

Mahayogi Vemana

Editor

Dr H. B. Neelgund

English Translation

Dr Mallikarjun Patil



**Mahayogi Vemana Peetha
Karnatak University Dharwad**

Govt of Karnataka

Our Regards

The sants, sharanas, dasas, yogis and darshaniks of the Indian subcontinent have happily made an experiment with God's ways to man for fulfilment. They transcended the limits of personal ideologies, established religion, caste and creed, language, geography and propaganda. They advocated that we need to understand both the material and spiritual worlds around us for fulfilment in life, the same helping a welfare state.

Yogi Vemana is one of the special saints of India. As a great yogi and philosopher, he condemned social evils. He rejected idolatry and ritualism. He realized that whatever man wants as a means of pleasure, is nothing but a source of despair. He wrote poems about how man can transcend the worldly limits, face life in its all ramifications and find satisfaction.

Shri H. K. Patil, the Hon'ble Minister, Government of Karnataka has been striving to propogate Yogi Vemana's philosophy of life to the common populace. This publicity is stretched politically, socially and spiritually. He is fully aware of Yemana's spiritual profundity and grace.

H. K. Patil is the brain behind Yogi Vemana chairs. If his uncle Shri S.R. Patil initiated the whole thing, Shri H.K. Patil has planned to introduce Yogi Vemana studies in Karnataka. Because of their past 50 years constructive effort, Yogi Vemana chairs are introduced in Karnataka. Because of this, the Government of Karnataka, has declared January 19 as Yogi Veman's Jayanti Day. Hence, we are thankful to Shri Siddharamayya, the Chief Minister of Karnataka, his Cabinet of Ministers, all politicians, and those who have otherwise helped us in this regard.

Mahayogi Vemana

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Vice-Chancellor's Words

The universities are founded for the sake of collecting the knowledge of the universe and imparting it to the student-community and people. They also aim at discovering new things. Their objective is to facilitate the universal welfare. In this regard, Karnatak University has been doing a yeoman service.

Like the Kannada poet Sarvajna, the Telugu poet Vemana is a popular bard (rishi kavi). He enlightened the good things — both simple and complex to the people. The University has already published the poet's popular poetry as *Vemana Viswageete*. The University has published several other lecture programmes too.

The present book briefly attempts to introduce Vemana to everyone. Because, it is not so easy to read Vemana's 20,000 verses. In this regard, Dr. H.B. Neelagund, the Coordinator of Mahayogi Vemana Chair, has visited the sites associated with Vemana, and constructed a biography of Vemana on the basis of his findings. Likewise, Dr Mallikarjun Patil, Registrar, Karnatak University has rendered the text into English beautifully, of course quoting several of C. P. Brown's verses in English. This effort is like representing Vemana in nutshell, and the booklet is a fine introduction for the laymen.

The booklet is like a synopsis about Mahayogi Vemana for those who want to understand him. It is noteworthy that Vemana Vidya Vardhaka Sangha, Hubli-Dharwad has published and distributed this book. Likewise, I wish that the association shall extend its activities for social welfare.

Dharwad
4-1-2018

Dr. Pramod Gai
Vice-Chancellor
Karnatak University
Dharwad

Publisher's Note

Mahayogi Vemana who has enriched Indian philosophy is a bardic poet. He tried to show us divine bliss, by transcending the established religion, caste, creed, race, nation, language and socio-political propaganda which are man-made. Vemana did not establish or get associated with any guild or association, but strived hard to publish God's way to man through satsanga.

Revd. S.R. Patil of Hulakoti dedicated his life for collecting and translating Mahayogi Vemana literature into Kannada; and thereby published it. He helped for the founding of Mahayogi Vemana Chair in Karnatak University. He has translated 4000 of Vemana's verses into Kannada, and he has published them as *Vemana Visvageete*.

The Government of Karnataka has declared January 19 as Mahayogi Vemana's Jayanti, and Mahayogi Vemana Chair of Karnatak University is thankful to the Government, for it has facilitated an awareness about Vemana so that the people can know him better for enlightenment.

The Vemana Chair felt that it needs to publish a booklet about Vemana, perhaps, including certain most representative Vemana's verses into it from Revd. S.R. Patil's collection. The Chair is thankful to Shri R.F. Jangal, the Vice-President of Vemana Vidyavardhaka Sangha for his help and cooperation in this regard.

I am beholden to all the esteemed members of the advisory committee of Vemana Peeth, Prof. Pramod Gai, the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor and Prof. Mallikarjun Patil, Registrar, Karnatak

University, Dharwad. I thank my wife Smt. Gayatri Huddar who proof-read the script, Shri R.K. Hegde who did the DTP work, Shri B. Maruti of the Chittar Graphics that designed the front page and the Vemana Printers Pvt. Ltd. of Hulakoti who published this book in time.

Dharwad
19-1-2018

Dr. H.B. Neelagund
Coordinator
Mahayogi Vemana Chair
Karnatak University, Dharwad

Friends, for your kind notice

You need to read the following books for happiness and peace and for divine bliss:

Bhagavadgite for Vaishnavas

Bible for Christians

Koran for Muslims

Vachanas for Lingayats

Vemana's Poems for Vemana people

Karnatak University published *Vemana Viswageete* in 1998 – the book being Vemana poems enabling the people to understand metaphysics in its simplicity and grandeur.

Now you can have the present book which introduces Vemana, and which introduces the life-divine.

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1. Mahayogi Vemana

Mahayogi Vemana is a unique rishi poet of India. He interpreted the quintessence of Indian philosophy in his small verses, that is too in the common man's language so that we can understand the life-divine. Vemana advocated the principled way of niskam karma (that is a work ethic, and accordingly one has to work without expecting rewards). He has spoken of life likewise and man can live as naturally as one can think of nature and society, so that we can compare Vemana with God Vemana.

As a matter of fact, many thinkers, writers and scholars have compared Vemana to the Tamil Tiruvalluvar, Kannadiga Sarvajna, Hindi Kabir and Marathi Tukaram. Still Vemana is unique as one may suppose. Vemana, who was born into a royal family, lived a life of greatness helping the needy, the poor, and the oppressed. He condemned the evils that existed in the name of God and religion.

