

"Brahmamokkate" Series

SRI SADGURU
MALAYALASWAMY

English Translation

Dr. P. SATYANARAYANA

Telugu Original

Dr. SAMUDRALA LAKSHMANAIAH



Published by

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS

TIRUPATI

2017

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FOREWORD

The Ancient Indian heritage and culture is galore with the great souls who emerged from different ages, castes and regions. Despite the adverse circumstances they dwelt in, they pulled on well facing the hardships. They were intent upon the embellishment of the stature of their fellow beings. Their missionary zeal for humanitarian service was responsible for social awareness among the people besides the greater goal of spiritual development. They stood as luminaries in the firmament of reformation.

The authorities of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams have cherished the goal of handing over the teachings of the great souls in heaven to the present generation by illustrating the stories of their pious lives. For this purpose they have published a series of books under the title "Brahmamokkate" which means 'the Lord is one though He is named differently', paving the way for world peace through the belief of only one Diety the Brahma who is all pervading. The renowned authors have made an authentic portrayal of the life- stories of biographies of the spiritual sages.

Dr. Samudrala Lakshmanaiah has written a book in Telugu entitled "Sri Sadguru Malayalaswamy" and the present rendering in English is done by P.Satyanarayana under the same title "Sri Sadguru Malayalaswamy". We look forward to realizing our cherished wish by making the copies available to children, the youth and the aged for intensive reading in order to sprout themselves as dynamic spiritual souls dedicating themselves to the cause of service to humanity.

In the Service of Lord Venkateswara



Executive Officer

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams
Tirupati.

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* * *

CHAPTER - 1

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Nature's bounties are bequeathed on Kerala province of India. It is also popular as Malayala Desa. The beautiful landscape of Kerala stands significant with the advent of Sree Shankara Bhagawathpada, the acharya and the exponent of Advaita Philosophy. Yet another prominent person popular as 'Sri Narayana Gurudeva' also hails from this province. He advocated the theory of 'only one caste, one religion and one God'. This is a divine theory that stirred the people into realisation of oneness of human beings.

Guruvayuru in Kerala is akin to Tirupati of Andhra Desa (Andhra Pradesh) in its prominence and holiness. Thousands of devotees through the religious centre everyday. In the vicinity of Guruvayur we find a village by name 'Engandyuru'. Once there lived a pious person called Kariyappa in that village. Nottiyamma, his better half was equally compassionate towards the passers by while she herself accepting the middle class standard of life. This virtue was handed over to them right from the period of their ancestors.

Nottiyamma gave birth to a lovely baby-son named 'Velappa' on the 27th of March 1885 A.D. After the naming ceremony Velappa's parents endeared him greatly and moulded the child into a boy of righteous temperament. The mother's patience in this regard was admirable.

We need not wait for the scented flower till it spreads its petals, for the balm it gives to the air. Verily the boy showed the traces of virtue right from the beginning, as a bud –

The boy abandoned a cosy bed. Instead, he curled on to the craggy floor. He had sound sleep there alone. Confused as she stood, the mother asked of a monk about the queer trait of the boy. The monk having observed him intently, decided that he would be a great sage, leaving his kith and kin very early in his life. That was his fore telling.

The parents referred his instincts to famous astrologers who found an analogy of his way of life to the creeper of a pumpkin. A pumpkin, lands far away from its roots. Similarly, the boy, they said, would bloom right away from the stand point as a pumpkin flower. He would be doing quite exceptional services. The affectionate parents could not bear with the impending separation of their ward from them.

The boy was sent to school for his preliminaries at the age of five years. Apart from the alphabet he sang psalms in praise of God and worshipped Him. The entire book was to be got by heart according to his vision of learning. So he continued reading even while he walked. He thought he had no right to eat and sleep without doing his lessons. This was his self discipline. While in meditation he completely forgot his food to be taken. The observance of holy days and the special worships like those on Ekadasi the

eleventh day of a fortnight of the no moon day and the day of the week like Monday have never missed his attention. Fasting was also observed with great piety. Thus the boy was under strict self scrutiny.

Compassion towards all beings

One evening when Velappa was returning home after his school hours, he saw a hunter on his way. The hunter had two birds tied up between his fingers and his intention was to sell the birds for some money. Velappa hurried home and begged of his mother for some money and paid the price to the hunter. No sooner did the hunter hand over the birds, than the boy joyeously left them free into the sky. Nottiyamma, Velappa's mother was delighted at the incident and hugged him to bless him with all good hope of kindness even to birds and animals in the future.

People who heard about this incident remembered Lord Buddha as a child. Similarly the child Gautama saved the swan shot down with an arrow piercing through its wings, Velappa translated into action the adage that God dwells in the heart of a compassionate human beings.

Extradition of a False Guru

Once a wandering sage visited Engandyuru. The villagers paid him respect as a mark of Indian tradition. He wanted to impress them and said :

“See, I hail from the holy city of Varanasi called Kasi. I underwent a rigorous penance and acquired

divine prowess. I respect my preceptor. He was pleased to part with his garland of holy beads sprouted at the tears of Lord Shiva in the Himalayas. It is a Rudrakshamala. It has a tremendous effect and works wonders. After a prayer either in the morning or in the evening just curl it up into a lump and squeeze it for a while. You will get a few drops of the water from the holy river Ganges. Every drop shedding from Rudrakshamala is precious enough to enable you to be free from your sins, here and now. A spoonful of drops of the water costs one rupee each.”

Velappa was only ten when he happened to see this bad bargain. He wanted to test the bonafides of the Sadhu and endeared him with his service to him, as a young and innocent disciples. He took out the garland of wooden beads from the box of his guru when he was out for a bath in the river. The very touch of the beads told him a story.

The beads were made of a cork like soft wood. They were the imitation of Rudrakshas. The porous cork inside absorbed ordinary water drops, to be squeezed for the awaited water drops of the Ganges. Soon the secret spread out. The villagers realised the hypocrit’s greed for money. They saw him extradiated. Velappa the wise boy was praised for his faculty of fact – finding and practical attitude. Blind beliefs were to be fended off at his early age as if his mother endowed the skill on the child while feeding the initial gulp mixed with a soft eatable, the cheese, as the idiom in Telugu goes.

Steadfast Meditation

Velappa practiced meditation. He would not know the ephemeral time and spent hours together in steady concentration of mind. It was in the month of Shravana of the almanac, Velappa sat for meditation in the evening intently. He would not come out even after a lapse of much time. His elder brother thought that Velappa was wasting his time aimlessly. With very harsh words on his lips the big brother gave a heavy slap on the youngster’s cheek. It was of no use. With much rage this time he tried to ward the boy off from the meditation. To his surprise there appeared a huge white bull. It was like the holy bull of Lord Shiva, known as Nandi. The sturdy ox terrified him. He turned nervous.

Later it was time for the mother to reach home. The words of the elder brother were unbelievable for there was no such ox there. She asked Velappa to tell the truth. But the boy was taken away by the bliss of meditation. They admired his rapt attention during his meditation and never tried to interrupt him in that exercise, any time thence.

Kerala province is noted for the popularity of Sanskrit language. We find our scriptures in Sanskrit. But in Velappa’s boyhood days English was also being taught. So the parents and the well-wishers stressed the need for his learning of English to be suited to the circumstances prevailing. He insisted on his mother tongue and the scriptural voice Sanskrit, vehemently, refusing to study English. His intention proved to be

right as he enriched his spiritual progress with Sanskrit alone.

Sri Narayana Guru

Kerala province saw a noble soul who was an epoch making soul both in social and spiritual awareness. His period is known as a land mark of total revolution of ideas. He is none other than Sri Narayana Guru who was born in 1854 in a village nearby Travancore. He was a great Sanskrit scholar. He roamed as a mendicant all over the country and came into direct contact with very popular saints of India and steeped himself in Yoga. He experimented with the truth. But at the latter part of his life he performed austere penance alone and attained self – realisation.

The age in which he lived was really a dark age for Kerala Desa. The lower strata of people were hideously affected. They were not shown the least compassion that was due even to animals. The oppressed classes called Dalits, could not bear the insult meted out to them in Hindu communities and preferred to drift into other religions of foreign propaganda. Social upheaval and blind belief ruled the province to plunge into darkness and chaos. There was no order anywhere.

Social discrimination plagued India. Narayana Gurudeva took an oath to root out this malady. He raised his hue and cry in the campaigns against the foul practices prevailing in his time. Untouchability, animal sacrifices, addiction to alcoholism, conflicts among different races and religions were the abhorred

practices to be stopped forthwith. Public awakening was to be established with immediate concern. He led the volunteers encouraging them to root out foul practices and to promote brotherhood and fair play to the fellow beings by opening educational institutions and by starting other social and welfare activities through voluntary organisations.

His sincere efforts bore fruit. He could bring in dynamism among people. Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore visited him and highly commended his movement for the world peace. The veterans admired his services.

Sri Narayana Guru proclaimed that the trio – caste, religion and godhood, is unique and equal in itself and there are no variations. Each of the three important centres stand for unity. Lakhs of dwellers of Kerala today have reverence towards the great teacher and social reformers who followed his ideals.

Every field of service to humanity worships him extending his thought process to generations to come. Sri Siddha Shivalinga Guruswamy is prominent among his followers. He established an ashram at a village known as Peringotkar in the name of Narayana Guru. It is famous as ‘Sri Narayanaashram’. This ashram lies in the arm of ‘Engandyuru’. The ashram proved itself to be an ideas centre for propagation of spiritual ideologies. The knowledge of self, ‘Brahma Vidya’ is being spread out through this ashram.

Under Guru's Care

Having undergone primary level education Velappa joined Sri Narayanashrama with the blessings of his parents. He had already obtained a good working knowledge of Sanskrit, besides strict discipline from one Shivalinga Guru. Narayanashrama upheld universal brotherhood and worked for its achievement in translating the ideals into action. It became instrumental in all round development of the promising youth.

Velappa longed for mastery over Sanskrit. It was a tough nut to crack. One has to get by heart the words from 'Shabdamanjari' a dictionary of Sanskrit terms. He was at times vexed with this routine and preferred to dart into meditation. But his inquisitive nature took up the task and owned the vocabulary by dint of his perseverance pulling ahead day and night. The days wore a few numbering thirteen though.

Relentless worship – routine did not hamper his will to acquire scholarship. Bent upon meditation right from his childhood days the routine of the ashram could not co-operate with him. Later, he revealed his feelings in these words :

“I made it a rule to do the lessons well before I got ready for a meal. Neither did I miss my prayers nor my coaching to my juniors before my supper. Meditation was mandatory before the meal. So, the delay in my taking food was pushed forward to 1.00 a.m. on certain days. When I got up from meditation the day nearly dawned. I used to place a wet pack of

cloth on the skull to hamper sleep and to continue the meditation.

I am convinced that I am also an average child as you are but my hard work is the secret of my success. I got by heart at the rate of 25 shlokas a day”.

His stay at Gurukula, the residency, was pivotal in Velappa's career. The reference and description of ashramas and penance by the hermits enthralled him. The vivid account of Vasishthashrama in Kalidasa's Raghuvamsha Kavya and the depiction of Goddess Parvathi's penance for Lord Shiva from another book of poetry. Kumara Sambhava by the same poet, kept him spell bound. He longed for the self same attainment in penance in his life.

Velappa was an ardent follower of the vedic principles. None of them missed his attention. The Vedas proclaim the 'Niyama Panchakas' of different types. The cleanliness group consisted of cleanliness of the dress, neat surroundings, glistening vessels, spruceness of body, and balanced adequacy in one's speech. These purities are accompanied by regularity in taking food, sitting for meditation, keeping the household neat, pure thought and performance of good deeds – 'the group of holy five observances'. Velappa observed them very strictly.

Once it so happened for Velappa to chide his inmate of the ashram, a celibate. The former thought that he had trespassed the purity of speech and repented greatly. He went on to an extreme step of burning his

tongue with a red hot needle. Whenever he went astray from the right path of conduct he would punish himself by going without food, the observance of Upavasa Deeksha.

Spiritual Initiation

The preceptor Sri Shivalinga Guruswamy was highly pleased with his disciple Velappa and fixed an auspicious day and offered initiation – the holy mantra for spiritual practices. He taught the worthy pupil the yoga which consists of eight principles called ‘Ashtanga – Yoga’ – yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and Samadhi. The worship of “Aum” called ‘Pranavopasana’ was also granted by the Guru. Velappa proved to be a worthy disciple to the hilt while scrupulously practicing the dicta of the Vedas. As a result Velappa began to engross himself in appreciating the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads – the parts of the Vedas, a religious rendering called Yoga Vaashishtham and other interpretations of Dharma. The secret and powerful chantings called Mahamantras were bestowed on him by the Guru. The latter ordered Velappa to perform ‘Nididhyasanam’ an act of relentless repetition of powerful chantings, for his spiritual aggrandizement.

