



Bhandhavya ಭಾಂಡವ್ಯ

Veerashaiva Samaja of North America

Spring 2010

Highlights of this Edition

Editors' note	2
From the Desk of President	3
Every day- A New Day	4
Yuga Yugadi Kaledaru	5
Gudhi Padwa	10
Greatness of Istalinga	11
Why We Should Worship Istalinga?	13
Advaitism of Veerashaivas	15
2009 Chicago Convention	18
2010 Convention	19
Chapters' Round-Up	22
Kids Corner	25
Election Schedule	28
Election Nomination Form	30

Editors:

Kusuma Aralere
Chaitra Kishore

HAPPY UGADI



ಯುಗ ಯುಗಾದಿ ಕಳೆದರೂ
ಯುಗಾದಿ ಮರಳಿ ಬರುತ್ತಿದೆ.

Editors' Note

Dear VSNA Members:

We wish you all a very happy new year 2010. We are featuring Ugadi – the beginning of the new year for people from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra in this issue. Though it is known by the name Ugadi in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, it is known as Gudhi Padwa in Maharashtra.

Whichever name this festival takes in different regions, it heralds the dawn of Vasantha Rutu (Spring Season), which is considered the first season of the year (Chaitra Maasa). Chandramaana Ugadi marks a beginning of a new year in which nature is in full bloom, symbolizing regeneration and celebrating the season's freshness. The doorways of the homes are adorned with fresh mango leaves and Ranglolis which signify prosperity and general well-being. According to the Hindu calendar each year has a different name and this year is **Vikruti Naama Samvatsara**.

But the most unique and significant tradition of Ugadi is beginning of the new year by savoring a unique flavored pachadi (chutney) that epitomizes the spirit of Ugadi called "Ugadi Pachadi" in some parts of Karnataka. This chutney or sauce is a symbolic reminder of the myriad facets of life which in a sense prepare us for the year ahead. In some parts of the state, eating the mixture of just Bevu (neem flowers) and Bella (Jaggery) is the tradition as well. The main dish for Ugadi is Holige, and for Gudhi Padwa it is Srikhand. You will read more about the celebration of Ugadi and Gudhi Padwa inside this issue of Bhandhavya.

We are planning to publish the newsletters quarterly, but in order to bring these issues to you in a timely fashion we need your support in getting articles from your local writers. Please help us in getting various articles of interest to all ages.

Thanks to all the writers who sent their articles for this edition with such a short notice. The views expressed in these articles solely belong to the authors and are independent from the opinions of the executive committee and the editorial committee.

Some guidelines to send in articles:

- Articles can be English (MS Word or Rich Text - Arial font size 11) or Kannada (Baraha font); and the length should be no more than 2 pages.
- Send your articles and suggestions to vsnanewsletter@yahoo.com.

As always we would love to hear from you - any news to share, comments, thoughts or suggestions.

Thank you,

Kusuma Aralere and Chaitra Kishore



From The Desk of President



MARCH, 2010

PRESIDENT - DR. NAGABHUSHANA MALAKKLA

Sharanu,

ಅರುಹಿನ ತೃಪ್ತಿಗೆ ಅನುಭಾವವೇ ಅಶ್ರಯ,
ಲಿಂಗಾನುಭಾವದಿಂದ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಕಂಡೆನ್ನ
ಮರೆದೆ ಕಾಣಾ. ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ !

Happy Ugadi to all and a Happy New Year!

I am glad to write that the VSNA Newsletter is renovated under the new Editors Kusuma Aralere and Chaitra Kishore.

The goal of this Newsletter, Bhandavya, is to communicate with and **connect all of our community** members irrespective of age, gender and location. VSNA promotes youngsters to participate in the youth activities and exhibit their talents. We encourage youth to take this opportunity to write their experiences and express their ideas in the newsletter to improve their writing skills and thoughts. One of the editors of this newsletter, Chaitra Kishore is a freshman in college.

Other important functions are spreading the message of Veerashaivism and Basava philosophy which are applicable even in the modern life. VSNA pleads all members to read and understand the religious aspects of Veerashaivism, Basava Philosophy, and Sharana's way of life. This will help them recognize, practice, and teach the younger generation the great thoughts of the Sharanas like "Work is Worship", equality of men and women, and Dasoha, community service. In this spirit VSNA recently performed Dasoha by helping Karnataka's flood victims. Dr. G. Jagadeesh, President of Maryland Chapter has taken a leading role in this Dasoha work and his experience is captured in this newsletter.

Another way of connecting with each other is to attend the annual VSNA convention. Please mark your calendars and join us in Toronto for 2010 convention. See a special invitation by Toronto convention chair Mr. Yuvaraj Patil in this newsletter.

I appreciate the hard work done by Kusuma Aralere and Chaitra Kishore to bring this beautiful and informative newsletter to us in such a short period.

Thank you

*With Sharanarhi,
Dr. Nagabhushana Malakkla
President VSNA*

Every Day - A New Day

Dr. Sri Shivamurthy Murugha Sharanaru, Sri Murugha Muth, Chitradurga



In day to day life, we always think of mundane matters but rarely about spiritual aspects. He is great who can see the philosophical design in pragmatic matters. If we can acquire that knowledge, then life becomes beautiful, every moment becomes a great moment, and every day becomes a happy day.

With the help of spiritual knowledge or philosophical knowledge, one can rise above petty things in life, which lifts us to the higher planes. Happiness from new clothes, jewellery etc. is temporary but happiness begotten by a fresh look at life i.e., a philosophical look at life, is permanent. From where and how to bring that fresh outlook? Is it from outside? No, one has to look inwards to attain that fresh perspective. It is also called insight.

With insight, the day to day world looks different in every moment. With insight, we can always have good thoughts and good feelings. This leads to good deeds. By always performing good deeds, we attain tranquility and equanimity. Once we attain that level, our brain releases chemicals like endorphin and we forget all the silly things in life and have only serene thoughts. In this connection I would like to give a new formula, that is: Insight + Foresight + Divine light = Enlightened life.

Most of us celebrate the new year with pomp and glory. The enjoyment we get from painting the town red is ephemeral. The enjoyment we get from enlightenment is eternal! In the same way Hindus celebrate Ugadi as their new year. Likewise different communities have different new year celebrations. My question is, is it enough if you celebrate new year a single day and be morose on all other days? No, that is not the way. One must be happy on all the days. One must learn to live every moment of life to its fullest. That is the secret of equanimity and I call it EVERYDAY - A HAPPY DAY.

Basavanna expresses the same idea in his following vachana –

*Hotthare eddu kannu hoseyuttha
Enna odalinge, Enna odavegendu, Enna madadi-makkaligendu,
Kudidenadade enna manakke manave sakshi.
Aasanee shayanee yanee samparkee sahabhojane |
Sancharanthi mahaghoree narakee kalamakshayam ||
Emba shruthiyu basavannoduvanu,
Bhavi bijjalana gaddugeya kelage kullirdu
Olysihanendu nudivarayya pramatharu.
Koduvane uttharavanavarige? Kodalamme.
Holeholeyara maneya hokkadadeyu,
Sale kaikuliya madiyadadeyu,
Nimma nilavinge kudivenallade, Enna odalavasarakke kudidenadade
Thaledanda Kudalasangamadeva!*

This is the secret formula of living a contented life. With a fresh or philosophical look we gain energy, equanimity and ultimately enlightenment. And that is the panacea of life which mankind has been looking for all through the ages. Newness makes every day a holy day, so let every day of your life be a happy day.



ಬಿಸಿಲು
ಬೆಳದಿಂಗಳು

ಡಾ. ಶಿವಮೂರ್ತಿ ಶಿವಾಚಾರ್ಯ ಸ್ವಾಮೀಜಿ
swamiji@taralabalu.org

ಯುಗ ಯುಗಾದಿ ಕಳೆದರೂ....

ಭಾರತೀಯರು ವಿಶ್ವದ ಇತರೆ ದೇಶಗಳ ಜನರಂತೆ ದೈನಂದಿನ ವ್ಯವಹಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಇಂಗ್ಲೀಷ್ ಕ್ಯಾಲೆಂಡರನ್ನೇ ಅನುಸರಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಆದರೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಹರಿದಿನಗಳನ್ನು ಆಚರಿಸುವಾಗ, ಮದುವೆ, ಗೃಹಪೂಜೆ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಮಂಗಳ ಕಾರ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡುವಾಗ ಮಾತ್ರ ಸಾಂಪ್ರದಾಯಿಕವಾಗಿ ದೇಶೀಯ ಪಂಚಾಂಗದ ತಿಥಿ ವಾರ ನಕ್ಷತ್ರಗಳನ್ನು ನೋಡುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಅಂತಹ ಹೆಚ್ಚುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ, ಆಂಧ್ರ, ಮಹಾರಾಷ್ಟ್ರಗಳ ಒಂದು ಪ್ರಮುಖವಾದ ಹೆಚ್ಚು 'ಯುಗಾದಿ'. ಉತ್ತರ ಭಾರತೀಯರು ಸೂರ್ಯನ ಚಲನೆಯನ್ನು ಆಧರಿಸಿ ಸೌರಮಾನ ಯುಗಾದಿಯನ್ನು ಆಚರಿಸಿದರೆ, ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಭಾರತೀಯರು ಚಂದ್ರನ ಚಲನೆಯನ್ನು ಆಧರಿಸಿ ಚಾಂದ್ರಮಾನ ಯುಗಾದಿಯನ್ನು ಆಚರಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಫಾಲ್ಗುಣ ಮಾಸದ ಅಮಾವಾಸ್ಯೆಯ ಮರುದಿನ ಬರುವ ಚೈತ್ರ ಮಾಸದ ಪಾಡ್ಯದ ದಿವಸವೇ ಯುಗಾದಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಹೊಸ ವರ್ಷದ ಮೊದಲ ದಿನ. ಹೊಸ ಚಿಗುರಿನಿಂದ ಗಿಡ ಮರಗಳು ಶೋಭಿಸುವಂತೆ ಜನರು ಮೈಗೆ ಎಣ್ಣೆ ನೀರು ಹಾಕಿಕೊಂಡು ಹೊಸ ಬಟ್ಟೆಯನ್ನು ಉಟ್ಟು ಸಡಗರ ಸಂಭ್ರಮಗಳಿಂದ ಹೊಸ ವರ್ಷವನ್ನು ಸ್ವಾಗತಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ. ವರಕವಿ ದ.ರಾ. ಬೇಂದ್ರೆಯವರ ಮಾತಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಹೇಳುವುದಾದರೆ:

ಯುಗ ಯುಗಾದಿ ಕಳೆದರೂ
ಯುಗಾದಿ ಮರಳಿ ಬರುತ್ತಿದೆ
ಹೊಸ ವರಷಕೆ ಹೊಸ ಹರುಷವ
ಹೊಸತು ಹೊಸತು ತರುತ್ತಿದೆ!