Nonetheless, Mahayogi Vemana did not establish a tradition, or a religion. He did not begin an association in this regard. He tried to enlighten the people-in-ignorance and tried to mend their tattered lives. He communicated in the common man's language. Whatever he did say it was his own experience, but not from any one else or from sastras. He did not encourage the evil or bad faith, and he established man-nature relationship.

Vemana's Life:

'Vemana' is a fine word. It is Vema and Anna, and then 'Vemana'. That is his name. Later he was called Yogi

Vemana or Vemanayogi. We Kannada people call him Mahayogi Vemana.

There shall be pioneers when great nations, races, language, traditions and great men themselves are in the process of becoming. Such great men are rather unassuming. There is some divine background for Vemana. A great rishi is there behind this Vemana just to come into the world for our joy and peace. Perhaps there is a story too.

Usually yogis lived in the forest. Such a yogi might have been the reason for yogi Vemana's up-coming

There lived a yogi in a cave near the village of Kondavidu. People would have a glimpse of him whenever he would appear outside at a tree. The folks called him 'Venpechittu unna' as his name was no more there. The Telugu meaning of the phrase means 'one who sits under the shade of a neem.' In course of time, the phrase was changed to Vempe chittu anna to Vempanna, Vemanna, Vemana. The tradition of his greatness continued for hundred years.

A farmer would provide him daily a pack of meals. Of course, he did not expect anything from him. Thus the years passed. One day, the yogi meditated under the tree's shade. The farmer visited him for reaching the meal pack when the holy man was in spiritual mood. He saluted the great man-in-tranquility. The yogi asked him as to why he should take the trouble or whether he wanted anything.

"No sir, I don't need anything. Because of the blessings by holy men as your self, I've got enough of it – enough wealth and happiness. So I'm serving you," said

the farmer in humble manner. The yogi said, "okay, happiness be with you always. Let your tribe flourish, likewise. Let the earth provide you all and you respect her. Nature will provide you enough wealth. You donate the surplus to others".

This farmer Allad Reddy was the father of the Reddy kingdom's pioneer Prolaya Vemareddi. Allad Reddy used Vemana as part of his name.

Once because of the yogi's blessings Allad Reddy got substantial body of wealth, he began social work. He donated his surplus income for social causes. He gave shelters to the poor, education to their children, schools in villages, roads for farmers, and lakes for them all. The people of the village Kondavidu then took Allad Reddy for a divine figure. Still, Allad Reddy did not show any pride. He brought up his children properly.



2. Reddy Empire

Four of Allad Reddy's sons ruled Adhanki, Amaravati, Kondavidu and Kandakuru. Their overlords were happy of them. The Reddy brothers did not rebel at all.

Then the Kakatiyas of Warangal were the overlords of the region for decades. Allad Reddy's sons were their partners in a way. The 1309 Delhi Sultanate's invasion wrecked a havoc upon the Kakatiyas. In the invasion made by Mahammed-bin-Tughalaq, the Kakatiya king Prataparudra was defeated and arrested. As a hostage he died on the way to Delhi.

Pratapareddy had, beforewards, sent a message to Prolaya Vemareddy for succeeding his kingdom and saving it anyhow. So Prolaya Vemareddy fought a struggle for overcoming the chaos, and established an independent Reddy kingdom at Adhanki in 1324.

The king's brothers controlled Amaravati, Kondavidu and Kandakuru. The Reddy brothers ruled the region from 1324 to 1424 and because of the internal battles and differences, their regions were acquired by the Vijayanagar Empire later.

The Reddy dynastic rule is as follows:

1. Prolaya Vemareddy - 1324 – 1339
2. Anupota Vemareddy - 1339 – 1350
3. Desati Vemareddy - 1350 – 1365
4. Anuvemareddy - 1365 – 1380

5. Kumar Girireddy - 1380 – 1400
6. Peddu Komati Vema Bhupal - 1400 – 1420
7. Rachavemareddy - 1420 - 1424

The Samskrit root 'raat' leads to the Telugu name reddy the last 'i' being alternated as 'y' often. Reddy means variously as king, chief, gouda, leader, or one who builds a region. Or he may be an army general.

The Reddys are from South India. Scholars think that they belong to Dravidas as a race. The Raddys as a race are understood to be the folks who work in fields sweatingly. The word 'ratte' means the 'toiling hand'. The word 'kapu' is used alternatively. The Jats of Hariyana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat are of the same implication. They are called 'Shakyas' in Bihar and Nepal.



3. Mahayogi Vemana's Birth

If one can construct it on Vemana's poems, he was born in Mugachintapalli (a hamlet) of Kondavidu township. It was nandana namasamvastara kartik shuddha pornime. Vemana lived for 68 years and passed away in Katarapalli; and it was Sarvari shukla paksa navami. The day of his passing away coincided with Shri Rama Mahanirvan.

Charles Phillippe Brown, British officer in Andhra Pradesh, India began his study of Yogi Vemana in 1816. He made a campaign for collecting the oral songs of Vemana. He collected 2100 such songs. A later day research reveals that there are 20,000 verses, though only 6000 of them are collected so far. 4000 of these Telugu poems are now available in Kannada.

C.P. Brown as a British officer for Rayal Seema made extensive research on Vemana and collected his writings. In fact, he learnt Telugu for this sake. He decided Vemana's birth year as 1412 possibly. Since different Telugu communities celebrate Vemana Jayanti on the fifth day of every Sankramana, the day of his birth was decided to be 19th January.

The government of Karnataka has also agreed upon this date, and declared the 19th January as Vemana's Day. So Vemana lived from 19th January 1412 to 1480 for 68 years.