Sri Narayana Gurudeva’s renown pervaded far and wide in those days. Velappa sought the permission of his preceptor ‘Shivalinga Guru’ to call on the great sage. The Mahatma noticed the disciple’s virtues while he prostrated before him with reverence. He foretold

that the young sadhaka would attain the Divine Grace, ‘Brahmanubhavam’ very soon. Thanking the sage profusely Velappa returned and reached his Gurukula.

Velappa had a pent-up desire for visiting the spiritual centres and to be in direct contact with great souls of Bharath – the spiritual land. Unfortunately he had to learn that his mother was ailing and so he left for Engandyuru with the permission of his preceptor. He also sought his permission to go on pilgrimage from there for some time.

While parting from the disciple the guru’s counsel was for unstinted practice of celibacy, non-violence, truth and non-accumulation of wealth wherever he moved about.

He bid him to shed hypocrisy from his heart.

Velappa was at the feet of his mother for service at Engandyuru for some period.

* * *

CHAPTER - 2

PILGRIMAGE

In the dutiful services of the son Velappa, his mother got over her ill health. She was alright by God's grace so as to enable her son to leave for pilgrimage. This was not an ordinary holy visit of spiritual centres. It was the act of sacrificing household style of life.

Renunciation of home and hearth alone could bequeath eternal fame on the Buddha, Sri Shankaracharya, Jesus Christ, Mohammad the prophet and Guru Nanak. The shritis extolled the significance of renunciation. 'Tyagenaike Amrutatva Manushu' is the adage. Man becomes non-ephemeral as gods and goddesses as if he were satiated with the intake of the holy drink of elixir of eternity, 'Amrita'. Till then the cycle of re-birth oldage and disease torment him. "I shall leave my house to step into the wider world for my experiment with the truth. For this I have to travel far and wide covering the entire areas of Bharath. This will be the aim of my life now" said Velappa to himself with a firm conviction.

Velappa was just eighteen when he had this determination. It was at midnight of a hopeful day on which he set out on foot for the holy travel of spiritual land, Bharath. In the early hours the inmates could find a letter which read as follows,

"Oh my Divine Incarnations, my dear father and mother, you need not worry about my absence. It will

be a futile effort to try to search for me. I'll be safe in the protective care of God Almighty so long as you busy yourselves with the guests offering them food and drink piously. I am off on a divine mission of realisation of the Truth.

The parents could not bear the separation from their beloved son. The mother verily sobbed severely. Her tears welled up relentlessly. "Everything went on according to the horoscope foretold in the case of the extraordinary boy" heaved the relatives a sigh.

The wise recognised Velappa as the divine soul directly emanated from the very stuff that made Godhood. All those sweet words were smooth enough to soothe the parents. The parents were true to their son's wish. Nottiyamma got solace busily attending to the guests at her home.

Velappa roamed about like Buddha with the speed of a stormy wind. His only precious possessions in his folded cloth around his shoulder were : the Bhagavad Gita Patanjali's book 'Yoga Darshana', 'Kathopanishath', a garland of holy beads for recitation of God's names, the sacrificial ashes Vibhuthi, a few sheets of paper for scribbling, a pencil and a small brass bowl.

The monk preferred to travel on foot. He scantily made use of the railway travel. His pace covered nearly 20 miles of craggy path everyday. Several adversities coming on way could not deter his will power. The wise do accept conflicts that encounter according to

the destined miseries that cannot be avoided. “Prarabda muttama gunah na parityajanti”.

The wandering seeker – after – truth made it a rule to sojourn for two or three days only at the popular pilgrimage centres – the punya kshetras. He could not tarry more than one day at an ordinary place. He visited Udipi, Subrahmanyam, Dharmastharam, Gokarnam and other holy places of Karnataka. His vessel made of brass and the threat of its theft always disturbed him as an ephemeral possession while he was in meditation. So he parted with it in Gokarna. An empty sheath of a coconut became his bowl.

His pedestrian march continued and he entered Maharashtra province to visit the holy pilgrimage centre Pandaripuram. He had Lord Omkareshwara’s darshan on the banks of the Narmada. He led himself to Dwaraka the serene abode of Lord Krishna. The devotional atmosphere there enthralled him greatly.

In the Punjab he was on the premises of Swarna Devalaya of Sikh faith. Feasting his eyes with the visit of significant holy places in the mean time, he arrived in Kashmir. He was taken away by the natural beauty of the place.

Velappa, the monk made a whirlwind tour of Madhura, Brindavan Gokulam and other sanctified soils. He had to cross a nalah (stream) to go further. He was penniless. The sailors demanded boat charges and left him there having got no positive response. He dared

the turbulent currents of the stream and jumped into it with all confidence of his strength, but the torrents were so severe that he was about to be drifted away. But providentially on the washing away by the currents, he found a floating tree and with great difficulty touched the other end of the shore. This experience of obtaining succour from God enthused him for further travel ahead.

The Bhakti prone environs of Brindavan touched his heart greatly. He reached Kuruskhetra where the justified war of the Mahabharatha was fought. The recital of the Gita at the place of its emergence and birth at least for three times entirely, pleased him enormously. The holy centre of Arya Samaj followers and of their maidens’ residential abode called Haridwara was replete with various hermitages or Mathas. His visit of these places laid indelible impression on his mind. The Vyasashrama founded by him later might have taken the Haridwar model as its foregrounding. Sri Dayananda Swamy the founder father of Haridwar elicited the monk’s great veneration.

The Swargashramas or the heavenly lands of Hrishikesh were also admired during his travel. The renowned Kali Kambal Baba – a saint who draped a black rug of wool – was popular for his sacrifices and selfless services there. He was convinced that Hrishikesh was magnanimous enough to afford for spiritual satisfaction. Having reached another holy place, Badarikashram he recited the ‘Brahmasutras’, the spiritual renderings from the Vedas.

Brahma Tarpanam

In the Himalayas he trekked upto a pilgrimage centre called 'Brahma Kapala'. While he was about to have a dip in the Alakananda, the team of Brahmins there surrounded him to chant the mantras of Sankalpa, the enunciation of the desires one is fond of fulfilling, as a result of the bath. "I don't want desirous chanting, but all I want is the desireless state of mind to be granted by God". One clever Pandit got ready to get it done. But the reply came, "Reverend sir, you are prone to say about the ever pervading line of blessed sons and grand sons in that case. This is a kshetra or holy place wherein a will is going to be fulfilled without fail. I am a celibate, a brahmachari. I don't need your kind Sankalpa any more". Velappa there happened to hear the wise words of an aged Brahmin saying, "My child, no doubt it is a place sanctified enough to grant one's wishes but the utterances of an impure soul will have no effect. It is true elsewhere indeed!" The place is not more important than one's pure soul".

Velappa determined to offer holy water offerings called 'Tarpana' for the well being of all beings of the Universe in which he formed part thereof.

While his retreat from the north he crossed Naimisharanya, the forest where ancient rishis dwelled, and reached Ayodhya, the capital city of Lord Rama. He thought it was due, over there to repeat the powerful 'Ramatarak Mantra' and he did so, one lakh times intently. Then he marched towards Prayaga. Here he

collected two earthen crucibles (called Kashi Kuppe) of holy water of the Prayaga and preserved it for offering a holy bath to Sri Rama of Rameshwaram in the South of India.

Then he made a sojourn in Kashi known as Varanasi, a very popular pilgrimage centre of India. The learned people over there were extraordinary in their acumen of spiritual knowledge. But there these people maintained the lineage of upper castes and the discrimination prevailed everywhere. Upper strata of the society showed undue preference to one's caste rather than the purity of thought irrespective of one's creed. There Velappa relentlessly took the names of Lord Shiva for divine effect. He spent there the four pious months called Chaturmasya period when the worship is the most suitable and effective one. The deity of Kasi, Lord Vishwanatha was worshipped by him scrupulously to the astonishment of the religious heads, temple complex organisers and the pandits of the shrine. The latter congratulated the devotee on his pertinent prayers, without any flaws.

Citing appropriate shlokas (Sanskrit verses of an order) from the Vedas, Velappa made a Tarpana (offering of holy river water) at Prayaga and he coined his Sankalpa now. As Prayaga is noted for offering obeisance to the passed away parents and elders individually, the monk beseeched the Lord to take into his Greater Self, all the beings into the abode called Pitrloka in general, without an iota of discrimination.

This was his unusual, humanitarian wish of promoting peace to the departed souls. His short stay of three days at Buddha Gaya was also a significant event for the devotee. The place of the Buddha's radiance was exquisite for Velappa's meditation.

Navadweepa is a place of adoration of Krishna Bhakti propounded by Sree Krishna Chaitanya known as Chaitanya Prabhu. People danced with agility absorbed themselves in devotion towards the Lord. It gave Velappa a pleasant surprise. Having arrived in Culcutta (Kolkata) city, he scanned the terrible visage of the mother Goddess Kali. He spoke to himself seeing the ferocious enthusiasm of the idol, "Oh Goddess! Be tranquill. Let peace reign on your countenance! The Dooms Day is yet to come. You are the Goddess of the world, may be the universe. Please be benign by withdrawing your ferociousness! Let serenity and fathomless kindness and love prevail instead!"

Now, it was the turn of the visit of Puri Jagannath. He spent three days there. Later he entered Andhra Pradesh and paid a visit to the holy places like Simhachalam, Bhadrachalam and Srishailam. His feet led him to Tirumala. There he thought about the southern part of India. The Northern part of India seemed to have been lucky in comparison to the South. He thought that this region requires the services of saints to propagate devotion towards God, Bhakti, knowledge of God, Gnana and the spirit of renunciation, Vyragya. Some one should sow the seeds

of the above virtues in the South. He exposed himself to Lord Venkateswara in all piety, and visited the Papanashana and other holy places. The Gogarbh Kshetra in the vicinity impressed him greatly. This nature's bounty, he has thought, is suitable for the penance to be undertaken during his travel.

Velappa wished to cover all the remaining holy places of the South provinces. He paid his visit to Arunachalam, Kanchi, Chidambaram, Sri Rangam and the like. The managements of Southern Indian temples are prompt and rich in comparison to those of the Northern India. The north is galore with the centres of sojourn for celibates, practitioners of Brahma Vidya and the mendicants and monks. He felt sorry.

At Phalani, a pilgrim – centre, he offered the water to Lord Subrahmanya Swamy, a deity there. He used the water he preserved in an earthen crucible. Madhura was the next place he visited to worship Lord Sundareshwara and the dame, Goddess Meenakshi. According to his prior intention he used the water of the Ganges stored in the second crucible to adorn with a holy bath to Lord Ramalingeshwara. He was happy to have accomplished the cherished wish of the tour.

In visiting Dwaraka, Badari, Jagannatha of Puri and Rameshwaram he overjoyed with a feeling of going about the four holy temples of Bharath. He thought that he could pay respects by going around clockwise in veneration to Bharath Matha. Traversing through Cape Camorin (Kanya Kumari) and Anantha Shayana's

abode he perched at the feet of Sri Narayana Gurudeva and touched his holy feet and obtained his blessings. Then he met Sri Shivalinga Guru and prostrated before the guru seeking his best wishes and ‘ashis’.

When he reached home in Engandyuru his heart became heavy with the news of the demise of his father some time before and the widowed mother was found as a pack of bones on account of his separation all those days. Now he bent his sinews to do all possible service to the mother, staying in the native village for some more time.

Mendicant as he was by nature, he relinquished the place without informing anyone. It was again a tranquil night when he departed on foot only to reach Tirupati, the place of seven steep hills as majestic as the divine knowledge of the soul. To his tremendous satisfaction he had the darshan or visit of Lord Sri Venkateswara. Velappa the incarnation of Divine powers, arrived in Gogarbha Thirtha of Tirumala in 1913.

* * *

CHAPTER - 3

ARDENT PENANCE

Scaling the country, Bharath on foot, Velappa could have the first – hand knowledge of the predicament of people. Most of them were unlettered and as ignorant as animals. They never acquired wisdom because of non-availability of teachers and so they were prone to commit wrongs to the fellowmen roaming about as wild animals. While the recognition of the worth of a man that should be based on noble qualities, the hereditary element crept in for judging the traits of man in its stead. Pure thoughts and fine deeds are the yard – sticks of one’s worth or capacity. But they were totally ignored. The birth in a backward family was reckoned as one’s real low standard. Thus a worthy person of a lower caste was always looked down upon in the society.

Those were the days of freedom struggle. But few could digest the idea behind the self-rule. Though Independence became a reality it was restricted to political and materialistic realm. There was no spirituality attached to the great movement and so the materialistic attitude did not bring in complete meaning to swarajya. Dearth and disturbance reigned every where. There dwelled neither happiness nor peace in the country.

