



AKKAMAHADEVI'S PHILOSOPHY OF DIVINE GRACE

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INTRODUCTION

Research Article contains a brief life sketch of Akkamahadevi, objectives, hypothesis, problem, concepts used, and research methodology.

Life Sketch of Akkamahadevi (brief):

Mahadeviyakka, or Akkamahadevi was born at Udatadi a village not far from Shimoga, which was then the capital of king Kausika. Her parents were named Sumati and Nirmalay'



She was more beautiful in mind and heart. So firm was her conviction of being already wedded to her lord Mallikajuna. The turning-point in her life came when king Kausika,

Another attractive feature of Akkamahadevi's personality is her sense of community, of a very lithe communion of saints.

When Akka was born here, it was ruled by a king called Kausika. She is considered as the very incarnation of Parvati.

Even as a child she was going to the temple of Mallikarjuna to offer him her devotion. Gurulingadeva was her family Guru. Once it so happened that Kausika, the king of the place, happened to pass by her house in the evening.

But when king Kausika failed to keep his word, Mahadevi left the place declaring that she was already married to god Mallikajuna. Her Guru Gurulingadeva advised her to go to Kalyan where Basava and other saints. She was calling birds, beasts, trees and mountains to show her lord Mallikajuna. Akka went to Kalyana first after leaving Udatadi.

Objectives of the Research Study:

The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures. The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered as yet.

To make suitable new formality regarding Akkamahadevi's vacanas.

Methods adopted in the Research Methodology

Research is an art of scientific investigation. Research in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge. The advanced learner's dictionary narrates research as: A careful investigation or inquiry, specially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge. Redman and Mory define research as a "systematized effort to gain new knowledge".

Research is thus an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge making for its advancement.

Motivation in Research:

What makes people undertake research?

This is a question of fundamental importance. The possible motives for doing research may be either one or more of the following:

- 1) Desire to face the challenge in solving the unsolved problems, i.e., concern over practical problems initiates research.
- 2) Desire to get intellectual joy of doing some creative work.
- 3) Desire to be of some service to society.
- 4) Desire to get respectability.

KEYWORDS :- World, Soul, Devotion-Bhakti, God-Linga, Divine -Guru grace, Moksha

Criteria of Good Research :

One expects a scientific research to satisfy the following criteria: qualities of a good research as under:

- 1) Good research is systematic.
- 2) Good research is logical.
- 3) Good research is empirical.
- 4) Good research is replicable.

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the phenomenon of epistemic Morality & Philosophical concepts of God, Linga Bh within contemporary Philosophy of Akkamahadevi

Need for the Study:

Akkamahadevi was one of the foremost spiritual philosophers of this country. She has worked for the ultimate man like Cennamallikajuna through his various devotional ways.

The present Article is necessary for the ideas of Akkamahadevi's expressed in vacana's need to be spread in society. Various Women saints are influenced by Akkamahadevi's. So many women are converted to moral life through the light of Akkamahadevi.

Problem of the study (statement of the problem):

Study of philosophical theories raises some fundamental problems:

- 1) What is the role of Cennamallikajuna in the concept of Akkamahadevi.?
- 2) What is the spiritual and philosophical contribution of Akkamahadevi to the society.?
- 3) How women saints are influenced by Akkamahadevi.?

Research is equally important for social scientists in studying philosophical relation and in seeking answers to various philosophical problems. Morality is very much needed in contemporary society. Akkamahadevi's concept of world, soul, bhakti, God how can one get the divine grace and reach the moksha etc.

In this chapter, Akka hopes to be blessed by Cennamallikarjuna. Akkamahadevi searches many ways by imagination by telling beads, or singing hymns and through the knowledge of heart but finally she comes to the reality that she cannot be blessed until He showers the blessing of solitude. Akka has wooed and pined for Cennamallikajuna, but her lord has not yet bestowed his grace upon her. Every devotee is inspired by this truth. When truly comprehended that there is god's grace available to him or her and that is, what will carry him or her onward in life. Thereafter there is a beautiful and natural blending of self-effort and divine grace until the flood of divine grace engulfs the devotee. Here the pr

of Akkamahadevi has made it easy for her to come out of this bounded life. He liberated Akka from all worldly bonds. By erasing them He showered on her the supreme bliss.