ಈ ಯುಗಾದಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದಲ್ಲಿ ಎಷ್ಟೊಂದು ಪ್ರಸಿದ್ಧವೆಂದರೆ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಜನರ ಬಾಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಪ್ರಚಲಿತವಾದ ಹಾಗೂ ಆತ್ಮತ ಶಕ್ತಿಯುತವಾದ ನಾಣ್ಯದಿಯೇ ಇದೆ: "ಊರಲ್ಲೂ ಉಗಾದಿ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ, ಅಡ್ಡಾಡಿ ಅಮವಾಸ್ಯೆ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಾತೆ!" ಜನರೊಂದಿಗೆ ಹೊಂದಿಕೊಂಡು ಬಾಳುವುದನ್ನು ಬಿಟ್ಟು ತನ್ನದೇ ಆದ ವಿಚಿತ್ರ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ವರ್ತಿಸುವ ಸ್ವಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠೆಯ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಯನ್ನು ಕಂಡು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಜನರು ಆಡುವ ಮೂದಲಿಕೆಯ ಮಾಡಿದರು.

ಸಂಜೆ ಪಡವಣಿ ದಿಕ್ಕಿನ ಕಡೆ ದಿಟ್ಟಿಸಿ ನಾ ಮುಂದು ತಾ ಮುಂದು ಎಂದು ವೈವೋಟಿಯಿಂದ ತುದಿಗಾಲ ಮೇಲೆ ನಿಂತು ಮಾಡುವ 'ಚಂದ್ರ ದರ್ಶನ'ವೇ ಹೊಸ ವರ್ಷದ ಶುಭಾರಂಭದ ಸಂಕೇತ. ನಂತರ ಗುರುಹಿರಿಯರಿಗೆ ನಮಸ್ಕರಿಸಿ ಮಾಡುವ 'ಪಂಚಾಂಗ ಶ್ರವಣ' ಹೊಸ ವರ್ಷದ ಜಾತಕವನ್ನು ತಿಳಿಯುವ ಕುತೂಹಲ! ಇಂದು ಜನರು ನಿತ್ಯವೂ ದಿನಪತ್ರಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಷೇರು ಪೇಟಿಯ ಧಾರಣೆಯನ್ನು ತಿಳಿದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವಂತೆ, ವರ್ಷಾರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಚಂದ್ರ ಎತ್ತಿ ವಾಲಿದ್ದಾನೆಂಬುದರ ಮೇಲೆ ಪಂಚಾಂಗವನ್ನು ನೋಡಿ, ಆ ವರ್ಷದ ಮಳೆ, ಬೆಳೆ, ವ್ಯಾಪಾರ ಉದ್ಯಮಿಯ ಲಾಭ-ನಷ್ಟಗಳ ಲೆಕ್ಕಾಚಾರ ಹಾಕುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಮೂರು ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಹಿಂದೆ ಹೊಸ ಹರುಷದಿಂದ ಸ್ವಾಗತಿಸಿದ್ದ ತಾರಣ ಸಂವತ್ಸರ ದೈತ್ಯಾಕಾರದ ಸುನಾಮಿ ಅಲೆಗಳಿಂದ ಇಡೀ ಜಗತ್ತನ್ನು ತಲ್ಲಣಗೊಳಿಸಿ ನಿರ್ಗಮಿಸಿತ್ತು.

ಈ ವಾರಾಂತ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಹಿಂದಕ್ಕೆ ಸರಿದು ಹೋಗಲಿರುವ ಈಗಿನ ಸರ್ವಜಿತು ಸಂವತ್ಸರ ಕುರಿತು ಕಳೆದ ಯುಗಾದಿಯಂದು ಕೇಳಿದ್ದ ಪಂಚಾಂಗ ಶ್ರವಣ: "ಎಲ್ಲ ಜನರು ಸುಖ-ಸಂತೋಷದಿಂದ ಇರಲಿವರು. ಆದರೆ ಭಯಂಕರ ಯುದ್ಧವಾಗುವ ಸಂಭವವಿರುವುದರಿಂದ ಭಯ-ಭೀತಿಯಿಂದ ಪ್ರಜೆಗಳು ಆತಂಕಕ್ಕೆ ಒಳಗಾಗುವರು. ದೇಶದ ನಾಯಕ ಮಾರ್ಗದರ್ಶಿಗೆ ಅನಿಷ್ಟವಿರಲಿವು." ಇದು ಒಂದು ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ರಾಜಕೀಯ ವಿದ್ಯಮಾನಗಳ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಿಂದ ನಿಜ. ಸಂವಿಶ್ವ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಬಿ.ಜೆ.ಪಿ ಮತ್ತು ಜನತಾದಳಗಳ ಮಧ್ಯೆ ಸಂಭವಿಸಿದ 'ಭಯಂಕರ ಯುದ್ಧ'ದಿಂದ ನಾಯಕಮಾರ್ಗದರ್ಶಿಗೆ 'ಅನಿಷ್ಟ' ಉಂಟಾಗಿ ನಾಡಿನ ಪ್ರಜೆಗಳಿಗೆ ರಾಜ್ಯಪಾಲರ ಆಡಳಿತದ ಭೀತಿಯಿಂದ 'ಆತಂಕ' ಇನ್ನು ಹೊಸ ವರ್ಷದ 'ಸರ್ವಧಾರೀ ಸಂವತ್ಸರ'ವನ್ನು ಕುರಿತು ಕೇಳಿ ಬರುವ 'ಪಂಚಾಂಗಶ್ರವಣ'ವೆಂದರೆ "ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಕಡೆ ಮಳೆ ಬೆಳೆ ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿ ಆಗುತ್ತದೆ, ರಾಜರು ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿ ಪ್ರಜಾಪಾಲಿಸಲಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಾರೆ". ಇಲ್ಲಿ ರಾಜರು ಎಂದರೆ

ಚುನಾವಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ (ಅ)ನಾಗರಿಕ ಮತದಾರರಿಗೆ ಕಂಪ್ಯೂಟರ್ ಕುಡಿಸಿ ವಿಧಾನಸಭೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಟ್ಟಕ್ಕೇರುವ ರಾಜಕಾರಣಿಗಳು. ಪಂಚಾಂಗ ನೋಡುವ ಪುರೋಹಿತರಿಗಂತೂ ಶುಕ್ರವೇ. ಚುನಾವಣೆ ಸಮೀಪಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದರಿಂದ ಅವರ ಗ್ರಹಗತಿಗಳು ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿವೆ. ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಮಳೆ ಬೆಳೆ ಆಗಲಿ ಬಿಡಲಿ, ರಾಜಕಾರಣಿಗಳು ಟಿಕೆಟ್ ಪಡೆಯುವುದರಿಂದ ಹಿಡಿದು, ನಾಮಿನೇಷನ್ ಪ್ಲೆಟ್ ಮಾಡಿ ಗೆದ್ದು ವಿಧಾನಸಭೆ ಪ್ರವೇಶಿಸಿ ಮಂತ್ರಿಯಾಗಿ ಶಪಥಗ್ರಹಣ ಮಾಡುವವರೆಗೂ ನಡೆಯುವ ಪಂಚಾಂಗ ಶ್ರವಣ, ನವಗ್ರಹ ಶಾಂತಿ, ಹೋಮ, ಹವನ, ಇತ್ಯಾದಿಗಳಿಂದ ಪುರೋಹಿತರಿಗೆ ಸುಭಿಕ್ಷವೋ ಸುಭಿಕ್ಷ! ಬೇಗನೆ ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ಚುನಾವಣೆ ಬರಲೆಂದೇ ಅವರ ಅಂತರಂಗದ ಹಾರೈಕೆ!