The analogy of the disturbed circumstances goes as mentioned here under:

A medicine gives good effect to a patient; but it is not for the strong. Ignorance is akin to a disease – prone person. He needs knowledge. The in-take of knowledge is like the intake of medicine. The Vedas dispel ignorance. Thus the disease is cured. Besides the acquisition of knowledge – the 3 R's of reading, writing and arithmetic – there should be the acquisition of spiritual practice. The real goal of human existence is to attain self – realisation or Moksha. The wise should putforth their efforts to do away with the hurdles that come in the way of clearing their path of deliverance.

Velappa thought of all this programme while he was roaming about the country. His ideals were really pure and great. Ends justify the means. We need tools to work out the ends or goals. Can a man who himself does not know swimming save a person from drowning in a pool of water? The ability to help humanity is a must. So we must first learn to help others. Mere talk about peace and happiness is a waste. The helper should attain the tranquility and the spiritual joy by means of constant practice. In order to enable himself for this self-less service alone did Velappa arrive in Gogarbhava cave for an ardent and austere penance.

Intent as he was on his goals, there emerged a shloka (a form of Sanskrit verse) from his heart of hearts as Velappa started his penance. The words were full of veneration to God.

*“Atheetha Vairagya makhanda bodhah
Kada nu mai sidhyathu, He’! Dayalo!
Samadhiyogasya parasya nishtha
Sarveshu bhootheshu samathva buddhihi!”*

“Oh! Compassionate Soul, my Lord, I long for thy sanction of the following qualities to be endowed with for me by your grace. I need complete renunciation from the worldly desires. I pine for wisdom. I want to attain the highest level of concentration to unite my soul with that of yours – the ‘yoga’. Grant me will power to attain yoga. Likewise I must be in a position to mete out equal treatment to all beings without any discrimination. Oh God! I am very curious. When will you grant me all those virtues?” Velappa prayed to God with welled up tears which drenched his heart completely.

He was all alone. With a single drapery on, he was a thoughtful pedestrian. He reached Gogarbhava and sat for penance. After meditation Velappa regularly visited Sri Venkateswara in the shrine. He went for alms to the village of Tirumala only once a day. Penance continued. He scantily felt the need of bhiksha asking for alms. He quotes :

“I presume that it is not wise on my part to go about the households like myriad alm-seekers of the temple land especially when I have made up my mind to be absorbed totally in severe penance. To obtain alms in such a busy place is an up-hill task. I have

renounced the home in search of finding the Truth. Instead, I began to search for food. It has become a problem, but to speak the truth it should not be like that. Reluctant to go anywhere for alms, I depended on the wet flour left off by the pilgrims as a part of offerings to their dead parents. I fended off this practice too later. Then I started picking up the left off cooked grain from the preparations meant for the holy offering – Naivedya, of Sri Venkateswara the deity. This satiated my hunger”.

People found him in a secluded cave of Gogarbha as a saint in meditation. They came to know that the saint hailed from Malayala Desa, Kerala and so they paid their reverence to him as ‘Malayala Swamy. This name stood in good stead and all the pilgrims sincerely visited him and he became popular as Malayala swamy.

In the serene atmosphere of Tirumala with the gentle breeze he could continue his spiritual practice of meditation least bothering about a timely meal. The setting of Gogarbha helped him to be an austere sadhaka or the practioner of tapasya.

Once it so happened that an acquaintance devotee of the swamy set apart some rolled up ball-like sweets filled in a mud-pot and said, “Please accept the sweets for your daily use”. The sweets were so relishing that they could disturb his meditation. That sweets – pot came in the way of his stead – fast penance. It lured his conscience. So the swamy emptied the pot by distributing the sweets to the beggars around his hut. This can be reckoned as the first phase of his penance.

The Realisation of God’s benevolence

It was the period when the devotees sporadically attended the cave of Gogarbha. One, by name Thiru Venkatacharya, a Vaishnavite used to feed him with the Prasada (holy offering to Venkateswara) at the temple. But the torrential rain inundated Gogarbha. It was impossible for him to attend the temple for three consecutive days. Terrible hunger made him sad. He repeated a shloka from a book ‘Shivananda Lahari’ rendered by Sree Shankaracharya of Advaita philosophy. He could not help bring to memory the recital of the shloka at that suitable juncture. It said :

“Smritou shastre vaidye shakuna kavithagana phanithou

Purane mantre va stutinatana hasyeshwachcha chaturah!

Katham Ragnam preetirbhavati mayi? Kohum pashupathe?

Pashum mam Sarvagna! Prathitha Kripaya palaya vibho!”

I am not adept in vedic religious arts like Smriti, Shastra, Vaidya, knowledge of omens, the employee, singing of hymns by composing them, the knowledge of myth, the science of mantra (powerful spell), saying of true prayers, dance in the praise of God, the art of humour and the like. How can I win the favour of the Lord? Oh God! You are entitled Pashupathi, the protector of dumb animals. Who am I to please you?

You are the knower of All the things! I am dull. I am a laggard. I am an animal in human form. Kindly protect me as you do voluntarily come to the rescue of the animals. Save me, Lord, save me!”

Swamy repeated the Sanskrit poem from his memory exactly at 3 p.m. A gate keeper of Lord Venkateswara in the temple was in a siesta after a heavy meal. The Lord appeared in his dream and ordered the “Sharabu”; “Find my devotee in his place and hand over to him a sumptuous food”. Verily, in the choultry raised by a Mysore devotee, the pilgrims there performed a sanctified celebration called ‘Upanayanam’, the ritual of baptism by giving the sacred thread to a young man to enable him to perform worship of the Lord. So the devotee “sharabu” passed over the pack of the food picked up from the choultry to the other side of the bank across the flowing water. He tied the pack to a lengthy bamboo stick at the other end and asked the swamy to catch hold of it stealthily. This was a predicament. God comes to the help of the devotees at such helpless moments. Swamy witnessed the benign succour of God practically.

Every thing was going on according to God’s plan. One, Ramalakshmanadas the younger brother of the temple head known as Mahanthu the chief of the employees began preparing food for the swamy at the hermitage. Rising from meditation swamy would walk to the ‘matha’ for a meal regularly. Absorbed in meditation he was late for the meal one day at sunset.

The inmates of the hermitage who were assigned the work of cooking food, spoke annoyingly having been impatient at swamy’s late coming. The swamy could not bear with the careless attitude of the persons. He said to himself with a firm conviction in these words : “It doesn’t matter much. My God will surely send me my meal. That will be acceptable to me. In case it is not sent, I shall go on without food, maintaining ‘Upavaasa Deeksha’. He adamantly sat up in the cave of Gogarbha.

The next day came the result. A devotee who visited Tirupati made up his mind to offer food to swamy as a sacred offering, Bhiksha. All along he went to Gogarbha, prepared there food afresh and waited for the swamy till the sunset. There appeared swamy emerging from the cave. The devotee was delighted to see him, paid his obeisance to the swamy and beseeched him to accept his offer. Swamyji with welled up tears at this providential offer remembered the promise of the Lord that he would quench the desires of the devotees who depend upon ‘None other than He.’ They will get whatever they look for. He accepted the meal. It was a good beginning. Thereafter many devotees made it compulsory to have the darshan of Gogarbha and the cave over there. Swamy was so immersed in meditation that the devotees had to wait till dusk when the wild animals prowl. Scared of the animals emerging from the forest, the devotees would tie up their offerings to branches of trees that stood near the cave and leave.

Swamy's popularity soon spread far and wide. He granted the pilgrims his darshan. He delivered messages in halting Telugu (for he knew Malayalam well). Thence it has become the part and parcel of the pilgrimage to Tirumala to have a darshan of the Malayala Sadguru, Velappa.

As a further development that went on unasked for, the devotees could afford to raise a straw thatched hut for the Sadguru. He would sit up for a prolonged meditation in it. He recited the powerful chantings from the Vedas called the 'Divya Mantras'. He sat repeating the Vedic adages called 'Vakyas' as a part of Nididhyasanamu and his life went on peacefully.

The Sadguru now began to roam about holy places yet remaining uncovered. Tumburu Teertha, Sanakasananda Teertha, Kumaradhara Teertha, Ramakrishna Teertha, Sri Vaikuntha Teertha were a few among them. He stayed for some period at those places and continued his penance. Tumburu Teertha is famous in the annals of the history of devotees. A majestic devotee Tarigonda Vengamamba, lady saint and bard got self-realisation at this place. The swamy has put on record that the place was the most serene one. He too could experience the vision of his own self at that historic place.

The manifestation of his vision of self can be quoted with the happening that occurred soon after. One day the Sadguru was on his way to take a bath in Tumburu Teertha. There appeared a live tiger in his

close proximity. His thought went on to see the tiger in the form of the Lord. "Oh! Lord", said he "Definitely You, the all pervading Lord appeared before me. You are the tiger. If you feel that this mortal coil, the body of mine, is destined to do good to the people around, you will relinquish me to them. Otherwise I am ready here to become your food. Please, eat me as your prey to satisfy your hunger. So saying he stood undeterred before the tiger praying to God! The tiger stared at the swamy and made his retreat in the opposite direction.

In yet another instance, a leopard came there to quench his thirst. The devotees around were terrified to the core. They wanted to chase the leopard away, scared they were of a threat of their lives. The Sadguru saw the Lord in the wild animal and warded off the ill will. He said, "These forest areas are His. We reside in His land. We have no right to see him off from here. Please don't chase Him. Meanwhile the leopard satiated his thirst and left the place with a roar while returning.

The Sadguru, in Sanakasanandana Teertha, was offered Bhiksha, the neatly prepared meal – offer, by myriad devotees on pilgrimage. He was full of introspection. He said to himself, "The places are holy no doubt, but I am afraid, I get the advantage in the name of the place. Do I deserve to take the offerings? It might be the sanctity of the place. On the other hand I must get the same bhiksha even if I dwell elsewhere". Saying so the Sadguru entered the thick forest of the

Tumbur Teertha. There appeared some devotees. They were on their way to Sanakasanandana Teertha. They thought that the saint could be seen there in that Teertha. They lost their way. They were now in Tumburu forest. They found a saintly figure and requested him to direct them to the place of the swamy. Later in further conversation they knew that the swamy was Malayala Sadguru himself. With the food stuff they were carrying for Swamy's bhiksha, they prepared it sprucely there and offered bhiksha to Malayala Swamy. The swamy had umpteen examples of such an order.

Penance under Prying Eyes

The place was Sanakasanandana Teertha. The swamy was still under penance. An inquisitive visitor hurled a volley of questions. The swamy answered them all.

Q1. Swamy, why do you continue penance here in this secluded area? Is it for His darshan?

Ans : Gentleman, I am not performing penance to be face to face with the Lord. The Lord granted his appearance to myriad devotees in the past. He as a Universe – statured preceptor gave messages. We find them all in our religious scriptures like Bhagavad Gita. They are ready for our perusal. There is nothing new the Lord can convey us appearing before us again.

Q2. Is it for deliverance?

Ans : Deliverance is in-built for every soul. We are not under bondage. So we need not pine for liberation.

Q3. What other benefits form your cherished goals?

Ans : I do not have the idea of other benefits. I found my Atman. No other desire is as great as self-realisation. So the question of other desires or benefits does not arise.

But I strongly desire to be away from a sort of fear. I beseech God to empower me to get rid of that fear. All people desire to be away from the return to this land. They do not like a re-birth. But there is every possibility of escaping from the re-birth cycle as a reward for penance. On the contrary, I pray to God to grant me re-birth. I ask for relentless darshan of the Lord. I should do away with the obstacles of persons in coming nearer to godhood. For this I need energy from the Lord to help them achieve their goals. Deliverance of a single individual is not significant. I should work towards the attainment of a goal. That is to alleviate persons from the state of their ignorance. Their hearts must be made pure. Discrimination should be put to an end. The annihilation of discrimination is itself the deliverance. The Universal soul dwells in every soul. This realisation is a step forward for deliverance. For explanation of this spirit alone, I need another birth. People seem differently moving about. They do so on the basis of their original temperament. They look different when they take up a particular action or karma. Guna and Karma are not real. All beings have the same goal of happiness. We should not come in the way of

this common goal, the happiness and safe existence of others. Sin enters in so doing. I want to live for achieving success in my teachings this way.

Reformation Movement

Swamy one day pitied the children of the beggars. Their life was away from the happiness that their counterparts in well-to-do families enjoy. He wanted to help them. He shared his opinion with the temple employee Ramlakhan Das. The temple authorities conceded to the proposal and opened a night – school in the Veyikalla Mandapam on the temple premises. Two teachers were allotted to educate the wards of the beggars. They provided for them food from the temple’s provision. Slates, slate pencils, text books, uniform and other necessities were also supplied as a mark of charity. They framed certain disciplinary principles too. But the children could not follow the schedule and the discipline and so they abstained from the attendance of school.