Grace

Akka has wooed and pined for Cennamallikarjuna without end but her lord has not yet bestowed upon her his grace.

Some how this love of hers appears to be mundane and selfish to the ordinary eye. She decided not to ask that he necessarily requite her love. She says she will love him for his own sake rather than for herself. Whether He listens to her or not, she sings His praise. Whether He bestows his favour on her or not, she sings His praise. Whether He bestows His favour on her or not, she continues loving him and yearning for him.

Akkamahadevi has come to many births in which she has experienced pains in different stages of life.

According to her, one should be away from these personal enemies to tread towards heaven. In search of God, one shouldn't fear or need the criticism of others. Here Akkamahadevi's craving for Cennamallikarjuna is unshaken. Her faith, devotion and dedication have become a polestar to guide one.

Knowledge, which is added of the spirit and which alone can guide our steps to our destiny, should come as his Grace, as the following lines of Akka testify:

*Thou, Cennamallikarjuna
Shouldst lift me up with Thy tender grace
Do away with my oblivion
And vouchsafe a glimpse of Thy feet!*

On her way to Kalyana, she had to face perils and ordeals at every step. Besides, wherever she went, the dazzling beauty of her person plagued her, as it were her enemy.

*Can I win you through eightfold rights ? You live, O lord, beyond
The commerce of the outer sense ! Can I win you by taking thought
Within my heart ? You are, O lord, Beyond both thought and speech !
Can I win you by telling beads
Or singing hymns ? You are, O lord. Beyond all sound !
Shall I win You Through knowledge of the heart ? You are,
O Lord, beyond all reasonable sense ! ' Can I take you within
The lotus of my heart ? But you, O lord. Pervade the entire world of me !
It's not in me to win you, Lord:
That you should love me is all my bliss, O Cenna Mallikarjuna Lord !*

Akkamahadevi presents eightfold paths to enjoy the warmth of the embrace of Lord Cennamallikarjuna. She asks manyfold questions to the Lord but confesses that it is not in her power to have him. It is all in his power to love her and to gladden her with these blessings. To be blessed by him, she searches many ways by imagination, by telling beads, or singing hymns and through the knowledge of heart, but finally she comes to the reality that she cannot be blessed until, He showers over her the bliss of solitude.

'The wind of God's grace is incessantly blowing. Lazy sailors on the sea of life do not take advantage of it. But the active and the strong always keep the sails of their minds unfurled to catch the favourable wind and thus reach their destination very soon.

Every devotee is inspired by this truth, that there is God's grace available to him or her. That is what will carry him or her onward in life in a beautiful and natural and rewarding manner blending self-effort and divine grace, until the flood of divine grace engulfs the devotee.

The strength of a devotee lies in self-surrender to the Divine. This is the only occasion when surrender becomes supreme victory. The knowledge dawns that the breeze of divine grace has been

gently carrying onward his or her little boat of individuality on the waters of life towards the ocean of total fulfillment.

So, in Vedanta it is said, even to turn towards god or towards striving for liberation, man needs His grace. Only through the grace, the of god do you get even this tendency towards spirituality, this thirst for the highest.

*Guru, who savest those
Who, seeking Thee, surrender unto Thee,
O Guru, to Thee all hail!
Thou who hast manifested on my palm Incorporating that void being which Abides in
the unknowable void,
O Guru, hail, O hail!
Cenna Mallikarjuna Lord !*

Akkamahadevi is sure that Guru will save and manifest on the palm in the form of Istalinga. Akka, here, is delighted to find her Guru, Lord Cennamallikarjuna on her palm in the form of Istalinga.

When she has realized the eternal Istalinga on her palm, she praises the glory of the lord. With immense pleasure and pent up feelings of joy bursting out, she started. Singing His glory. She saluted the supreme Guru who had brought her Cennamallikarjuna to her and made Him manifest in her.

That is the way grace operates in human life; but we fully recognize it only when we become spiritually mature with the strength of manliness leading to the strength of godliness or saintliness in total self-surrender.

In this Vacana, Akkamahadevi has found Cennamallikarjuna as a Gum, and says that there was no comparison to Him. Her faith in Cennamallikarjuna is firm. He can turn a dried tank into a ocean of water within a short span of time, a bare tree can be turned into an evergreen one only by the rain of his presence.