ಭಾರತೀಯ ದಾರ್ಶನಿಕರು ಕಾಲವನ್ನು ಎರಡು ಭಾಗವಾಗಿ ವಿಂಗಡಿಸುತ್ತಾರೆ - ಒಂದು ಪರ ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ಅಪರ. ಪರ ಎಂದು ಕರೆಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಕಾಲ ಅಖಂಡ. ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ಭೂತ, ಭವಿಷ್ಯ, ವರ್ತಮಾನಗಳ ಪ್ರಭೇದಗಳು ಇರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಏಕೆಂದರೆ ಅದು ಅನಾದಿ ಮತ್ತು ಅನಂತ. ಅದರ ಅನುಭವ ಮನುಷ್ಯನಿಗೆ ಆಗುವುದು ಕಷ್ಟ. ಏಕೆಂದರೆ ಮನುಷ್ಯನು ಕಾಲ (time) ಮತ್ತು ದೇಶದ (space) ಪರಿಮಿತಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟವನು; ಅವುಗಳನ್ನು ಮೆಟ್ಟಿ ನಿಲ್ಲಲು ಅವನಿಂದ ಸಾಧ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲ. ಕಾಲಾತೀತ, ದೇಶಾತೀತನಾಗಿರಲು ಭಗವಂತನಿಂದ ಮಾತ್ರ ಸಾಧ್ಯ. (ಷ ಭೂಮಿಂ ವಿಶ್ವತೋ ವೃತ್ತಾ ಅತ್ಯತಿಷ್ಠಾ ಕಶಾಂಕುಲಂ - ಪುರಾಣಸೂಕ್ತ). ಇನ್ನು ಮನುಷ್ಯನ ಗ್ರಹಿಕೆಗೆ ಬರುವ ಕಾಲವನ್ನು 'ಅಪರ' ಎಂದು ಕರೆಯುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಅದು ಭೂತ, ಭವಿಷ್ಯ, ವರ್ತಮಾನವಾಗಿ ಮನುಷ್ಯನ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಅನುಭವಕ್ಕೆ ಬರುತ್ತದೆ. ನಾಳೆಯ ಭವಿಷ್ಯ ಇಂದಿನ ವರ್ತಮಾನವಾಗಿ ಬಂದು ನಿನ್ನೆಯ ಭೂತಕಾಲಕ್ಕೆ ಖಾಯಂ ಆಗಿ ಸರಿದು ಹೋಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಮತ್ತೆ ನಾಳೆಯ ಭವಿಷ್ಯತ್ ಕಾಲದಲ್ಲಿ ಏನು ಕಾದಿದೆಯೋ ಎಂಬ ಆತಂಕದಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಮನುಷ್ಯ ಸದಾ ಬದುಕುತ್ತಾನೆ. ನಾಳೆಯ ಭವಿಷ್ಯ ಇಂದಿನ ವರ್ತಮಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಅನುಭವಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದಾಗ ಅದು ಕೆಲವೊಮ್ಮೆ ಸುಖವಾಗಿ ಪರಿಣಮಿಸಿ ಮನುಷ್ಯನ ಮನಸ್ಸನ್ನು ಉಲ್ಲಾಸಗೊಳ್ಳುವಂತೆ ಮಾಡಬಹುದು ಅಥವಾ ಕೆಲವೊಮ್ಮೆ ದುಃಖವಾಗಿ ಪರಿಣಮಿಸಿ ಮನುಷ್ಯನ ಮನಸ್ಸನ್ನು ಘಾಸಿಗೊಳಿಸಬಹುದು. ಹಾಗೆಯೇ ವರ್ತಮಾನ ಕಾಲದಲ್ಲಿ ಸುಖದ ಅನುಭವವನ್ನು ತಂದು ಅಹ್ಯಾಧವನ್ನುಂಟುಮಾಡಿ ಭೂತಕಾಲಕ್ಕೆ ಸರಿದುಹೋದ ಕಾಲ ಸುಖದ ನೆನಪುಗಳನ್ನು ಮತ್ತೆ ಮತ್ತೆ ತಂದು ಕೊಟ್ಟು ಮನುಷ್ಯ ಸದಾ ಅದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಹಪ ಹಪಿಸುವಂತೆ ಮಾಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಅಂತೆಯೇ ವರ್ತಮಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ದುಃಖದ ಕೆಹಿ ಅನುಭವವನ್ನುಂಟು ಮಾಡಿ ಭೂತಕಾಲಕ್ಕೆ ಸರಿದು ಹೋದ ಕಾಲ ಮತ್ತೆ ಮತ್ತೆ ನೆನಪಿಗೆ ಬರಬಹುದಾದರೂ ಮನುಷ್ಯ ಅದನ್ನು ಮರೆತು ಬಯಸುತ್ತಾನೆಯೇ ಹೊರತು ನೆನಪಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಇಷ್ಟಪಡುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಅಷ್ಟೇ ಅಲ್ಲ ಅಂತಹ ಕೆಹಿ ಅನುಭವ ಮತ್ತೆ ಭವಿಷ್ಯತ್ತಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಉಂಟಾಗುವುದನ್ನೂ ಸಹ ಬಯಸುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಆದರೆ ಕಾಲದ ಗತಿ ಮನುಷ್ಯನ ಇಷ್ಟಾನಿಷ್ಟಗಳನ್ನು ಅವಲಂಬಿಸಿರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಅವನಿಗೆ ಇಷ್ಟ ಇರಲಿ ಇಲ್ಲದಿರಲಿ ಸುಖದುಃಖಗಳು ಮನುಷ್ಯನ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಗೋಡೆಯ ಗಡಿಯಾರದ ಲೋಲಕದಂತೆ ಸದಾ ಓಲಾಡುತ್ತಲೇ ಇರುತ್ತವೆ (Life is a pendulum oscillating between joy and sorrow). ಒಮ್ಮೆ ಸುಖ ಬಂದರೆ ಮತ್ತೊಮ್ಮೆ ದುಃಖ. ಅವುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಮನುಷ್ಯ ಯಾವಾಗಲೂ ಸುಖವನ್ನೇ ಬಯಸುತ್ತಾನೆ. ಆದರೆ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಗೆ ಆಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride". ಮನುಷ್ಯನ ಬಯಕೆಗಳು ಕುದುರೆಗಳಾಗಿದ್ದರೆ ಭಿಕ್ಷುಕರೂ ಅವುಗಳ ಮೇಲೆ ಸವಾರಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು! ಜೀವನದ ಗೋಡೆಯ ಗಡಿಯಾರದ ಲೋಲಕ ಸುಖದ ಕಡೆಗೆ ನಿಲ್ಲಲಿ ಎಂದು ಮನುಷ್ಯ ಹಾರೈಸುವುದು ಸಹಜ. ಹಾಗೇನಾದರೂ ಆದರೆ ಮನುಷ್ಯನಿಗೆ ಸುಖದ ತೀವ್ರತರವಾದ ಅನುಭವ ಆಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಆದರಿಂದ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಸ್ವಾರಸ್ಯ ಇರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಲೋಲಕ ಸದಾ ಚಲಿಸುತ್ತಲೇ ಇರಬೇಕು. ಒಂದೆಡೆ ನಿಲ್ಲುವಂತಾದರೆ ಅದು ಗೋಡೆಯ ಗಡಿಯಾರ ಕೆಟ್ಟಿದೆ ಎಂಬುದರ ಸಂಕೇತ ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ನಾವು ಮರೆಯಬಾರದು.

ಒಮ್ಮೊಮ್ಮೆ ದುಃಖ-ದುಮ್ಮಾನಗಳು, ಕಷ್ಟ-ಕೋಟಲೆಗಳು ಹಠಾತ್ತನ ಸುನಾಮಿ ಅಲೆಯಂತೆ ಎಲ್ಲಿದಲೋ ಬಂದು ಒಂದರ ಮೇಲೊಂದರಂತೆ ಸರದಿಯ ಮೇಲೆ ಬಂದರೆ ಮನುಷ್ಯನನ್ನು ಜರ್ಝರಿತಗೊಳಿಸುತ್ತವೆ. ಅವುಗಳಿಂದ ಪಾರಾಗುವುದು ಕಷ್ಟಸಾಧ್ಯವಾದರೂ ಅಂತಹ ಸಂದರ್ಭಗಳನ್ನು ಧೈರ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಎದುರಿಸಲು ಮನುಷ್ಯ ಸಿದ್ಧನಾಗಿರಬೇಕು. ಹೇಡಿಯಾಗಬಾರದು. "Towards die many a times before their death" (ಹೇಡಿಗಳಾದವರು ಸಾಯುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಮುಂಚೆ ಅನೇಕ ಸಾರಿ ಸಾಯುತ್ತಾರೆ) ಎಂದು ಷೇಕ್ಸ್ಪಿಯರ್ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾನೆ. ಕೆಹಿ ಇದೆ ಎನ್ನುವ ಕಾರಣಕ್ಕಾಗಿಯೇ ಸಿಹಿಯ ಅನುಭವ ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗಿರುವುದು. ಒಂದು ಪಕ್ಷ ಕೆಹಿ ಇಲ್ಲದೇ ಹೋಗಿದ್ದರೆ ಸಿಹಿ ಏನೆಂದು ಅರ್ಥವೇ ಆಗುತ್ತಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಹಾಗೆಯೇ ಸುಖದ ಅನುಭವ. ದುಃಖ ಯಾರಿಗೂ ಬೇಕಿಲ್ಲ, ನಿಜ. ಆದರೆ ಸುಖ ಏನೆಂದು ತಿಳಿಯುವುದಕ್ಕಾದರೂ ದುಃಖ ಬೇಕೇ ಬೇಕು. ಗೌತಮ ಬುದ್ಧ ಬುದ್ಧನಾಗಿದ್ದು ಅರಮನೆಯ ಸುಖದ ಸುಪ್ಪತ್ತಿಗೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಓಲಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾಗ ಅಲ್ಲ; ಹೊರಗೆ ಬಂದು ಜನರ ನೋವು ಸಂಕಷ್ಟಗಳ ಸರಮಾಲೆಯನ್ನು ನೋಡಿ ಮಮ್ಲ ಮರುಗಿ ಅಂತರ್ಮುಖಿಯಾಗಿ ಅರಿವಿನ ಕಣ್ಣೆರೆದಾಗ.

ಭವಿಷ್ಯದ ಸಂಗತಿಗಳೆಲ್ಲವೂ ಮನುಷ್ಯನಿಗೆ ತಿಳಿಯುವಂತಾಗಿದ್ದರೆ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಸ್ವಾರಸ್ಯವೆಂಬುದೇ ಇರುತ್ತಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಭವಿಷ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಏನಾಗಬಹುದೆಂದು ಇತರರ ಜೀವನಾನುಭವದಿಂದ ಮನುಷ್ಯ ಊಹಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದಾದರೂ ಅದರಿಂದ ಪಾಠ ಕಲಿತುಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ರಾತ್ರಿ ಕಂಡ ಬಾವಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹಗಲು ಬೀಳುವುದು ಸರಿಯಲ್ಲ ಎಂದು ಗೊತ್ತಿದ್ದರೂ ಮಾಡಿದ ತಪ್ಪನ್ನೇ ಮತ್ತೆ ಮತ್ತೆ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಾನೆ. ಸಂಪತ್ತಿನ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಣೆಯ ನಾಗಾಲೋಟದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೊಚ್ಚಿ ಹೋಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾನೆ. ಅಜ್ಞಾತ ಇಂಗ್ಲಿಷ್ ಕವಿಯೊಬ್ಬ ಹೀಗೆ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಾನೆ:

We squander health in search of wealth
We scheme, toil and save;
Then we squander wealth in search of health
All that we get is the Grave!