4. Vemana's Education

Vemana was born as the second son of the five children of the Reddy king Kumaragirireddy (Komaru Girireddy, 1380-1400) and his good wife Mallamma. The couple were spiritual. When the boy Vemana was two years old, the Reddys internal wars had begun. There were fiery battles. Mallamma could not tolerate any of this and she devoted herself to God Mallikarjun in Shrishail. She began spending her time in renovating temples and building gates. In fact, she died there itself. Vemana grew up under the care of his sister-in-law and an aunt's daughter Hemareddy Mallamma. The said sister-in-law who was issueless, took care of the boy. By all means, Vemana had a happy upbringing.

Vemana was a charming youth. He had all the education at home as it was a custom for the royal households. He completed his basic education at Kondavidu, and then he was groomed by Ivvatori Somashekhar. The poet Bommar Pote studied there too.

Vemana was a sort of spiritual man. He had a rapport with the flora and fauna, and spent much of his time there. He did not like the traditional kind of education. He argued once that the gurukul-kind of education was lop-sided. According to him, society and nature were the right schools for men. There experience was counted. He believed that experiment, creativity and self-introspection were much needed. In fact, the teachers gave him the much-needed liberty as he was a genius and

royal youth. Guru Somashekhar himself a divine man did not delay in recognizing Vemana's talents. He foretold that Vemana would one day emerge as a great man and reform society.

Vemana had both gurukul education and an immense knowledge about worldly life. He believed that the function of education was not just for survivalism, making a business, or becoming a king. He decided to bring in basic changes in social structures so that the social evils would be eliminated. He believed that the center of the moving structure was God and that would bring in changes.

Vemana when in gurukul had studied various religions and philosophies. He studied the vedic-lore such as Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Saktya, Ganapatya, Kumar, Soura, and also Buddhism, Jainism, not to speak of Islam which had arrived in India a couple of centuries earlier.



5. Vemana's Worldly Life

The Reddys internal battle was not yet over when Vemana came back from his education in a gurukul. The big royal brothers incurred a lot of losses from their in-fighting. Since Vemana's uncle Komati Vemareddy had assumed the powers of kingship, Vemana's father passed his time in music and dance. He even spent much of his time in devadasi Lakumadevi's house, a famous dancer. Vemana tried hard to wrest his father from her embrace. It was an embarrassing thing. Vemana collected all details about Lakumadevi. She lived in a palace, where trainings were conducted for fine arts.

One day Vemana joined a dance school where Lakumadevi's daughter Viswada also registered for classes. There the singers and accompanists would go wrong in their concert. Once Vemana said addressing them: "Your dance and tones and their accompanying – everything is erratic." Viswada wondered at Vemana's appearance and she liked his shapely body, ideal face, height, courage, confidence and royalty.

Vemana had a good grooming in gurukul. He sang and did bharatanatya. She asked him about how he studied it so meticulously. He burst, "The people who serve god with His bounty of arts can do it well and then the degenerated ones will fail." Viswada wept at this.

It is true Viswada was the prostitute Lakumadevi's daughter. The mother had served the teachers of Nath tradition. Then she had accepted devadasi method, and

ran a fine arts school. In fact, because of pressures she had given in to the royal people. However, she had safeguarded her daughter's interest. She therefore asked her daughter to specialize in dance and music. She had alerted her daughter against the evil-people and spoken of her own bad experience. Her lessons to her daughter included morals and manners. This Vemana could notice in the young lady. Perhaps, Vemana's sarcasm might have annoyed her.

Viswada wondered whether the folks of her ilk could not lead an honorable life. Vemana said she could, but she should find out an improvement. Lo! Viswada fell at the feet of Vemana with the request: 'Please you guide me.' Himself the learned man Vemana realized it. He felt that he could seek her help for separating his father from her mother. So he frequented the dance school. Viswada was pleased of Vemana's personality, soft skills, music, social concern, and his writing of poetry. She had herself surrendered to him already.

Vemana forgot the world when he was with Viswada. He imparted his knowledge to her. What a strange thing Viswada decided to live for him and him only. Ironically speaking Lakumadevi did not want such a thing to happen. She tried to divert Viswada's mind from Vemana. Vemana continued his dealing with the young woman, thereby the two young people became close to each other. One day, Lakumadevi decided to stop this, however.

According to Lakumadevi's plan, Viswada was to ask Vemana to fetch his sister-in-law's Hemareddy Mallamma's nose ring, if he loved her, indeed. This shocked Vemana. How could he ask his mother-like sister-in-law

for the nose ring – she was such a woman whom he had considered as mother for her caring and consoling him. He did not believe his own ears.

Vemana was in crisis. He wondered about the purpose of life itself. He left for home. Mallamma asked him for the reason of his despair. Vemana could not control his feelings. He revealed Viswada's desire. The woman-divine Mallamma realized Vemana's lust. She gave the nose ring to him, and burst forth: "You thought of cleansing human society of its injustice, rape suppression and other evils. Oh! Now you think of a woman! I give you this nose-ring with a condition: ask her to dance nakedly. Let her pick up the nose-ring by mouth and you place it on the floor. You see her entire body from behind." Once Vemana spoke of this to Viswada, she agreed, as she had hailed from a devadasi family.



6. The Transformation in Vemana's Life

Vishwada danced nakedly. She picked up the nose-ring as she was asked to do. Vemana saw her from every angle. Her nakedity, the bodily desires themselves humiliated him. He was enamored of her bodily parts, and the same repulsed him later.

Hemareddy Mallamma was Vemana's elder brother Barumareddy's wife. She was a saintly woman. Her ancestors were royalists. Her father Kataya Vemaraddy was the son of Prolaya Vemareddy's daughter. Mallamma's mother was Narasambe, the sister of Vemana's father Kumaragirireddy.

Viswada, then in all the profundity of her nakedness, glimpsed into a mirror. Vemana was aghast of his sister-in-law's nose ring, then placed on the body of this devadasi woman. Vemana left the spot in huff. He was out of mind. He renounced his life too, by entering into the deep forest.