*Its perfume is so like a ball of scent Before beginning was or the unbegun
Himself he was, so with no manner of touch Channabasavanna gaining the Guru's grace,
Himself became the Linga
That he might show me
Both goal and way, assumed this form In Lord Kudala Sangama !*

From all this it becomes clear that Channabasavanna was born of prasada (grace), and that knowledge was initiated into him at his birth. There is a difference between a physical body and a spiritual body.

A Sadhaka has to pass through different stages - Bhakta, Mahesvara Prasadi, etc. The signs of an enlightened soul begin to manifest only when the sadhaka reaches the Prasadi stage. Saranas have recognized Channabasavanna as belonging to the Prasadi stage, because he was born enlightened.

The guru of Mahadevi presented her the Linga which is supreme and eternal. Therefore, she surrenders herself completely to him for giving and placing Cennamallikarjuna in her hands. In this vacana one thing is clear that placing god in ones hand is found only in Veerashaiva religion. This is the specialty of this religion.

Individual effort waits on the divine Grace and needs self- renunciation too. This problem of individual effort and divine grace has been exaggerated by some of the schismatic thinkers, but each has its own due place .

Individual effort directed towards deserving God's grace and God's grace not measuring the quantum of the individual effort but supremely giving itself to the individual who has thrown himself at the feet of God are both complementary. Thus the earlier Vaisnava thinkers synthesized individual effort (yoga) with the divine Grace and made all God's own supreme yoga. Thus the twin concepts of saulabhyatva (accessibility) and antaryamitva (indwelling Lordship) of God, the means have been synthesised. This is the synthesis of the means (upayasamanvaya).

*The body's grace is mine, mine is mindss:
The graceofsoul is mine, and of the Will:
The grace that issues from Experience in union is mine :
O Cennamallikarjuna, I spread
They grace, and wrap myself with it !*

In this vacana, Mahadeviyakka has shown that the divine grace of Lord Cennamallikajuna is found in every action, word and deed. Therefore, she says that the union of her body, mind, and soul is are the grace of God.

With the grace of Guru-Ling-Jangama, she has been blessed, and is communed with the divine world.

Here we could understand that there is no detachment from the Linga. Akkamahadevi and Jangama-Linga have been wrapped into one and made grown inseparable. Body, Mind and soul- everything has been dedicated to Linga-God, Lord Cennamallikajuna. Her union with Linga. God made her forget this mortal world.

The Gita also lays emphasis on the grace of God. But the Gita introduces its own concept of divine Grace. Grace has no place in atheistic monism, which is incompatible with God as the supreme personal ethical will.

Grace has the connotation of that sort of relationship which can hold good only between persons .

Once there is a transformation in their mental outlook with the awakening of the spark of divinity in them, the grace of God begins its operation in elevating them to higher and higher levels of moral perfection and purity Kabir says:

*"The counting of rosary beads. The giving of alms.
All these are meaningless without the Guru. The Vedas and Puranas will confirm
That giving alms, unless it is done Under the direction of the Guru, Is an act of sin and harm."
Mark, lady, the young Moon Upon His glistening locks,
And in his ear-rings look the serpent-gem! If you should see the mighty one
Skull-garlanded around his neck, Tell him to come to me!
Govinda's eye is resting on his toe:
This is the emblem, lady, of Lord Cennamallikarjuna*

Akkamahadevi told her friend to send Lord Cennamallikajuna, if she happened to see Him any where.

While telling this, she introduces the marks to recognize him a young bright moon upon his glistening locks, the serpent ear-ring in his ears, Skullgarland around his neck, and an eye of Krishna on his toe- these are the emblems of her Lord.

Mahadeviyakka is so eager to meet and join Cennamallikajuna.

Here she doesn't show her fixed mind. Sometimes she says that he is in her and she clasped him tightly and some other time she says she doesn't have any confidence that she could have salvation by meeting Him. Therefore Akkamahadevi requests her friends to inform her about the whereabouts of Lord Cennamallikajuna.

He also mentions another source which he has used. It is the divine Grace ingrained in him. He ascribes the authenticity of his work to this God's grace.

