not find now the kind of slavery that was prevalent then. This change is not due to change of heart. It is primarily due to fight of the vulnerable generally lead by idealistic and capable men bringing newer institutions like judiciary, police, state, constitution, elections, etc. that has brought changes in behavior of the wealthy in addition to developments that has occurred on

account of huge strides in and technology. The same science and technology is devouring mankind is another matter.

(50) The older institutions like family, marriage have hardly changed the hearts of men (women) on the lines of Basava's teachings which is purely founded on ethics. This vindicates the sayings of Jiddu Krishnamurti that family as a unit is the first enemy of man. It is in the family that a child is taught to learn to differentiate us from them, me from the other. This obviously breeds self-centeredness in the child right from the beginning. Thus family as a unit is a failed compact. Instead of eulogizing the so called family values, in actuality family and marriage as institutions require a vigorous relook. As this brings us to the area of values, we shall not discuss it here.

I thank you, Sir, for giving me an opportunity to study and think over on the subject. Thank you for patiently reading this lengthy letter.

With Regards,

Chidananda B
Flat No 205, Chirag Residency,
Opp: Byatarayanapura Police Station,
Mysore Road, Bangalore 560026