Swamy tried this again at a place in Gogarbha area. Now the swamy himself was the teacher of the small school meant for poor children of the begging parents. The children could not follow the rules and took to the easy way of begging like their parents, instead. With this, the reformatory measure turned a failure. But it flourished while the swamy resided at Vyasashram of Yerpedu.

The Seat of Kotambedu

Kotambedu is a village of Venkatagiri taluk of Nellore district. Cholera was rampant over the area. Out of fear people vacated the village. Some of them visited Tirumala and prayed to the swamy to help them wean away from the crisis. Swamy readily agreed and went there. He cleansed a dilapidated temple and stayed on the premises for a week. People got rid of the effect of cholera. His presence there brought in appeasement of the malady. Swami came back to Tirumala.

Yet another time did the villagers approach Swamy with the request. This time their cattle were the victims. They suffered from a hideous disease which resulted in death of animals en masse. The villagers sought his directions. This time swamy asked the villagers to repair the Rama Mandir in ruins. They bent their sinews in this aspect and made the temple useful for their prayers. They also erected a humble house on the banks of the village tank for the sojourn of the swamy. This very construction became famous in due course as a ‘seat of Kotambedu’ or ‘Kotambedu Matha’. Thus the credit of setting up a ‘matha’ in the name of the swamy goes to the then villagers of Kotambedu.

Publication of ‘Sushka Vedanta Tamobhaskaram’

Swamyji gradually gained ground in the use of Telugu language. He began to dispel the doubts of spiritual field in Telugu language. A host of pilgrims used to approach the swamy.

Those days the philosophers of half knowledge tried to exploit the faith of the innocent devotees. On the other hand some others called themselves the spiritual preceptors of ancient culture of Bharath. They advocated that women folk had no right of practicing brahma vidya or the spiritual pursuance of rituals. Other than the Brahmin communities were also deprived of their right to go with the tide. This false belief had strong roots from the past immemorial times. So, the common man was kept away from the access to know the self.

In order to ward off this social injustice and to ameliorate the conditions of the common run of mortals, Swamyji authored a book entitled “Shushka Vedanta Tamo Bhaskaram” in 1919. It was written in conversational genre, the conversation between a preceptor and a disciple. The author vehemently condemned the then prevailing superstitious practices and foul deeds. He discussed the issues supporting the narration with the principles from the authentic scriptures. He followed convincing rationale in explaining the issues. As he did not obtain copy right for the volume, the rendering was published by many a publisher. The readers of the book realised the acumen of the author and the art of enunciation and paid their respects to the author. Even today the book is the crown of Telugu literature of spiritual discourse for the practitioners of self realisation. The book was also reckoned as a guide for social reform movement.

So it was translated into other languages like Hindi and English. All the Sadhakas thought that the principles were worth assimilating.

As Swamy’s popularity became all pervading, a battalion of disciples hovered round the Guru.

Swamyji also penned the valuable books like ‘Sri Venkateshadi Pooja Pancharatnamala’ and ‘Dhyanamritam’ during his stay in Gogarbha. He, in his books cautioned the promoters of caste and creed which have been linked with people’s birth. He pooh-pooed the followers of the age-old dharma called ‘Sanathana Dharma’ for their discrimination. ‘The caste has a direct connection with the temperament of a person, but not with one’s birth’, asserted Swamyji. He further said, “People did not have the opportunity to pursue the techniques of service or Vidya based on the compatibility of their abilities. Birth was to be the yard-stick for pursuance of knowledge. As a result the sub-continent Bharath has been subdued by the foreigners. India is rich in its material wealth and resources. The records show that ‘want’ was no more a problem with the presence of Kalpa Vriksha; the fulfilment of desires were at its height with the presence of Kamadhenu the holy-cow, and the natural resources were aplenty as replete this land was with valuable diamonds like ‘Chintamani’. From the highest snow hills of the Himalayas in the north to right, up to the feet of the Indian Ocean in the South, Bharath attracted the attention of the world countries.

With all these noble ideology of the swamyji, people were led towards embellishment in self-aggrandisement.

Supine Apathy – Divine Intuition

Swamyji, spent nine long years in ardent penance but the spiritual serenity common to the penance was conspicuous by its absence. This revelation made him totally despondent. The despair turned into supine apathy towards self realisation. He longed for attainment of it within three more days to come. He determined to leave his mortal coils in case he could not succeed. So he abandoned the in-take of food and never willed to get the wink of an eye.

Intuitively, he heard a voice which said, “The fixture of search of ‘Brahma’ for complete twelve years alone can make one fit for self-realisation”. He treated the words as those of the Lord God.

Swamyji maintained strict practice for the remaining three years. At the end of the stipulated period he got a Godly Message. One cannot depict the unique status of self-realisation. He conveyed the followers that the austerity for 12 years alone can ensure self-realisation. “While in this period of austerity”, said swamyji, unperturbed and immaculate self confidence reigns. The self-confidence can dictate a great mountain to move about thence and the latter cannot help follow the dicta. He stated about his experience to make it clear to others with the simile stated above.

Swamy at the Foot of the Hill

Swamyji spent twelve years in Tirumala. He contributed his might and main to the spread of Dharma. His clarion call worked wonders for social change. But the orthodox religious heads vied him. Nay, they were on fire of anger. They became swamy’s bitter enemies. A causus of antagonists complained against the swamy to the head of the Temple authority, ‘Mahantu’ the chief. The latter was prompted wrongly, and yielded to their pressure. The accusations they had plotted were varied and many in number. The false propaganda was responsible for the wrong step by the ‘Mahantu’.

On the other hand swamy was aware of the developments. He thought the welfare activities and reforms are the bitter pills for Tirumala. He surrendered completely to God’s will.

Swamy’s advent at the foot of Tirumala was welcomed by his followers and disciples. They searched for a suitable place for swamy’s intended stay. They earmarked a vast place lying in the lap of Tirupati and Sree Kala Hasti pilgrimage centres. It was called Yerpedu region. The principal place selected was the area of Kashibugga. The devotees were unanimous in their selection of the spot.

In the mean time swamy was in receipt of an official order from the Mahantu who rectified his earlier orders. Swamyji was invited to have his dwelling at the north

of the 'Pushkarini' in the orchard. He apologetically stated that it was decided by the panel not to allow saints at Gogarbham as it was a pilgrim centre as well.

Denying the offer the swamy descended the hill of Tirumala accompanied by his disciples on 3-6-1926. Swamyji was so grateful to Lord Venkateswara that he turned back and said, "Oh Lord Sri Venkateswara! It was your compassion to have granted this place and ordained me to stay here for these long years. With your order for the retreat we take leave of your kind arms that held us". The devotees of Tirupati at the foot of the hill, at Kapilatirta welcomed swamyji on his way to Kashibugga. He reached the place in the evening.

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CHAPTER - 4

VYASASHRAMAM

The very day swamyji stepped into Kashibugga, is the auspicious day of the establishment of 'Vyasashramam'. It was named after the sage Vyasa Bhagawan. Vyasa is the composer and author of the Mahabharatha and other epics to his credit. He is venerated as the incarnation of Sriman Narayana. We can easily perceive the inner meaning compatible to the activities of the ashram.

The devotees raised a hut to the northern direction of the place. This abode is now meant for worship. Another 'kuteera' was also built for the swamy to sit for meditation. This dwelling is the Gurudeva's holy seat. The precincts, once a thick forest were transformed into a scenic beauty of an ashram. Time reaps wonders beyond one's expectations!

In order to avoid encroachments and land – right's problems one Sri Kumara Venkatalingama Nayiningaru was instrumental in getting the premises registered in the name of Swamyji. He was the administrator of Srikalahasti.

People knew about the tiding of installation of an ashram at Yerpedu and paid pious visit to it in troops. They had the darshan of Malayalaswamy and poured out presents and money, the collection of which was used for the management of the ashram. The Brahmin

‘agraharas’ or the assigned lands were purchased at their will and were added to the property of the ashram. They were so vast to be called hamlet.

Prevention of Animal Sacrifice

There stood a small temple dedicated to the deity of necromancy, the shakti, to whom there was a practice to sacrifice animals for gaining the favour of the goddess. It was situated to the east of Kashibugga, under an olive tree. The swamy sent the villagers a message to abandon animal sacrifice. But it fell on deaf ears. Some villagers ventured to continue the foul practice, against the wishes of the swamyji.

The disciples once visited the place of sacrifice, and said to the people who were ready to kill animals, “Dear elders, our master wishes that there would not be animal sacrifice any more. If you deny his wish come and cut our throats out with your knives and axes and offer the bodies to the deity as “prasada”. So saying they stretched their necks on to the wooden anvil for cutting, bending themselves before the altar. From that moment onwards the superstitious sacrifice was fended off. Swamyji also advocated that vegetarianism is preferable to meat – eating – the non-vegetarianism. He preached the value of non-violence. As a result most of them turned into vegetarians. But some misunderstood the idea and argued that it is the soul, atman which does not stick to one’s karma. So, meat – eaters and killers of animals are not actually the wrong persons and sinners. They are metaphysical in

their contention but they could not dare the presence of the swamyji. The swamy’s very perception was so terrible as the appearance of a lion in the dream of even a huge animal elephant.

III Effects of Planets dispelled – ‘a cure’

The planets at times have an adverse effect on the psyche. They call the disorders planetary diseases. The swamy wills that the sufferer may become free from his suffering with his yogic concentration at hand. The swamyji thus could make many a disease subside at his will even while he was in Gogarbha. This therapy continued at Vyasashram too. But the swamyji never desired his yogic power to use it for the cure of timely diseases. It seemed to the swamy a minor help. The body is subjected to death. But the swamy wanted to brighten the lives of people by indicating them to lead a pious life. Man will thus be elevated permanently. So he willed that his prowess of cure might be abandoned. His firm decision totally stopped the influx of the sick people at the ashram. The ashram became a seat for the seekers after divinity and the inquisitive souls.

Yadirtha Bharathi

A journal or magazine is a must for spreading spirituality among the human souls. The other journals of those days lacked this spirit to be given to understanding. So swamyji thought that besides newspapers and other journals, there was a necessity of a spiritual monthly to be launched.

Swamiji advocated for regular columns set apart for spirituality in every newspaper. His letters to the editors with regard to the proposal were scantily attended to. Having found no response from them, he made up his mind to start a monthly magazine from his ashram itself. His appeal went on as follows :

“My dear brothers and sisters spiritual entities and enthusiasts! I wish that you will receive the kindness of God Almighty. We are goaded by sinful attitudes. Sinful life is like a fire of unsatiety. It needs the rain to relinquish and put out for ever. God’s benevolence is such a rain. We should long for it. By the divine grace alone can we become human beings of tranquil hearts. Peace reigns on us then and there alone. This is possible through spiritual practice. No doubt, there are a few monthlies, fortnightlies, weeklies and dailies in our Andhra Pradesh, but scantily do they refer to spiritual subjects. The reference is sporadic and the frequency is tantamount to a zero. The dearth is clearly felt. So I would like to enlist your cooperation in bringing out a Telugu Spiritual Monthly Magazine ‘Yadartha Bharathi’ from this ashram”. This appeal appeared in February 1927 number of Yadartha Bharathi. A number of people enlisted as permanent patrons while others contributed everything required for the perennial publication. The magazine was intent on spreading the theme of Karma, the action; Bhakthi, devotion, Dhyana, meditation and Jnana, seeking of the Truth. It established affinity among people of devotion towards God. People were attracted towards

the noble goals of swamyji. Swamyji’s own series of essays later appeared as volumes which could bring in an unparalleled spiritual movement of remarkable stature.

A Conference on Vedic Enlightenment

Those were the days when saintly associations were conspicuous by their absence in Andhra Pradesh. Swamyji wanted to fill the gap.

At the instance of swamyji the devotees assembled in the ashram and established a society called “Mission for the preservation and promotion of Sanatana Dharma”. On the tenth day of its existence the body met at Palachuru of Srikalahasti taluk. We find swamy’s words on that occasion :

“Sisters and brothers of pure soul and clear wisdom! Vandanas! This service mission is ten days old. We are now in the company of purified souls of virtue, and righteous conduct, both the ladies and gentlemen. Andhra Pradesh is galore with Sadhus of high order in knowledge of self. They do not fall in as a congregation. In this vast country people are philanthropic and god loving. But an association of Sadhus has not yet been materialised. This seems a wide gap because they are dispersed. We have to bring co-ordination among them. The Divya Jnana Sangha along with other societies do promote amelioration of the conditions of needy people. We too should serve others to our utmost capabilities. Soul should not be

bound within. It should be free. The realisation of soul is a flower high in the sky for many. Here and now we should work for the liberation of the souls by untying their chains of ignorance. By all means we should be ready for the welfare of the people. It is as much significant as the service to God. ‘Service to man is service to God’. Myriads of men of action stand as examples for us. So, I would like you to resolve as to what aspects have to be stressed for this selfless service”.