Vemana had left the civilized world altogether. He heard the gayatri mantra being chanted somewhere in the wild. He visited the holy place. The yogis-in-meditation said: 'So Vemana could you see how was the passion of love overwhelming you.' This surprised Vemana more. He justly asked the yogis as to why the enquiry. A teacher consoled him with the gesture of a parent. He said, "Whatever you've so far seen is because of your karma. People can't escape from the same. Maybe I could have safeguarded you from this. But I didn't, because you've a

burden with you to safeguard crores of people from this kind of existential hazard. So you needed a doze of grief, separation, angst and humiliation. Then only you will be able to enlighten the folks." The teacher showed a sign of protection.

The profound metaphysicians called as Lambika yogis were duly waiting for Vemana. Thereafter, they imparted their siddhi to him systematically. Vemana began experiencing the paradisaal joy. He started getting enlightened. They said, "Vemana, you'll acquire this divine bliss. You enjoy it as the eternal truth. Later you impart it to the worldly folks. Please do it," and they disappeared.

Vemana did tapasya in the same cave for months. He opened the eyes, and lo! He saw novelty thereunto. Vemana's vision of the world changed spiritually. God-Himself incarnate Vemana began a new life – a life divine. Vemana was as if bodiless and he forgot of bodily comforts. The ordinary folks saw him naked, and the enlightened ones saw him godlike amongst them.

Vemana had already left his family for 12 years. He spent much of his time in the forest. He had little awareness of his body – the source of sorrow. Divine power that could emancipate people was dwelling in him. People in hordes began taking his darshan with the firm belief that their difficulties would be removed with the savior.

On the other hand, Vemana's sister-in-law Mallamma was trying to trace him desperately. A friend of Vemana by name Abhiram, a goldsmith left his occupation in search

of Vemana. People said him, “see, there is a naked yogi near Tanjavur. If you meet him, he will tell you about Vemana’s whereabouts.”

Vemana was a pragmatist as much as a diviner. He would guide the folks about medicine, money-problem, crops as much as he would guide them to meditate for divine bliss. He would write of his pieces of advice in verses. The folk would learn and sing them.

One day Abhiram met the naked yogi near Tanjavur. The yogi recognized Abhiram. The yogi said, ‘You need not be afraid of this nakedness. It’s man’s natural condition, a primitive state. Why man’s cultural domination.’ The yogi who spoke this was none but Vemana. Abhiram spoke to Vemana of the news about his people, and about Mallamma. Vemana did not show much attachment, as he looked at the palm leaves wherein his verses were written. He handed them to Abhiram at the time of bidding adieu. Abhiram, back home, revealed the whole thing to Mallamma. The elderly lady regretted, for Vemana had once decided of re-building the decadant kingdom. Abhiram said, ‘No madam, Vemana has already built that kingdom.’

○○

7. Vemana as a Legend-Maker

None was as much annoyed as Mallamma about Vemana’s spiritual awakening. People advised her to see that Vemana would make a pilgrimage to Kashi for coming to normalcy. So Mallamma once with her family visited Vemana’s cave. No sooner she came thereunto, than Vemana tried to touch her feet. But she stood afar.

‘Please forgive me,’ Vemana said.

‘Ok, we’ve decided to go on a pilgrimate to Kashi. You too accompany us,’ Mallamma said with an appeal. The sister-in-law wanted Vemana somehow to return home.

‘Life for me is here’, Vemana said.

‘No brother, we need to visit Kashi for Viswanath’s darshan. Such a thing will provide us fulfilment,’ she said.

‘Okay, then, you visit it this time. Please keep this money with you. You will see a pilgrimage place in the place where this coin will turn into gold,’ said he.

Mallamma collected the coin and left.

The royal household that visited Kashi for three months returned to Kondavidu. By then Vemana had visited several villages and returned to a cave near the native place. He sent Mallamma the message that he would visit her the next day. The sister-in-law was greatly pleased. The royal family decorated their palace, while the villagers decorated the entire village.

Vemana entered the town by sunrise. The village folks carpeted the road for him with flowers. Mallamma welcomed Vemana at the palace with an arti. He wondered whether Mallamma had some problem in Prayag. ‘How d’you know it?’ she said in surprise.

‘D’ you know that I had provided you with a coin? Did it turn into gold?’ he asked.

‘How could it be possible, Vemana?’ she rejoined. Vemana got back the punch-marked coin. He looked at it. Lo! The copper coin turned into gold there and then. Vemana returned it to Mallamma. She looked at the miracle. All the folks fell to the feet of Vemana.

Vemana replied: ‘See, as I told you, Kashi is the place where mind is transformed.’

So where there is a will there is a way.



8. Vemana’s Life as a Yogi

After enlightenment, Vemana preferred solitude as a pre-condition for his spirituality. Two men Neelakantha and Ramareddy renounced their lives and they began serving Vemana.

Vemana depended on nuts and fruits for survival. The same was compensated with food brought in by the disciples from the houses as alms. In such circumstances of alms-getting Vemana would bless the folks for divine blessing subject to the condition of their becoming good folks.

However, Vemana’s life was not as rigorously disciplined as that of the soldier. He would also participate in religious and theological debates and discussion. After meditation, he would write verses. Neelakanth and Ramareddy would document them on palm leaves. If the devotees would insist for remedies for their maladies Vemana would try to provide a solution; and the same advice would go in the form of a verse for posterity sake. The people would memorise such verses. Vemana would ask the people to sing it as and when it was needed.

Vemana’s verses do not represent a harmony between mind and heart. They relate to the truths beyond them. Of course, there was wit and humour. They would be relevant too.

Veman’s sadhana was ‘Rajayoga’ – that was what he would tell it to the folks. His reply about who a yogi might be is this:

The one who limits his desires
Goes beyond imagination;
Goes beyond enmity and anger and love
He is a yogi, says Vemana.

Vemana would say God is the unseen. He is not the apparent. Vemana lived as a yogi for 35 years. He is said to have written thousands of verses.



9. Vemana's Death

A great yogi was born to the south of the Mount Vindyas; and he did the great work of spiritualizing a race there. "People need to see a sharana in his marana (passing away)." This is a saying. This is what the people thought of Vemana.

Mahayogi Vemana's language was aphoristic, and thoughts quite utilitarian and revolutionary. They affected a whole race. They came into currency as if sayings. Both laymen and achievers used Vemana's verses as sayings and examples in their lives. The priestly class that exploited the people for livelihood, tried to hide Vemana's verses written on palm leaves as they were afraid of metaphysical discrepancy. Still thousands of Vemana's verses have come down to us, guiding societies for centuries.

It was Sharvari nama samvatsara one day. Chaitra masa, shukla paksa, navami tithi. As he had hinted at, that day Vemana was to go nirvana. The folks had gathered on a hill in the village of Kotarlapalli. They had not seen a yogi going on nirvana as livingly.

That day Vemana had his morning chores including a bath, and meditation in his hermit. Ramareddy provided him with milk. Ramareddy felt that this was his last service to the yogi. He was sad. The folks were not clear outside. They said, 'Let Vemanayogi be Victorians! Let Truth be Victorious!' Vemana came out. He walked towards a construction for his Samadhi. The folks were sad and disturbed. They said,

‘Please, don’t leave us,

The yogi looked at the people with his transcendental inward eye. He blessed them. The devotees felt a divine joy. There was a degree of seriousness everywhere. Vemana walked to the Samadhi; sat there in meditation, surrendering to the Gods. He closed his eyes finally.

Ramareddy conducted the last rites.

The mantra ‘Om shanti, shanti, shanti’ was heard with great gusto and echo.



10. Mahayogi Vemana’s Samadhi

Usually Samadhi condition is nothing but the last condition. It is a spiritual conditioning. That is how a great man ends up his life. In fact, everyone needs to end up his life accordingly. Man should leave his all and end his all in that state. He simply returns to the earth — the place where he came first from. Contrastingly, the body strives for ego-clashes as if it lives for alone and forever. Samadhi state speaks of transcending this. It is nothingness. If a man breathes his last, we say he has passed away. Once the life is passed away, the beautiful body becomes bloody. We inter the dead body in a place with a mark, and call it Samadhi.

The words ‘sama’ (naturalizing) plus ‘aadhi’ (as it once existed) mean, returning to previous state. Spiritually speaking, the people who reach Samadhi state are those who transcend the man-made barriers and they are unaffected by the events of the time. They are calm, quiet and peaceful. It is a sign of eternity.

Yoga has a much higher meaning. It means it is a state of existence for all times and climes. A yogi feels that this pre-ordained life is for his body (but not for his mind). He lives it as if detached. There his atman is like a catylist. The whole series of life is something that we see on a TV screen. Such a transcendental condition is near to a Samadhi position. Yogis live for this society and mankind. Mahayogi Vemana belonged to this state.

People build a stone enclosure to the spot where they bury a man of their own; and they call it a Samadhi. It is a consumeristic attitude. Mahatma's samadhis have become shrines. Unfortunately many samadhis today are consumerist places where the people earn money by foul means, where they support orthodoxy and where they earn a socio-political mileage. Not to speak of, Mahayogi Vemana's Samadhi has this state of affairs today.

There is a Samadhi believed to be of Mahayogi Vemana's in the village of Katarapalli. The structure is of the size 6.3 feet. One side of it that has the face of man is worshipped. It is an old structure; and the villagers have not allowed any renovation around. Still a round space is allowed for taking a holy round, and a huge structure of the pyramid shape is raised there now. It looks really divine.

This is the holy place as mentioned by Indian and foreign scholars of Vemana studies. I have visited the place on 1 December 2010.

The village of Katarapalli is in the hobli of Gandalapenta of Ananthapur district in Andhra Pradesh. The place is near the town of Kadari; and it is 10 kms away there. One has to get down at Katarapalli cross; and there one has to walk a distance of two kilometers.

The people called 'Tunga descendents' worship Mahayogi Vemana. These people have been the priests. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has spent 1.5 crore rupees for the development of tourism at Vemana center. Stone plates having the carving of Vemana's verses are all around. There are guest houses, canteens, lawns and flowers as tourist attractions.

This village which is not invaded by modernity retains its age-old tranquility. There is no bus facility to the village. The hamlet is surrounded by patches of farmlands amidst rocky mountains. There are undergrowths surrounding caves and medicine plants, inspiring metaphysical excursions. The villagers follow small-scale farming, sheep-rearing and collecting of forest products. Their crops include paddy, groundnuts and tur. The social life is that of the primitive in appearance. For example, the folks prepare dosas at the roadside for consumers. A piece of dosa costs only one rupee. This can give us a glimpse into the tribal-kind of folks. God is within us too. He is experience-bound. Just idols cannot show him. God is nothingness. He is one. He is our Ram, Rahim and Christ. Our saint Vemana is likewise eternal. There is his poetry. If we honestly, and purely remember him, and follow him, he will guide us forever.



11. Veman's Writings

Mahayogi Vemana's writings are not merely knowledge-oriented. There was a kind of divine insight in him in his solitude, meditation and whenever he would think of human societies. He then wrote something spontaneously; and that is his so called verses. His followers copied them and gave it publicity. They became part of our literature. They were scripted on palm leaves. The British officer C.P. Brown brought it in the form of a book in 1824.

Vemana's poetry had a Kannada translation in the 20th century. One Mr. Bhimaraju translated a few of Vemana's poems into Kannada in 1920. Siddhaveerappa of Duggavatti Village, Ballary District, well-known for his kayaka-attitude, collected a chunk of Vemana's verses and handed them to P.G. Halakatti. Revd. Halakatti published the select 507 verses under the title *Yogi Vemana's Vachanas* in 1951.

Revd. S.R. Patil of Hulakoti initiated the work of translating into Kannada the entire writings of Vemana (that is mainly poetry) from 1960 to 2000.



12. Shri S. R. Patil

Shri S.R. Patil happens to be the brother of eminent politician, and leader of the cooperative sector the late K.H. Patil. The latter is known as the Tiger of Hulakoti.

S.R. Patil was an engineer and he retired as superintendent engineer. He was a writer too with spiritual leaning. He established 'Prajnanodaya,' an ashram, catering to the needs of mind and spirit.

By force of habit and inclination, S.R. Patil spent much of his time with scholars, diviners, swamijis, and he was greatly attracted to Vemana's life and works. So he dedicated his life establishing Vemana studies in Karnataka.

S.R. Patil learnt Telugu in his later life. He established a close contact with Telugu writers and scholars. He collected the entire corpus of Vemana's writings and the consequent commentaries on him. He translated as many as 4000 verses into Kannada. He made divisions into it for the sake of easy-reading. He brought the following books thus:

1. Vemana Viswageete
2. Vemana Yoga Mimamse Part I and II
3. Avarivaru Kandante Vemana
4. Vemana and Ommanada Hakkigalu
5. Vemana Muttina Hara

Yogi Vemana's ideologies are useful for man's welfare. S.R. Patil thought of establishing a Vemana chair at Karnatak University with the noble intention to spread Vemana thoughts for all communities. This was realized

in 1983 because of his sustained efforts. Since then Vemana Chair is doing a series of good works.

People who want to familiarize with Vemana need to know the following:

1. They need to study Vemana with their hearts, as Vemana lived a life of a yogi.
2. A study of Vemana's writings and a supplementary meditation may lead to Vemana-realization. Then we may live Vemana truly.
3. One should live according to our Karma. Perhaps this experience is a pre-condition for our fulfilment. This is here on the earth and thereafter.
4. Man needs to live a life of bodily wants also. Let him live it satisfactorily so that he needs it no more. The man who decides to live a yogi's experience needs to finish his longing for material culture.
5. Man must avoid ego-class. Such goodly and godly conduct of life will make us beggars to God. Such people are superior to the kings or millionaires.
6. God dwells in each one of us. The whole creation stems out from us. Lo! We are the creators. We are the masters.

British officer J.K. Gribble prepared "Kaddappah District Gazette" in 1875. He too collected Vemana's writings, and the following are the gists of Vemana's writings as Gribble puts it succinctly:

1. Let the 'id' get out; let me be the relic of God.
2. Be kind to everyone and everything.

3. Learn to live peacefully, avoiding violence, envy and enmity.
4. Kindly consider others' feelings
5. Please publish the truths without fear and favor.
6. Be in search of the eternal.
7. Work until the end of life. To live and to work is a divine ordination.

These seven formulas, if we taken sportively, will lead us for a happy and contented life.



13. Vemana's Selected Verses

The following are Mahayogi Vemana's verses. F. G. Halakatti, one of the earliest publishers of Vemana in Kannada, calls them as vachans after he called the Sharanas's sayings as vachanas. These samplings relate to life's various circumstances and areas such as God and Religion, Wisdom, Teacher, Marriage and Family Life, Wealth and Riches, Values and Virtues, Truth and Goodwill, Karma, Varna and Ritualism and Democratic Values

These Vemana's vachanas are from C. P. Brown's translation into Book I, II and III. If the entry is I-2 it means Book I verse 2. So you can read them accordingly.

I-2 means

Religion and God

- I-2. When I cry "Speak, O God," why speakest thou not?
O speak to me, and
powerfully! Speak, O father, surely I shall recognize
thy voice!
- I-13. Grass he created for cattle : wind as food for the
serpent : and earth for the earthworm, forgetting
none: behold how he hath prepared food for all
inhabitants of the globe !
- I-110. The mind cannot see God as long as it is in this
life; but convert thy body into a temple, and restrain
thyself; give up all worldly thoughts, and see him
with thy internal eye.

- I-111. By looking to Thee, is wisdom perfected; by
looking to ourselves, we fall into delusion; when
we know Thee, we shall know ourselves.
- I-136 He who, free from fault, and full of love, believeth
on Thee, and with all austerity worshippeth Thee;
he shall certainly attain release.
- I-185 Lo all fear is ignorance: when fear leaves us, the
divine spirit shall become our own: surely this
body is perishable; proclaim O Vema, that the
living soul alone shall be victorious.
- I-188 Mad and idiotic are those who perpetually
enquiring where the deity resides: God dwells in
all things in his complete fullness.
- II-205 That light, like the morning star, that dwells in the
inmost heart of every man, is our refuge. What
asylum is there superior to this illumination?
- III-205 The deity bestows on us that alone which is
destined to us; what we gain is the result not of
fate but our own conduct. Brahma is indeed the
author of destiny, but we are the agents ourselves
in all we do; and shall be rewarded or punished
accordingly.

Wisdom

- I-7. Even as a lamp shines in a glass vase, thus shineth
wisdom dwelling in the bodies of men of
understanding.
- I-11. Whatever he may read who is devoid of
understanding, his virtue continues only so long as

- he is reading; even as a frog is dignified only so long as it is seated on a lotus leaf.
- I-16. Salt and camphor are of one semblance ; but if you examine and try the flavours, their tastes are diverse : thus do the excellent differ from other men.
- I-18. Truth and falsehood the Great Spirit alone knows : water alone truly knows the declivity and the rising ground : and the mother alone knows the generation of her son and who is his father.
- I-27. If there be in a tribe one of excellence, the tribe becomes illustrious by reason of his virtues ; as the grove is distinguished for the sandal tree therein.
- I-172 In no world is there a blessing greater than wisdom: none possesses wisdom but he who recognizes its value. Knowledge is comparable to itself alone. Wisdom is (tatwa) the chief good.
- II-46 He who can neither lose nor close his purse, who will neither feed nor clothe himself; devoid of genius and unpolished by learning; he who thus walks, is like a walking corpse.
- II-179 If a lamp be lighted in a temple, is it wonderful that its brightness should fill the whole dome? Thus shall the light of wisdom, shining in the heart of a saint, illuminate the whole world.
- III-4 He that has wisdom, shall live for ever; even in the final destruction his soul shall not perish: at the time of that destruction he shall be united to the Great Spirit.

- III-247 He who says “I know nothing” is the shrewdest of all: he who says “I am learning” is a mere talker. He who holds his peace is the wisest and the best.

Teacher

- I-8 A false teacher restrains us in all our acts. The middling, ordinary teacher, makes a multitude of senseless spells. But the good one combines the whole power of excellence.
- I-105 Like a cuckoo lives in a crow’s nest; like the worms live that are hidden by a wasp; is he who honours a teacher; he shall himself become a master.
- I-108 They cannot learn that the heart is the source of perfection; they are entangled in their lusts and perish; he who is converted into pure mind is the saint who knows the great secret.
- I-131 Water mingled with milk bears the appearance of milk; and thus becomes acceptable in sacred rites: thus, by intercourse with the pure and excellent, shall even the foolish attain perfection.
- I-147 The teacher, who is unable to shew the path of holiness to his disciples, and plunges them in an evil creed, his wisdom is like that of a bullock entangled in a field of maize.
- I-179 The teacher is the root of all; the disciples of a teacher are the branches: men can seldom discern the really excellent teacher, in the world.

- I-197 Can salvation be attained by him who is false hearted? Labour not in works that are fruitless; the fool that thus acts shall never be called a teacher.
- I-198 He who has cut off his desires, who has quenched the fire of passion, who has bound up his loins, and crushed all anger; he who has attained to the great secret, is the teacher of teachers.
- II-110 He who understands all the secrets of his heart, who has cut off his passions, and purified himself; he, who restrains his body, this is the true saint.
- III-186 As pieces of wood of various kinds, when formed into a ship, are no longer distinguished by their names, and their interior qualities are undistinguished; so after entering the Zangam sect, a man's former caste is forgotten.

Marriage and Family Life

- 145 If the wife delights in what pleases her husband, and if the married pair are united as one, this leads to perfect purity. The duties of man and wife lead to deliverance from sin; this shall form a means whereby they shall be united to the great spirit, that is of incomparable perfection.

Wealth and Riches

- I-39. Seeing he cannot see, he will not open that mouth of his. Hearing he heareth not, through arrogance. Such is the disorder of the man of wealth! !

- I-47. When he departs this life his riches follow him not, neither when he returns in another transmigration; when he again dies he carries not his wealth with him: where does he go and where does his wealth go?
- I-129. He heaps up wealth, and gives none in charity; he consumes it not himself, but hides it! Will not the bee that stores up honey yield it by force to the traveler?
- I-130. The wealth of liberal men shall always increase; poverty shall never befall them: when that well has poured forth its waters, again shall they be plentifully produced.
- I-132. The rich man, who takes the destitute by the hand, and rescues him, shall ultimately, in the presence of the glorious Siva, shall unceasingly dwell in happiness.
- II-202 Are riches the real wealth of either the wife or the husband? surely the possession of a son is the first of blessings, and to grow old together is the greatest of all riches.
- II-208 Riches flourish, like the charms of women, for a season, but rapidly fade away; as moonlight dies when a cloud passes over the sky.
- III-15 As surely as figures added to figures form a total, so surely shall liberality and beneficence lead to wealth.

- III-23 If thou consume it not thyself, nor bestow it in charity, but hoard up thy wealth for thy sons, and then die without pointing out where it is buried, all thy riches shall fall to the lot of strangers!
- III-63 Poverty makes a man's relations his foes; by poverty we fail of attaining heaven; and through want we lose credit with the lender.

Virtues and Values

- I-51. He who keeps himself afar from another's wife ; who desireth not another's wealth, but is benevolent ; who, though others be enraged, is not wroth; and who lives in the esteem of others, is the wise Man.
- I-54. Whose is the body, that we should continually nourish it and whose is the soul, that we should be devout to save it? whose is our wealth? virtue alone is ours !
- I-70. How should fortune dwell in the houses of those who perpetually tell lies? It is like drawing water in a leaky vessel.
- I-71. The house of a virtuous young woman is orderly, she is like as a light shining in a dark room : The house in which a first wedded wife dwells, is like as the place of divine worship.
- I-74. The son who hath no regard for mother and father, what matter though he be born, what though he perish? Do not the white ants in a hillock come forth and perish as well as he?

- I-152 Look closely at musk; its hue indeed is dark, but its fragrance perfumes all things. Thus hidden are the virtues of men of weight.
- I-161 By practicing what was right, did Dharma Raz and other warriors maintain their spotless heroism. Righteousness is to all rulers the means of attaining salvation.
- II-2 If a wicked son is born from the womb of the excellent, he will destroy his entire race; as an empty ear growing on a sugar cane destroys all its sweetness.
- II-18 There are crowds upon crowds of those who reckon the fault of others: yet every one in the world has his fallings. Those who look to the faults of others are often ignorant of their own.
- II-63 Civility is indispensable in the world; but hypocrisy is a disgrace to the most sagacious of men: baseness leads to ruin; and malice towards others leads to our own destruction.
- III-18 To give food to the hungry is as meritorious as offering it in sacrifice; so great is the charity of relieving the poor.
- III-29 Beneficence to others shall cover thy sins; it shall be a stay to thee; it is a means of attaining the world above; it forms a refuge for thee.
- III-35 He who has ceased from envy, lust, and selfishness, who is not agitated by the influence of any passion, who is benevolent to others and remains in the faith to the Great Spirit – he is the perfect man.

- III-40 From his birth upwards let a man constantly beware of sin; let him not become degraded to a brute; but grow old in holiness and attain to bliss.
- III-53 At the death of his son-in-law a man grieves in soul; at his son's death he is plunged in sorrow; but when a good man dies the whole world grieves as though on the point of perishing.
- III-76 To know one's-self is the chief object; is there any other who can explain this to us? If we know not ourselves, none can teach us.
- III-106 A dog instinctively recognizes the kindness shown to it; how base is the man who feels not the good that is done to him.
- III-108 Whether you speak with the great or with your companions, respect and consideration are equally necessary; or evil will befall you, and you will lose your respectability.
- III-224 Wisdom is a surer reliance than empty worship: the mind is more to be depended on than mere words; and a man's virtues are of more importance than his caste.

Love and Lust

- I-60. He who being given up to the pleasures of women, cannot exercise firmness of mind, verily shall be ruined. Like as a tree on the river bank is ever unstable.
- I-62. He that is given up to his senses is the lowest. He that is delivered up to his lusts shall through

- devotion become medial. He is the best who hath conquered his lusts. He who hath subdued his passions and commandeth himself is, (hear me) the mighty lord!
- I-69. When his passions are redoubled, a man is seized with madness and roams the earth. Cupidity makes a man as restless as a dog.
- I-86. Meditation is of superior merit to the bestowing of gifts; as understanding is superior to meditation; and to cut off our lusts, is superior even to understanding.
- II-29 What is dearest of all things? Life : but gold is dearer than a thousand lives: and dearer than gold are the words of a maiden.
- II-30 Sweeter than the core of the jack-fruit, than refined sugar, than the honeycomb, than thick cream, and than the juice of the sugar cane; sweeter than all these are the words of a beloved damsel.
- II-99 All men, be they who they will, desire gold and fine women. Not the mightiest of lords can relinquish a fair eyed maiden.
- II-134 Where there are women, there is sport: the town would be ruined but for women; men are indeed in the hands of women.

Truth and Goodwill

- I-67. A good work performed with a pure heart, though small, is not trifling. How large is the seed of the banyan and the mustard tree!

- I-78. Like as all those who comprehend the science of alchy my by reason of that skill suffer no more sorrows, so when thou hast learnt the truth, thou shalt no more grieve.
- I-85. If though be endued with truth, thou shalt attain wisdom; by gaining wisdom, thou shalt attain the truth. He is the regenerate, who possesseth wisdom and truth. In an equal degree.
- I-101. The best of the excellent on earth, is he who knoweth the truth; he who displays his own greatness is in the middle state; and he who wears a religious garb to nourish his belly is the lowest of all.
- I-112. In the dissolution, at death, of the five corporeal elements, air returns to air, ether to ether; earth to earth, flame to flame, and water to water; thus does the spirit attain purity.
- I-137 When he is well grounded in the truth (tatwa) he searcheth it in every place, and, united with holiness, shall be transformed into it; all his vain thoughts shall be done away; and he, (go to,) shall be perfect.
- II-214 Through the performing of divine worship is divine enjoyment attained. He who knows the truth is verily as a god. But he who has nothing, shall attain to nothing.

Karma, Varna and Ritualism

- II-6 Though he roam to Concan, no dog will turn into a lion; going to Benares will make no pig an elephant; and no pilgrimage will make a saint of one whose nature is different.

- II-51 Imagining that by acquiring sons he will attain the happiness that is the reward of merit, a man remains entangled in the creed of works. If an elephant fall into a pit, how can a gnat extricate it?
- II-90 If misfortune befall him, the sinner reviles the deity; if he meets with good, he lauds himself for it: but evil and good are the result of his own acts.
- II-170 The source of final happiness is inherent in the heart: he is fool who seeks it elsewhere as at holy places and pilgrimages: he is like the shepherd who searched for the sheep which was in his bosom.
- II-189 Why should you collect stones from the hills, and build fine temples to walk about in them? Why torment yourselves so, while the god as a living being constantly dwells within you?
- II-192 Better is the humble washerman, than the empty student; better is the house dog, than the inanimate household goddess; and better than all demigods, is the Lord of the Universe.
- II-193 All this smearing your bodies with holy ashes, these sectarian decorations on your shoulders, and images dangling from your necks; in short, your entire creeds, are of avail in this world alone, not in the next.
- III-9 Fortune-telling, possession by a demon, dreams of sleep, idle wishes, and pleasing auguries, with divinations of all sorts, turn out true or false, as it may happen, who can rely on them?

- III-174 Bald heads! Matted locks! Daubing with ashes, harangues, postures, and a religious garb! No man is a saint who is not pure within.
- III-182 A man makes a stone image, and sets it up in dignity, and worships it! He is devoid of sense. He cannot comprehend the deity that dwells within him!
- III-187 The books that are called the Vedas are like courtesans, deluding men, and wholly unintelligible; but the hidden knowledge of God is like an honourable wife.
- III-201 Why bow and fall down in worship? Will the hard stone in the temple change its nature? the true temple is the body, the soul is the god therein; empty is the worship ye pay to these worthless stones.
- III-217 If we carefully observe and examine the universe, we shall see that all castes equally originated therein: then all are equal: surely all men are brothers?
- III-218 What matters food, or caste, or country, so as to affect our bodies? Surely the trouble men take about caste, is all ridiculous!

Democratic Values

- II-91 Be not ensnared by the fire of hunger, by the flame of desire, or the heat of anger. If thou maintain one changeless disposition, this is freedom.

- II-135 Consider not him a Pariar, of degraded rank, who is so by birth; he who breaks his word is far viler. He who reproaches the Pariar is (go to,) worse than him.
- III-111 “Thou art defiled and unclean, touch me not,” thy cry: what limits are there to defilement? What is its source? All human bodies are equally unclean: defilement is born with ourselves in the body.
- III-164 If a man still has in his heart the principles of a pariah, and yet scorns pariars, how should he become twice-born, while devoid of every good quality?
- III-225 Disputations as to which caste is the best are all fruitless: all the tribes originated in the same origin: who can decide as to the superiority or inferiority of any one.
- III-238 Their grandsire was born of an unmarried woman, their fathers and they themselves were the illegitimate children of a wife and a widow. Their mother was a lover of strange men, and then her five husbands! If you talk of their morals, such were the practices of the Pandavas.- These falsehoods are the greatest in the world!
- III-271 Fools roam to holy places imagining that the deity is not to be found where they dwell: they merely exercise their limbs and squander their money; they are ruined, and so return home!
- III-272 Casi, Madura, Conjeveram, Gaya, Prayaghi, Setu; though a man visit all these holy places with an

ardent mind, what benefit does he derive? This is mere drudgery!

III-277 Verily the foolish wretches, who are unable to comprehend the mental wisdom taught by Vemana, shall perish like a hair when separated from the head; devoid of sustenance here and perfection hereafter.

Love of animals and other sundry affairs

II-4 All killing of animals is a sin against Siva: consider all animals as forms of the deity; indeed every living creature if sinless is as a god.

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