According to Akka, Lord Cennamallikajuna fulfills all these wishes and whims of a man. Then why should one go to others and serve them? Therefore one must not go. In search of butter holding it in his palm. This vacana reveals that one has to be content with whatever he / she has. There should be sincere faith and ardent desire to possess anything in the world. Here Akka doesn't want anything from the world, because she has had Linga on her palm, bestows on her everything.

Umapati exposes what he had seen with the eye of divine grace: viz., the prior condition of the Lord, the self, the dark impurity and the existential dimension of divine grace in its two phases. In what follows the ariyumneri, he expounds the fruits and consequences of knowing with the 'eye of divine grace'.

*If you expect Siva to approve
Of piety that lasts not to the end,
or servanthood that lacks in steadfastness How will he, pray ?
Do not indulge in baseness of the mind; And if you do, the lord of mind
Is sure to know. Think you
Wise Cennamallikarjuna will be pleased
If you but tell your beads without a pause ?
If you show your devotion in the end of what use is it ?
How can the Lord be pleased with your false servitude ?*

If you are devoted to the Lord right from the beginning you can win his grace, and not otherwise. If your devotion and faith are not real, Cennamallikarjuna will never approve of you, and you can never have His grace.

Only when the beads are closely knit and arranged carefully you can prepare a fine necklace. If you carelessly arrange them and keep them at irregular spaces, it will never be a good necklace. In the same way only when you are devoted to Him firmly and without any wavering, He will approve of you. When once you win His approval, your life's mission is over.

*It is as if a poor man's life is gone
The while the rich man's granary is shut. Tell me, O father, is this my lot
The while Thou put'st me to the test By thus tormenting me ? It is as if the chaff is blown away
The while one fans and piles the grain
What manner dost Thou bless me,
Lord Cennamallikarjuna?*

Desire in human beings has always been there, and it is this element that is playing havoc with the lives of the people. It is making all people terribly miserable, and it is in fact creating a hell in their lives. Of all the desires, kama the desire of sexual satisfaction is one of the strongest urges in human beings.

'Sharana' thinks that the divine spark within him directly belongs to Cennamallikarjuna, and therefore, it has no caste identifications. A sharana doesn't believe in caste, much less the superiority of one over the other.

He is always humbleness personified. As he considers himself the spark of the almighty, we can almost think him to be an 'Ayonija'.

That is to say, to the one who has dived into the sea of divine grace (arutkadal), seeing everything with the 'eye of divine grace' becomes a true and authentic way of knowing.

This idea has been expressed by Umapati in the following kural:

Easy the way of vision :

*But twixt eye and Object light must be
Without the light of grace Twixt soul and
Known soul sees not*

That is to say the self cannot know anything really of its own accord without peeping into the world through the eye of divine grace. His grace for the purification of one's mind is the fifth commandment.

It is only by god's grace that we may even recognize such an avatara. We should feel honoured and doubly blessed if in addition we can enjoy his beatific presence.

*Four quarters of the day they toil for food;
Four watches of the night, for joys of sense;
Like washerman, who stands
In water and yet dies with parched mouth,
That is within themselves
O Cennamallikarjuna.*

Ordinary people, during the entire life time they are very busy and working incessantly to amass wealth for their living.' Their night time is spent in indulging in carnal pleasures. They are so deeply immersed in worthless activities that they are left with no time think at all about our Cennamallikarjuna.

They are something like washermen, standing in kneedeep stream water and yet dying out of thirst. In the same way, they do not know that lord Cennamallikarjuna. They cannot reach Cennamallikarjuna who is right within themselves only.

If sugarcane is cut into pieces and crushed in a crusher, it will never lose its fine quality of sweetness. Oh Lord, I might have

committed many sins in my many births and in all those births you have been with me as a witness and I cannot hide from you any of them.

If nature showers a big rain of embers, I take it as having sent to quench my thirst and fill my stomach. If the whole sky falls upon me, I will take it as a shower sent by God and I bathe in it nicely. If mountains fall upon me, I do not care at all. They are like fine flowers falling upon my head. If at last my head is to be cut off, I gracefully accept that position and I will gladly offer to you.