Accordingly, the participants passed resolutions and undertook to do constructive work to that effect.

Many men, many minds! It so happened that some devotees visited swamyji at Gogarbha. He was engrossed in penance. They chanced to see him here in the ashram advocating constructive work by running schools, magazines and conferences. Thus the swamy is wedded to the materialistic achievements. “Is not it a drift from the great heights of spirituality?!” they thought.

Humanitarian Service Emphasized

A grape wine or criticism did not go unheard by the swamyji. He spoke out in clear terms about it in a conference held in Aravapalem village in April 1928. His address to the devotees dispelled the doubt.

“People loved me when I turned my face and kept everything behind, out of vexation. Now that I am in the service of humanity their faith dwindled. But I feel

that this phase of my shift is superb. It is filled with the attempt to pay for the society its due. It alone is of saintly quality. What I did earlier alone was the preparation for the service to humanity that I took up at present. My previous exercise made me fit enough to render my service to humanity”.

Giving priority to Vedic dharma he guarded himself against hatred of other religions and conducted the conferences every year striving for co-ordination of different religions. The one celebrated in Pamarru of Krishna district was distinct among them. He went to say “Sanatana Dharma or Vedic austerity implies assistance to others in attaining advancement of their souls towards realisation, but it does not even think of coming in for the rescue of others. Live and let – live policy in religious arena is what is known as Sanathana Dharma.

It is better to achieve duality. Listen to the essence of Upanishads. On the other hand do not forget to listen to the melancholy of the deprived classes. Strive for its solution instead. Have a clear perception of Brahma but don’t shut your eyes on the difficulties of the have – nots. Collect, using one hand, the material wealth but be curious to part with it for the sake of others with the other hand. Exert one leg of yours to fetch knowledge and wisdom running and use the other leg to go on to distribute and disseminate the funds among other people. This is true penance. This is the motto of tradition of rishis. It alone is Sanatana Dharma. Please beware of the duality’.

Rajahmundry Congregation

The fourth conference of Vedanta was held in Nellaturu of Nellore district. The next significant one is that which was held in Rajahmundry city in the year 1931. It was attended by several prominent figures like Sadhumatha of Veerabhadrapuram and her women – disciples besides the devotees' societies, Sri Pada Krishna Murthy Shastri the Kavi Saarvabhauma and Maharaja Nyayapathi Subba Rao Pantulu.

Sri Sripada does not show the signs of much respect towards the swamy. His organization of the gala gathering and the message delivered by him enthralled the bard and generated veneration towards the swamyji. He became one of the swamy's devotees. Enormously impressed as he was with the charisma of the swamy, he composed a set of five poems of prosody called 'Pancha Ratna' and sang to him prostrating publicly before him with reverence. In his composition he extolled him as them modern Vyasa and the incarnation of Adi Shankaracharya, the exponent of Advaita philosophy.

In the conference that was held in Poduru, Sripada Krishnamurthy was in the chair to conduct the proceedings. In his speech he had all praise for swamyji. He said, "God re-appears in various forms and incarnations with an eye to promote deliverance to people. The ignorant people fail to identify them as great souls do and so they undergo unending troubles. But the wise can realise the greatness of such mahatmas

and dwell according to their directions, offer service to them and liberate themselves. Earlier, I did not recognise the prowess of swamyji but having heard his discourse at Rajahmundry meet, I was enamoured with devotion. It was an extraordinary transformation. Then I composed a certain shlokas extolling his greatness and worth. I have been visualising progress in my veneration towards him. Like Sri Adi Shankara the swamy hails from the same holy land Malayala Desa and exactly dwelling in His foot steps swamyji also spreads Advaita philosophy far and wide. This age needs his advent.

'Sanatana Dharma Paripalana Seva Samajam', the rejuvenation of ancient spiritual spirit and its propagation mission, along with the conferences held by them for ten times at several places, emerged as Sanatana Vedanta Jnana Sabhas thereafter.

A day's full session of such sabhas were managed by women devotees under the orders of the swamyji. They delivered their speeches too in the sessions of the day. Such was the concern shown by swamyji towards women. This precedent is being followed in the sabhas un-interruptedly till date.

Emergence of a Sanskrit School

Swamyji's core curriculum of universal service – the spread of Sanskrit knowledge, forms an integral part of his mission. The ashram premises have been propagating Sanskrit language from the popular Sanskrit school. Kanya gurukula meant for girls too

imparts education in Sanskrit to hundreds of children. The ashram's Sanskrit centre was started in 1928. The contribution of the devotees is praiseworthy.

We find a valuable discourse of Swamyji in the July, 1929 edition of 'Yadartha Bharathi' magazine. It pertains to the prominent role of Sanskrit in achieving universal well being. The swamy elaborates the idea in the following words :

“Oh! My dear brothers and sisters whose knowledge is pure, whose hearts are full of sympathy, on whom peace reigns, and who are the embodiment of devotion! There is an adage that a man without knowledge is akin to an animal. This principle came to us as part of the teachings of rishis, the great sages of our ancient Bharath. This forms of divine clarion-call. The renown philosophers say that we belong to the clan of Aryans and that our principal language is Sanskrit. In various dialects we do find Sanskrit words. This is true and those who have not studied Sanskrit also use them. In their oral dealings they use Sanskrit words with a clear pronunciation. All the Indian religious scriptures teach through Sanskrit medium. If this medium is left off, our religion, I fear will disappear. Resultantly spiritual wisdom dwindles. It will gradually become jeopardised. This in turn changes 'man' (human beings) into animals, strange as they seem having two legs instead of four legs common to ordinary animals in nature. So, it is our duty to protect and develop Sanskrit language. Only in the development

of this language lies our successful efforts to promote swarajya, the independent existence, with our heads high. The other realm of swaarajya which refers to our spiritual progress is possible through Sanskrit language.

There was a rumour that the Brahmins were reluctant to teach Sanskrit to other classes, though the latter realise that learning of Sanskrit entails their progress. Why don't the disgruntled non-brahmin classes study Sanskrit? Words and deeds must match to establish the truth. Mere criticism without a base is a waste in itself. Now, the Brahmins say in unison, “Oh! Brothers and sisters, do come and learn Sanskrit. We are waiting for your will to learn it. But the so called other classes do not seem to have shed their lethargy. They are in a swoon of ignorance. Why does this happen? Have we to blame the Brahmins? Is it the supine apathy of the other classes towards Sanskrit instead? Please focus your attention towards the issue. This Ashram of Yerpedu is functioning in the name of Divine Rishi Vyasa Bhagwan – I mean this Vyasashrama. The ashram invites you. There is a Sanskrit school functioning here. There is a willing admittance for all into it. Irrespective of your background in social strata the Sanskrit school admits you without any discrimination. There is a sea-change these days. Hitherto people were saying “Get away! You are not eligible to pursue Sanskrit”. The scene has changed now. “People, please come! Come along! You are very much entitled to learn and you can learn it”. The changed voice is very sweet to our ears indeed! It is a

feast to our ears. The time is ripe. Don't waste the time which forms part of Divine will.

Swamy's Hermitage

The year 1936 is magnanimously significant in Swamyji's life story. He achieved 'Atma Sanyasa' long back. Actually he can be called the yogi, who got coronation unto Atma Sanyasa Samrajya. He used to be clad in white khadi, the hand spun and hand woven cloth. He took up Turiyashrama in February that year.

According to Swamyji, the setting apart soul and its study, Atma Sanyasa is more important than the Deha Sanyasa, the relinquishing of the body. Some people do not attain atmasanyasa like that of Swamyji who attained it in yester years. Without such a background on the part of some they cannot be called the 'Practitioners of Deha Sanyasa'. Such a condition becomes ridiculous. So swamyji did not give prominence to Deha Sanyasa at that juncture.

There arose a predicament. Swamyji's disciples were disallowed to pursue their higher studies in scriptural discipline though they attended some such educational centres like Kashi and other places. Swamyji should keep up Sanyasa Deeksha. Sanyasa forms the last stage of spiritual discipline or ashrama chatustaya – Brahmacharya, Garhastya, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. Otherwise his sishyas (disciples) had to seek the discipleship of other gurus.

There was a mounting pressure from the side of his disciples. The swamy did not want to come in the way of the progress of his disciples. He strove for the embellishment of their 'self'. With this pious intention the swamy entered Turiyashrama, the last stage of the four noted ashramas or 'stages spiritual' in February 1936.

The deeksha was conferred on the swamy by Paramatmananda Mandaleshwaropdhyaksha Sri Sri Sri Shankarananda Yathivarya, on 2-2-1936, after due procedures related to it.

Swamyji adopted Giri tradition of Sanyasas and was named 'Sri Asangananda Giri Swamy. But this name did not get coinage. The name 'Malayala Swamy' is evergreen till date. To cap it all, Swamyji himself scribbled his name as "Malayala Swamy", while affixing his signature.

* * *

CHAPTER - 5

PROPAGATION OF DIVINE ENLIGHTENMENT

On the full moon day of every year of Telugu calendar, Swamyji initiate conferences on Sanatana Dharma. It is followed by the visit to different places in order to conduct 'Ekahas', the celebrations divine for one day, a ritual; 'Saptahas' that went on for a week, and 'Omkaara Satra Yagas' – all intended to pray to God for the well-being of all besides the continuation of spiritual practices.

Face to Face with Mahatma Gandhi

There came into existence a few branches established and sponsored by Vyasashram. The swamyji paid scant attention to Vedanta sans practical utility called 'Shushka Vedanta'. He could call on Mahatma Gandhi while in such a programme in Bandar. Gandhiji stayed there as part of Freedom struggle. The two Mahatmas met in the residence of Dr. Bhoga Raju Pattabhi Seetha Ramaiah. Gandhiji advocated for Swaarajya or rule by its people as against a foreign authority. Swamyji went further to say that there is another stage of 'Swaarajya' the liberation from material pleasures. We should try to attain this too. With spiritual pursuit alone can we be happy and peaceful. Gandhiji was apprised of the social welfare activities of Vyasashram. He expressed his satisfaction praising

swamyji's services. Gandhiji acclaimed the swamyji as an incarnation of Divine Grace.

Surrender of Opponents as Disciples

It was in Krishna district that Swamyji held Vedanta congregation under the usual banner 'Sanatana Vedanta Sabha' in 1936. The devotees thronged the place in such a manner as if the water flows to an ocean automatically. Swamyji was on cloud seven. He spoke to the volunteers and the disciples who conducted the conference in an apt manner.

"The soulful dear villagers of Unguturu, brothers and sisters! I am aware of your enormous devotion and attention towards me. The participants of this conference are our guests. I wish that you would show the self same reverence to them also. This will be the real tribute to me".

Verily, being true to the spirit and swamyji's opinion, the villagers offered the participants a remarkable hospitality as if they all were the close relatives their kith and kin.

Gods' ways are mysterious! An untoward incident took place there at the conference. One villager from Telaprolu, Aarumalla Subba Reddy, a Youngman, descended there along with hundreds of his followers. He resorted to an attack of the swamyji. He questioned his authenticity of holding the conference. He spoke out that such fake swamys' are bent upon exploiting

the people who are innocent. This hypocracy of sadhus reaps insult on humanity. How come, these thousands of people attend the conference to listen to this mad man taking him as a sadhu. These unreal saints hatch such tricks just for their existence. It is a vile treachery'. He uttered these words amidst a volley of abuses. He led the opposition – gangs and carried out processions against the smooth conduct of the proceedings. To top it all, he distributed the copies of an infamous book let entitled 'Kalikala Vedantam', the metaphysics of the period of Kali's reign – 'Kalikala'. He did it in the presence of the swamyji.

Swamyji remained unperturbed. People were the witnesses, of this havoc. They turned against the antagonist villain. They showed their red-hot annoyance. But they did not retaliate them with a practice attack convinced of the thoughts of the Swamyji. It rained cats and dogs at the conference so to say but the trouble maker went on his way.

The very wild chaser touched the feet of swamyji lying prostrated on the ground. He prayed for forgiveness repenting for his folly. The bitter enemy transformed into a close devotee of swamyji, by playing the role of an organiser of myriad such meets that went on later.

The same Subba Reddy later in 1950 composed a volume entitled 'Asangananda Gautama Buddhulu' comparing swamyji to Lord Buddha, the founder of Buddhist order. Here is an excerpt from the book.