ಮನುಷ್ಯ ತನ್ನ ಆರೋಗ್ಯವನ್ನು ಲೆಕ್ಕಿಸದೆ ರಾತ್ರಿ ಹಗಲೂ ದುಡಿದು ಹೇರಳವಾಗಿ ಹಣವನ್ನು ಗಳಿಸುತ್ತಾನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಕೂಡುತ್ತಾನೆ. ಆದರೆ ಕಳೆದು ಹೋದ ಆರೋಗ್ಯವನ್ನು ಮತ್ತೆ ಪಡೆಯಲು ದುಡಿದ ಹಣವೆಲ್ಲವನ್ನೂ ಅಸ್ವತ್ತಿಗೆ ಖರ್ಚುಮಾಡುತ್ತಾನೆ. ದುಡಿಮೆಯ ಭರಾಟೆಯಲ್ಲಿ, ಸಂಪತ್ತಿನ ಗಳಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಜೀವನದ ನಿಜವಾದ ಸುಖವನ್ನು ಸವಿಯದೆ ತನ್ನ ಬದುಕನ್ನೇ ಹಾಳು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಾನೆ. 'ಧರ್ಮ-ಅರ್ಥ-ಕಾಮ-ಮೋಕ್ಷ' ಎಂಬ ಚತುರ್ವಿಧ ಪುರುಷಾರ್ಥಗಳ ಜಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ 'ನೌಕರಿ-ಕಾರು-ಬಂಗಲೆ-ಸೈಬಿ' ಎಂಬ ಆಧುನಿಕ ಪುರುಷಾರ್ಥಗಳ ಬೆನ್ನೇರಿ ಹೊರಟಿದ್ದಾನೆ. ಬಂಗಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬಣ್ಣದ ಟೀವಿಯೇನೋ ಇದೆ. ಆದರೆ ನೋಡಲು ಅವನಿಗೆ ಪುರುಸೊತ್ತಿಲ್ಲ. ಸುಪ್ಪತ್ತಿನ ಹಾಸಿಗೆಯೇನೋ ಇದೆ. ಆದರೆ ಮಲಗಿದರೆ ನಿದ್ರೆ ಬರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ನಿದ್ರೆ ಗುಳಿಗೆ ಬೇಕೇ ಬೇಕು. ಹೆಚ್ಚುಕಡಿಮೆ ನುಂಗಿದರೆ ಚಿರನಿದ್ರೆ! ಉಣ್ಣಲು ಷಡ್ವೇದವೇ ಭಕ್ತ ಭೋಜ್ಯಗಳಿವೆ. ಆದರೆ ಸಿಹಿಯುಂಡೆ ತಿನ್ನುವಂತಿಲ್ಲ. ಸಕ್ಕರೆಯುಳ್ಳ ಕಾಫಿ ಕುಡಿಯುವಂತಿಲ್ಲ. ದಿನವೂ ಇನ್ಸುಲಿನ್ ಚುಚ್ಚಿ ಮದ್ದು ತಪ್ಪಿದ್ದಲ್ಲ. ಕಾರು-ಬಂಗಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹವಾನಿಯಂತ್ರಕ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯೇನೋ ಇದೆ. ಆದರೂ ತಲೆ ಬಿಸಿ, ಚಡಪಡಿಕೆ! ವಾಸದ ಕೊಠಡಿ ತಣ್ಣಗಿದ್ದರೂ, ಮನಸ್ಸಿನೊಳಗಿನ ಬೆಗುದಿ ತಣ್ಣಗಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಹಾಗಾದರೆ ಹಗಲಿರುಳು ದುಡಿದದ್ದು ಏತಕ್ಕಾಗಿ, ಯಾವ ಪುರುಷಾರ್ಥಕ್ಕಾಗಿ? ಕೊನೆಗೆ ಸಿಕ್ಕಿದ್ದು ಏನು ಅವನಿಗೆ? ನಾಲ್ಕು ಜನರ ಹೆಗಲ ಮೇಲೆ ಪಯಣ! ಎಲ್ಲಿಗೇನು ತಿಳಿಯದ ಸ್ವಾಭಾವ ಮನ! ಆರಡ ಮೂರಡಿಯ 'ಮಣ್ಣಿನ ಮನೆ'ಯಲ್ಲಿ ಚಿರಂತನ ಶಯನ! 'ಎಲ್ಲರೂ ಮಾಡುವುದು ಹೊಟ್ಟೆಗಾಗಿ, ಗೇಣು ಬಟ್ಟೆಗಾಗಿ' ಎಂದು ಕನಕದಾಸರು ಹಂಗಿಸಿ ಹಾಡಿದರು. ಆದರೆ ಇಂದಿನ ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಚಾಯತಿ ಚುನಾವಣೆಯಿಂದ ಹಿಡಿದು ಅಸೆಂಬ್ಲಿ-ಪಾರ್ಲಿಮೆಂಟ್ ಚುನಾವಣೆವರೆಗೆ ಈಗ 'ಎಲ್ಲರೂ ಮಾಡುವುದು ಓಟಿಗಾಗಿ ಮತ್ತು ನೋಟಿಗಾಗಿ' ಎನ್ನುವಂತಾಗಿದೆ. ಮನುಷ್ಯ ತನ್ನ ಹೊಟ್ಟೆ ಪಾಡಿಗಾಗಿ ಮಾತ್ರ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದರೆ ಎಲ್ಲವೂ ಸರಿಹೋಗುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಆದರೆ ಮನುಷ್ಯನ ಸ್ವಾರ್ಥಪೂರಿತ ಬಕಾಸುರನ ಹೊಟ್ಟೆಗೆ ಇತಿಮಿತಿಯೇ ಇಲ್ಲ. ಎಷ್ಟಿದ್ದರೂ ಬೇಕು. ಅದೂ ತನಗೇ ಬೇಕು. ಅದನ್ನು ಜೀರ್ಣಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ 'ವಾತಾಪಿ ಜೀರ್ಣೋ ಭವ' ಶಕ್ತಿ ತನಗಿಲ್ಲ ಎಂಬ ಪರಿವೆ ಅವನಿಗಿಲ್ಲ. "There is enough in this world for man's need, but not enough for man's greed" (ಈ ಪ್ರಪಂಚದಲ್ಲಿ ಮನುಷ್ಯನ ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪೂರೈಸಲು ಬೇಕಾದಷ್ಟಿದೆ; ಆದರೆ ಅವನ ದುರಾಸೆಯನ್ನು ಪೂರೈಸಲು ಸಾಕಷ್ಟಿಲ್ಲ) ಎಂಬ ಗಾಂಧೀಜಿಯ ಮಾತು ನೆನಪಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

ಲೌಕಿಕ ಜೀವನದ ಸುಖ-ಸಂತೋಷಗಳು ಧರ್ಮದ ನೆಲೆಗಟ್ಟಿನ ಮೇಲೆ ನಿಂತಿರಬೇಕು, ಮೋಕ್ಷದ ಗುರಿಯನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿರಬೇಕು. ದುಃಖ-ದುಃಖಗಳಿಂದ ವಿಮುಕ್ತನಾಗಿ ಶಾಶ್ವತ ಸುಖವನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯುವ ಹಂಬಲವಿರಬೇಕು. ಬದುಕಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಕೇವಲ ಬೆಲವೇ ಇಲ್ಲ; ಬೇವೂ ಸಾಕಷ್ಟು ಇದೆ. ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಬರುವ ಸುಖ-ದುಃಖಗಳನ್ನು ಸಮಭಾವದಿಂದ ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸುವ ಅಗತ್ಯವಿದೆಯೆಂದೇ ಯುಗಾದಿಯ ಹಬ್ಬದಂದು ಬೇವು-ಬೆಲವನ್ನು ಬಂಧು-ಬಾಂಧವರಿಗೆ, ಅಪ್ಪೇಷ್ಟರಿಗೆ ಹಂಚುವ ಸತ್ಸಂಪ್ರದಾಯ ಇರುವುದು. ವರ್ಷಕ್ಕೊಮ್ಮೆ ಯುಗಾದಿಯ ಸಂಜೆಯಂದು ಎಲ್ಲರ ಕಣ್ಣುಗಳು ಪಡುವಣ ದಿಕ್ಕಿನಲ್ಲಿ ನೆಟ್ಟು ಎಳೆವೆಳದಿಗಳ ಬಿದಿಗೆಯ ಚಂದ್ರನನ್ನು ನೋಡಲು ತವಕಿಸುತ್ತಿರುತ್ತವೆ. ಆಗಸದಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನವೂ ನಿತ್ಯ ಏನೂತನ ಚಂದ್ರ ಕಾಣಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದರೂ ಬಿದಿಗೆಯ ಚಂದ್ರನನ್ನು ನೋಡುವ ಸಂತೋಷವೇ ಬೇರೆ. ಚಂದ್ರ ಕಂಡ ತಕ್ಷಣವೇ 'ಹೋ..!' ಎಂದು ಕೂಗಿ ಕೂಗಿದು ಕುಪ್ಪಳಿಸುವ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಆ ಆನಂದ, 'ಚಂದ್ರನನ್ನು ನೋಡಿದಿರಾ?' ಎಂದು ಅಕ್ಕಪಕ್ಕದವರನ್ನು ವಿಚಾರಿಸುವ ಮಧ್ಯಮಾಸ್ಥರ ಉಭಯಕುಶಲೋಪರಿ, ಚಂದ್ರದರ್ಶನವಾದ ತಕ್ಷಣವೇ ಧನ್ಯತೆಯಿಂದ ಬೀಗಿ ಗುರುಹಿರಿಯರಿಗೆ ಶ್ರದ್ಧಾಭಕ್ತಿಯಿಂದ ಬಾಗಿ ನಮಸ್ಕರಿಸುವ ಆ ಭಾವಪರವಶತೆ, ಕಣ್ಣು ಮಂಚಾಗಿ ಸರಿಯಾಗಿ ಕಾಣಿಸದ ಅಜ್ಜ-ಅಜ್ಜಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಚಂದ್ರನಲ್ಲಿದ್ದಾನೆಂದು ತೋರಿಸಿಕೊಡುವ ಮೊಮ್ಮಕ್ಕಳ ತವಕ ವರ್ಣನೆಯೆಲ್ಲವೂ. ಆ ಮೊಮ್ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೇನು ಗೊತ್ತು!

ಆಗಸದಲ್ಲಿ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಬಾಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸವದ ಪೆಪ್ಪರ್‌ಮೆಂಟಿನಾಕಾರದ ಒಂದು ಚಂದ್ರ ಕಂಡರೆ, ಜೀವನದ ಮುಸ್ಸಂಜೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಆ ಹಿರಿಯರಿಗೆ ಕಾಣಿಸುವುದು ಆಕಾಶದ ಆ ಚಂದ್ರನಲ್ಲ, ಅವರಿಗೆ ತಮ್ಮ ವಂಶದ ಕುಡಿಯಾದ ಮುದ್ದುಮುಖದ ಹಾಲುಗಲ್ಲದ ಆ ಮೊಮ್ಮಕ್ಕಳೇ ಹತ್ತಾರು ಬಗೆಯ ಬಿದಿಗೆಯ ಚಂದ್ರ! ಮುಂದೆ ಮುಗಿಲೆತ್ತರಕ್ಕೆ ಅವರು ಬೆಳೆಯುವಂತಾಗಲಿ ಎಂಬ ಹೆಚ್ಚುಕೆಯ ಆಶಾಗೋಪುರ!

ಚಿಂತನಶೀಲ ಓದುಗರೇ! ಕೆಲವೊಮ್ಮೆ ನಿತ್ಯ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ನಿಮಗೆ ಬಹಳ ಬೇಕಾದವರು ಅಪರೂಪಕ್ಕೆ ಸಿಕ್ಕದೆ ಸಂತೋಷಪಟ್ಟು 'ಯುಗಾದಿ ಚಂದ್ರನನ್ನು ನೋಡಿದಂತಾಯಿತು!' ಎಂದು ಉದ್ಗ್ರಸ್ತರಲ್ಲವೇ? ಆದರೆ ಬಿದಿಗೆ ಚಂದ್ರನಂತೆ ಪ್ರಿಯವಾದ ಆ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಯನ್ನು ನೋಡಲು ನೀವು ನಿಜವಾಗಿಯೂ ಮಾಡಿದ ಪ್ರಯತ್ನ ಏನು? ನೋಡಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗದೆ ಹತಾಶೆಗೊಂಡ ದಿನಗಳು ಎಷ್ಟು? ಅಂತೆಯೇ ನಿಮ್ಮನ್ನು ಕಾಣಲು ಹಾತೂರವ ಜೀವಿಗಳಿಗೆ ನೀವು ಕಾಣಿಸಿಕೊಂಡದ್ದು ಎಷ್ಟು? ಪರಿತಪಿಸಿದ್ದು ಎಷ್ಟು? ಕಾಲದ ಕಾವೋಡದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಡಗಿ ಕಣ್ಮರೆಯಾಗುವ ಮುನ್ನ ಅವರನ್ನು ಕಂಡು ಮಾತನಾಡಿಸಿರಿ. ಬದುಕಿನ ಒಬ್ಬಟ್ಟಿನ ಸವಿ ನಿಮಗೆ ಸಿಗುವುದು ಆಗಲೇ! ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಮನೆಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅತ್ಯಂತ ಸಡಗರ-ಸಂಭ್ರಮದಿಂದ ಆಚರಿಸಲಿರುವ ಸರ್ವಧಾರೀ ಸಂವತ್ಸರದ ಯುಗಾದಿಯ ಶುಭ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಂದು ನಿಮ್ಮೆಲ್ಲರಿಗೂ ಹಾದೀಕ ಶುಭಾಶಯಗಳು!

ಶ್ರೀ ತರಳಬಾಳು ಜಗದ್ಗುರು
ಡಾ|| ಶಿವಮೂರ್ತಿ ಶಿವಾಚಾರ್ಯ ಮಹಾಸ್ವಾಮಿಗಳವರು
ಸರಿಗೆರೆ

Allama Prabhu – The Saint

Guruswamy Ayya, VA

Allama Prabhu was born in a place called Belligave in the present Shimoga district of Karnataka. His parents were of modest means and Allama took up drum beating which was the family tradition. Through gradual and persistent self-development, he grew to be an eminent *Sharana* in the Basava movement of the twelfth century. He was known for yogic accomplishments. He presided over the proceedings of Anubhava Mantapa where sharanas debated their spiritual experiences to develop philosophical concepts of Veerashaivism.

Allama Prabhu was an exponent of the relationship of God and spirituality. He has expressed his spiritual experiences in his vachanas under his signature name of *Guheshwara*. Some of his complex vachanas known as “bedagu vachanas” are known to contain insightful revelations but hidden in artful words. He emphasized the importance of conduct while detesting rituals. We will discuss the bedagu vachanas later. The following is one of his simpler vachanas.

*Bhavadollabba devara maadi
Manadallondu bhakthiya maadi
Kayada kaiyali karyavunte
Vayakke balaluvuru noda
Etthaneri Etthanarasuvaru, Etthahoarayya Guheshwara*

We create God(s) responding to fears and desires
We try to reach God mentally
We perform tiring rituals, but without conduct
We are sitting on the cow but keep searching for it
Oh, Guheshwara

Our misguided search for God is like a person who rides on his cow, and travels all around, looking for the cow on which he is sitting. God is within each of us. The way to reach God can be accomplished directly through proper spiritual conduct. We are always trying to contact God in one way or the other. In our mind, we create God as a person, bearing various characters, suitable to our own mental disposition. We portray God as a punishing person and then perform self hurting exercises to please him. When we want him to make our wishes come true, we see him as gracious. We engage others to perform rituals to gain God on our side, while we know that God is all knowing.

We travel to distant places such as, temples, forests and holy places to meet God. But God is within us. God is not a person or a being. God is all pervading divine energy encompassing everything we know from the cosmos to the human cell. We realize God by relating our own divinity to the divinity in others through our spiritual conduct. Thus, our conduct, respecting divinity in each of us, is the basis for experiencing God.

Gudhi Padwa

Jayashree Kori, VA

Gudhi Padwa is considered a very auspicious day for Maharashtrians. This is one of the three and a half auspicious days in the Hindu lunar calendar. Gold is purchased on this day, as it is said that what you buy this day, does not get lost. In this same way, activities performed this day will fulfill the purpose. It is said that the Universe was created by Brahma on this day and Satyuga (The Age of Truth and Justice) began.

It is also believed that on this day, Shri Rama returned to Ayodhya after victory over Ravana and Lanka. Traditionally, bittersweet leaves of the neem tree are eaten on this day. A paste of crushed neem leaves, cumin seeds, jaggery and salt is taken before eating any food in the morning.

Neem leaves are added to the bath water. I remember the Gathis – the garlands made with white and pink paisley and other shape candy made from sugar, which were given to small kids. They used to be displayed in the mithai stores all over the town. On this day, gudhis are set outside the houses.

A 'gudhi' is a pole on the top of which an upturned brass or silver pot called a kalash is placed. The gudhi is covered with a colorful silk sari, shawl and decorated with marigold flowers, coconuts, and mango leaves that symbolize nature's bounty. The Gudhi is worshipped by offering sandalwood paste, turmeric and vermilion.

Shrikhand

Latha Mallikarjun, PA

Ingredients

- 6 cups homemade curds made out of whole milk
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 tsp powdered saffron
- 1 tbsp of crushed pistachio & almonds (blanched)
- 1/4 tsp ground cardamom
- A pinch of ground nutmeg

Method

- Line a colander with two layers of cheesecloth and hang it over a bowl. Gently, pour the curds over the cheesecloth and let it drain for 4-5 hours in a cool place. Now pull the edges of the cheesecloth with the curds in a tie and twist to remove additional water.
- Scoop the drained yogurt into a bowl. It should be thick like cheese and half the original volume.
- Add the powdered sugar and saffron to the yogurt. Beat with a whisk. More sugar could be added depending on the sourness. Now mix in the crushed nuts, cardamom and nutmeg.
- Shrikhand is ready to be savored with puris or may be served in bowls topped with extra nuts as dessert.

Greatness of Istalinga

Guru S. Bale, NJ

A person cannot be a Veerashaiva just by birth in a Veerashaiva family. The child must be initiated to the religion by being bestowed with an Istalinga by a guru or a jangama. Without the Istalinga, he is not a part of the Veerashaiva religion. So, what is Istalinga?

ಲಯ ಗಮನ ಶೂನ್ಯವಾಗಿಪುರ್ದು ಶಿವಲಿಂಗ ತಾನೆ ನೋಡಾ!
ಕೇವಲ ನಿಷ್ಕಲರೂಪವಾಗಿಪುರ್ದು ಪರತರ ಪರಬ್ರಹ್ಮ ತಾನೆ ನೋಡಾ!
ಭಕ್ತನ ಕರಕಂಜದಲ್ಲಿ ಖಂಡಿತಾಕಾರದಿಂದ ರೂಪುಗೊಂಡಿರ್ದು,
ಅನಿಷ್ಕವ ಕಳೆದು ಇಷ್ಟಾರ್ಥವನೀವುದು ಪರವಸ್ತು ನೋಡಾ,
ಕೂಡಲಚನ್ನಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ, ನಿಮ್ಮ ಒಲವು

laya gamana shUnyavAgirpudu shivaliMga tAne nODA!
kEvala niShkalarUpavAgirpudu paratara parabrahma tAne nODA!
bhaktana karakaMjadalli khaMDitAkAradiMda rUpugOMDirdu,
aniShTava kaLedu iShTArthavanlvudu paravastu nODA,
kUDalacanna saMgamadEvA, nimma olavu

The one without birth or death is Parashiva. Parashiva is formless. A painter cannot draw a picture of God. Sense organs can only recognize things with form and mind comprehends things with name and forms. But God has no name and no form.

Parashiva is not just Shiva with the trident in his hand; moon on his head; Gange falling from his head; Gowri on the lap and a snake in the neck. He is the linga.

There are two types of lingas – Stavaralinga and Istalinga. Sthavara linga is the linga in a temple. It is also seen under a tree and in many other places. Generally they are carved in stones and placed according to rituals. Almost all lingas in temples are worshiped by a priest. Devotees cannot worship sthavara linga directly but they have to be satisfied looking at the worship performed by priest. Some aspect of worship is not allowed to be seen. There are many temples charge fees to accept the offerings of devotees and also to view the idol in the temple. In some temples one has to make an appointment several months ahead of visit to the temple to view the decorated stone idol. Even today many people in the lower class are not allowed to enter the temple grounds.

All of us know that God is omnipresent. He has all the knowledge. He is Always true and happy. There is no sadness in Him. There is no discrimination; there is no differentiation or classification of people to groups. Yet, ignorant people become victims of the games played by the priests.

Istalinga is the form of Parashiva. Guru gives the form to Parashiva as Istalinga and is placed on the body to instill devotion. A devotee with an Istalinga on the body remembers his origin. It destroys the hurdles and makes ways to reach Paraśiva.

Istalinga is carried on the body. It reminds the person not to sway from the righteous path. It is worshiped by the person with a pure mind and heart. To satisfy hunger, the person eats food. He stays hungry if someone else eats instead of him. The same goes to worship of sthavaralinga. The person does not get benefits of worship when priest does the worship.

It is very important that Veerashaivas do not worship other than the Istalinga. Istalinga is the gateway to everlasting happiness. For a Veerashaiva, mokṣha does not mean securing one of these four states – salokya (in the divine world), samipya (close to God), sayjya (with God) and sarupya (dressed as God). They are not eternal. Mokṣha for a Veerashaiva is to unite with Parashiva . Unity with Parashiva is the only way to escape the illusions of maye and to be free from the cycle of birth-living-death.

If Parashiva has no form then the question arise how does he exist in this world?

ಕಿರಿದಾದ ಬೀಜದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿರಿಯತರುವಡಗಿದ ಪರಿಯಂತೆ,
ಕರಗತವಾದ ಕನ್ನಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕರಿಗಿರಿಗಳು ತೋರುವ ಪರಿಯಂತೆ,
ಜಗದ್ವ್ಯಾಪಕವಾದ ಪರವಸ್ತುವು ಖಂಡಿತಾಕಾರಮಾದ ಶರೀರದಲ್ಲಿ
ಅತಿ ಸೂಕ್ಷ್ಮ ಪ್ರಮಾಣದಿಂದಿರ್ಪಂತೆ,
ಪರತರಶಿವಲಿಂಗವು ಸದ್ಭಕ್ತರನುದ್ಧರಿಪ ಸದಿಚ್ಛೆಯಿಂದ
ಲಿಂಗಾಕಾರವಾಗಿ ನೆಲೆಗೋಡಿರ್ಪುದು.
'ಅಣೋರಣೀಯಾನ್ ಮಹತೋ ಮಹೀಮಾನ್' ಎಂದುದಾಗಿ
ಪರಬ್ರಹ್ಮರೂಪವಾದ ಲಿಂಗವು ಮಹದ್ರೂಪದಿಂದ ಅಖಂಡವಾಗಿಯೂ
ಅಣುರೂಪದಿಂದ ಖಂಡಿತವಾಗಿಯೂ ತೋರುವುದು
ಕೂಡಲಚನ್ನಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ, ಇದು ನಿಮ್ಮ ದಿವ್ಯಲೀಲೆಯಯ್ಯಾ!

kiridAda bljadalli hiriyataruvaDagida pariyaMte,
karagatavAda kannadiyalli karigirigaLu tOruva pariyaMte,
jagadvyaApakavAda paravastuvu khaMDitAkAramAda sharIradalli
ati sUkShma pramANadiMdirpaMte,
paratarashivaliMgavu sadbhaktaranuddharipa sadiccheyiMda
liMgAkAravAgi nelegODirpudu.
aNORaNiyAn mahatO mahImAn' eMdudAgi
parabrahmarUpavAda liMgavu mahadrUpadiMda akhaMDavAgiyU
aNurUpadiMda khaMDitavAgiyU tOruvudu
kUDalacanna saMgamadEvA, idu nimma divyallleyayyA!

Chennabasavanṇa answers the question with the above vachana. A small seed contains all the traits of a large tree. A small mirror shows large objects like elephant and mountain. Parashiva, who is in the entire universe exists in the stula body.

'Aṇoraṇiyana mahato mahimana' means God lives in the body as smaller than the smallest and larger in the larger bodies. Also, in the world, he lives as the largest. Yet, we cannot see him. It is possible to see him through the grace of guru and with pure mind and heart. We attend schools and colleges to learn about things. Similarly we need to learn about God from the learned. In that case, it is possible to see and experience God.

Why we should worship Ishtalinga?

Shankar Sagare, MD

This article is a compilation of writings from H.H.Mahatapsvi Shri Kumarswamiji's book, 'Prophets of Veerashaivism'.



Yoga has different meanings in different contexts. It means meditation, union, discipline etc., but it also means Upasana or worship. Upasana is an effort to realize the presence of God, and it consists of all those observances and practices, either physical or mental by which Upasaka or worshipper makes a regular and steady advance in the realm of spirituality. Upasana, in the true sense, is a sort of Bhavana or feeling. Thought is deeper than speech, feeling is deeper than thought. Our feelings move our nature and our nature may call back a semblance of those feelings; but the whole difference between nobleness and baseness lies in the question, whether the feeling begins from below or from above. In religion, feeling begins from above, for religious faith springs up from deep feeling. Worship is only an articulate form of feeling, and man should worship as though God were present. If his mind is not engaged in worshipping, it is as though he did no worshipping. The mode of worship must correspond to the issuance of God. It is symbolical and the feeling of the worshipper must correspond to the character of God which is spiritual. The mode of worship as adumbrated by yoga fulfils the above two conditions.

In myths, metaphysics and religious systems one speaks of the absolute. But it would be a mistake if we took the mythical, religious and metaphysical ideas literally and not symbolically. In the limiting situations we experience these ideas as symbols, which we enliven by our relation with the Absolute. This symbolical experience defies analysis and it is indescribable. But it is something that imparts depth and significance to our life in the world. When religious ideas and metaphysical concepts are realized as symbols, the world of our experience becomes artistic. Philosophy is not so much a matter of logical arguments as an attempt at deepening our consciousness. At a superficial level, we are aware of the world of objects, at a deeper level we become conscious of the self which is the condition of the world of objects; at a still deeper level we realize the Absolute. This conditions even the existence of the self. This is the real spiritual realization offered by Shivayoga.

The formless and nameless Reality is given a name and a form in the religious systems. The ultimate Reality is Shiva for both the Shaiva and Veerashaiva, and Shiva has two forms - the human and tupal. If the bias of the Shaiva is more towards the human form, that of the Veerashaiva is more towards Linga or the tupal form. This is the difference between the Shaiva and Veerashaiva practices. The Shaiva worships Shiva in human form as well as in the Linga form and Linga is installed in the temples. The Veerashaiva worships Shiva only in the Linga form and he carries that Linga, the emblem of Shiva always on his body. Veerashaivism substitutes individual worship in place of congregational worship, thus doing away with the need of the middleman and preserving the purity of worship.

The representation of Shiva in human form as conceived by the Shaiva is rich in symbolism. We find him represented either with one face or with five faces; the five faces symbolize the five root races or they signify the five elements. Whenever the five faces are represented, there are the corresponding ten hands. In each hand except the two is a destructive weapon like trident, sword or axe etc. The fifth hand is the boon-giving hand and in the remaining hand is Ghanta which represents the spiritual sound that the disciple has to hear during his progress. The instruments of destruction have an occult meaning which Madame Blavatsky unravels in her Secret Doctrine. "From the yogic standpoint, all of them symbolize the different trials which a neophyte has to undergo. For instance, Pasa, the noose is like a cross on which all the human passions have to be crucified before the yogin passes through 'the strait gate', the narrow circle that widens into an infinite one, as soon as the inner man has passed the threshold." Shiva is styled Mahadeva because he is chiefly an ascetic and the patron of all yogis and adepts.

The typical form of Shiva or Linga which the Veerashaiva prefers to worship and wear is symbolic of Pranava or 'Om'. The universe which is set forth by the spandana or vibration of the primal Energy, has a sound symbol and that is Om. Om, therefore, is the most universal and all inclusive sound utterable by man, and the only fit name for the whole universe, visible and invisible. According to Herbert Spencer, there are quadruple rhythms in the universe. These quadruple rhythms are represented by A.U.M. and silence, the combination of which forms Om.

As there are four rhythmic vibrations in the cosmos, so there are four states of consciousness in man. The primary test of existence is in the human consciousness. In the first three states of consciousness, Jagrat, Svapna and Sushupti or the waking, dreaming and deep sleep which are represented respectively by A.U.M. - existence is intuited in relation to something that is, a posterior or external and hence it is called relative existence. But the consciousness of existence in the turiya or the fourth state of existence is absolute and unconditioned by space, time and causation. In that state consciousness is existence; the absolute existence and the absolute consciousness are identical, man and the cosmos become one and the same. Such a state is represented by cipher or shunya and the attainment of this state is known as Shunya Sampadane. The avowed aim of upasana or worship of Linga is to attain to this absolute state.

The process of Upasana or worship is simple. The first requisite is that the worshipper is required to remember that the Ishtalinga which he wears is the representative of the Inner Light which is known as Jyotirlinga or Pranalinga. That inner resident of the lotus should be worshipped." The process involves the worshipping of the Linga with water, flowers, bhasma (or holy ashes), waving of light, incense, bilva leaves, sandal paste, rice grains, and sugar candy. After this process is over, place the Linga on the palm of the left hand so raised as to come in a line with the center of the eyebrows, behind the back and just above the left shoulder a burning candle or an oil fed lamp should be placed so that the light of the candle or the lamp is reflected in the Linga. With half closed eyes the aspirant should fix his attention on the speck of light reflected in Linga, the coating of which is blue black or indigo serving to widen and deepen concentration. The concentrated gaze generates psychic heat or tapas which stirs into activity the pineal gland. The gazing upon the speck of light reflected in Ishtalinga is the essence of drashtiyoga or lingayoga. This produces spiritual light or tejas which in turn, leads to the release of ojas or the thought power which is at once a power of vision and a power of execution. Shivayoga therefore lands one into a region of effective will and intuitive knowledge, where to will is to create, to think is to see. **This is the secret and significance of Shivayoga.**

For more information on this please visit – <http://www.veerashaiva.info> and <http://www.shivayoga.net>

ADVAITISM OF VEERASAIVAS

Linga Raju, NY

Veerasaivas (VS) are advaitins/advaitas in general. They believe in only one Absolute Reality – Sunya (1). Monism is the western term that refers to the view that Reality is basically one. Sunya encompasses the whole universe. For a commoner to understand this further, it seems that VS have adopted Siva (male component) and Sakti (female component) to represent Sunya. Sakti is Siva's Consciousness Force. The universe and the worldly existence were created by Sakti in Siva's Consciousness. The activities are being played out as Lila (sport, game, play, play acting) in Siva's Consciousness. It is believed that Siva, not only is tranquil, but also has active consciousness at the same time (1). Hence God is real and everything else is real within God's Consciousness – that way everything is still one – one Reality.

The Oneness philosophy is practiced by many Hindu groups of which VS are one such group. **Hinduism accommodates both theistic (belief in the existence of God) and atheistic (belief that there is no God) ideas.** Based on the Vedas, there are six major religious philosophical systems which were developed by Hindu sages at different periods of time (2). In addition, many other systems have been adopted by other Hindu groups. All these systems are so diverse that each one may qualify to be a separate religion. The most ancient of all the schools of Hindu Philosophy – the **Sankhya System – is atheistic**; but it can still help people attain spiritual liberation (2). This system recognizes two types of ultimate realities – Purusha and Prakriti. Purusha is pure spirit, and there are as many Purushas as there are conscious beings. Prakriti is primordial matter. Sankhyas are not advaitas since they believe in two realities.

The original treatise of the Uttara Mimamsa or **Vedanta Philosophical School** is known as **Brahmasutra**. It was written by none other than **Vyasa** who is the compiler of the four **Vedas**, and the author of **Mahabharata** which includes **Bhagavad-Gita** (2). Several famous Philosophers – Sankaracharya (788 to 820 AD), Ramanujacharya (11th century AD) and Madhvacharya (1199 to 1278 AD) – have written their versions of commentaries on Vyasa's Brahmasutra. **Sankaracharya's Advaita Philosophy** is the one that is usually referred to as Advaitism. Here Brahman is the only Reality (Satya), and everything other than Brahman is Mitya (false) (3). Brahman is neither male nor female, and has no active consciousness. It is pure knowledge. The Jiva or the Individual Soul is Brahman itself. There can be no real birth, death or origination for the Jiva – it is described as being in par with the Jiva in a dream (3). From Brahman's standpoint, the world has not really been created; it is real to those who are under the spell of Maya (illusion). A rope in partial darkness may appear to be a snake to an observer; at that moment the observer perceives the snake to be real. But when the light shines, the misperception disappears. Both Sankara's and VS' advaita philosophies agree with the concept of oneness and that God is real, but they disagree with regard to whether God has active consciousness or not. Both systems believe that one can attain oneness with the Absolute, even when alive. The spiritual aspirant has to first go through various moral and ethical practices, worship of personal God, etc., and then go through intense meditation which enables the aspirant the knowledge of the inner Divine Self. Both systems believe that worship of, or meditation on the monosyllable **OM** can lead to the highest knowledge. When ignorance is completely eliminated, and all sense of I or Thou is wiped out, oneness is attained.

Ramanujacharya's version is known as **Visishtadvitism**. It is a qualified monism. It holds the view that three entities – God, soul and matter – are steady factors, and the three form inseparable elements of one (4). "It is one and not two, and still that one is made up of the three, a unity of trinity and therefore it is known as Visishtadvaitam" (page 2 of reference 4). If so, some state that, it can be categorized as traitism, not advaitism (3). Visishtadvaitins believe that only bhaktimarg/bhaktiyoga can lead to Moksha (salvation). They also believe that a person can attain Moksha only after the person's death. This Moksha means living blissfully

in Vikuntha (god Vishnu's abode), subservient to god Vishnu, not becoming one with God. **Madhvacharya's** version of the Vedanta Philosophy is dualistic – **Dvaita Vedanta**, and thus not advaitism.

Another major philosophical system - **The Yoga School** – was founded by **Patanjali** who is the author of the **Astanga (eight-limb) yoga**, the practice of which results in the Union of the Individual Self and the Universal Self. Astanga yoga is very similar to **Sivayoga** of VS.

It appears that **Veerasaivism** and **Lingayatism** are synonymous and are used interchangeably. However, the Lingayat version applies/uses the term Linga for everything to emphasize the oneness philosophy. Sunya is Linga. The Universal Self is Mahalinga. The Individual Self is Atmalinga. The personal god Siva is Istalinga (portable form) and Sthavaralinga (fixed version at a temple). In the other older religious philosophical systems, the soul is said to be enclosed in five sheaths that form three bodies. The outer sheath forms the gross body Sthulasarira; the middle three sheaths form the subtle body Lingasarira; and the innermost sheath forms the causal body Karanasarira. The triple body – the gross, the subtle and the causal – are known in Veerasaiva terminology as tyaganga, bhoganga and yoganga. The respective Lingayat equivalents are Istalinga, Pranalinga and Bhavalinga (page 194, volume III of reference 1).

Sunyasampadane compilations are considered by VS to be what the Bible is to the Christians. The compilations consider VS philosophy to be Siva-advaita philosophy - Sivadvaitism. However some others have raised controversy, stating that it is Shaktivisistadvaitism (5). This term is not mentioned anywhere in Sunyasampadane. Professor Sakhare in his book (5) states that the philosophy of Lingayatism is the same as that of Kashmere Sivadvaitas. Siva is characterized and distinguished (visishta) by His power (Shakti) or capacity to work. Kashmere philosophers imply the visishtatva of Siva, but do not express it in so many words. However, Lingayats do – this is the point of difference in terminology only (page 281 of reference 5). He continues – Lingayat philosophy of Maya is an improvement upon Kashmerean theory where there is no explanation of what the real Maya is (page 290 of reference 5). He admits that misconception is possible if the content of Parasiva, the unmanifest condition of the universe in his consciousness (Shakti) is stressed; and that this could be construed to be similar to the philosophy of Ramanuja's school of Visishtadvaita (page 290 of reference 5). By emphasizing Shakti and using the term visishta in his proposal of Shaktivisistadvaitism as the philosophy of Lingayats, he may be causing too much of a confusion, and his concept may be misconstrued.

As to the practice of Veerasaivism, Sunyasampadane is replete with the use of the terms Sivadvaita and Sivadvaita, bhakti in the practice of Veerasaivism where the worshipper and the worshipped are one and the same. Despite the above controversy, it appears that Siva-advaita philosophy is generally accepted to be the philosophy of VS. If there is a need for another term to differentiate VS from others, may be Lingayat-advaitism or Veerasaiva-advaitism could be used.

1. Sunyasampadane, volumes I through V, Karnatak University, Dharwar, India
2. The Essentials of Hinduism, Swami Bhaskarananda, Viveka Press, Seattle, WA 98102
3. Sankara's Advaita, R. D. Karmarkar, Karnatak University, Dharwar, India
4. Hinduism In The Light Of Visishtadvaitism, C. Duraiswami Aiyangar, Lecture delivered before the Inter Religious League, Printed at The DT. Printing works, Chittor, 1933
5. History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion, M. R. Sakhare, Karnatak University, Dharwad, India.

Karnataka Flood Donation from VSNA



Dear VSNA Members,

On an auspicious day of "Shivadeepotasava" - December 1, 2009 Dr.Jagadeesh and Mrs. Jayashree Jagadeesh presented the check to JSS Mahaswamiji in Mysore on behalf of VSNA. The check amount was \$16,831 and VSNA would like to thank all those who donated for this cause.

VSNA will continue to accept donations for this cause and sincerely urges every member give. Please send your checks to VSNA treasurer - Latha Mallikarjan and complete (100%) donations will go toward helping the flood victims through JSS.

Dr. Jagadeesh noted that "Mahaswamiji upon receiving the check informed us about the developments that are taking place in the flood-affected areas and assured us the amount will be put into use in construction of houses for the flood victims". The presentation of donation was well received by local news organizations including new papers like "Mysore Mitra", "Prajavani", "Andholana", etc.

Sharanu,
Shiva Maganahalli

2009 Chicago Convention

Bhavani Moodabagil - 2009 Convention Chair

Dear Veerashaiva Members:

It is indeed an honor and a proud moment for Chicago VSNA chapter to have hosted the 2009 annual VSNA convention. In this exciting city of Chicago, Veerashaiva life and experience came into a vibrant display for all generations!

Almost 26 months ago, our chapter members collectively agreed to host the 32nd annual convention and have been busy at work ever since. From finding a suitable venue to deciding on the various chapter shows to fundraising enough, we have had much to do. In January of 2008, members elected a Convention Chair and the committees were formed, along with the selection of committee chairs and co-chairs. Many inactive members in the past now joined the universal cause of hosting a successful convention. Our mission to include every willing VSNA member to participate in at least one committee and to take part in at least one event was very successful with an overwhelming amount of interest. No member was left behind!

For the first time in the VSNA convention, we hosted a CME event for the physicians to not only attract the physicians to attend, but to bring some donations along with them. In addition, the youths of the chapter were very excited to take part in some great events. Six of the youth, with guidance from an adult mentor, prepared and moderated a game show where the youths and adults were able to learn about the Veerashaiva way of life and its teachings in a fun way. Hospitality and Youth committees staged a bus tour to Chicago and a fun outdoor game of scavenger hunt for youths that allowed them to learn some Veerashaiva culture and beliefs along the way. Though the country was in the midst of recession, it was delightful to see more than 425 Veerashaivas gathered under one roof for 2 days of camaraderie through religious discussions led by our learned sharanas and swamijis and exciting entertainment. Also, meeting old friends and making new ones became a common theme at the convention.

Two full days of programs were just not enough to capture the essence of our convention theme – Aacharave Swarga, which was front and center throughout the convention. Music, drama, entertainment, religious discourses by swamijis and invited guests, and the great food, were all factors in making this a successful convention. Attendees of all ages were excited to participate in workshops and competitions. At the young adults meet, some serious discussions went on for matrimonial opportunities as well!

Many memorable stills and descriptions of the event along with the results from the post convention survey can be reviewed in our souvenir. We thank all the attendees, participants, guests, Central VSNA and our local chapter members who made the 2009 convention a grand success in Chicago! We appreciate their support, their generosity of time, funds and attendance.

It is now time for Toronto VSNA members to take on the baton and march towards VSNA Convention 2010. As we wish Happy New Year – 2010 to all, here's to wishing Toronto chapter members much success as they get gather in large numbers at the 33rd VSNA Convention in Toronto!

VSNA 2010 Convention

Yuvaraj Patil



VSNA Convention is a forum for families to get together and learn from spiritual leaders and scholars. Is a forum to celebrate Sharana Samskruti. Is a forum to showcase talents by all members, especially by the youth and children. As you might be aware, the Toronto Chapter is hosting the 33rd annual convention. We are pleased to invite you to attend and participate at the VSNA Convention 2010.

- Convention committee has made very good progress:
- Spacious and convenient venue is booked.
- Spiritual leaders and scholars are invited.
- Cultural program with professional artists from Canada and India is announced.
- Youth program and competition is announced.
- Registration package is ready.

Dates:

April, 30, 2010: Early bird registration closes.

June 1, 2010: Discounted registration closes.

July 1, 2010: Canada Day

July 2, 2010: Youth Camping, north of Toronto

Jul 3, 2010: Convention Day-1

Jul 4, 2010: Convention Day-2

Invited Spiritual leaders:

Siddeshwar Swamiji

Shivamurthy Sharanaru

JSS Mahaswamiji

Invited Scholars:

Writer Ramjan Darga

Blogger Ravi Reddy

Kavi Kanavi

Youth programs:

Bollywood Dance by Youths

Fashion Show by Youths

Professional artists:

Vachana Singer: Smita Bellur

Painter Dr. J S Khanderao

Professional dance groups

Sampradaya Dance Academy Group

Menaka Thakkar Dance

We are trying to meet your expectations in terms of diversity of programs and also depth in spirituality. VSNA Convention 2010 is two day event, Saturday the 3rd and Sunday the 4th. The night of Friday the 2nd is when the youth will head out camping. Camping at the Canada's scenic north is arranged by youth committee. Just heads up for you to book the hotel rooms accordingly. July 1st being Canada Day, there is spectacular fireworks at down town Toronto.

Event Registration Rates (Register online now) Hotel (book online now)

Category	Before April 30, 2010
Adults	USD 109
Students age 16-24	USD 75
Kids age 5-15	USD 65
Kids age 5 below	FREE

Convention Hotel	Discounted Room Rate
Sheraton 4 Star	CAD 109
Best Western 3 Star	CAD 89

Yes, you can register and book discounted tickets online at: www.vснаconvention.com
 We hope to see you in Toronto in July. Please feel free to contact us.

Sharanarathi,
 Yuvaraj Patil,
 Chair, VSNA Convention 2010
 Toronto, Canada
 Cell: 647-891-4267
patil.yuvaraj@gmail.com

Vijay Aivalli,
 Co-Chair, VSNA Convention 2010,
 Toronto, Canada
 Cell: 416-220-2892
vijayaivalli@hotmail.com

<http://www.vснаconvention.com>
 Google: VSNA Convention

“Opportunities: What VSNA Has To Offer”

Amulya Khajuri

(Amulya is a youth member from Pittsburgh chapter)

Each year, the Veerashaiva Samaja of North America conducts a convention in which Veerashaivas from all over the United States and Canada meet. One of VSNA’s goals is to preserve our culture by strengthening our community, so in order to do this we meet on an annual basis. When most of us think of a VSNA convention, we picture a fun and sociable weekend. Although this is true, the convention has much more to offer.

This gathering is an opportunity for people to gain more knowledge about their culture. With this, our convention gives us a chance to learn more about our religion, help our community, and educate our youth about Veerashaivism. Some activities include the Ishtalinga puja, yoga sessions, and workshops. Along with the Ishtalinga puja, adults and children perform in cultural programs such as dramas and dances. Furthermore, children partake in competitions that include coloring, dancing, and vachana recitation.

Participating or even witnessing events such as these help us remain in touch with our tradition and culture. In addition, yoga sessions not only help relieve stress, but they also encourage people to start trying yoga on a regular basis. For those who are interested, VSNA encourages people to attend workshops. Topics in these workshops include, but are not limited to, the future of the youth, business practices, and health related issues.

Speakers volunteer to give informative lectures while encouraging their audiences (especially the youth) to make a difference. These workshops are educational, appealing, and worth attending. Furthermore, to appeal to teenagers, VSNA incorporates a whole day for a youth retreat. Parents should encourage their kids for this fun-filled and interactive day. Ultimately, VSNA conventions provide families with cultural and social experiences in hopes to strengthen our community; it is definitely worth the money and it is an action-packed weekend that all Veerashaivas should anticipate.

Chapters' Round-Up

VSNA Ohio Chapter

Amit Vagaralli

At the Ohio Chapter, 2009 witnessed increased participation from adults and kids in the various activities planned for the year. Highlights of 2009 activities include:

On the first Sunday of every month we had Linga Pooja for kids. Children learned how to perform Linga Pooja. Vachanas were recited with the meaning of the Vachana explained. In addition time was spent discussing the tenets of Veershaivism and how they can be used in everyday life. Member families also participated in major festivals including Makar Sankranti, Maha Shivaratri, Basava Jayanti, and Deepavali. Kids and adults performed linga pooja, and participated in cultural activities during these celebrations. In addition, we had kids' movie night, mens and ladies night out and a picnic in the picturesque Hocking Hills State Park. Members also donated to the local Mid Ohio Food Bank.



Hocking Hills – Picnic 2009



Kids activities during Sankranti 2009



Hocking Hills – Linga Pooja

VSNA Chicago Chapter

Chaitra Kishore

The Chicago Chapter kicked off 2010 with Makara Sankranthi celebrations January 23rd at Eola community center in Aurora, Illinois. Almost the entire Chicago chapter was there to celebrate Sankranthi giving the chapter a good start for the year. Several of the younger children had put together various programs to entertain everyone. Vachanas and songs recited in the sweet voices of little kids filled the air along with melodious music coaxed from a variety of instruments played by older kids. Adults contributed to the program by singing songs and vachanas as well. In addition, there were three group Sankranthi themed dances that were very well done. The entertaining program was followed by discussions and then a tasty meal that was finished by 'yellu'. Also, a few new members were announced at this meeting.

A month later, on February 20, VSNA Chicago Chapter convened again to celebrate Shivaratri at the residence of one of the members. The program started out with a lovely puja to Lord Shiva and was followed by cute programs by children. The evening ended with typical rice-less Shivaratri meal of uppittu, avalauki, and mandakki (chur-muri). All the members thoroughly enjoyed both functions and are now looking forward to the upcoming Ugadi function. Here are few snap shots of our programs:



More photos of VSNA Chicago Chapter activities can be viewed at:

http://picasaweb.google.com/channuk/2010_VSNA_Chicago_Sankranthi#

http://picasaweb.google.com/channuk/2010_VSNA_Chicago_Shivarathri#

VSNA DC AND VA Chapter

Girija Angadi

Basava Samiti, DC and VA chapter of VSNA celebrates every year Shivarathri, Ugadi, Basava Jayanthi, Ganesh Chaturthi, Deepaavali festivals and the holiday party in December. Once a year we organize joint picnic with Maryland chapter, perform Dasoha where we feed homeless.

Basava Samiti celebrated Maha Shivarathri on February 27, 2010. The festival was hosted by Mr. Raj and Mrs. Rajeswari Galagali of Sterling, VA. The mood was very festive and it was an appropriate time to have religious discourse. The function started with group prayer-songs followed by Istalinga Puja led by Dr. Saroja Ullagaddi. Children and adults participated in the puja, and it was gratifying to see three and four year old children performing the Linga Puja. There was vachana recital from children and ladies. Arathi was performed with group arathi song, followed by potluck dinner with typical Shivarathri treats.

Dr. Saroja Ullagaddi briefly addressed the gathering to highlight the meaning and importance of Istalinga Puja. She said Veerashaivas worship Shiva in the Istalinga form and according to Basavanna- Guru, Linga and Jangama are equally important to Veerashaivas. Devotees should wear the Linga on their body, do Linga puja daily, get spiritual guidance from the Guru and devote their time to serve others seeing them in the form of Jangamas.

She also talked about Kayaka and said Kayaka in its wider sense as preached and practiced by Basavanna is that everyone must do their duty and not to live an idle life but to be a productive member of the society. The speech was very well received, especially by the younger audience. Mrs. Rajeshwari Galagali explained the spiritual significance of Shivarathri and also read an article written by Mr. Guruswamy Ayya about Shivarathri.

Our goal is to make our future generation of youth to recognize the importance and the benefit of understanding the principles of Veerashaivism. We will have Anubhava Mantapa style discussion among youth and adults, and planning to invite experts on Basava philosophy to give lectures to our members. We will strive to understand and learn to practice Basavanna's simple teachings even in this modern day-to-day stressful life.

New Years In A New Way

Chaitra Kishore, IL

“Wake up Annie! Happy New Year!” Renu’s joyous voice rang out.

New Year? Annie sleepily wondered to herself. Wasn’t it March? Thirteen-year old Annie Smith was born in a small suburb in Tennessee and had never ventured farther than her grandparents’ home in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In fact, that was where she and her best friend Renu Shankar spent spring break every year. But then Renu had complained that she wanted to visit her grandparents for once. So here they were in Bangalore, India. So far, the trip was proving quite interesting. First morning to wake up in a different continent and she was being waken with ‘Happy New Year’? Seeing the bewildered look on Annie’s face, Renu laughed.

“Come see.” She dragged Annie to the window. Rubbing her jet-lagged eyes, Annie peeped outside. The sun hadn’t risen yet, but the world glowed. It was spring!

“In the Hindu calendar, Chaitra, the month of spring, is the first month of the year. So with the dawn of spring comes the dawn of the new year, or Ugadi. Happy Ugadi Annie!” Renu smiles at her friend’s mystified face and then tugs her away to start the new year fresh and clean. But instead of having warm water pouring down over her head, like Annie expected, she had to pour the water herself! What a visit this was turning out to be! Next, she was presented with a pretty skirt with a matching blouse called a lengha. Though it was gorgeous, Annie simply couldn’t accept such a lovely gift. But when she tried to turn it down, Renu simply replied, “Everyone wears new clothes on the first day of the new year!” So in their new outfits and with fresh jasmine flowers in their neatly braided hair, the girls ran downstairs and out the door.

The world outside was simply vibrating with festivity! And the entrances of every home echoed this festiveness.

“Why are the doorways decorated with leaves?” Annie wondered.

“Those are mango leaves and neem leaves. The mango leaves signify a good crop and well being while the neem leaves are said to ward of evil and also have medicinal powers.” Renu replied.

“Oh what pretty designs on each doorstep” Annie exclaimed.

“Yes, rangoli is really pretty. It is also a symbol of festivity.” Renu explained. Just then, a neighbor whose doorstep was yet to be decorated, came out and poured unpleasant smelling water on the doorstep. “Uggh! What is that?!” asked Annie, holding her nose.

“Oh just cow dung water. It serves as a sanitation means.” Renu answered as they watched the neighbor apply rangoli where the water had just splashed. “Come on, lets go in for prayers.”

“Sanitation means?!” Annie wrinkled her nose and then followed Renu inside.

The entire household gathered together to thank the gods for a wonderful year and to seek blessings for the new year. Then they exchanged a small dish called bevu bella. When Annie put the dish in her mouth she experienced first a sweet taste and then a bitter one.

“Uggh! Can I please have just the sweet?” she pleaded.

“Life isn’t a bed of roses Annie. Bevu Bella signifies that life is a mixture of both happy and hard times.” Renu smiles at her friend as they sit down for a festive meal. Annie had never sat down to a meal like this before! And literally, sat down.

For they all sat down on the floor on little straw mats and ate off of plantain leaves. There was a wonderful spread of delicacies.

“Many of the dishes include mangoes since this is also the start of the mango season.” Renu explained. “Oh I love mangoes!” Annie cried.

“Then try this, it’s called mavenkai chitrana. It is basically a rice dish with a bit of raw mangos included.” Renu said, passing the dish to her.

“Ohh and its spicy , too!” Annie exclaimed. Laughing, Renu handed her another dish.

“This is obattu, a type of sweet stuffed bread. This should take away the spicy taste! Oh, and it tastes great with this mango sauce called seekarna.”

“Mmm,” Annie reveled in the sweetness. Then, she noticed some other interesting looking dishes.

“That’s hrulikai palya, which is a dish of fried green beans. Oh and that is called musrubajji. It is basically a tomato and cucumber salad drenched in yogurt. Oh and you have to try the kosambri! It’s a soaked lentil and cucumber salad.” Renu kept on passing various items towards Annie.

After eating to their hearts’ content, Annie and Renu spend the rest of the day visiting relatives and exchanging bevu bella with them. In the evening, when the exhausted girls were lying in bed, Annie thinks about her day. It was a completely different new year’s experience. For her, New Years had always been a crazy, all night party in the middle of winter. But, here in Karnataka, they did things differently. There were so many interesting traditions. And, she decided, she liked them, too.

“Hey Renu, can we come back here every spring break?”

Veerashaiva Trivia!

The FIRST three people who send in ALL the correct answers will have their names featured in the next issue!
Send your answers to vsnanewsletter@yahoo.com!

1. What are places where Veerashaiva philosophy is discussed called?

2. What is Basavanna's samadhi or burial place?

3. Who wrote this vachana?

I am the servant of Visnu
I am not the servant for dasoha!
I am the devotee of Visnu not Shiva!
Devotion to Shiva cannot take root in me
Help me Lord
Narayana Priya Ramanatha.

4. Who is Basavanna's older sister?

5. What is the case that holds the linga called?

WORD SEARCH

C K G S I V D Y V G S S E O L
M H U H N V M N Q U U P G V S
C G A K T C X P A D U D I P D
N K Z I Y O E A V H Z S L E I
X Y R O T N S B O I K E O C E
U Z C Z A R M N B P F I H B M
D P J L I B A E Z A H S R G G
Z N T D R I V M O D J P J S O
N B A O M U N B A W T I R V F
C G H I B R Y G G A B R J W F
U M Q E O V R B I U S H E P Q
D Q L G K T I C P F C A J J N
N L L G U J E Q F M Y C U A L
A K U U K D X U S M D H S G U
A G N A H C N A P V V A N R H

BEVUBELLA, HOLIGE, PANCHANGA, SRIKHAND, UGAADI, CHAITRAMAASA, GUDHIPADWA

(Answers will be published in the next edition)

VSNA 2010 Elections and Election Schedule

Sharanu All VSNA members,

We are starting the Election process of VSNA Officers for the next term. See “call for Nominations” by election committee and Nomination forms posted in the VSNA Blog and Newsletter.

As per by law there are 3 members for the Election committee, consisting of

Dr. Munavalli Chair, Mr. Doddamani our senior member of VSNA, and Mr. Deepak Bevinamara, young member with sound knowledge in Web technology. We will try to set up an electronic voting system. The election committee will shortly meet on Teleconf and discuss logistics of this voting system.

As mentioned before there will be election for the following VSNA officers post.

1. **VSNA President**
2. **VSNA Vice President**
3. **Secretary**
4. **Treasurer**
5. **Three BOD members (executive)**

Duration of Post: The term for these posts is 2 years.

Eligibility: The candidates should be **Life members or Annual paid members with good standing character having interest, intention, and time to improve VSNA.**

Who can nominate: Any VSNA members can nominate suitable candidates for the above positions. Interested Life members can nominate himself/herself as per BY law for any of the positions.

Nomination forms: For all nominations please use the nomination forms that are posted in the VSNA web site and Blog to nominate the candidates

Team Nomination: It is advisable to nominate your own team (slate) on single nomination form (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer) as your team members will be working together closely.

Eligible Voters: All VSNA **Life member** and All VSNA **Paid members**. See **VSNA By-Law Article IV Section 8**.

How the Election committee will determine the eligibility of the voter?

It is the duty of the Presidents of every Chapter to send us the list of paid members /eligible voters with their e mail address (send central VSNA annual membership \$35 each if they are not a life member). This list will be officially sent to Election committee.

Election Schedule: Following is the tentative dates for the election (This date may change according to the decision of election committee).

1st March 2010: Opening date for filing nominations

30th March 2010: Closing date for filing nominations

First week of April, the election committee will contact the nominated candidates for confirmation of their nominations.

15th April 2010: Last date for withdrawing nominations

If there are more than two candidates for one post there will be an election.

20th April 2010 to 30th April 2010: The Ballot (or Ballot in electronic version) will be sent to all the eligible voters.

1st May 2010: Opening date to send the Ballot.

1st June 2010: Last date to receive the Ballot by the election committee.

15th June 2010: Results of the election will be sent by election committee to central VSNA.

3rd July 2010: Official announcements of new VSNA President and other officers will be announced at the VSNA Convention.

If you have any questions please send an email to me; I will get it clarified from the election committee.

Thank you

With Sharanarathi,

Dr.Nagabhushana Malakkla

President VSNA

Central Officers:

President:

Dr. Nagabhushana Malakkla

Secretary:

Mr. Shiva Maganahalli

Treasurer:

Mrs. Latha Mallikarjuna

Cover image – Ugadi graphics from <http://shubhashaya.com>