*As the word goes the form of hara is wed
To body, the form of Guru united to the breath,
The Guru's Grace to the disciple given
Is joined unto the disembodied soul.'
"With deep prostrations, without shame,
Your body, wealth and life be offered Unto a virtuous Guru face to face."
My heart bows low to Kudala Sangama Believing Him healer of this malady of birth.*

The vacana which tells how Basavaraja paid homage to Prabhudeva with the eight forms of worship and sixteen kinds of service, thereupon Channabasavanna having done obeisance and feet-worship received the padodaka.

The grace of god plays a very important and significant role in Virashaiva mysticism. With the God's grace, God is not an invited guest from without or it is not like a patch put on externally. But He is the very kernel and inseparable part and parcel of Virashaiva mysticism.

*All those who come to you for money's sake
Are parasites, and not true friends at all.
The friend is he who seeks your heart. Who stays to scold and rail
Yet knows to point the path to you Does Cennamallikarjuna care
for hypocrites who flatter with their mouths
for belly's sake*

People will flock to moneyed persons just as ants flock to a piece of jaugery. They enormously praise the moneyed man, pretend to love him and show him that they follow him. They behave like servants before him. They do all these things to the rich man in order to fulfill their own selfish ends.

Such persons are never true friends of the rich man. They can't show the rich man the correct path for his progress and ultimate salvation.

But a real relative, friend or guru is one who is not at all selfish. God will never approve of selfish people who dance to the tune of the rich. Your real well wisher is one who shows you the right path.

*It is not easy to be born a man Not easy to have love for Hara;
It is not easy to get Guru's grace
Nor the experience of true Saranas. Therefore, mark you, O soul,
Revel and roll in the experience
Of Lord Cennamallikarjuna's saranas !*

Of all the different forms of living things, human life (Narajanma) is the most difficult to get and the most important also. Only human beings have the consciousness and it is they who have the knowledge such as an all powerful universal force (which is nothing but you my lord Cennamallikarjuna) is in existence.

Only human beings are capable of gaining real knowledge and become total devotees of yours, my Lord ! Only by experiencing the sorrows and pains of the worldly life, one becomes disinterested and turns away from them. That is exactly the time when one becomes attracted to the Lord and starts seriously searching him. He tries to find a guru (or master) because it is possible to get God easily through him.

Importance of Guru, Linga and Jangama :

According to Virashaivism Guru, Linga and Jangama are a trinity, Kumar Swamiji has rightly pointed out, "Virashaiva is enjoined not to make any distinction between the Guru, Linga and Jangama, as all of them are believed to be equal and command the same reverence."

*Cennabasaveshwara has said, Body is purified by Guru ..
Mind is purified by Linga. Property is purified by Jangama. Life is purified by Prasada.
Because of these, all become purified, Kudala Channasangamadeva
How shall I know what these things be Ayata; Swayata, Anubhava, Lord ?
I can be only
A servant to the servants of Thy devotees
Who have surrendered wealth, honour and life To Guru, Linga and Jangama
O Cennamallikarjuna, I have no other wish Except the company of the Saranas.
The three important philosophical concepts are :*

"Ayata, Swayata and Anubhava". By the grace of Guru, welcoming the lord towards us is called Ayata. Making it permanently establish within yourself is known as 'swayati'. Experiencing the great truth or the Lord within yourself is known as 'Anubhava', Oh! Lord, as of now, I do not know any of these things. To know them, we have to surrender our bodies to Guru, mind to the Lord (Cennamallikarjuna and our wealth to the devotees of god in addition to these).

One should throw away one's ego and one should prostrate and totally surrender to the Lord. Only then salvation is

possible. That is why Akkamahadevi likes to become a slave of sharanas. She would like to be only with sharanas. She has nothing to do with ordinary worldly people.

*Immaculate both in word and deed In body, mind and will;
Save me, O Cennamallikarjuna, By showing me
Thy saranas Who live upon this mortal earth
Endued with these five holy traits!*

O Lord, I would like to become a person whose mind, word and deed always work in unison. As of now, I am not in a position to accomplish it. I know that if I can accomplish it, I will be making a big stride towards you.

God, kindly show me a sharana who has attained that stage. By becoming a trusted disciple of such a Guru, I hope to come to you and merge in your soul.

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