“Sri Asangananda Buddha's forgiveness pours out through pages and emerges as an epic in itself if I try to justify his ways to humanity. He is an epitome of Buddha. The ancient prophet Buddha forgave a hypocrite Chandu. Chandu invited Buddha for offering him the Bhiksha or the sacred offering of food to the mendicant. Buddha is the founder father of Ahimsa, the non-violence. But the host offered the monk the meat preparation of a pig's dead body. Strangely enough Buddha let him go with forbearance of an uncommon sort. Our swamyji is as great as Buddha. It forms his routine to let off sinners with great benevolence. He brings them closer to him as well. So is the case with this Asanganandaswamy! People turn against the swamy. Renouncing ashram, they bend on false propaganda against him. Thus they ought to be abandoned and to be thrown to the nether worlds, Adholoka. But Swamyji instead of cursing them he endears them and enables them to mend their ways for good. Umpteen are the instances that can be quoted.

He further wrote : “I am the eye witness of such an incident. There was one devotee who served swamyji pleasing him with sincere services for many a day. But he quit the ashram, unluckily became the antagonist of swamyji by criticising him in his false propaganda. He realised his down fall only to repent and touch the feet of Swamy with remorse and repentance. I also saw swamyji who hug him endearingly smiling and conducted a ritual of 'prayaschita' the repentant ordeal. This happened in the precincts of Vyasashram. I myself

was in touch with a thief, who was vexed with his foul deeds continued for a long period in the past. Lucky indeed is he to find refuge in Swamyji at the ashram. For the redemption of his sins Asangananda Swamyji as a corrective measure asked him to go on pilgrimage asking for alms as a beggar for three years to different places in a holy travel. It was in Thatiparthi, a village of Nellore district that I met him on one of his visits of remorse. The author confessed in the following words in his book :

“It looks still strange to me! In Ungutur Sanatana Sabha of 1936, I went against the dicta of Swamyji followed as I was by hundreds of my gang men. I led opposition propaganda against Swamyji and agitation reaping a havoc there. Now, I stand at the feet of the Swamyji as his servant of servants by the year 1940. What a change! How has his forgiveness touched the zenith. This came as the living example.”

The same devotee Subba Reddy took to renunciation, and turned renowned as Samatvananda swamy. We can cite quite a number of cases of those who first rebelled against the swamy, only to realise his greatness later. All of them have been anointed as swamy's disciples.

Disarming a popular poet at a Confrontation

Omkaara Satra Yoga was performed in Donepudi, a village by the Krishna in 1940. Swamyji made speeches on elevation of one's atman to higher states by condemning the metaphysics and anti-vedic

propaganda. A certain group of people spread rumours against Swamyji. ‘The chances of falling are greater when you stand on the zenith!’ The wise and the ignorant began to take delight in listening to the unfair upbraidings regarding the swamyji. One Sri Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Chowdhry was no exception. He was known as Kaviraju, the poet of poets, of that period in the region. He yielded to their versions and determined to wage a war of words at the congregation. He took to his side a large group of listeners to his soap box oratory. On the other hand Swamyji was addressing another large gathering. The essence of the pretentious pandit's argument was that the Brahmin classes are hatching plans to hoodwink the ego of ordinary men only to establish their own suzerainty over masses. These opponents criticised swamy but dined at the Swamyjis charitable dining halls, meant for the performers of a ritual in the name of God.

The followers of Swamyji wanted to teach the opponents a lesson by sending them out of the premises even by using the power of muscle. But swamy warded off the danger. He said to them, “We are not here to harm others. Our programme will be organised by God Himself. Why should we oppose them when they crave for their own reasoning? Let the public expose themselves to the lecturers of their liking and choice.”

The disciples of swamy gathered some pieces of news. One among them was that Kotaiah, a Sadhu by

profession too was in the opposite group. He is reported to have composed a few poems and sang them in the meeting. Swamyji retorted, “Earlier people praised us and prepared pamphlets for distribution all in our favour. That attempt did not bring in any benefit all by itself. Now, we are being criticised. It does not deter us. We are what we are! By being abused by others the worth of a person will never diminish. ‘To-be or not to be’ are the same.” The worried disciples further complained saying, “Swamyji, that culprit has also got the poems published!” The swamyji quipped, “Let it be done. The press wallahs will find their livelihood. Opposition is not a taboo. A good enemy is better than a bad friend. We may know about our mistakes that way for our own alertness. We need the opposition party too, which keeps us cautious all through.”

Devils do not relish the Vedas! It so happened that at one night they set ablaze the Yagnashala where sacrificial offering – rites were being performed. But none was hurt in the fire accident. Swamyji was as cool as he was before. He did not resort to vengeance. This was a litmus test for his steadfastness. In Indian idiom the Swamyji has withstood amidst burning flames all around; this act was once used to test the innocence, popularly known from our scriptures.

The culmination of the foul deed faced a bitter experience. This time the women folk extradiated the gangs.

After storm there is calm! It was in 1951 a linguist and scholarly figure known as Sri Jonnalagadda Satyanarayana Murthy was enthralled by Swamyji’s spiritual discourse and said, “Sri Sadguru Swamy has been holding Vedic conferences one after the other in succession at various places in Andhra Desa in order to enlighten people. His clarion calls remind us of Lord Buddha. We see the Buddha in him.”

In his voluminous rendering ‘Maha Bhakta Vijaya’ a history of Divinely Great men, Swamyji had carved a prominent niche in it.

Practicing School for Divine Wisdom

On the premises of Vyasashrama, Swamyji opened a practicing school for spiritual education, in November 1945. The course design was so perfect that the most popular and useful books like Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, “The Yoga Darshana” by the saint Patanjali were prescribed as the textbooks. The school was open to all without a question of eligibility for admission. The age of the learners does not make any difference either. Men, women and children were drawn as the pupils. The school’s motto was to disseminate Divine Wisdom. Even sadhus joined it willingly. The vexed sadhus found solace here in this school. Some sadhus of Sanyasa ashram - stage too stayed here. Enthusiastic women folk irrespective of caste and creed continued their pursuation. On records, we find that the unlettered folks attained literacy and became adept at the recital of the Gita by word of mouth of their voice. Getting

by heart and recital without the aid of the text, marks the success of school curriculum. Education is that which is at the finger tips and which is ready to reveal.

The Message of Freedom Movement

Bharath emerged free in August 1947. Swamyji gave a message in these words :

“Last month we the Indians attained freedom. It is a good augur. The young and old alike participated in the celebrations enthusiastically. There were gala gatherings and speech – making. Some voluntary service bodies have performed the acts of charity. The wise hailed the advent of freedom. All these events are no doubt worthy of appraisal and stand to be good omens.

Bondage was a disease. We were all sick with the hideous ailment. Now we are away from the suffering. We are happy. But we must find out the reasons for the disease in order to take preventive measures. This is true with our freedom movement. We lost to foreign power just because of our disharmony. We scantily find notable compatibility and unity even among the people and the governing bodies. This is a known fact reiterated by us from time to time. To my mind there is yet another reason. The caste comes by birth, but professions should be based on the mental attitudes. The upper classes are always reckoned on the basis of heritage. But other classes should also be given the opportunity to render their services according to their capacities to do. The pursuance of epics and the Vedas

should be open to all. Like wise the warring classes should emerge from all who are able bodied and inclined to become soldiers. Physical and mental prowess should form the basis of vocations. Then alone can our mother country get rid of the devil which drags us to retrogression.

Observance of Chaturmasya Vrata

The disciples of swamyji implored him to conduct the observance of Chaturmasya Vrata. The swamy began it in 1948 in Krishna Lanka. The provinces of India were running a hard time at that moment. The Razakars of Nizam were on their atrocities. Having brooded on the predicament a few devotees wrote to the swamy to postpone the vratas. A congregation of thousands of people at one place was not thought of to be a worthy decision.

Swamyji replied, “In stopping the vratas we are joining hands with fear. We ought to be fearless! People take wrong signals in that case. While the millions of the household – women and children of Bejawada continue to reside, is it justified on our part to be terror stricken enough to fend off the spiritual programme? We sadhus are men of non-attachment. We are not expected to be frightened regarding injury to the body. The vrata is very sacred one. It was performed by the greatest sages of yore. It aims at world peace and universal welfare. Self – purification is its main objective. We are going to be blessed by the God Almighty and the all pervading entity sarveshwara and

our righteous maharshis will surely bless us. We need not be dubious about the performance of the vrata.”

Chaturmasya Vrata began on 6-7-1948. It went on for two months without interruption. Meanwhile Indian Union undertook a raid of the army men and subdued Razakars with a heavy hand. It also occupied Nizam’s kingdom, and added to the Indian Union. Chaturmasya prolonged its schedule without any hurdles. The observances were conducted in a smooth manner while worships and spiritual speeches were continued which led to development of the soul. The Swamyji was acclaimed as ‘Maharshi’ by his followers..!

Swamyji stood as a living example for a fight against inequality. He, in his ashram treated all castes and creeds on an equal plane. The Harijans or the segregated class of once untouchables recognised his yeoman service towards their existence on par with others in the ashram. They expressed their profound gratitude to swamyji.

Social Service

The proverb ‘good wine needs no bush’ is also true in the case of service organisations. They need no show off.

As usual, Swamyji carried out spiritual education campaign relentlessly. It was the year 1951. Rayalaseema was a drought prone area. Vyasashram is situated in Rayalaseema province. People were badly in need of appeasing their hunger. In Sarkar area

swamyji appeared holding Vedic classes. It annoyed a few prominent volunteers of Non-Government Organisation. They approached the Swamyji at work and stated, “Dear Sir, In this area of Rayalaseema people long for food. You give them teaching. Does it behave you to teach the hungry bellies? You had better gone there and stuck to social service, if you don’t mind! Coming to the rescue of the needy is part and parcel of Dharma or religious owe. Why don’t you do that?”

Swamyji had a ready answer with him. He said, My dear ones! Can you name a few social welfare organisations in active functioning in Rayalaseema?” They replied in the affirmative and said, “Dear Sir, There we find one such organization. It is run by a humanitarian society. It works day and night to supply millet and salt-salad to the hungry who appear in large numbers.”

“Is it?” said swamy “It is a satisfactory piece of news. The organisation you have mentioned just now is one of my service centres. The volunteers, are none other than our disciples.”

Sri Karunyananda swamy, Swamyji’s disciple was the executive head of the hunger camps. The inquisitive questioners were well aware of the operations. It was then their turn to repent at the volley of questions they hurled at Swamyji.

Co-ordination between Religion and Yoga

A visitor of Vyasashrama was confounded to learn that there were the portraits of all the prophets for exhibition there. Worship too was equally conducted for them. He was in total oblivion as to what religion did the Swamyji belong to.

In reply to his query swamy said with a poise, “My dear one! No doubt all the exponents of religions whom you see here are of bright ideas. The brilliance beyond their view point is responsible for different ideologies. That nameless and formless brightness is real wisdom. It is the wisdom of Gnana the enlightenment. It does not come under the sway of either Desa or Kala the place and the time. That is our religion”.

In the same way Swamyji proposed co-ordination among the four aspects – Karma, action, bhakti, devotion, jnana, knowledge and yoga, the union between soul and body. He called the karma, bhakti – jnana and yoga can be compared to the legs of a cow. “The cow cannot walk properly with an injury to any of its legs. For spiritual existence four of the above aspects should have exquisite co-ordination or harmony. Otherwise perfectness in spiritual realm cannot be accomplished.”

A Yuga, not a Barrier for Self Realisation

Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kali are the ages in the span of their calculated years and characteristics. We

are in Kaliyuga. All the three yugas above it are construed and proved hopeful of self-realisation. Swamyji denies the variation as far as human effort is concerned. The misconception about the trends of yugas has become the root cause of the forlorn condition of our land, Bharath. Superstitions ruled India. Only the populace who dwelled in Krita Yuga are not the only blessed beings. The sinful people in every yester yuga are as remorseful as those of Kaliyuga. The belief that Kaliyuga is destined to be sinful is a misnomer. The virtuous people of Kaliyuga are construed to be pious as those of Kritayuga, wherein the dharma was observed in full swing. Repeating the name ‘Kali’ many a times, people should not succumb to be cursed lots. The righteous attitude is still achievable. So we are the brethren of people of Kritayuga, here and now, but not the laggards provided, we strive for righteousness. The fame or blame attached to a particular yuga remains unattached to Time and Desa. We can elevate ourselves even living in Kaliyuga. Swamyji’s fight against despair enthused the devotees towards knowing the self and efforts for self realisation.

