

**EVOLUTION OF
VĪRĀŚAIVA CONCEPTS**
**PART III: SMṚTIS, DHARŚANAS, TANTRA, ŚIVĀGAMA, AND
SIDDHĀNTA ŚIKHĀMAṆI**

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Depiction of Sanskrit and Kannaḍa Words

Most of the articles written in English, and published in this book, have many Saṃskṛta (Sanskrit) and Kannaḍa words that are written using the English alphabet. Transliteration of these words for proper pronunciation is a challenge with only about half the number of letters in the English alphabet. Furthermore, in general, the sounds of the English letters f, q, w, x and z, are not usable in both Sanskrit and Kannaḍa, leaving even a lesser number of English letters for the depiction. Each letter/syllable of the Sanskrit and Kannaḍa alphabets has only one pronunciation, and the alphabet is arranged according to the functional structure of the mouth to produce these sounds. There are no capital letters; all the letters are in one case only. The following is the English representation of the letters of the Kannaḍa alphabet and the corresponding Dēvanāgarī script of Sanskrit that are in common use nowadays. The lines, dots and other marks used here are called 'diacritics' or 'diacritical marks'. The diacritics are combined with English letters to represent new sounds. This representation is slightly modified from the scheme of transliteration given in ŚŪNYASAMPĀDANE Volumes I through V, published by Karnatak University, Dharwar, India.

Vowels: The vowels are either of a short or of a long duration. The sound of short vowels is held for one count, and that of long vowels is held for two counts. The sound of complex vowels is held for two counts.

Short vowels	Long vowels	Complex vowels
ಅ/ಆ/ a	ಆ/ಆ/ ā	
ಇ/ಇ/ i	ಈ/ಈ/ ī	
ಉ/ಉ/ u	ಊ/ಊ/ ū	
ಋ/ಋ/ ṛ	ೠ/ೠ/ ṝ	
ಎ/ಎ/ e	ಏ/ಏ/ ē	ಐ/ಐ/ ai
ಒ/ಒ/ o	ಓ/ಓ/ ō	ಔ/ಔ/ au

Anusvāra (Nasalization):

ಅಂ/ಅಂ/ aṃ (also aṅ)

Visarga (Aspiration):

ಅಃ/ಅಃ/ aḥ

Consonants: Five sets of five each of the twenty-five consonants are arranged according to five points of articulation with the first vowel 'a' added for pronunciation.

Velars or gutturals - the sound is produced in the throat or back of the mouth:

ಕ/ಕ/ ka, ಖ/ಖ/ kha, ಗ/ಗ/ ga, ಘ/ಘ/ gha, ಙ/ಙ/ ṅa

Palatals – the sound is produced with the tongue touching the palate (roof of the mouth):

ಚ/ಚ/ **ĉa**, ಛ/ಛ/ **ĉha**, ಜ/ಜ/ **ja**, ಝ/ಝ/ **jha**, ಞ/ಞ/ **ña**

Retroflex or cerebrals – the sound is produced with the tongue bent backwards:

ಠ/ಠ/ **ṭa**, ಠ್ಠ/ಠ್ಠ/ **ṭha**, ಡ/ಡ/ **ḍa**, ಡ್ಢ/ಡ್ಢ/ **ḍha**, ಣ/ಣ/ **ṇa**

Dentals – the sound is produced with the tongue touching the back of the upper teeth:

ತ/ತ/ **ta**, ಥ/ಥ/ **tha**, ದ/ದ/ **da**, ಧ/ಧ/ **dha**, ನ/ನ/ **na**

Labials – the sound is produced at the lips:

ಪ/ಪ/ **pa**, ಫ/ಫ/ **pha**, ಬ/ಬ/ **ba**, ಭ/ಭ/ **bha**, ಮ/ಮ/ **ma**

Semi-vowels: ಯ/ಯ/ **ya**, ರ/ರ/ **ra**, ಲ/ಲ/ **la**, ವ/ವ/ **va**

Palatal sibilant: ಶ/ಶ/ **śa** Retroflex sibilant: ಷ/ಷ/ **ṣa** Dental sibilant: ಸ/ಸ/ **sa**

Aspirate: ಹ/ಹ/ **ha** Lateral: ಳ/ಲ/ **la**

Conjunct (combination of two letters): ಕ್ಷ/ಕ್ಷ/ **kṣa**, ಜ್ಞ/ಜ್ಞ/ **jña**

If the diacritical marks cannot be used for some reason, then there are a few accepted ways of representing some of the sounds/letters: aa for ā, ee for ī, oo for ū, and sha for the retroflex ṣa. In this version the palatal śa, as in Śiva, seems to have been written both ways – sa and sha.

It is not too difficult to use this type of representation in the articles. Although it takes more effort to properly depict the Saṃskṛta and Kannaḍa words, it is worthwhile to use the diacritical marks so that the words are sounded properly.

Smṛti

There is a multitude of smṛti texts. The main scriptures that come under smṛti are the Itihāsas, Purāṇas and Dharma Śāstras. Itihāsa means 'verily it happened thus' and means that it was composed as it happened. The two great epics, Rāmāyaṇa, and Mahābhārata which includes Bhagavad-Gītā, are the Itihāsas. There is a considerable controversy about the timing of the Itihāsas; it is generally believed that they occurred more than 5,000 years ago; Rāmāyaṇa is said to have preceded the Mahābhārata, but there is some controversy on that also.

Rāmāyaṇa

Rāmāyaṇa means 'Rāma's journey'. The original Rāmāyaṇa was composed by sage Vālmīki who was Rāma's contemporary. It has 24,000 verses. The original version has gone through a long process of interpolations and additions, and possibly some redactions, so that it is difficult to date accurately. The traditionalists believe that the event occurred in the Treta-yuga which preceded the Dvāpara-yuga when according to traditionalists Mahābhārata event took place, and now it is the Kali-yuga. Also, in Rāmāyaṇa, South India is described as a dense forest, where as in Mahābhārata, acquaintance with all parts of India and its division into numerous Ārya states that were in flourishing state have been described. Thus it appears that Rāmāyaṇa preceded Mahābhārata. However, there was already some urbanization of eastern part of North India in the Gaṅga River area when Rāmāyaṇa occurred as it is depicted in Rāmāyaṇa itself, while the Mahābhārata event occurred west of this area prior to the urbanization in the Vēdic period. On this basis it appears that Mahābhārata might have preceded Rāmāyaṇa.

Rāmāyaṇa explores the human values and the concept of Dharma through the conflict between good and bad, and the ultimate triumph of the good. Kannaḍa version of the Sanskrit Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa (38), narrates the story of the journey of Rāma in six books/chapters called Kāṇḍas. In brief it is as follows.

Bālakāṇḍa is the book of childhood of Rāma. It describes the capital city and the people of Ayōdhyā, and describes Daśaratha's kingdom. Birth of princes Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Śatrughna, and Bharata, and more importantly education in all respects, are explained. In a challenge to prospective princes laid down by Janaka to win his daughter Sītā in marriage, Rāma raises the 'Bow of Śiva' to his chest level in order to use it, which no one else had done before (the bow breaks), and wins the challenge. Rāma's marriage to Sītā is then described.

Ayōdhyākāṇḍa explains the preparation for Rāma's coronation in the capital city of Ayōdhyā, but the coronation does not take place then. Rāma goes into exile with his wife

Sītā, and his brother Lakṣmaṇa.

Araṇyakāṇḍa the book of forest explains the forest life of the three, particularly in the forests of South India. In an encounter with Śūrpaṇakhi, sister of King Rāvaṇa of Laṅkā (which is the present day island nation of Sri Lanka), Lakṣmaṇa on account of Śūrpaṇakhi's despicable behavior, cuts off her nose and ears. In revenge King Rāvaṇa kidnaps Sītā, and takes her to Laṅkā.

Kiṣkiṇdhākāṇḍa is the book of the kingdom called Kiṣkiṇdhā which is said to be an ape-kingdom. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa meet Hanumaṅta who is also known as Hanuman. Hanuman is supposedly an ape-person. Rāma helps Sugrīva, the younger brother of Vāli, to depose Vāli and gain the kingdom of Kiṣkiṇdhā.

Suṇḍarakāṇḍa: Suṇḍara means handsome, and it is a fond name of Hanuman given by his mother. This book is about the adventures of Hanuman in helping Rāma. He leaps and flies across the ocean from the southern tip area of India to the island of Laṅkā. There he meets the kidnapped and imprisoned Sītā, burns the city of Laṅkā, returns and informs Rāma of what he learned there.

Yuddhakāṇḍa is the book of war. It describes the battle of Laṅkā, defeat of Rāvaṇa, rescue of Sītā, completion of exile, return to Ayōdhyā, and the great coronation of Rāma as the king.

Other Rāmāyaṇa compositions have another book, the seventh or the last book Uttarakāṇḍa which describes in detail the banishment of Sītā, birth of Lava and Kuṣa and their education in the Āśrama of sage Vālmīki, their return to Ayōdhyā, and reconciliation of Rāma and Sītā.

Mahābhārata

It is stated that some elements of the Mahābhārata can be traced back to the early Vēdic period. Vēda Vyāsa, who compiled all the available Vēdic mantras into four Vēdas, is intimately connected with the story of the Mahābhārata itself. Vyāsa's mother Satyavati, later married the king of Hastinapura, which is located north-east of Delhi in the present day Uttar Pradesh State, and had two sons. But the sons died without having any children. Satyavati asked Vyāsa to bless the two wives of her dead son Viçitravīrya with children; this resulted in two sons (one each). Dhritarāstra was born blind; he is the father of the Kauravas (said to be 100 sons). Pāṇḍu was born pale and anemic; he is the father of the Pāṇḍavas (five sons). The Kurukṣētra war was between these cousins the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas.

As the older son Dhritarāstra was born blind, Pāṇḍu took over the reign of the kingdom. When Pāṇḍu died, the kingdom was divided into two. But Duryōdhana, the eldest Kaurava was not satisfied. By devious means in a game of dice, he won the whole kingdom and

sent the Pāṇḍavas into exile in the forest for 12 years and another year in incognito. Furthermore, he did not give their share of the kingdom after their return. They went to war for the right of succession. Pāṇḍavas were victorious in the end.

The core of the Mahābhārata is called '**Jaya**' which means victory. Jaya with its 8,800 verses is attributed to Vēda Vyāsa. **Bhārata** with 24,000 verses, containing the Jaya in its entirety, is said to have been recited by Vaiśampāyana who was one of Vyāsa's chief disciples. **Mahābhārata** is more than 100,000 verses, and is the expanded version of Bhārata. It is said to have been recited by Ugrasrava Sauti, a professional story teller, to an assembly of Ṛṣis. Jaya is structured in the form of a dialog between Dhritarāstra and his advisor and chariot driver Sanjaya. Jaya deals with diverse subjects such as geography, history, warfare, religion and morality. Jaya includes the well known **Bhagavad-Gītā**. Bhagavad-Gītā is a dialog in a dialog. The inner dialog is between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna on the battle field of Kurukṣetra. Divine Kṛṣṇa is not to be confused with Vyāsa whose name is Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana. Arjuna is one of the Pāṇḍavas, and Kṛṣṇa was his chariot driver. Thus, technically speaking, Vyāsa authored 'Jaya' including the 'Bhagavad-Gītā', and not Mahābhārata.

The traditionalists believe that the story of Mahābhārata took place in the Dvāpara Yuga, just before the beginning of the Kali Yuga which is said to have started after the disappearance of Kṛṣṇa the Divine and submersion of Dvārakā Island in the Arabian Sea in 3,102 BCE. Another calculation based on the same astronomical references in the passage itself, gives the date for the Bhārata to be 2,449 BCE, 653 years after the start of the Kali Yuga. Archeological findings from the excavations at the Dvārakā site which was a port city in Gujarat state in India, have revealed structures similar in style to the traditional city of the Divine Kṛṣṇa that has been described in Mahābhārata, and it has been dated to about 1,500 BCE (3). Vyāsa was a contemporary of Divine Kṛṣṇa, therefore it could be construed that Vyāsa lived around that date of 1,500 BCE.

Purāṇa

Purāṇa means 'history having the origin in the distant past'. The original Purāṇa which is mentioned in the early Vēdic literature is not available now. Eighteen post-Vēdic principal Purāṇas and another 18 secondary Purāṇas are available. Although some original Purāṇas existed as far back as the period of Buddha (5th century BCE), most of these are said to have been composed around 7th century CE. Purāṇas have grown and have become bulky from additions and interpolations from time to time, and additions have continued into the post-Basava period; Basavapurāṇa, Ćennabasavapurāṇa and such other Purāṇas are available.

Purāṇam Pañcalakṣaṇam means 'Purāṇa is that which has five characteristic topics': *Sarga* is the Creation; *Pratisarga* is renewed creation after dissolution of the universe; *Vamśa* is the genealogy of gods and ṛṣis; *Manvantara* is the period of Manu, the genealogy of the forefathers of humans; and *Vamśānuĉaritra* is the history of the generations that includes

the solar and lunar dynasties (7, 39). All Purāṇas are supposed to contain these five parts in them, but many Purāṇas do not exactly confine to this rule because it is inapplicable to those (39).

The Purāṇas are works of evidently different ages and have been composed under different circumstances. They try to explain the principals of Vēdas and Upaniṣads with illustrative legendary stories for the common people, but they do that in a strange and obscure way and as such the primary objective is lost, and somewhat contradictory and unintelligible style results. Worship of several different deities is brought out, and individual sectarian bias is introduced (39). Anyway in general the Purāṇas expound the four objectives of human life: *Dharma* is duty or righteousness; *Artha* is wealth; *Kāma* is desire or love; and *Mōkṣa* is emancipation from the worldly existence.

Dharma-śāstras

Dharma-śāstras are the so-called Law-books (4, 5). There are eighteen Śāstras named after the ṛṣis who compiled them (4). Duties of different categories of individuals, duties of kings, auspicious ceremonies, laws of inheritance and marriage, criminal justice, examination of a witness, and such issues are given in these law books. The most famous Dharma-śāstra is the Manu-smṛti.

Manu-smṛti classifies men and women separately. Men are classified according to their social status into varṇas (castes), and also according to their spiritual evolution into āśramas – Brahmaçārya is the student life, Gṛhastya is the house-holder life, Vānaprastya is the retired person's life, and Sannyāsa is the life of a monk. Women are classified according to their domestic status – married, unmarried, widowed and such. Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mōkṣa, as mentioned above, are said to be the four values that are to be pursued (2).

Śūnyasampādane in its notes section (1) refers to Manu-smṛti II.94 which says 'Desire is never extinguished by the enjoyment of desired object; it only grows stronger like a fire fed with clarified-butter'. But some of the more common passages that are in the Manu-smṛti are as follows (40): In V.19, it says 'A twice-born who knowingly eats mushrooms, a village-pig, garlic, a village-cock, onions, or leeks, will become an outcaste'. In XI.54, it says 'Penances, therefore, must always be performed for the sake of purification because, those whose sins have not been expiated, are born again with disgraceful marks'.

Vyāsa

Vyāsa means 'compiler'. Vēda Vyāsa means 'compiler of the Vēdas'. The term Vyāsa itself has come to be known only as Vēda Vyāsa. Both these terms are titles conferred on a person named Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana. Kṛṣṇa is a proper name and it means dark or black. Dvaipāyana means a person born on an island. Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana is said to have been born on an island in the Yamuna River. His mother was a fisherman's daughter named Satyavati, and his father was a Ṛṣi by name Parāśara. The term Pārāśarya refers to Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana as the son of Parāśara.

The ever present vibrations/sounds were perceived/heard by the ancient Ṛṣis; the Ṛṣis compiled them in the form of Vēda (Vēda means knowledge or wisdom) in the ancient language of Vēdic Sanskrit; and these compositions were transmitted orally/verbally over thousands of years. In course of time a need arose to compile and record the Vēda. Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana, now revered as the **Vēda Vyāsa**, collected the existing Vēda and arranged it into four Vēda format. All the hymns used by the Hōṭṛ-priest to invite the various divinities to the sacrificial ceremony became the Ṛgvēda. All the liturgical parts of the Vēda, useful to the Adhvaryu-priest, the chief executor of the sacrificial rites, formed the Yajurveda. Collection of all the musical chants, especially those associated with the Sōma group of sacrifices, and to be sung by the Udgāṭṛ-priest (the singer), was named the Sāmavēda. The rest, a sort of miscellaneous appendices and addenda, assigned to the Brahmā-priest who is considered as the supervisor over the whole sacrificial process, became the Atharvavēda (2). Furthermore, Vyāsa taught the Vēdas to his four chief disciples, and assigned one each of the Vēdas to them to be transmitted over the generations. Paila was assigned Ṛgvēda, Vaiśampāyana the Yajurveda, Jaimini the Sāmavēda, and Samantu the Atharvavēda.

It is generally believed that Vyāsa compiled and classified the Vēdas more than 5,000 years ago (4). It is also believed that Vēda Vyāsa authored Mahābhārata which includes the well known Bhagavad-Gītā, the 18 Purāṇas, and the Brahma-sūtra. However there is considerable controversy not only about Vyāsa's time period, but also about the authorship of his works other than the compilation of the Vēdas. This controversy seems to be mainly due to confusion caused by now defunct theory of Aryan Invasion of India. This theory had implied that there was no Sanskrit or Vēdas in ancient India prior to the so called invasion which supposedly had occurred between 1,500 BCE and 1,200 BCE. Because of this false theory, everything had been dated since that false event. Once the theory was disproved, all these time periods had to be reevaluated and corrected.

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blind; he is the father of the Kauravas (said to be 100 sons). Pāṇḍu was born pale and anemic; he is the father of the Pāṇḍavas (five sons). The Kurukṣētra war was between these cousins the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. Kurukṣētra land roughly corresponds to the present day Haryana State in India.

The core of the Mahābhārata is called '**Jaya**' which means victory. Jaya with its 8,800 verses is attributed to Vēda Vyāsa. **Bhārata** with 24,000 verses, containing the Jaya in its entirety, is said to have been recited by Vaiśampāyana who was one of Vyāsa's chief disciples. **Mahābhārata** is more than 100,000 verses, and is the expanded version of Bhārata. It is said to have been recited by Ugrasrava Sauti, a professional story teller, to an assembly of Ṛṣis. Jaya is structured in the form of a dialog between Dhritarāstra and his advisor and chariot driver Sanjaya. Jaya deals with diverse subjects such as geography, history, warfare, religion and morality. Jaya includes the well known **Bhagavad-Gītā**. Bhagavad-Gītā is a dialog in a dialog. The inner dialog is between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna on the battle field of Kurukṣētra. Divine Kṛṣṇa is not to be confused with Vyāsa whose name is Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana. Arjuna is one of the Pāṇḍavas, and Kṛṣṇa was his chariot driver. **Thus, technically speaking, Vyāsa authored 'Jaya' including the 'Bhagavad-Gītā', and not Mahābhārata.**

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It is stated that Vyāsa's father Parāśara wrote the original text of Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and Vyāsa authored the rest, and then edited and presented all the 18 Purāṇas (4). Furthermore, it is said that Vyāsa's son Śuka was the narrator of Vyāsa's major Purāṇa called Śrīmad Bhāgavata. **There is a considerable controversy about the authorship of the Purāṇas.** It is generally considered that Vēda Vyāsa did not compose the Purāṇas.

Most of the controversy is on the authorship of **Brahma Sūtra**. Sūtras are the main parts of the doctrines of the Hindu Philosophical Systems. Sūtra is an aphorism with minimal use of words to project a thought (4). Brahma Sūtra systematizes the thought of the Upaniṣads, which are the later parts of the Vēdas; therefore, it forms part of the Uttara Mīmāṃsā Philosophy. Brahma Sūtra is the book of reference in all matters pertaining to the Vēdāntic doctrines (42). It was composed by the sage **Bādarāyaṇa** (42). Bādarāyaṇa lived under a Badari tree at the Badari Āśrama in the Himalayas. Traditionalists identify Bādarāyaṇa with Vyāsa, and believe that the two are one and the same. Śaṅkara of the

Advaita Vēdāntic School of Philosophy identifies the two separately where as Rāmānuja of the Viśiṣṭādvaitism implies that they are one and the same. However, it is generally believed that, and many modern historians think that, Bādarāyaṇa and Vēda Vyāsa were two different persons (see 'Brahma-Sūtra' article).

Bhagavad-Gītā

Bhagavadgītā means 'song of God', and it is sometimes simply referred to as 'The Gītā', 'The Song'. Bhagavadgītā is the most popular of all the Hindu scriptures. It occupies a special place in the School of Vēdānta, representing one of the three authoritative works on Vēdānta known as *prasthāna-traya*, the other two being the Upaniṣads and the Brahma-sūtras (2). Its sublime and the universal teaching, appeals to everyone. The fundamentals of the Vēdic philosophy are in the Upaniṣads, and the essence of the Upaniṣads is the Bhagavadgītā. Most of what follows in this article is taken from two Bhagavadgītā books referenced here (43, 44).

Bhagavadgītā is a treatise on the Reality called Brahman. This Reality has three categories. The Immanent Reality is the phenomenal universe. It is the abode of all living beings. It serves as a divinely devised training ground where, through pain and pleasure, and through life and death, all beings are driven to evolve in the Divinity. The Transcendental Reality is Īśvara who contains controls and governs the Immanent Reality. All worship and adoration are offered to this Reality. Īśvara bestows emancipation to those who perfect themselves. It is said that Īśvara is embodied in Kṛṣṇa for the benefit of the devotees. The substratum of these two categories of Reality is the Absolute Reality which is also called Nirguṇa Brahman or Pure Consciousness. The goal of human life is to dissolve one's individuality into this Cosmic Awareness – *Prajñāna* - that is Brahman.

The process by which one regains one's identity with Brahman is through **Yōga**. Bhagavadgītā is a manual of the science of Yōga and its different paths. The emphasis in Bhagavadgītā is on the Karma Yōga, the path of non-selfish action. This is somewhat of a departure from the Upaniṣadic teaching that prefers the path of Jñāna Yōga, the path of discriminative Knowledge. This may be because the Upaniṣads were geared specifically to those already free from social obligations – the forest dwellers and the hermits, where as the Bhagavadgītā is intended for the society at large, the Karma Yōga being relevant to the householder as well as to the monastic (2).

Bhagavad-Gītā is composed as a dialog in a dialog. The inner dialog is between Divine Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna on the battle field of Kurukṣētra. Arjuna is one of the Pāṇḍavas, and Kṛṣṇa is his chariot driver (see 'Smṛti' and 'Vyāsa' articles). The Kurukṣētra battlefield is said to be analogous to the human body where both good and bad are utilized to serve its purpose. The life lived on earth is a conflict between the good and the bad, and although the bad are more in number the good ultimately triumphs.

Bhagavadgītā begins with the *Gītā Dhyānam* which means 'Meditation on Gītā'. This meditation has seven verses. The fourth one says something like this: All the Upaniṣads are the cows, the one who milks the cows is Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna is the calf, people of intellect are the drinkers, and the milk is the supreme nectar of the Gītā. It basically says that Bhagavadgītā is the essence of the Upaniṣads. Furthermore, in the colophon at the end

of each chapter, The Bhagavadgītā refers to itself as an Upaniṣad – ‘In the Upaniṣad of Bhagavad-Gītā, the knowledge of Brahman, the Science of Yoga ...’

The main part of Bhagavadgītā has 700 verses which are distributed into 18 chapters. The first chapter is entitled ‘The Despondency of Arjuna’. Kṛṣṇa’s main teaching starts in the second chapter in response to the despondency of Arjuna who does not want to engage in battle against his own kith and kin.

Bhagavad-Gītā References in Śūnyasāmpādane

Bhagavad-Gītā is the essence of what is in the Upaniṣads. Most of the Viraśaiva concepts are from the Upaniṣads. Therefore, Bhagavad-Gītā is a good referral source for the Viraśaiva concepts.

The Viraśaivas have devised a practical way of achieving Oneness, with a common person in mind. The attainment of Oneness is within reach of anyone whether it is a man or a woman, or of any caste or creed, and it is not a monopoly of a chosen few. This concept is exemplified in Bhagavad-Gītā: Verse IX.32 says 'for those who take refuge in the Blessed Lord, though of inferior birth – such as women, Vaiśyas and Śūdras – even they attain the Supreme'; and in verses XVIII.41 to 46, the Gītā says something like this 'to whatever caste one may belong, zealous performance of one's duty will lead one to the ultimate goal'.

The Śūnyasāmpādane book (1) quotes eight Bhagavad-Gītā verses to explain some of the vācānas contained in there. Those references are as follows.

The first reference to Bhagavad-Gītā comes in the explanation of Prabhudēva's vācāna in Māyāvilāsaviḍāmbana-sthala in Śūnyasāmpādane. It is the stage when the play of Māyā is held up to ridicule. The vācāna is a complex one, and it is said that it conveys this meaning – 'So long as the ignorant Jīva (individual self) is caught in the clutches of Kāla (time), Kāma (lust) and Karma (law of cause and effect of actions), the Jīva is unable to realize its own nature, its real identity'. The vācāna implies that Jīva has to rid itself of Māyā by recognizing that the Self is different from Māyā and that the play of Māyā is working against the Self.

The referenced Bhagavad-Gītā verse VII.15 is as follows – 'The evil doers, the ignorant and the lowest persons whose intellect has been deprived of its discrimination by Māyā, do not worship or seek refuge in the Blessed Lord'.

The next reference is in the Liṅgadhāraṇasthala in the following context. While Animiṣa was in complete trance, gazing at the Iṣṭaliṅga on his palm, and not physically able to give Dīkṣā (initiation), Prabhudēva picks up the Iṣṭaliṅga from Animiṣa's palm. At that instant there is Divine descent into the mind, life and body of Prabhudēva (meaning that Prabhudēva instantly receives Dīkṣā from Animiṣa), and Animiṣa attains Śūnya with his body falling to the ground. Prabhudēva consoles himself by realizing that Animiṣa has not perished, but has attained the Absolute. In this context, part of the vācāna says 'for the Real Unborn, there is no death'.

The referenced Bhagavad-Gītā verse II.20 is as follows – 'The Ātman is neither born nor does it die, and having come into being It does not cease to exist. It is unborn, eternal, constant and ancient. It does not die when the body dies'.

Context for the next reference is as follows. When Prabhudēva encounters intensely grieving Mukṭāyī upon her brother Ajagaṇṇa's death, he tells her that mourning in the case of Ajagaṇṇa is not right. Part of this vaṇcana says that her grief seems sorrow-less and her lamentation seems to be without grief.

The referenced verse II.11 is something like this 'The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead'. The reason is as above 'Ātman does not die when the body dies'.

Then there is this encounter with the great Śivayōgi Siddharāma. It is the vaṇcana of Siddharāma that is being explained. Siddharāma admits his mistake in not recognizing the greatness of Prabhudēva at that encounter, and surrenders to Prabhudēva.

The referenced verse XVIII.62 says something like 'Seek refuge in Him with all your heart. By His grace you will gain Supreme Peace and the Eternal Abode'.

Next reference is again for Siddharāma's vaṇcana. This is in response to Prabhudēva saying that the Knowledge of Reality destroys the Sañcita Karma that merely stays accumulated, and also prevents Āgāmi Karma that is being gathered in this life (the effects of Prārabdha Karma are being experienced in this life and cannot be changed). Siddharāma, in his defense, says that his yōga is a process wherein one stage follows another, and thus it is necessary that he perform his deeds.

The referenced Bhagavad-Gītā verse V.11 is like this 'For self-purification, the Yōgi, abandoning attachment, performs work with the body, the mind, the intellect and the senses only'. Here, because the Yōgi does not seek fruit for his action, his body is merely performing action without gathering any Karma.

Another reference for Siddharāma's vaṇcana comes during his discussion with Prabhudēva. The vaṇcana means something like 'lust is the root cause of imprisonment in the body, anger is the root cause of clinging to life, and greed is the root cause of attachment to the all-embracing world of senses'.

In support of this vaṇcana, Bhagavad-Gītā verse XVI.12 is quoted. It comes in the context of description of people with demonic qualities, and says some thing like this 'Bound by a hundred ties of desire, and enslaved by lust and anger, they strive by unjust means to hoard wealth for sensual enjoyment'.

The next explanation is for Mōḷige Mārayya's vaṇcana which goes something like this 'If one goes to heaven by virtue of devotion or meritorious deeds, after enjoying the fruits of those deeds, one returns to this world. But Basavaṇṇa and other great bhaktas, knowing this, did not go in that path; they attained the highest state here and now'.

The referenced Bhagavad-Gītā verse IX.21 tells about the knowers of the three Vēdas

and performers of Yajñas (sacrifices) who go to heaven. Having enjoyed the vast world of heaven, they return to this world of mortals on the exhaustion of their merits; thus abiding by the injunction of the three Vēdas, desiring objects of desires, they go and come.

The last referral comes in context of the discussion between Prabhudēva and Akka Mahādēvi. It is about Prabhudēva's vaĉana which says something like 'The body, the bones and the senses are all filled with lust, anger and greed. The god of love is lust, and it is to be subdued'.

Two Bhagavad-Gītā verses II.62-63 are referred to here. 'One develops attachment to the senses by constantly thinking about them; from that attachment desire comes; from desire anger sprouts forth; from anger proceeds delusion; from delusion comes confused memory; from confused memory comes the ruin of reason; and due to ruin of reason the person perishes'.

Although Bhagavad-Gītā has been sparingly referred to and quoted here, it is a good source of reference for Vīraśaivas, because it is the essence of the Upaniṣads from where most of the Vīraśaiva concepts have arisen.

Dharśana

Dharśana scriptures are not included in the śruti or smṛti texts, but are included in a separate category. Dharśanas are the six Philosophical Systems that are based on the Vēdas. The Dharśana scriptures are called Dharma-Sūtras. Sūtra is an aphorism with minimal use of words to project a thought. These Philosophical Systems were developed by six sages at different time periods, said to be in the time period prior to Buddha. The Sāṃkhya System was developed by the sage Kapila. The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā was developed by the sage Jaimini. The Uttara Mīmāṃsā was developed by the sage Bādarāyaṇa. The Yoga System was by the sage Patañjali. The Nyāya System was founded by the sage Goutama. And the Vaiśēṣika System was developed by the sage Kanāda (5).

The six Philosophical Systems were called the Orthodox Schools, because, they accepted the authority of the Vēdas. The systems that did not accept the authority of the Vēdas were designated as the Heterodox Systems. One system with extreme retaliation was called the Ćārvāka. The Ćārvākas were extremely materialistic and anti-religious. The other two well known Heterodox Systems are the Buddha and the Jaina (42). The allegiance to the Vēdas of the six Orthodox Systems varies widely. The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā and Uttara Mīmāṃsā Systems are intimately connected with the Vēdas, whereas the others are loosely connected (42).

It is said that the thought on the subject matter of these Sūtras developed over many generations of thinkers, and that the authors of the systems merely systematized the thoughts. The six orthodox systems of thought further developed in different intellectual centers, many of which had already been well established all over India during the Upaniṣadic period (42).

The original treatises of these Philosophical Systems were written using very concise aphorisms called Sūtras in Sanskrit. Because these Sūtras are very brief and terse, they needed explanatory notes or commentaries. These commentaries were written at a later date by other scholars (5). These later literary writings are called by many names such as Bhāṣya, Kārikā and Vārtika. The original treatise of the Uttara Mīmāṃsā System is the famous **Brahma-Sūtra**. Several commentaries have been written on it. The three very famous commentaries are written by Śaṅkarācārya (8th century CE) the exponent of Advaita or Monism, Rāmānujācārya (11th century CE) the exponent of Viṣiṣṭadvaita or qualified Monism, and Ānanda Thīrtha more commonly known as Madhvācārya (1199 – 1278 CE) the exponent of Dvaita or Dualism.

Brahma-Sūtra

Brahma-Sūtra is the book of reference in all matters pertaining to the Vēdāntic doctrines. It occupies a special place in the School of Vēdānta, representing one of the three authoritative works on Vēdānta known as *prasthāna-traya*, the other two being the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavad-Gītā (2). It forms part of the philosophy of the Uttara Mīmāṃsā System. Brahma in Brahma-Sūtra refers to Brahman of the Upaniṣads and not to Brahma the creator deity of the three main divinities. Sūtra is an aphorism with minimal use of the words to project a thought. Sūtras are the main parts of the doctrines of the Hindu Philosophical Systems. The word 'Sūtra' means a 'string'. It is said that Brahma-Sūtra is a string in the form of a garland that holds the loose Vēdāntic flowers shed by the Vēdic tree. The authority behind the Brahma-Sūtra is the Upaniṣads. It deals conclusively with the goal of the Saṅnyāsins, and it is an enquiry into Brahman (4).

Brahma-Sūtra was composed by the sage **Bādarāyaṇa**. Bādarāyaṇa lived under a Badari tree at the Badari Āśrama in the Himalayas. Traditionalists identify Bādarāyaṇa with Vyāsa, and believe that the two are one and the same. Śaṅkara of the Advaita Vēdāntic School of Philosophy identifies the two separately where as Rāmānuja of the Viśiṣṭādvaitism implies that they are one and the same. In Bhagavad-Gītā XIII.4 the word 'Brahma-sūtra-padaih' appears. This compound word is interpreted as 'in passages indicative of Brahman'. This raises a question whether Brahma-Sūtra existed at the time of the composition of the Bhagavad-Gītā. Brahma-Sūtra in a few sūtras says some thing like 'It is also stated in the Smṛti' and 'The Smṛti declares' and such; the commentators quote the Bhagavad-Gītā texts to mean the same for what is in those sūtras. The confusion that has arisen from this cross reference might have been because some form of Vēdānta-sūtras must have existed before, and that Vēda Vyāsa must have had a hand in the present recensions of the Sūtra (42). It is generally believed that, and many modern historians think that, Bādarāyaṇa and Vēda Vyāsa were two different persons.

Brahma-Sūtra has 555 sūtras; the book has four chapters with four further divisions in each chapter. Chapter one states that all the Vēdānta texts talk about Brahman, that Brahman is the ultimate Reality, and that attaining Brahman is the ultimate goal. The second chapter discusses and refutes the possible objections to Vēdānta Philosophy. The third chapter gives the process by which ultimate emancipation can be achieved. And the fourth chapter talks of the state that is achieved in final emancipation (Wikipedia.org). Because of the minimal use of words in each sūtra, it is difficult for an ordinary person to understand what exactly the sūtra means. Some examples are as follows, taken from the Brahma-Sūtra book referenced here (42).

Sūtra I.1.1 is '*Athātō brahmajijñāsā*'. The word for word translation is something like 'Now therefore the inquiry of Brahman'. This has to be explained further for better understanding – 'Now' is said to mean 'After the attainment of requisite spiritual qualities'; 'therefore' is said to mean 'as the results obtained by sacrifices are ephemeral, whereas

the results of knowledge of Brahman is eternal'; and 'the inquiry of Brahman' is said to mean 'the inquiry of the real nature of Brahman'. Thus this sūtra has been explained to be - 'After the attainment of requisite spiritual qualities, as the results obtained by sacrifices are ephemeral, whereas the results of knowledge of Brahman is eternal, the inquiry of the real nature of Brahman which is beset with doubts owing to the conflicting views of various schools of philosophy, should be taken up'.

Sūtra I.1.2 is '*Janmādyasya yataḥ*'. Its word for word translation is 'Origin etc. of this from which'. Then it has been explained to mean as - 'Brahman is that omniscient omnipotent cause from which proceed the origin sustenance and dissolution of this world'.

Sūtra I.1.3 is '*Śāstrayōnītvāt*'. This compound word has been translated as 'The scripture being the means of right knowledge'. Then it has been explained as follows – 'The scripture alone being the means of right knowledge with regard to Brahman, the proposition laid in Sūtra 2 becomes corroborated'.

Sūtra I.1.4 is '*Tattu samanvayāt*'. Its translation is 'That but because It is the main purport'. Further details given as to what it means is – 'But that Brahman is to be known only from the scriptures and not independently by any other means is established because It is the main purport of all Vēdānta texts'.

Sūtra I.1.22 contains the word '**Liