

It is said that the 'world is a movement in the realization of values:

What are these values?

It is difficult to define them. They are elusive in character and inexplicable in nature.

Have they appeared in an unexpected and mysterious way in the age-old process of evolution which has been described by some thinkers as a process of 'achievement' in which, step by step, higher values are won?

According to them, life itself is one of these values science is one; mind is one; social organizations is one. Hegel goes further and declares that philosophy, art, and religion are the final values toward which the world is striving. What about consciousness? Is it the highest round of the ladder? Is evolution a great movement in the realization of values in addition to a process of achievement?

Be that as it may, it may be stated without fear of contradiction that it is these values which impart value to life, lend meaning to it and add worth to it. Even if we do not accept the extreme stand that the God idea itself resolves into the idealization of certain fundamental and characteristic values which have ranked high in human experience, particularly ^{power} ~~peer~~, righteousness, love, justice and personality and God is the embodiment or personification of these values, there seems to be no obstacle in accepting these as ideal excellences and supremely worthy objectives of social and personal life. Only these make life worth living and loving. Not only this, these constitute God's chief meaning to us; and we are beginning to see that the ideal values are not energy of the efficient type, but power of the integrating and harmonising type manifesting in the form of balance, unity, ~~proportion~~. It may be called a constructive, integrating and perfecting power - the power which makes for wholeness, beauty, truth, righteousness, love and cooperation - not a driving force, but a drawing power.

What, then, are these higher values which are the goal of human life? These are not mere virtues such as temperance, courage, wisdom, justice, love, cooperation or mere ideals such as freedom, equality, opportunity etc. These are to be determined with reference to the Ethical End or Highest Good according to our vision and judgement.

There are three different and distinct theories about this Ethical End or Highest Good-hedonism and its various schools which regard pleasure or happiness as the end; the functional theories which regard self-realization or activity as the end; and the intuition theories which regard unconditional obedience to the call of duty as the end.

A critical evaluation of these three theories is outside the scope of this ^{monograph} booklet. Suffice it to say that none of these is comprehensive enough to include the entire gamut of human values. Pleasure springs from the satisfaction of desires and G.S. Mill is right when he says, 'It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied'. Greater are the values of service and sacrifice than the mere satisfaction of desires or pleasure.

The functional view which regards self-realization or self-actualization as the ethical end or highest good is also inadequate to comprehend fully all those values which are indispensable to the realization of self-fulfilment. The intuition theory that the ethical end is unconditional obedience to the call of duty also does not take us far enough. Perhaps, all these three theories are complementary and subserve to the ultimate end- i.e. good life.

What, then, is good life? It is the one led in conformity with the concept of the highest good. According to Plato, man's highest good is a harmoniously developed personality, a condition in which every faculty functions in a perfect way without infringing upon any other faculty. The good man is one in whom appetite, reason and courage work in harmony, no one of them being in excess. His disciple, Aristotle, opined that the highest good is found in the normal activity of our highest powers. According to him man's highest activity is

intellectual. Hence rational activity is Aristotle's notion of the highest good, expressed in scientific research, in philosophical thought, in the quest of truth.

But what about man's thirst for beauty and creativity? If truth, goodness and beauty are the highest values, any scale of values should include all ancillary values which are necessary for the realization of these three highest values to satisfy the demands of personality, good life and self-fulfilment.

Everett has given a table of values in his book, 'Moral Values' based on the idea of functional activity:

1. Economic Values
2. Bodily Values
3. Values of Recreation
4. Values of Association
5. Character values
6. Aesthetic Values
7. Intellectual values
8. Religious Values.

Even this list is just illustrative, not exhaustive. A modern man, facing unprecedented complexities and problems of life, can very easily add to this list certain new values necessitated by the great strides made in various sciences and humanities such as physics, chemistry, eugenics, genetics, psychology and psychiatry, biology, anthropology, economics, politics etc.

The Hindus have accepted a four-fold goal of life consisting of Dharma - righteousness, Artha- Economics, Kama-sex - and moksha-salvation. From these religious values, economic values, bodily values and intellectual values can be adduced. The highest goal-moksha is nothing but the attainment of an emancipated mind and emancipated being.

In sum, values are the sine qua non for the realization of the highest good or ethical end of life. These are of such supreme importance that the study of the theory of morals leads us to the question of values - the higher values of life and even the study of philosophy is essentially a criticism of values according to the late eminent philosopher Prof.M.Hirianna.

Hence, any literature, worth its name, is inevitably a store-house of values. A study of literature from this angle is most rewarding. An attempt is made here to study the human values enshrined in the vachana literature in Kannada.

Before this, it would be enlightening to know something about the origin and development of this unique genre of literature of which the Kannadigas are ~~justly~~ proud. Prof. A.K. Ramanujam has rightly observed: "There is evidence for atleast fifteen centuries of literary work in Kannada. Yet in all the length and variety of this literature, there is no body of lyrics more strikingly original and impassioned than the vachanas of medieval virasaiva saints"

Efforts of some scholars to trace the origin of this literature in the Dandakas of Sanskrit or the Tevars of Tamil have at last yielded place to the conclusion of the late lamented scholar, M.R. Sreenivas Murthy, that vachana Literature is the native growth of Karnataka. It may be that it started a couple of decades before Mahatma Basaveshwar, with Jedara Dasimayya and others. But it should not be forgotten that they were senior contemporaries of Basaveshwar. Hence, it may safely be stated that Basaveshwar is the fountainhead of this literary movement of men and women from all strata of society - from the humblest to the highest - not of brards and pundits only. They included the fallen, the forsaken, the high castes and the outcastes, the learned and the unlettered, the privileged and the unprivileged and the deprived and the down-trodden.

Out of a cross-pollination of their individual and ~~un-~~ <sup>un-
milled experience was born this literature of unpremeditated art sans</sup> artifice and ornament - an ~~out-~~ ^{une-}less art springing from sincerity, spontaneity, transparence, directness and unfettered freedom of expression. It became ^{came} the authentic voice of a great sweeping movement of socio-religious reformation and a revolt against ritualism, blind faith, superstition and all other evils which held society in thralldom in the name of religion.

This explains the emergence of some new human values in this literature, in addition to some old eternal values, expressed in their mother tongue, in the language of the man in the street with homilies, metaphors and images drawn from

devils, kings and queens, pontiffs and pundits. Prof. Armado Menezis must be quoted here: " we are never far from the kitchen hearth and can smell the dung-cakes burning and hear the clatter of the pots and pans. Homely images of milk and cream, of sugar and jaggery recur; we can hear the ox at the oil-mill; the washerman beating his clothes on the washing stone. There is the snake and the snake-charmer; there are clay dolls, and the puppets ~~dance~~^{dangle}---; birds and ~~best~~^{beasts} the most familiar, the monkey and the dog prominent among them; we are ever conscious of tanks and rivers and wells; and of the jungle, where the jackal, the tiger and the elephant loom. There are the homliest of birds, too; the crow and the hen; but also the peacock and the swan. The bee hums in the champak flower, and the lotus blooms in the lake. The moon shines or is strangled in eclipse; a house burns or a nay-stack. There are images rooted in legend, and others which ~~shack~~^{smack} of proverbial sayings. There are images drawn from the theatre or the market-place; from popular beliefs "what is true of Basava's vachanas is true of other sharnas' vachanas also. x

One more outstanding feature of this literature is the exceptional fact that though rooted in individual experience, it was subjected to collective scrutiny in the 'Anubhava Mantapa' - hall of experience - founded by the leader of this new movement - Mahatma Basaveshwara. Each vachana was discussed thread-bare under the presidentship of Allama Prabhu, the greatest yogi of that age, and approved with or without modification, the personal becoming universal in the process. An amazing achievement, indeed; creative writing originates in the individual and requires unfettered freedom of expression for its articulation. At the same time, it gains authenticity of subjected to discussion in an assembly of like-minded seekers, without losing the stamp of personality and individuality.

This uniqueness of Vachana literature accounts for the new commonly accepted values evolved in it which have stood the test of time and the march of science. It is in this respect that vachana literature has been called wisdom literature and vachanas are deemed as Kannada upanishads. No wonder they have yielded some startlingly new values.

The range of religion is from ritualism to mysticism and spiritualism. Here also the content conforms to the intent. If the purpose of religion is to pacify hostile gods and goddesses and to appease the awful in nature, it becomes a predominantly ritualistic religion. If the intention is to attain heaven and its boons, it becomes a religion of prayers, worship and offerings and so on and so forth. Religious values in such religions are naturally coloured by such cravings.

But to the vachanakaras life itself was the highest value-born out of life, for life and for life larger than life. The purpose is the enrichment, enlargement and sublimitation of life. Hence they did not demand from religion either heaven or salvation or communion with the universal soul, Devotion, devoid of any desire, was the only aim of their religious aspirations. They considered it as the be all and end all of their religious life. It became the supreme value, the 'panchama Purushartha' the summum ^{bonum} ~~bonum~~ of their religious life. It was itself the end, not a means to an end.

Questions Lakkamma, the wife of wife ~~et~~ Aydakki Marayya - both vachanakaras of a high order -

"If you say you will go to Kailas,
practising righteousness and offering charity,
Is kailasa ^{ways} ~~ways~~ for your devotion?

"If you are where you are
without conjecturing ^{the} ~~the~~ hereafter
and without imagining the past,
Kailasa is where Amareshwara Linga is".

Siddarama Sivayogi has ^{pooh-poohed} the very concept of Kailasa in the following strong words:

"Listen my brother, ~~wrong~~ling for Kailasa,
Kailasa is a barren hill on their earth.

The hermits ~~these~~ are all life-stealers (Jeevagallaru)
The Chandrasekhara there is a great simpleton!

Why its astentation?

Act ethically towards our elders.

Understand the oneness of Anga and Linga

And vanish in the lotus feet of Kapila Siddayya -

And this is Kailasa".

Shri Basaveshwara proclaims unequivocally that
^{aspiring}
~~aspirations~~ for union with the 'One' after death is meaningless.

"As long as you delimit the world of gods and the
world of human beings,
Sharanahood is impossible.

If you say you have mingled after death,
It is like chewing the top of sugarcane".

Both the worlds are in yourself, he says:
The world of gods and the world of human beings
are not different, look:

If you speak the truth,
it is the world of gods
If you utter falsehood,
it is the world of mortals
Good ^{conduct} ~~connect~~ is heaven,
and bad conduct hell -
Kudala Sangama Deva.

He interpreted 'Mari' and 'Masani', the evil spirits, in
this illuminating way only-

'Mari and Masani' are not different, you see-
If you look with evil eyes -
Mari is there;
If you speak with an evil tongue
Masani is there;
If you forget Kudala Sangama Deva
these are there!"

Channbasaveshwara has given a novel and inspiring twist to
the very concept of ~~Deva~~ and Deva in the following vachana:

God has rallen, God has fallen,
You want to perish with such literature?
You do not know when it fell
You do not know when it rose!

Tell me if you know when it fell.

Kudala Channasangayya.
It exists when we are aware of you,
It collapses when you are forgotten."

Thus, the rise and fall of God do not determine the rise and fall of man; it is the rise and fall of man which determine the rise and fall of godhead. Where was Godhead before man discovered it as a result of his profound contemplation after experiencing the divine ^{silence} impulse, the wire ~~silence~~. The universal beauty in his own heart like Wordsworth to whom the Quer-soul or the Eternal one was a presence that disturbed ^{him} ~~me~~ with the joy of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns and the round ocean and the living air, and the blue sky, and in the mind of man; a motion and a spirit that impels all thin^{king} things; all objects of all thought, and rolls through all things".

It is in the mind of man that the concept of Godhead rose and that concept has progressively assumed more and more comprehensibility as man's knowledge of the mysterious universe increased immeasurably with the amazing advances made in the fields of physics, astronomy, space science etc. which have found strange foot-prints on the shores of the unknown. The concepts of one world, three worlds and fourteen worlds have yielded place to the ^{un}imaginably expanding universe of perhaps a hundred thousand million stars. To the primitive man, a snake was enough to arouse ^{dwe}and ^{bear} and submission in him considering the snake to be a god; but to the modern man? Even the sky is not the limit.

Aptly. say Basava:

"The wideness is the wideness of the world,
The wideness of the firmament,

Ay, wider still:

Thy feet are deeper than the under-world,

Ay, deeper still.

Thy crown is higher than the cosmos,

Ay, higher still

Than Linga, who art imperceptible

Past understanding and beyond compare

Didst shrink to the dimension of a speck.

when coming to my palm.

O Kudala Sangama Lord!"

This is literally holding eternity in the palm of one's hand. All previous processes of humanization of God with

are neither wholly rational or fully logical. This vision of holding eternity in the palm is at once novel and inspiring. By holding it in the palm, the devotee turns every limb of his body into the symbol. Says Allama:

"A running river is all legs
A burning fire is mouths all over
A blowing breeze is all hands
So Guheshwara for your men,
Every limb is symbol"

This perception of the all-pervasiveness of the Almighty and its inherence in every atom of atom in the human body has ^{new meaning to old mythological concepts. Here is Harinabala Kallaya's} lent interpretation of the mythological deity-Siva;

"Some say siva ~~de~~^{dwells} out of a fresh human skull.

I do not think it is false, since he ~~dwells~~^{dwells}.

through the mouth of his devotee;

Some say he is decked with bones;

I am sure it is true

Since he is the God who has His body in the body
of his devotee;

Some say He is ~~dressed~~ⁱⁿ skin,

It is not false, since he ever resides in the
heart of his devotee.

Therefore, Oh Mahalinga Kalleshwara,

you act ~~through~~^{through} your devotee."

He acts through his devotees only. Hence all his ~~devotees~~^{devotees} are equal and entitled to equal respect and equal affection. His devotees are not confined to human beings only. Lord Basava recognises ~~only~~ that the supreme father has eighty four hundred thousand faces - not only the human face. All living beings, numbering eighty four lakhs according to the reckoning then, are the living temples of the Lord. He resides in all of them and He acts through all of them. They all have a claim on our compassion. Behold Basava's concern for all these millions and millions of species of life.

"Out of your eighty four hundred thousand and faces
put on just one and come and test me, ask me.

If you don't come and ask me, I will swear by
the names of your elders.

Come in any face and ask me: I'll give.
My Lord Kudala Sngama Deva.

It is just one more step further and one finds the same world consciousness in all nature-organic or inorganic. Says Akka Mahadevi:

"All groves you are:
all bees in all groves you are;
all birds and beasts that play there you are,
Oh, Chenna Mallikarjuna, all you are;
disclose yourself to me!"

He is the universal mouth and that Universal mouth should be fed by a true devotee before he ^{feeds} ~~feeds~~ himself. Starving any one of these myriads of mouths is an offence against God. Here is a significant saying of Basaveshwara:

"What other punishment is there, O Lord,
for the offence of keeping the body alive
by stripping bare the yield of trees and
ships and corn and eating live creatures that you kill?
do not all animate and inanimate beings
Devour the mass of living things
from one sense ones to give?"

Therefore, when Kudala Sanga's sharanas
Have made an offering to Linga
and taken it back when sanctified
being exempt from sin, they are saved".

The food and other bounties of nature are meant for the universal mouth in the form of millions and millions of mouths animate and inanimate, not for the mouth of man alone. Hence we should not deprive any one mouth to over-fill our mouth, Food, nourishment and shelter available in this world should be preserved for all. They should not be exploited recklessly by human beings to satisfy their acquisitive, possessive and ownership instincts.

This is real religion - not temple building or idol-worship or offering eatables to idols of stone or metals. Not to build temples but to become temples should be goal of a religious man. The following vachana of Basava has been variously by interpreted and appreciated by eminent scholars like A.K. Ramangan.

"The Rich will build temples for Siva,
 What shall I a poor man do?
 MY legs are pillars,
 the body the temple
 the head a cupola of gold!
 Listen, O Kudala Sangama Deva -
 Things immovable shall fall,
 but the moving ever shall survive!"

The last two lines of this vachana are of epoch-making importance. They reverse the blind trend continuing to this day of neglecting life for the sake of the lifeless, sacrificing the moving at the alter of the immovable and of encouraging the rich-and-priest-combine to fleece the innocent ^{party} ality by false assurances of happiness here and salvation in the other world.

This ~~-----~~^{craze} for idols and stone images is partly traceable to the fact that they do not consume anything offered to them and the offerings come back to the offerer himself after the pujari takes his pound of flesh.

"Devotion can be done to Linga
 with song and dance.
 It never makes demands
 You bring and serve it once.
 But, O Lord Kudala Sangama,
 Should Jangama arrive,
 there is no serving him"

The 'sthavara' - immovable - tightening its strangle-hold over the jangama - the moving and the living - in the name of religion;

Even this idol worship is not without its hypocrisy and absurdity ~~and comic aspect~~:

"If they see a stone cobra
 They pay 'pour milk on it';
 If they see a living cobra
 they say 'Kill it, O Kill it';
 If hungry jangama comes
 they say 'GO away'
 for the hungerless lingam
 they say 'give it food!'
 when they meet the devotees of our

and Kudalasangama and treat them unkindly.

This is pouring ridicule on ritualism-this ritual of giving bread to the stone and stone to the hungry living beings. Basava has very emphatically exposed the futility of offering food to idols and the divinity of offering it to living beings:

'Lord, if thou art what thou art, I say:
What is thy obligation and thy debt:
Not through thy mouth a single crumb
Doeth spend itself; to take thy grace
Is the seed of all my birth!
If because jangama is linga, I take
what's left of the offering, my wheel of births
becomes as naught, O kudala Sangama Lord"

It is the left-overs from the devotee's table that ensure liberation from all bonds, not the offerings to the stone image. *vacana provides a philosophical foundation to his shifting of emphasis*
The following from the 'sthavara' to the 'jangama', from the non-living to the living and from the individual mouth to the universal mouth manifest in millions and millions of spices of life.

"The root is the mouth of the tree:
pour water there at the bottom and,
look, it sprouts...green at the top!
The Lord's mouth is His moving men.
Feed them, the Lord will give you all.
You will go to hell
if knowing they are the Lord
you treat them as men".

Feed them! Basava's concept of the Ishta Linga is certainly marvellous as seen earlier. But even this Linga worship is not as important as the feeding of the living, moving, loving beings. Says he:

"If you pour water upon it,
It won't grow soft;
Nor wither if you forget to water it.
Worthless the Linga rite!
O Lord kudala Sangama,
if you water jangama
the immovable one gets soft".

Feed the jangama - the moving, living beings!

'Oh, do not feed yourself
offering the tree its own plucked flowers.
Offering the stream the water of the stream,
Pressing the udder when you have
Hurt the cow depriving her calf of milk".

the desire of God's grace. Even when it embraces all species of life and life-sustaining nature, it is for its own sake. The happiness resulting from loving God and all living beings, from tending nature with tender affection is the greatest reward for devotion with its manifold manifestations - devotion, love, affection, sympathy, concern, compassion and so on. Compassion is the most comprehensive term in Vachana literature and it is considered as the very root of religion".

"What sort of religion can it be without compassion?

Compassion needs must be towards all living things.

Compassion is the root of all religions, faiths.

Lord Kudala Sanga does not care for what is not lila this"

This kin-sense and loving kindness or compassion towards all creation prohibits even plucking of flowers and sacred leaves for puja for fear of hurting the plants and trees in that act. Only flowers and sacred leaves that automatically drop to the ground are to be gathered for worship. This is the ideal way for preserving nature and maintaining environmental and ecological equilibrium. This is still alive in some sincere devotees of Basava and his associates. Dasarayya, a contemporary of Sri Basaveshwara, had imbibed this compassion to such an extent that his name became synonymous with compassion. The following poignant vachana of Dasarayya is a beacon light to the present day environmentalists and Earth-summit wallahs--

"Knowing one's lowliness in every word;

the spray of insects in the air

in every gesture of the hand;

things living, things moving

come sprung from the earth

under every footfall;

and when holding a plant or joining it to another

or in the letting it go

to be all mercy to be light

as a dusting brush of peacock feathers;

such moving, such awareness is love that

makes us one with the Lord Basaveshwara".

Mere love of all creation is not enough. Love becomes fruitful in service, in sharing our possessions, aspirations and earnings with other living things which are in need of them. What is left over after offering to them becomes 'Prasada' which is the

'asangraha' - non-accumulation, 'aparigraha' - non-acceptance^{of},
'astheya' - non-stealing, and a host of other virtues. It is ^{the principle of} based on sharing with others, not saving for oneself. Its elaboration will be attempted at a later stage. Suffice it to say here that if this lofty and sublime concept is accepted everywhere, there will be no problem of starvation, no problem of environmental pollution, no problems of hoarding, black marketing, smuggling and profiteering.

Thus, desireless devotion finding fulfilment in compassion for all creation and 'prasada' emerge as the twin most important religious values in vachana literature. Since life in all its forms is the highest value, all-embracing love which lends meaning and fulfilment to life and 'prasada' - the gift of nature - that sustains and sanctifies life are the supporting sublime values.

Since earthly life is the base for life divine, love of mother earth is also of paramount importance. Misconceptions about the world we live in have in no mean measure contributed to the misery of mankind. This life giving, life-sustaining and life-fulfilling world has been variously scorched as 'Maya' - 'illusion, as a vale of tears'; and as the place of punishment for those whose 'punya' is exhausted in heaven or whose past sins have thrown them into this ^{awful} cradle of all sufferings and misery. Such dismal notions about the world compelled men and women through the ages to look upon the life in this world as despicable and detestable and the despondent desire to free themselves from the ~~betters~~ of worldly life became irresistible in them. The resultant other-worldliness, fatalism, insincere asceticism, self-mortification and negation of the will-to-~~live~~ and will-to-love made life in this world meaningless.

But Basava and his associates consider this world as the 'maker's mint' and ~~self~~ - fulfilment here the stepping stone to self-realization over ~~these~~. The place of punishment was thus transformed into a place of fulfilment. No more negation of worldly life as all higher life and higher values of life are dependant upon a same and satisfying worldly life.

Hence, reverence for life, includes worldly life also, and love for living beings includes love for ^{no} mother earth also. Viewed in this light, the only religion is the religion of compassion for all creation. Religion is by man and for man - not vice versa; the highest religious values are reverence for

Truth, goodness and beauty, which have been declared as the ultimate values, are the attributes of godhead also. Hence love of God includes love of these values also and together with love of life and prasada constitute the core of religious values.

Economic Values

The concept of 'prasada' naturally led to the co-sharing of one's honest earnings and gave birth to the concept of 'Dasbha', + 'Dasoha' is sustained by the voluntary surrender of surplusses by the devotees after meeting their just and legitimate requirements. These should be their own earnings by manual or mental labour-not the earnings of exploitation in any form, and this labour should be free from violence, Tyranny, greed, self-aggrandisement and sinister designs; because Basava's aphorism is: - 'Dhanadalli ^{Shuchhi} ~~-----~~, Pranadalli nirbhaya - if pure in the production of wealth, fearless life is the reward. Wealth in itself is not a ^{curse} ~~curse~~. It becomes a curse when produced by unfair means and practices, when it accumulated in a few hands instead of circulating in the sinews of society like pure blood in the human nervous system. The same wealth becomes a boon when produced by pure methods and honest avocations and is distributed equitably among the various participants of production. Basava has emphatically stated that a sinner's wealth is fit for penalty only, Not for righteous utilization. (Pāpiya dhana prayaschittakkallade ^{sat} ~~st~~alpatrakke salladayya). Hence ^{pains} ~~pains~~ prasada is impossible from dasoha done with sinful wealth.

The divorce of economics from ethics is responsible for the insatiable hunger for wealth and the inhuman and unethical methods adopted to produce it, unmindful of the unemployment, misery, health hazards, environmental pollution and gradual depletion of global resources that they generate. It has created greed-based economy instead of need-based economy and mass production instead of production by the masses resulting in employer-employee conflicts, strikes, lock-outs and lay-offs, not to talk of the death of creativity in the ordinary worker, dearth of avenues of cultural advancement and merciless mechanization of life itself.

literature liberates liberated

The economy envisaged in vachana literature / on the one

and the tailing and malling millions from the curse of slavery

status of slaves destined to do service to the higher castes and classes all their lives without the right even to retain their savings with them; and on the other eliminated the concentration of wealth in the privileged few by adopting decentralized methods of production, and uprooting the employee-employer mechanism. All employment became self-employment not depending on the ~~whims~~ and fancies of upper castes and classes and on the man-~~maneuvers~~ and machinations of monopolies.

'Kayaka' is the key word in this economy. It grants freedom ^{to} every one to choose his own avocation regardless of what shastras say or monopolists want; it confers not only dignity but divinity on labour - from the lowest to the highest kind; it allows every one to utilize his honest earnings to meet his legitimate requirements; it gives him an opportunity to surrender his surpluses to Dasoha - programmes for commonwealth; it wipes out the stigma attached to some kinds of manual work by treating all work as equally sacred; it purges wealth itself of all impurities by producing it by sinless methods; and it ensures equitable distribution of wealth among all.

No one, not even Guru-Linga Jangama, are exempted from Kayaka which was obligatory for all. Nuliga Chandayya, an eminent sarana and rope-maker by Kayaka, has left this wonderful vachana:

"Even for the Guru, salvation is through kayaka
alone;

Even the Linga is liberated from its ~~stint~~
of stone through kayaka alone;

Even Jangama escapes the shackles of his robes
through kayaka alone;

This is the discernment of Chandeshwara Linga,
O Prabhu"

Kayaka purifies and elevates everyone, be he a Guru or a disciple, a prince or a ^{pariah} ~~-----~~, a pundit or an illiterate. Hence it is not only compulsory for all; It takes precedence over everything else. Says Aydakki Narayya, a great sarana and gatherer of spilt rice by Kayaka-

If absorbed in Kayaka, one should forget even
the Darshan of the Guru;
Should forget even the worship of the Linga;

Kayaka enables one to become a doing, ^{ing}donation-of devotee (maduva Needuva bhakta) and a self-reliant and independent man. Those who become parasites and live on the labour of others have no place in 'sharana samaja'. Says Basava:

If I see a doing and donating devotee,

I feel I have seen a treasure;

If I see a 'prasadi',

I feel my lost life has returned;

If I see any paragan of a sarana

who does not take shelter in others' houses to
eke out his livelihood

He is certainly Lord Kudala Sangama in my eyes"

Kayaka gives self-reliance; Kayaka gives self-respect; kayaka gives job satisfaction in the sense that it is done in an atmosphere of freedom with one's home as the work-spot and with no employer to restrict his freedom of action and with full scope for creativity. Kayaka replaces greed with love-love of the Lord and love of his children; kayaka saves labour itself from degradation by sanctifying it with the spirit of self-denial and service; and kayaka ensures equality of all engaged in it whatever its nature or stature.

It ceases to be Kayaka the moment greed or possessive impulse or the saving instinct enter into it. The story of Aydakki Marayya and his wife Yakkamma is unique in this regard. Picking of spilt rice was the Kayaka of Marayya. A wonderful Kayaka, indeed. It emphasizes the fact that food should not be wasted in any way. This reverent approach to food finds its consummation in the concept of prasada which prohibits wastage of a single morsel of food offered.

Sri Basaveshwara took pity on Marayya once and deliberately spilt more rice before his 'maha-mane'. Marayya picked more rice that day than was usual and brought that rice to his cottage. Yakkamma was taken aback on seeing the abundant rice that day. She took exception to her husband's desire for more rice when less could do. Her vachanas are shining examples of the spirit of kayaka:

"Violating single-mindedness

You have brought this with mind's dichotomy ^{any}

Is this your will or Basavanna's will of doubt?

This is unacceptable to Marayya Priya Amareshwara

the urge to accumulate. Hence it should be spurned ^{an} automatically. Should there be an element of desire, greed or avarice in kayaka?

"Greed is for kings, not for devotees, ^{sire!} siva!
Why should you have desire for this much rice?
The Lord will not approve this.

It is far away from Marayya-priya Amareshwara Linga.

Are you worried about paucity of funds? Don't harbour this illusion in your mind. Deficit finance is for the men of impure minds - not for devotees doing kayaka with unsullied... minds.

"Paucity of funds is faced by people of impure minds,
If kayaka is done conscientiously, the goddesses of wealth will appear automatically

Wherever one casts his eyes -

Till Marayya Priya Amareshwar Linga's service subsists."

This same principle of Kayaka is repeated in the story of Moligeya Marayya and his wife Mahadeviamma. They were king and queen of Sapada Laksha territory in Kashmir. Having heard of Basava's humanitarian movement for the upliftment of the under-dogs, eradication of caste and untouchability, emancipation of womanhood and humanization and sublimation of work, they renounced royalty and trekked to Kalyan^{on}foot as ordinary devotees.

Acceptance of a Kayaka of one's voluntary choice was a prerequisite for entry into Basava's fold. Moligeya Marayya chose fetching of firewood as his Kayaka. He used to go to nearby forests every day and bring just enough firewood from there to meet the minimum requirements of himself and his wife and their daily dasoha.

The compassionate Basava could not stand the sight of an ex-king eking out his livelihood by selling firewood. One day he entered the ^{when he was away,} hut of Marayya and entreated Mahadevi to offer prasada to him. Mahadevi's joy knew no bounds that the leader of the revolutionary socio-religious movement had graced her hut with his benevolent presence. While she was engaged in preparing prasada, he hid three containers of gold coins in the heap of firewood and left after taking prasada.

Marayya noticed the containers after his return and asked

He was at a loss to know how Basava forgot the fact that he had renounced royalty, riches, luxuries and all other comforts that wealth can provide only to hug voluntaries Kayaka and its honest earnings. Could ^{these} take gold coins, the gift of Basava, deviate him from the path of kayaka which enjoins labour of love, not of greed?

He distributed those gold coins among the mendicents that passed by his door and went about his daily routine with equanimity.

Basava heard this and was at once stricken by remorse. He hurried to Marayya's hut and fell prostrate before him. He begged his pardon for his failure to ^{grasp} the depth and width of his desirelessness. Marayya lifted him up and embraced him with overflowing reverence. He repeated his own vachana:

"What if you have elephants, horses, chariots & ^{re?} treasurers,
What one can consume is a handful of rice,
milk of one cow, and can sleep on half a cot only!
Do not degrade yourself by attachment to non-essential
wealth!"

This vachana stunned Basavanna. He ^{instantly} realized that mere wealth is of limited value. If it is not earned with earnestness, purity and loving kindness as guiding principles, it becomes a ^{glittering better} gathering better of gold.

"There are ten fingers for doing special Bhakti,
If worked by spreading them enough there will
be for himself and for his pramathas - elders.
How can it be to me like Mari father?
Kudala Sangama has chastised me with ~~better~~ betters
of precious stones! Alas, alas!"

Kayaka gets debased where wealth accumulates, Excess wealth is theft. "We are all thieves," said Gandhiji, "in a way if we pass anything that we don't require for our immediate use, we steal it from others."

Hence, the dual imperative in offerings to Linga: it must come from Kayaka, even if it is 'Kare' leaf. Otherwise it is unacceptable to Linga. (Kareya soppadaroo Kayakadinda bandude lingakkarpita - illadire anarpita). Secondly it must be the fresh earning of the present day - not past saving! (Satya sudha kayakada nitya dravyavadare Chandreshwara lingakke naivedyakke sandithu kalawva) There is a surplus still? Surrender it to Dasoha - social

There is one more marvellous aspect of Kayaka on a higher plane. Its role in temporal life has been examined in the foregoing paragraphs. Its role in the spiritual advancement of man is to be examined now.

Indicating the higher purpose of Kayaka, Basava says:

"That I may worship Guru,
I practise husbandry;
That I may perform my rites
To Linga, I follow trade;
That I may serve Jangama,
I am another's drudge;
Whatever the work I may do,
I know that you
have given me my reward;
No other occupation do I have
But for the wages that you give....
A curse ~~Of course~~ upon me if I fail
to give you what is yours,
O KudalaSangama Lord!

Why The Kannada phrase used by Basavanna is a 'Nimma Sommu' - ~~thy~~ property. Viewed thus anything earned by Kayaka becomes His property. Gandhiji gave the concept of trusteeship; Vinobaji gave the call that all land is Gopal's land (sari jameen gopalki) and Basava proclaimed that all property is God's property. It should be used in God's name for God's creation. It should not be appropriated for oneself. If belongs to the community as a whole, for satisfying individual needs and for collective deeds. Basava, therefore, proclaims:

'If I should say I want, this day,
another day,
A single particle of gold,
A single thread of cloth,
Let ~~they~~ curse and the pioneer's curse
be upon me;
But for thy sharanas,
There's nothing that I know,
O Kudala Sangama Lord!'

Nothing for oneself exclusively; everything for all!
This is to divinise work, sublimate property and wealth and to make duty God and work worship.

As noticed earlier, the Vahhanakaraa attach less importance to Linga worship and more importance to their Kayaka. Many of them have lent a spiritual meaning to Kayaka by

interpreting ~~to~~ outer working in conformity with their inner sadhana. Kayaka-inspired Vachanas form a very interesting and instructive part of Vachana literature.

Scholars have listed hundreds of variegated Kayakas followed by the Vachanakaras and the allegorical and spiritual interpretations of these Kayakas have added additional richness to vachana literature. The vachanas of Jedara Dasimayya, the weaver, Shankara Dasimayya the tailor, Mudivala Machayya, the washer^{man}, Medara Kethayya, the basket maker, Kinhari Bommayya, the goldsmith, Vokkala Muddayya, the farmer, Hadapada Appanna the barber, Jodara Madanna the soldier, Ganada Kannappa the oilman, Dohara Kakayya the ^{tanner} ~~tanker~~, Madara Channayya the cobbler, Ambigara Chowdayya the berryman, Terugahi Ramanna, the cow-boy, Vaidya Sanganna the physician and a ~~host~~ ^{host} of others are to be studied if this richness is to be assessed and appreciated. More than thirty women vachanakaras have lent a characteristic^{charm} of their own to this portion of vachana literature and added new ~~dimensions~~ to the comprehensive concept of kayaka. It may be safely asserted that no other literature has bestowed so much attention on work ethics and economic values.

This concept of 'Sivana Sommu' or socialization of surplus wealth naturally leads to the rejection of ~~luxury~~ which renders wealth a curse. Says Basava:

'If I lend myself, my treasure, my wealth
for the business of usury
and store it in the corners of my house,
it is not my wealth; it is a curse!
Sangama Deva, if you come in the forms of Jangama,
and utilize that wealth as per your wish,
and if I murmur and mourningⁱⁿ my mind
saying I want it, the curse of thyself and thy
pioneers be on me!'

All surpluses should be shared by Siva's devotees equally. The ideal is to become 'Veera Dheera Sama-Grahaka' - valiant equal - sharer - as enunciated in the following vachana:

'I am not afraid of the mind
that you have placed in me
as it has surrendered itself to supermind;
I am not afraid of the wealth

I am not afraid of ^{his} the body
that you have given me
as it is sustained on fixed share of prasada
after surrendering everything:
Hence, having become a Veera Dheera Samagrahaka
I am not afraid of you also--
Lord Kudala Sangama :

This ideal is further elucidated in the following
episode of Basava's life.

As is well known, Basava used to take prasada along with
one hundred and ninety six thousand devotees of siva. The
tradition was that the same Prasada should be served to ~~all~~
one and all, and in quantities fixed according to every one's need.

One day 'Divanna'- rich food-was prepared and as
usual Basava was seated in the midst of the 196 thousand
Jangamas. For the first time, Basava's wife became partial
to her husband out of her attachment to him and served more
Devanna than was ^{his} her due. Basava immediately surrendered
the excess devanna and took only his usual share; the vacana
recording this exhilarating episode is as follows:

"Hara-gana Bankitya naduve kullirdu
nanu- odetanada nayi-tejava hottukondu
madadiyennagaladologe sakala devannaya
odeyarigintaloo migilagi ikkalu tegedirisiden~~a~~ ;
Ee pariya aya kange to⁹²alu kilbishavadavu
ka^yni channabasavanna maredu kondenadade
odeya Kudala sangayya kedahi narakadallikkeva"

(Seated in the midst of Hara's devotees:

^Wearing the dog's image of ownership

My spouse served more devanna to me
than to my masters.

I kept it aside !

when my eyes see such receipts

they look like sinful things

If I accept them ignoring kind Channabasava,

Lord Kudala Sangama will throw me into the hell".

Summing up, kayaka and Dasoha emerge as the twin
economic values in vacana literature. Both these terms contain

a world of meaning and deserve attention from the leaders of economic thought all over the world. They are virtually virgin gold-mines to be exploited at this time when the world is in search of a new world economic order. Work + purity of means + non-injury + one's own manual or mental labour + surrender of surplus income for social good + temporal and spiritual growth ^{constitute} ~~is~~ kayaka.)

↳ Socialization of surplus wealth + co-sharing + equal sharing + non-wastage + concern for sanctity + concept of prasada + mutuality ^{constitute} ~~is~~ Dasoha; they ensure economic security and moral and spiritual advancement for the individual and solidarity and sublimity to society - a society free from frictions, tensions, pollutions, exploitation by the few and impoverishment for the many and free from dehumanizing factors inherent in industrialism, child labour, fatal accidents, health hazards, loss of creativity etc.

Social values in Vachana literature;

It may be sheer survival instinct that threw nomadic men and women into habitats and villages; but having come together they must have very soon faced the problem of human relationships to avoid conflicts and ^{clearance} ~~clearances~~ and encroachments on each other's property and privacy. This must have ^{led} ~~had~~ them to evolve a code of conduct however crude or primitive. Extended relations with other human habitations must have generated in them a sense of belonging to a larger group of men and women resulting in the emergence of the concept of society.

Since then, various experiments in social organization have been made, some of which stood the test of time and survived adapting themselves to changing circumstance of time and place; and some yielded place to new social orders. What are the social values that make for a society of moving equilibrium, which guarantees liberty to the individual to grow to his full stature - material and moral, and solidarity, cohesion and dynamism to the community as a whole?

The answer to this question depends on the answer to another question: what type of ^{men} ~~men~~ and women that society seeks to foster; as the test of every social organisation, association or institution is the men and women it creates?

Space forbids elaboration of the various answers to this question; but the answer of vachana literature to this question is clear; it seeks to foster men and women with minds of their own, minds without fear-even the fear of the Almighty. They proclaim emphatically as follows:

"Should I say that the sea is great?

The earth holds it!

Should I say that the earth is great?

The jewel in the snake-god's hood holds that!

Should I say that the snake-god's great?

He is contained within in the signet-ring
on the small finger of Parvati.

Is then Parvati great?

She is Parameshwara's better half.

Is this Parameshwara great, then?

He's contained within the point of points
of our Kudalasanga's Sharana's minds!"

The mind of man mirrors the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent Almighty! Why should anybody be afraid of one who is so close to us, who resides in our own mind?

Here is a challenge to the Almighty:

Thy illusion surrounds the word *world*;

My mind surrounds thee;

If thou art all powerful in the world,

I am more powerful than thee:

Even as a mirror holds the elephant
in miniature,

my mind, holds you, O Lord Kudala Sangama."

It is with this power of the mind alone that man can face the slings and arrows of outrageous fate and declare that the ultimate victory will be his. Here is that hope held out:

"Listen sires, there are only two voices in the

Jamboo island and the world of nine continents:

'I shall vanquish thee' says the voice of God;

'I shall conquer thee' says the voice of the devotee:

Drawing the sword of Truth, the devotees of

Kudala Sangama won!"

This is to restore the primacy of man in the scheme of things and to place him at the very centre of creation. Hence, the

vachana literature-man with a mind of his own, man who has the will power to harness the power of mind to dispel ignorance and to defeat the forces ~~arr~~^{arraigned} against him. It is not an ordinary power if the mind is wide awake, and engaged in thinking, comprehending and understanding reality.

"The elephant is huge -
but shall we say the ~~god~~^{god} is small?
The mountain is huge
but shall we say the diamond is small?
Darkness is thick-
but shall we say the light is small?
Kudalasangama Lord, oblivion is great,
but shall we say the mind that remembers
you is small?

The power of mind is certainly ^{by} great if it becomes aware of itself. Hence self-awareness, self-consciousness, the will to know and the will to overcome all obstacles in life with the power of the mind may be termed as the second individual value in vachana literature.

Knowledge of oneself in the real Guru-'Tanna tanaridara tanna arive guru!' It ^elevates one to the highest state-Godhead. The following vachana of Bala Sangayya is significant:

"Gods made of stone are not God;
wooden gods are not God;
Gods made of five metals are not God;
Gods residing at setu-bndha Rameshwar,
Gokarna, Kashi, Kedar and at other sixty eight
holy shrines are not God;
If knowing oneself one realizes his own self.
he alone is God, Apramana Kudalasangama deva'.

Knowledge of self is basic to all advancement-temporal, moral and spiritual, It will ^{be} just like building on sand if this is not achieved. Ambigara chowdayya's following vachana is very illuminating:

'If one says he seeks God
Obliterating onself completely,
it is defeating one's purpose.
Since Siva, Brahma, Vishnu

Thus, as already indicated, self-knowledge emerges as the second individual value in vachana literature with its avowed objective of moulding men and women of exceptional calibre and moral fibre.

Other

~~Teher~~ desirable individual values have been enumerated in the following vachana of Sri Basaveshwara:

"I do not call them great
who deal in vedas and sashtras too;
Nor those who know the Gita; they who are
Enveloped in illusion's veils!
Are these great? mimes, Dance-masters of
the sacrifice!
And are they small who have accomplished
greater things than these?
All these accomplishments - Learning
and virtue and enlightenment, ~~duty~~ and
character and discipline -
Attained by Kudalasangas saranas must be
achieved"

The following vachana further elucidates this;

"What's true wisdom, indeed?
Not learning the Gita by rote
nor chanting the vedas complete:
it's being more than knowing
its great trust in God:
It's an active career of service.
It's courage in the face of death
~~at~~ Lord Kudala Sangama."

Of these, learning and enlightenment have already been commented upon and the rest can be brought under the head-character values which are of fundamental importance in shaping man's destiny.

These character values may be summarised as modesty, rejection of what is not one's own, concern for the suffering of others, fellow feeling, inward and outward purity, respect for the opposite view, truthfulness, non-violence and toleration towards all. The attainment of purity in thought, word and deed - ^{inner} ~~wisher~~ and outer purity, in other words-is the ulti-

"Thou shalt not slay or steal;
 Nor speak a lie;
 Be ~~angry~~ with no one
Nor hate another man,
 Nor praise-thyself;
 Nor despise opposition ..
 This is thy inward purity;
 This is thy outward purity;
 This is the way to win our Lord
 Kudala Sangama!"

Slaying is not merely killing, it includes character -
 assassination also; stealing is not merely theft, it includes
 living on the labour of others also; these two can be elab-
 orated ad infinitum. Suffice it to say that non-violence is
 the bed-rock of a better life and non-stealing the bulwark
 of civilized life. Not to covet things belonging to others -
 wealth and women - is of supreme significance in vachana
 literature. Says Basava -

"I fear not creeping snakes,
 nor consuming fires,
 not the *bonior's* edge,
 I fear only, and shun
 the lust for another's wife.
 the greed for another's self!
 Save me from these,
 O Lord, Kudala Sangama"

Here is a clarion call for all:

"When you bathe friends
 in the flowing stream,
 do you leave yourselves of dirt
 the greed for another's self *self*
 and the sin of *carnal* desire?

If my friends but bathe,

Not wash out these sins, this clinging dirt,
 in vain has the river flown,
 O Lord Kudala Sangama".

The following vachana highlights the highest value of
 non-killing, non-violence, non-injury:

"Cry Cry, o Goat,
 that you're slain

cry cry before them
that hear the sastras:
Lord Kudala Sangama
will take a fit toll
for what you've wept!

As regards anger, the following vachana is conclusive:

"Why get angry with those
who are angry with you?
What do you gain?
What do they lose?
The anger of the body,
is loss of worth:
The anger of the mind
is loss of knowledge.
A fire in your house
won't burn the neighbour's house
without burning your house,
Kudalasangama Deva'."

How all pervasive is falsehood in the world: false words leading to false deeds, false gods, false values and false notions leading to the falsification of all that is highest and noblest in life! Hence unswerving adherence to truth and uncompromising avoidance of untruth is of paramount importance in the pursuit of inward and outward purity. As already noticed, truth is the world of gods and untruth the world of mortals in vachana literature. Hence, to speak the truth and act accordingly is the dictum of Basava because God rejects those who tell lies. Therefore, Basaveshwara proclaims as follows:

"I speak the words of pious speech,
I act even as I talk,
I live up to my word in deed:
In your hand also the balance and weights:
should I give underweight
by even a barley grain

You will drown me and arise and go
O Lord Kudala Sangama!"

The ideal to be achieved is to become truth's own prasadi

"Truth's own prasadi, who has shed the false:
Immaculate without stain,
free of all sorrow, filled with highest bliss.

Self-praise is the negation of meekness, modesty
and what you have, ^{one} ~~are~~ should not only indulge in it, but
should also discourage his ^{own} praise or flattery by others.
On the positive side one should adopt this attitude of
Basava:

"A smaller man than I,
no, there is none:
A greater than your devotees,
no, there is none;
I feel it, I know it,
be witness to these truths
O Lord, Kudalasnagama"

On the negative side, the following vachana should be the guide:

"With praise on praise, mine own
from sheer love stabbed me with
the spear of gold!
This praise of me enfolds me round and round
Lord, your regard, alas
has smitten me like a whetted sword!
Oh, Oh! I am hurt,
I ^{cannot} ~~am not~~ bear it anymore!
O Kudalasnagama Lord,
If you do love me, come between
And bar this praise, O merciful!"

Not to tolerate one's own praise, ^{but may be easy, and} ~~but~~ to tolerate, nay,
respect opposite view and adverse opinion is absolutely
essential for the realization of other values. This is the
foundation for and fountainhead of all values. Hence the
dictum: don't despise your opponent's point of view. The
existence of organized opposition is indispensable for real
democracy. It is a pre-requisite for any rational social
order. It is often forgotten that an opponent is not an
enemy. Hence opposition should not lead to ^{enmity} ~~.....~~ It
should ^{lead} ~~tear~~ to wisdom, connective wisdom.

Not to hate any one is the last maxim of the 'Sapta
sutras'—seven imperatives—of Basaveshwara. Conquest of hatred
is no doubt a very difficult proposition. This becomes possible
only when one regards all creation as the abode of the
Almighty. Jedara Dasimayya has pin-pointed this in his

What can I pull it out of
or stab it in.

When you are all the world,
at Ramanatha?"

This is feeling the presence of God everywhere, in every animate and inanimate object. A significant sentence occurs in Vachana literature; "Mela tavarana^{la}dade Kallagede - yelli?" where is room for a ^{robber} if the earth becomes the watchman?

Sri Basaveshwara has envisioned this immanence and omnipresence of the Almighty in this vachana:

"Whichever way I look
I see thou only, O Lord!
The soul of all the circumbient space -
Thou only art, at Lord! =
Thou art the universal eye,
O Lord, and Thou the universal face!
Thou art the arms of all, at lord,
and thou the feet, at Kudala Sangamadeva!

This vision of the oneness of God, oneness of all life and oneness of all creation must induce us to love all and conquer hatred by love. When there remains none to hate, where is room for hatred? No question of hating any one. We may differ from some: even oppose some ideologically or theologically; but we must not hate anyone if our faith in the presence of God in all is unshakable.

Equality: Vachana literature envisages the creation of a society of such men and women as are wedded to these 'sapta sutras' and categorical imperatives. Hence there cannot be any room for the concept of high and low in such a society. Equality of status, equality of opportunity, equal right to work, equality of ^{sexes} in sum, all-comprehensive equality emerges as the first social value in this society of Sarana's dreams. It might have taken another six hundred years for humanity to accept at least reluctantly the unalterable ground reality that all men and women are born equal; but the saranas discovered and accepted this unreservedly more than ^{six} hundred years ago and unequivocally proclaimed the

"There is one earth to hold
God's temple and the pariah colony;
One water for the closet and the bath;
One seat for those who know-themselves;
One need for those who are released
by means of the six-fold mystic way;
One stature for those who know thee,
Lord, Kudalasangama"

They did not rest content with this unambiguous declaration of equality. They strove sincerely to make it a reality. They explored the origins of inequity and declared a war of righteousness on all of them. The following are some of the origins of inequity and consequent inequity!

Birth: The accident of birth determines the destiny of individuals in India and in some other parts of the world. Those born as untouchables, poor and powerless must continue as such throughout their lives with no hope of bettering their lot as they must undergo this punishment in this life for their wrong doing in their previous births. This is the theory of Karma with its powerful grip on the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist minds. It is unalterable and unchangeable. Hence social change is unthinkable.

During the days when the theory of determinism held its sway over the world of science, the postulates of the Karma theory had received some justification. But now that the concept of indeterminacy has replaced the theory of determinism, the theory of Karma seems to have lost its foundation.

Be that as it may, the Vachanakaras made a frontal attack on this theory as it came in the way of social reformation and social change. Here is Basava's testament:

"Should happiness come, I do not say
It is the fruit of my punya: (outcome of good actions)
Should sorrow come, I do not say
It is the fruit of my 'papa' (outcome of bad actions)
I do not say it's so because
you've made it so.
I do not say the *doer* is the limit for a deed;

Here is the battle-cry against Karma and the dogged determination to vaquish it:

"I'm up in arms against A warrior -

Karma his name;

Hearken ~~Hasten~~ ^{unto} my prayer - Thy servant's word:

I'll push this warrior to the battle's edge

I will lay him low: "Should I hide or withdraw

I'am not thine'.

"I bow to thee, lord!" and wield the sword

of the congregation of the saints

O Kudalasangama, Lord".

Probably this Karma theory is responsible for the evolution of the caste-system in India which might have served a useful purpose in the past and which is blocking all progress in the direction of forging a truly secular and egalitarian society in India. The hierarcial society structured by it is so stubborn in nature and character that all efforts at *reforming* ~~eradicatin~~ it have ended in ^{dismal} ~~divisional~~ failure. The vachana literature abounds in thoughtful and vigorous onslaughts on this out-moded system which ^{and} ~~was~~ ^{it} banished from the society that saranas built out of the raw material of humanity - the ~~de~~prived, down-trodden and dehumanised sections of Hindu society.

Here is Basava's irrefutable indictment of the caste-system:

"Unless the flow of blood appear,

there is no harbourage

wherein the embryo, may dwell.

The function of the seed is e'er the ~~same~~. *Same.*

Greed, lust, ~~a~~nger and joy,

All other passions are the same.

Whatever you read or hear, of what avail?

What is the ~~er~~iterion to judge a caste?

"The embryo heeds the seven elements;

It is the ~~same~~ birth out of the ~~same~~ womb;

~~Same~~ the alliance of self and soul;

what then, the use ^{ful} ~~fulness~~ of caste?"

You are a blacksmith if you heat,

A washerman if you beat,

So many are the utterances on this issue in vachana literature that it may not be inappropriate to state that castelessness^{ss} itself was elevated to the high status of a human value conducive to the highest value of equality.

SEX: Unfair treatment to the fair sex has been a disgraceful feature of human civilization through the ages. Almost all religions have assigned a lower status to women - bordering on serfdom. The Vachanakaras wiped out this inequality also in a very rational way. They declared that the discriminations based on sex were meaningless as the difference between the sexes is simply biological, not mental or spiritual. Jedara Dasimayya's following vachana is pregnant with profound wisdom:

"If they see breasts and long hair coming
they call it woman,
If beard and whiskers, they call it man;
but look, the self that /lovers in between
is neither man nor woman, O Ramanatha!"

Breasts and long hair, beard and whiskers, even the sacred thread are mere externalities - they have no place in the inner life.

"Did the breath of the mistress
have breasts and long hair?
Or, did the master's breath
wear sacred thread?
Did the outcaste, last in line,
hold with his outgoing breath
the stick of his tribe?"

Basaveshwara, Siddarama and some other saranas have revered woman as Mahadevi and Kapila Sidda Mallikarjuna and Prabhudeva has compared man and woman to the two eyes which see objects together. Women not only got equal status with men socially and religiously, they got equal opportunity also to pursue their own Kayaka, to participate in spiritual discussion and discourses, to express their views fearlessly, to marry or not to marry according to their sweet will, and to correct their own husbands whenever necessary. Neelambika, the wife of Basava, calls herself the 'Vichara Patni' - intellectual partner of Basava.

Saintess Satyakka delivers the final ^{verdict} judgement on this issue - a ^{verdict} judgement which present day feminists and male charvinists alike may ^{accept} accept if they ponder over it dispassionately.

'It can't be certified that
what has breath and tresses is woman:
It can't be certified that
what has ^{loin} ---cloth, whiskers and
dagger is man.
Whatever the fruit, it is judged by
its sweetness;
Even a flower without loveliness is
liked for its fragrance
It is known to thee- Shanbhu Jakkeshwara.

Wealth: Wherever wealth accumulates men decay. It is as true of this age as it was of Goldsmith's age. Accumulation of wealth is accompanied by arrogance, ^{indulgence} and exploitation of others - especially the weaker sections of society.

As for the arrogance of wealth, the following vachana of Basavaholds a mirror to it:

"You can make them talk
if the serpent has stung them
You can make them talk
if they're struck by an evil planet.
But you can't make them talk
if they're struck dumb by riches;
yet, when poverty the magicina enters
they'll speak at once, at lord
Koodalasangama".

So debasing is this insolence of wealth that it dehumanises its owner completely. The following vachana poignantly portrays such inhuman human beings:

"Does it make you ugly if you say
come right in, how do you do?
Does your floor cave in when you say
do sit down, please?
Or does your head, or belly burst
If only you speak to one?
If you have nothing to give, not even a grace,
Lord Kudalasangama, be sure,
will pull you down and chop your nose!"

"If a huntsman brings a rabbit
 they pay for it a proper price
 But none will give a betel-nut
 For a dead ruler of the land;
 A man's life is less worth
 Than a rabbit's, see!
 Do you, then, put your trust
 in Lord Kudala Sangama"

As noticed earlier, the Saranas removed the inequity and in humanity arising out of the accumulation of wealth in a few hands by socializing surplus wealth.

Education: To deny education to the majority of men and women, especially women, and to treat them contemptuously for being uneducated is adding insult to injury, to say the least. The arrogance of learning is more abominable than the arrogance of birth, wealth, power and self. Hence the vachanakaras condemned this insolence in very strong language:

"What if he knows the four vedas?
 Without Linga, he is a low-born man!
 What if he be an outcast?
 With Linga he is a holy Varanasi!
 His words are gracious; he blesses the world;
 His prasada is to me ambrosia-sweet!
 "One who has the four vedas by heart,
 He is not dear to me;
 A swapacha, although he cooks dog's meat,
 is dear to me.
 To him you give, from him receive
 He is as venerable as I myself"^x
 One who knows kudalasangama and worships
 is greater than the sex system.
 He is holy to the world, you know!"

Occupation: The misconception of high and low, superior and inferior, touchable and untouchable, respectable and detestable etc. springs from the equally baseless misconception that some occupations are superior and the others inferior. We have already noticed that by the concept of kayaka the vachanakaras have done away with the inequities based on one's occupation. The following vachana was mandatory to all then, as it should be obligatory even now to ensure unqualified equality for all.

"When devotees come to me
 with God on them, and if I ask
 what is their profession
 may thy curse and thy pioneer's curse
 Be upon me and my head, my head!
 O Kudalasangama Lord,
 May thy queen's curse blast me

Fellowship may be regarded as the second social value in Vachana literature. The Vachanakaras consider companionship of Saranas as more important than salvation in the other world. To them the supreme objective of life is Sarana-Sanga-Fellowship of Saranas. Urilinga Peddi has made this crystal clear in the following vahchana:

"Can nectar be hungry,
water be thirsty,
the supreme being have senses?
Can great devotees
who have received the grace of a master
and worship the godhead desire liberation?
Liberation was born with them;
It is their own nature
will they there seek
contentment and satiation,
Urilinga-peddi-priya vishweshwar?

What do they seek, then? Here is Allamaprabhu's answer:

"Arise at day-break,
touch the feet of Linga,
and see the faces of real devotees in the morning.
This alone is the reward of life.

This is true, this is real.
I do not ^{want} ~~with~~ those that are
without this- Guheshwara.

Shri Basaveshwara elucidates this further:

"Born in this ~~samsara~~ ^{samsara}
why should I wish
aught else except
to smile, to speak
to Siva's devotees?

Why should I be, good sir,
A proud, conveited, sullen man?
You, sir, should speak
with our Kudala Sanga's saranas
with open heart"

Even Linga should be seen in Bhakta's face:

"The Linga can be seen
mirrored in the Bhakta's face
Because the God embodied in the bhakta
has a winkless eye.

Lord Kudalasangama
dwells altogether in
the heart of the bhakta's words:"

seek their fellowship, solicit their fraternity. You will be
a different man altogether!

There is no telling by
whose contact what could be achieved:
could not a worm become a butterfly?
Must not, before a sandal tree

That, in the presence of our Lord
Kudala Sanga's saranas,
Karma will not be cleansed?"

One should, therefore, seek the presence of Saranas at
any cost.

"A hundred thousand leagues, to see
A bhakta, is meritorious deed;
and if, together, they perform
the lowliest service, then indeed
our Lord Kudalasangama shall take
them to his heart!

"The fellowship of Saranas
of Kudalasangama will never
let you wear the garland of
rebirths again!"

"The heights of Brahma-knowledge)
may not scale; no goaly stature
tempts me to aspire.
I desire but to pray that I may reach
in time the feet of your devotees, O Lord"

Discussion: Discussion may be deemed as the third social value
in vadhana literature. The establishment of the Anubhava
Mantap itself is an eloquent testimony to this. The saranas
firmly believed in the great value of discussion, debate, dia-
logue, exchange of views and even clash of ideas and opinions.
Fellowship of saranas becomes unfruitful if it is not followed
by intellectual and spiritual fermentation and cross-polli-
nisation of ideas. Akka Mahadevi's following vachana, radiant
with imagery, is relevant here:

"True rubbed against tree
and fire rose;
all the trees around were burnt.
Soul rubbed against soul and
light rose; the attributes of body
were burnt" Show me the illumination of
your great mystics, and save my body
for yourself Chennamallikarjuna!"

The four different compilations of vachanas in dialogue form
under the caption (Soonya Sampadane' are the outcome of dis-
cussions, debates, discourses and dialogues held in the
Anubhava Mantapa under the august presidentship of Prabhudeva.

Mutuality: What creates a people out of populace and an
organized society out of a mob or crowd? Homogeneity, soli-
darity, cohesion and commitment to some concept of common good
are the elementary ingredients for a sustainable social order
and these can be had only when mutuality, reciprocity and

responsive co-operation are accepted as the laws of corporate life. This mutuality emanates as the fourth social value in vachana literature ensuring the operation of the principle of all for all and the ^{tenet} ~~tenet~~ of cosharing. The following vachana of Sri Basaveshwara propounds this principle drawing examples from the animal world:

"When the crow sees a morsel of food,
it caws aloud and calls its kin
to share the feast;
When the hen sees a heap of corn,
it gathers all its tribe
to share the feast.
Lesser than the crow or hen is he
who vainly calls himself a devotee
but serves not your servants,
O Lord Kudalasangama"

A sense of togetherness, or sense of belonging is not sufficient to hold a society together. There should be mutual sharing of ^{the} boons and bounties that society bestows on its members; one should respond to the calls and cries of others; one should feel that the sorrows and sufferings of other members of society are his own.

"Is there anybody who, vexing the mind
and hurting the body of Sarana's clasp ^{the} feet?
This thing is bound to burn them
O Kudala Sangama Lord, is it devotee's pain?
It is linga's pain!"

The pain of the devotee is the pain of the Almighty. Hence all must exert to remove it; all should share it.

"unless you know to speak aright,
to walk in righteous ways
what boots this linga worship?
Their joy is mine, their sorrow mine!
If I should hurt Kudalasanga's Saranas
I burn, O Lord!"

To share ^{the} sorrows and sufferings of others and not to cause sorrow and suffering to others are two sides of the same coin. One should not knowingly cause pain to others and expect others to share his pain. Sivayogi Siddarama has highlighted this point in the following vachana:

"Of what avail is a dip in the Ganga
after hurting one's mind
and harming one's house?
The moon's stain is till unwashed
although he is on the bank of the Ganga!"

Desist from inflicting pain, partake others sorrows and sufferings; treat them as your own and sink and swim together.

In order to cultivate and imbibe these values in our worldly life, 'Panchacharas'-five rules of conduct- have been enjoined and they are elaborated in vachana literature; They are Lingachara, Sadachara, Sivachara, Ganachara, and Bhrttyachara. These have been defined as follows by Shri Chenna Basaveshwara:

Not to be conscious of anything else except Linga is Lingachara: to be engaged in ^{pure} ~~the~~ kayaka and to serve Guru Linga Jangama thereby is sadachara: not to consider the sect, ^{lineage} ~~since~~ ~~sinage~~ or caste of the devotees of Siva and to accept their left overs is sevachara; to treat saranas as superior and himself as subordinate is bhrttyachara; not to tolerate the disgrace of sivachara is ganachara. It is overruled that Lingachara purifies the body, ^{Sadachara the mind, Sivachara the property, Ganachara the behaviour and Bhrttyachara the speech of devotees}. He elsewhere enumerates fifty acharas which include the following:

1. Not to look at another's woman;
2. Not to steal another's wealth;
3. Not to speak lies;
4. Not to betray;
5. Not to kill living beings;
6. To give joy to all saranas
7. To wish well-being of all creation
8. Not to hurt another's mind by his speech
9. To contemplate mystic truth

The quintessence of these 'acharas' is the value-system as adumbrated above. It is possible to discover other values, such as cultural values, literary values, purely spiritual values etc., in vachana literature; But the time given and space allowed both forbid further elaboration of this introductory thesis on a virgin theme. Here is a gold-mine for all those who work for the exploration. Reevaluation and restoration of human values. Unfortunately, most of this literature is still in Kannada only, and it is really worth while if non-Kannadiga scholars learn the Kannada language to study this literature in the original to understand and appreciate its wealth of revolutionary ideas, human values and literary excellences. The highest human value may be characterised as

faith in the perfectability of man, in the ~~en~~voilability of man's dignity and equality, in the supremacy of man in creation, and in the safeguarding of his civic and fundamental rights, to ensure the fullest possible unfoldment of his ~~inher~~ powers and the optimum development of his qualities of head, heart and hand. It may be stated with confidence that vachana literature has upheld such values and continues to be a source of inspiration and enlightenment to all those who care to read it.

We may conclude this booklet with an extract from the well-known book of Shri R.R.Diwakar, a well-known leader of Karnataka, entitled 'Vachana Sastra Rahasya'.

"The V_achanakaras have a glorious message for humanity groaning under so many disabilities and illusions. They invite all to join them-

"Come one, come all-young or old, men or women, Brahman or untouchable, priest or scavenger, king or peasant, soldier or civilian- come ^{ye} you all. If you want everlasting peace and happiness, come here. Sink all your differences and abandon your trivial concepts. Cast off your arrogance of caste and occupation. All your powers and talents are but several musical instruments given to you in order that you may sing or play in tune with the universal music. Cultivate and develop your talents properly. Forget not that the talents of you all are complementary to one another".

12.12.1992

Siddayya Puranik