Swamy as an Author

Vyasashram stood as a repertoire of spiritual volumes. Swamyji’s efforts in this direction are unique. Yadartha Bharathi monthly published series of essays consecutively; as swiftly as the arrows that emanate from the bow of an adept archer. Swamyji facilitated for the publication of useful discourses. All these series

appeared in the form of books based on separate topics. Swabodhasudhakaram, Dharmasethuvu, Eeswarakripa, Prashnottara Malika and Upadesstamritam in four volumes and the like can be cited as examples.

A detailed commentary on the Gita was authored and released by the swamyji, in 1945. It was widely read as the one book penned earlier by the swamyji, the 'Shuska Vedanta Tamo Bhaskaram'. Apart from this Moola Gita, Sthoolakshara Gita. Tatparya Gita, Maha Bhagawad Gita were also released in various forms with an eye to enunciate, elaborate and expedite the principles of Dharma.

Besides theoretical propositions swamyji undertook to make use of fiction for moral upbringing of the readers. With this pious motto swamyji himself wove an imaginary life-story. Swamyji's biographical element is hinted at in it. Another fiction genre was dedicated to social reform stressing on the real concept Varna Vyavastha or the order of casteism. This book was endowed with the title 'Lokodharakam'. It serves as a handbook for the enthusiasts of social reform.

Swamyji wrote interpretations to Narada Bhakti Sutralu, Kathopanishad, Mundaka and Mandukyopanishads and got them published. Swamyji's another work 'Sri Malayala Yatindra Gita' contains eighteen cantos in Sanskrit prosody. It is a compendium of all the intended auspicious goals of swamyji himself. The other three books are swamyji's

discourses, essays, and 'Dharmopanyasamu' published along with the Gita.

For the Sanskrit renderings of Swamyji like 'Yoga Vaasishtam', 'Aatma Puranam', 'Anubhuthi Prakasham', 'Paatanjala Yoga Darshanam', 'Viveka Chudamani', 'Shankara Vijayam', 'Guru Gita' and 'Ashtavakra Gita'. There appeared explanations and commentaries on them by pandits in Telugu later.

The translations from other languages like 'Buddha Charya', 'Vedanta Balabodham were also published. The re-printed copies of 'Chandogyopanishad' 'Brihadaranyakopanishad', 'Dasabodha' and the like were brought to light as part of the preservation of Sanatana Dharma – a movement indeed. The practitioners are the beneficiaries of swamyji's efforts. The books written by his disciples like the one Sri Sayam Varadasu also gained wide popularity.

To cap it all, swamyji's noted works were translated into English and Hindi lately.

We find the foreword for 'Anubhuti Prakasha' in the words of a scholar of repute Sri Bankupalli Mallaiiah Shastry – who also translated the book extolling the pious endeavours of Swamyji reads :

"I sincerely feel that there are numerous books to be translated into Telugu. The translators have to be encouraged by one and all who cherish Telugu. The swamyji has taken a lion's share in this effort. Kudos to Swamyji? Universal well being is made to be pined

for, with the stupendous campaign of Swamyji through his enunciation of philosophy in his speeches in addition to his experienced revelations called 'Vakyopanyasas'. He published books necessary for wisdom to be dawned upon us. There are some bands of enthusiasts who work for Universal well being taking an oath to that effect, the 'Kankana Dharana' for Lokodharana. The schools established on the premises of Vyasashram promote knowledge to the needy. I wish the principle of service would inspire other saints of other ashrams aplenty. Then alone can Bharath attain advancement in all aspects. The Brahma Tatva contained in our scriptures will go a long way in achieving deliverance to both the male and the female."

Sri Pamulaparthi Venkata Narasimha Rao (Former Prime Minister of India) sent a message on the occasion of Swamyji's centenary celebrations in 1984. Focusing on Swamyji's contribution to Vedic Literature he praised Swamyji in the following words :

I was on the premises of "Vyasashrama" many a times. It enriched itself in activities and infrastructure. Buildings were erected. Efficient organisers supervised the departments therein like agriculture, animal husbandry and a press for publishing books."

Swamyji was dwelling on the utilisation of ashram's resources in the following words some time in 1942 :

The utilisation of the resources of the ashram will be distributed into three types of allotments. The one

is meant for the maintenance of teachers and pupils of Sanskrit school, the other is allotted to feed the sadhus who go here on pilgrimage and to satiate the hunger of the poor here and elsewhere and the last portion meets the expenditure towards food and shelter of hermits on Brahma Nishta the perpetual meditation.

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CHAPTER - 6

A GURUKULA FOR GIRLS EMERGED

The advent of Sanskrit school on the campus began to attract girls for admission as well. They excelled their counter parts i.e., boys in the recital of scriptures like Bhagawad Gita. The Swamyji wanted to draw their attention to Brahma Vidya, the knowledge of the soul and self realisation. His cherished wish bore fruit. He started Kanya Gurukula with the assistance of the devotees.

Kanya Gurukula was inaugurated on 01-12-1955 in Vyasashram. He went on to say :

“My motto in establishing Kanya Gurukula is to see my pupils emerge as Yoginis of repute like those of Vedic age. Observing austerity scrupulously they should be intent on the knowledge of the soul. Then they will be known as Brahmavadins. It was Sri Dayananda who advocated that women and non-brahmin folks should be given equal right for pursuance of Vedic knowledge. A woman-saint is just like a male saint. She will observe celibacy, remain a spinster, study the Vedas and perform sacrificial rites to Gods. This is one method.

Or otherwise such women may take up house-hold duties having got married but they should be intent upon being closer to God. In this stage too they can dedicate themselves to universal welfare. This is the second method.

Those who cannot be like the above, they can follow the ideal set up by Sri Kasturba and Mahatma Gandhi – leading family life for a considerable period. They observe celibacy and they can be away from the household duties entering Vanaprastha, the abandonment of one’s family life only to be in the service to humanity. This is the third method.

I hope that the inmates of Kanya Gurukula will select one of the three options. They should lead simple life. They are not expected to resort to beautifying by wearing costly ornaments. Chastity alone is the real ornament for a lady.

Meditation on ‘AUM’

The combination of three sounds ‘a’ ‘u’ ‘m’ is called Omkara. It is acclaimed as Pranavanada, the first ever sound while the nature was setting on. By repeating this in a silent sit up, promotes tranquility and the benefits attached to it for self realisation. Once it so happened that the disciples of Malayala Swamy held classes for the aspirants in Thadepalli area of Krishna district. The followers were taking the name of ‘Om’. This is a kind of worship or a sacred feat. Some orthodox people were annoyed with the disciples. It was a dictum under orthodox order that only the Brahmins can perform this ordeal. Women are said to have been deprived of this opportunity. They objected the trainers saying, “Don’t you know Omkara worship is not to be taught to non-brahmin classes and the women folk?” They exerted pressure

to stop the programme. The Swamyji visited the place. The orthodox groups approached him and repeated the words, of course with all humility.

In their presence Swamyji questioned the disciples “What did you began with while starting the alphabet to be learnt? who taught you the alphabet?” The disciples replied that they were asked to say and write “Om Namaha Shivayah; Siddham Namaha” The initiation to education was given to us by the fathers of the orthodox pandits. “They were our teachers”, said the sishyas in unison.

“See, my friends”, said Swamyji ‘these people forgot what has been taught them. Our attempt in starting Omkaropasana is a renewal of their services but we are not introducing any thing new.” These words disarmed them.

Strict Observance of Laws of Heritage

Swamyji conducted a mission for universal well being. On the other hand he showed unstinted attention towards certain principles of heritage as far as their importance is concerned.

The principles he had observed during his renunciation, continued after his twelve years of endless penance. After attainment of Brahman it is construed that the principles are to be abandoned. On the contrary Swamyji went on without food on certain important days like Monday, Ekadashi, Maasa Shivaratri and Kritika Nakshatra. This went on till the last foot of

Ashrama Chatushtaya i.e., Thuriyashrama or Sanyasashrama was attained. After completion of penance Swamyji was intent upon the observance of Ekadashi Vrata too.

Swamyji wore single fold – drapery, a cloth. Except while he was ailing at the fag – end of his life, he never mounted the cot. He did not use a quilt, bed or pillow for his head while sleeping. Instead, he lay down on a mat or a wooden, flat plank. He folded his arm and supported his head in the place of making use of a pillow of any sort.

He abandoned the practice of using foot wear. This was continued while he was on the sacred tour of India. The disciples made a futile effort to convince him to put on foot wear while it happened for him to walk in the scorching sun though!

Some enthusiasts wanted to know whether the principles of old order of cultural heritage common to saadhakas were to be observed for ever, even once a person has attained the goals of penance, Tapssiddhi. They said, “It is analogous to go on cooking so on and so forth but not getting the chance of satisfaction of eating the food thus prepared. Does it behave you to be a strick observer even now?” they asked. Swamyji quipped to convince them. He said, "Oh my dear ones! cookis is a perennial activity in choultries where food is served free to the needy. The persons connected with preparations also eat and serve. They should stand as models to the others. So the saints too are not free.

In a particular act of universal welfare they should not become stumbling blocks.

Non – Accumulation

Donations began pouring in for the running of Vyasashram, in huge amounts, to the amazement of common run of mortals. Some of them ventured to spread the vinegrape. It went on in these words, “Malayalaswamy must be a necromancer. He draws money with his magical powers. There ought to have been with him a faculty of accumulation of money by attracting public towards him”.

The rumour any how passed on to attract the attention of Swamyji. He proclaimed affirmatively saying, “Yes, I do possess the feats of black magic. They are these two which I would like to keep no secret of them. I release these two mantras. You are free to learn them irrespective of class, creed, age or gender. The one is to keep legs on your forward march but not to retreat. The other, not to keep your palm stretched under any other person’s. I have been practicing these two magical feats right from my abandoning of the home in my childhood days. These mantras are so powerful in their proper use that you can easily solve any problem under your eyes.

The then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Sri Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, Lok Sabha Speaker Sri Anantha Shayanam Ayyangaru and other political leaders visited Vyasashram. They thought of release of funds from the coffers of the Government, and entreatingly

appealed to him to accept the help of some sort or the other from their side. But Swamyji replied, “Oh, my dear ones! We surrender ourselves to God for help from the inception. The compassionate God will provide us with the necessities.

Simple to the Core

In the early days of the establishment of the ashram, both the erections related to the place of worship and the place of meditation – the two huts, were built of earth, with hay covered roof. At a later stage many other new buildings were raised in different directions on the premises. They were pucca buildings. The two humble huts, the devotees wished, would soon be permitted for re-construction or renovation. They revealed their intentions to Swamyji. But Swamyji denied to renovate. This is a living example shown by the Swamyji for simple living and high thinking.

Yet another incident draws our attention greatly. An artist and devotee of Swamyji from Madras (now called Chennai) presented an illustrious frame work to the ashram and departed. In that piece of art Swamyji’s portrait was painted. Swamyji is absorbed in meditation in that painting. The artist’s imagination reveals that there it rains mellifluous flowers from the hands of the Trinity – Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara floating on the blue sky. Swamyji happened to view it. The very other day he got it to the full view of the gathering of disciples, and said, “Oh! Very fine! How exquisitely did it look?!” Now the reader can imagine the feelings

of the audience! First volley of praise saw Swamy undoing the frame. The canvas on which the portrait is made was collected into his hands by dragging off the pad that supports it. Now Swamyji mercilessly tore it away and asked the disciples to dip it forever in the lotus pond on the premises. Then he opened his mind saying :

“Please don’t give room for showing off, extravagance, too dear a truth (or non-truth) and exaggerations and hyperboli. If you praise your worth above its magnitude, the so called worth you are in possession will vanish. Moreover, you will never get your due. In this instance the devotee, I presume, has never been a witness to the rain of flowers on me in meditation by the Trinity. The purely imaginary and fictitious events and the artistic lies have nothing to do with our spiritual education. It is a great fall head wards!”

Disciples and Discipline

Swamyji exhibited talent and patience in administering discipline to his disciples. His skills are unparalleled and beyond description. Any lethargy in observing the principle brought in the trouble of Upavasa, denial of supply of food. In the case of any serious offence Swamyji never hesitated to award expulsion to his disciples.

Swamyji always stresses the need for punishment believing in the proverb ‘Spare the rod, and spoil the

child?’ Swamy once spoke on this issue : “A raw shapeless piece of stone undergoes many a painful striking under the chisel and hammer and emerges as a beautiful idol for worship, thanks to the sculptor. Similarly a disciple should be ready to be disciplined under the guidance of his preceptor. In this process the former patiently undergoes the process of redemption. Then he will be fit for honour. The gold undergoes constant burning before it gets its glow.”

In meditation classes, quiet should reign everywhere. No noise is expected while working with the closure of books and spectacles boxes. Meal should be taken silently. We must shed lethargy all the time.

A bell is rung in the evening calling the inmates to dine. It is obligatory every time to say aloud the following caution;

“Oh! You, the divine souls! Don’t resort to anger. It is a sin. Peace is Divine. No smoking zone warrants that cigar, beedi, cigarette and the like are not to be smoked. Alcoholism is strictly prohibited. One should see that the environments are kept clean. Always remember the ideal that you are the embodiment of tranquility and compassion”. This set of instructions verily covered the strangers in the ashram, waiting for a meal. It is a caution for all alike.

The culmination of prevalence of discipline is evident with the words of Sri Seetharama Yatindra;

“Sri Swamyji maintains praiseworthy discipline in the ashram. No other ashram teaches so strict a discipline to the disciples. This is not an exaggeration. I was deeply struck with amazement at it.

Swamy’s Reformatory Zeal

The Indian ancient emperors followed the guidelines enshrined in Manu Smriti. It ruled the society for ages, dictating terms on the society. Of late there arose the tumult. It was about the validity of the laws of Manu Smriti. Discussions and debates were held. Arguments and counter arguments in the field prevailed. Let us read the mind of Swamyji in this regard. He opined on the following lines :

In spiritual stature Manu is known for wisdom beyond the senses. He was a strict follower of Brahma Nishta the ordeals of spiritual intellect. He practised and accomplished divine prowess. It is to our advantage that we worship him as the greatest of holy saints, a maharshi. He is the most venerated one. He always dwelt in concentration on Brahma, the Supreme Power. We pay our obeisance to him. It brings us Shreya, the guardianship. Regarding the caste system he envisaged proves that the principles seem to be as wild as devils. Even devils would not have expounded them like that. The thought behind it is so lowly that even the lowly cannot stoop to that level. The vilest of the vile cannot write down the laws for execution in the manner Manu has declared. There is every possibility that it might not be from the hand of Manu.

We learn that misanthropes and human haters might have proposed them to have been the work of Manu. They might be full of spite and annoyance towards humanity. They all went emotionally uncontrolled. For example Sri Dayananda Saraswathi pointed out a certain Sanskrit verses, shlokas appear as the insertions from a darker side. No doubt, Manu is a great intellect of spiritual order. His Charishma is unique. On our part we must emerge as the divine swans which separate milk from water. We must retain the workable principles and discard unworkable ones from the laws made by Manu regarding caste system, the Varnashrama dharma.

Our decisions should be agreeable to all people and the principles adopted should be so rich that the populace are ready to respect them.

Similarly, there was a meet of Swamyji with an organization which willed to prevent untouchability. They formed into a society and discussed the problem with the Swamyji. In reply to their questions Swamyji responded in these words :

“My dear ones! People, I am convinced, are not in touch with the folks who kill cows. The slaughter of animals for food is the prime reason for untouchability. Why don’t you be away from animal slaughter? Beef eating is a hideous crime as per Hinduism. It is a sin against God. Alcoholism is yet another abhorrent habit. Please, be away from it. Don’t resort to bad habits. Educate yourselves by working hard. See that your children are turned into men and women of good

character and chastity besides acquiring education. The foul habits easily pass from one group to the other like an epidemic. At this stage the other castes, the so called upper classes begin to treat you at par with them. There is a suggestion for the Hindus of all other castes. They should not prefer caste to character or ability. Skill should be preferable to caste. Then alone will India achieve progress. Otherwise there is no good in the offing on either side”.

In the Sanatana Vedanta Sabha of West Godavari, the ladies ordained to pardah culture, wanted to participate in the proceedings of the conference. These ladies belonged to a royal descent. They could not participate in the Sabha openly. They wanted a pardah raised between the speaker and the audience.

Swamyji read their minds and declared that pardah system is a social evil. There is no purity in its thought and promulgation. It does not withstand reasoning proper. A pure observance is that which aims at cleanliness of the souls without any iota of ill will. The outward show of a discipline does not entail purity. In such a situation we cannot pine for elevation of our souls. Self realisation remains a dream in this situation. The women under pardah cannot work for self realisation. It was a speech that deeply touched their hearts. From that day onwards, the royal families participated in the meetings of spiritual import.

Swamyji also declared his view regarding re-marriages for women on account of separation from

their husbands. The widows can re-marry, because it is better to do so instead of spoiling their chastity having not been able to observe celibacy. Some secretly resort to killing the babies in the womb, the practice of infanticide. Abortions are treated to be against the will of God of creation. But we do not resort to re-marriages on flimsy grounds. Likewise we should shun child-marriages, dowry system and other social evils.

Concern for the inert and the living alike

The universal prayer of Hinduism is “May all the beings be happy!” But the inert side of creation is also teeming with life. The equipoise of happiness entails non-violence. The Gurudeva wished that the non-living and inert bodies too should get their share of happiness and joy. He was so convinced of this maxim that he called himself the well wisher of all the living and non-living entities.

Those were the days of dearth of food material. Drought reigned the age. One midnight some people rushed into Vyasashram in groups and said, “Swamyji, we were not destined to eat anything for two full days. We suffer from abject hunger”. Swamyji was moved at their predicament and gave them to eat the remnants of stale food. They had square meals. Their count came to 42. Next day too they could get sufficient to eat and departed.

Then addressing the disciples Swamyji said, “Hunger is quite uncontrollable and un-appeasable

except with a meal. I underwent this trouble several times. The wearer of the shoe knows where it pinches. I cannot explain the pangs. Nor can you understand its pangs without coming under its sway.”

There used to be offerings of food arranged from time to time. Swamyji minded not only the human beings but also took care of animals. He offered rice-bran to them. Other proteinous grain was also offered to cattle. The disciples were asked to gather green grass from the hill tops for the worship and offering of bhiksha to them. The cows and oxen were seen comfortable. For the purpose of quenching their itching Swamyji erected pillars of stone near the pits and the lotus pond.

It was the Telugu month of Maagha. It is time for worship according to Vedic belief. He called out his disciple and said, “Rajaiah dear! people maintain Bhiksha tradition for sadhus and cows. Why not there be a bhiksha for the pigs?” The pigs from surrounding villages were made to gather. They were welcomed and served with jawari and water preparation called 'Sankati', the stale, cooked rice, rice-bran, relished commonly by pigs, listening to the grunt of pigs in comfort while eating the food was remarkably joyous for all.

Swamyji did not ordain the snakes for killing. He was kind to them. At the sight of a snake one uses an iron rod seven feet in length. The snake thus lifted had to be left off without a harm. Even while picking out mangoes the leaves had to be guarded on the branches. This was Swamyji’s instruction to the disciples.

Dining through plantain leaves because a taboo for the swamy. Let us read his reasoning in his own words:

“When one’s heart is serene and delicate in feelings one declines to harm even a tree. I attended a Bhiksha programme in Nellore. The food was served in tender plantain leaves. These leaves were from the plantain orchard of the Reddy family who offered Bhiksha as donors. We happened to stroll in the orchard at dawn. Approaching the plantain plants on the way to our morning oblations, the orchard was lavishly lush green as if the plants were dancing and smiling while the breeze touched the leaves. After Bhiksha in the evening we saw the plants gaunt and bare. They looked forlorn. I decided at the moment that I should not ask the donor to supply me food in a plantain leaf. I shifted to some other container every time, that time onwards.”

Accomplishment of Cherished goals

Swamyji could not hide his brightness of satisfaction on his countenance. This satisfaction is related to the establishment of Vyasashram. The goals with which it was established were seen fulfilled in his life time only. This streak of fulfilment of goals has appeared till his Maha Samadhi. He perceived the progress in social aspect, spiritual sphere and in the domain of advancement of women folk and the people belonging to non-brahmin classes. He was overwhelmed with joy. The women participants of the ashram made vedantic discourses eloquently. The non-brahmin followers were well versed in Sanskrit and

maintained the seats of acharyas or teachers, 'Yadirtha Bharathi' the spiritual monthly of the ashram spread the messages of spirituality far and wide in the east, the west, the north and the South directions. The publications evinced popularity everywhere. The branches of Vyasashram were set up elsewhere and were successfully maintained. Especially in the first part of 20th century, we notice the pace of expansion of the objectives. This period of service and the after-effects proved to be revolutionistic.

The Swamy conveyed the disciples, "We have accomplished the goals for which the God has sent us here." This is a significant statement indicating Swamyji's satisfaction. It is humanly impossible to satisfy a man of avarice. Swamyji's scheme of reformations tasted bitter to the tongues of the antagonists. So they never hesitated to criticise the revered Sire, Swamyji. But wisdom dawned upon them that they were mistaken. They repented grievously, at a later stage.

One Sri Padiparthi Venkatarama Shastri dwelt on the issue of Swamyji's mission and the benefits it has handed over to the next generations. He said, "Swamyji's contribution to the welfare of Andhras is enormous. It has no limits. Bharath should emulate the ideal of unity in diversity harmony, and emotional integration. Swamyji disseminated the value of forbearance, ignoring the discrimination of region, race

and gender. His ideal is exemplary to our country. The Swamyji's clarion calls of Dharma promoted bottomless benefit. The set artificial barriers erected had fallen down. In this course no one was injured. Bharath is replete with such instances of revolutions in the sphere of religion."

Sri V.Ramachary took up the conduct of 36th Vedanta Sabha celebration as he was a follower of Swamyji. The celebrations were held in Shadnagar in 1982. Swamyji not caring for his delicate health attended the Sabha, the arrangements of which were managed by his followers; to the Swamy's entire satisfaction. Swamyji's address covered the subjects like meditation, responsibilities of those desirous of deliverance the 'moksha', the role of women in Indian culture and like Swamyji's style was reported to have been quite convincing and the enunciation attracted the attention of the participants. He took to travel in Telangana region for some period later, and arrived in Penamalur Paramatmananda Ashram.

In the mean time his condition was serious. So he got treatment in Vellore. The devotees were worried about the issue of successor, to the ashram to lead the activities of the ashram. People were speculating about it. They had talked about the plans within groups and lobbied. The Gurudeva executed a will in favour of one, an epitome of duty towards his teacher. He was Sri Krishna Charanam.

His last message appeared in June 1962 edition of 'Yadatha Bharati' after his return to the ashram on the fourth instant of June 1962. The message read :

My dear brethren! I wish you would be self confident. You belong to the lineage of holy saints. You have forgotten the fact and belittle yourselves. If you confide in this belief your advent on this earth will turn to be fruitful. You will be liberated. Wake up from the sleep of ignorance! Realise the underlying theme of your emergence as human beings. Never will you be bereft of strict and ardent observance of the principles of austerity. You will attain sainthood! Cheer up!

Maha Samadhi

Swamyji, the emperor of the kingdom of atman, promoter of universal welfare, the teacher of a stimulating stir in the realm of spiritual awakening and the bright sun to dispel the darkness of metaphysical order, Shushka Vedanta. The well wisher of both the living being and non-living things. Sadguru Sri Malayalaswamy attained Mahasamadhi on Thursday the twelfth of July at midnight on the very holy 'ekadasi thithi' of Aashadha month – popular as Shayanykadashi of Lord Vishnu's Yoga Nidra.

The next day the news of Swamy's nirvana, the deliverance through leaving his mortal coil, spread through the nook and corner like a wild fire. Thousands of people thronged the ashram to pay tributes to the

departed soul woe begone as they were, to have missed the Swamyji in the ashram. Condolences poured in.

The mortal coils of the Swamyji were buried in the Nishtashram the holy place where Swamyji sat in, for daily meditation. Sri Krishna Charanam was anointed as Sri Vemalananda Swamy and took up the reins of the ashram to succeed Swamyji.

They celebrated Mandalaradhana a rite on 28-08-1962 in the premises of Vyasashram. Around thirty thousand people were present. Several prominent personalities praised the services rendered by the late Swamyji. They put on record with a high applause his meritorious services to humanity and paid tributes to him on this occasion.

At the place where his body was cremated they erected an abode of worship known as Adhishthana Mandiramu on 26-01-1972. A marble statue of the swamy was also raised there.

Vyasashram lies as a reminder of the co-ordinating link between Shaivites and Vaishnavites. The ashram is noted for religious tolerance. It is a Sadguru Kshetra, a place of worship of a sage. The seat of Shaivite temple complex of Lord Shiva of Sri Kalahasti on one side and the Vaishnavite shrine of Tirupati on the other, add to the significance of equilibrium between both the disciplines.

“We seek the refuge of the great teacher

And we surrender to the will of

*the one richly lain with
the virtue of the great self
that pervades all,*

*We seek the refuge of the saint of saints
the promoter of happiness to
the inert and living alike*

*“Sri Kalahasti the Dakshin Kailasa, Shiva’s seat
Kasi of the South*

*And the seven – hill abode of Venkatachala
Have in their arm an auspicious dwelling
Of Sadguru, well established”*

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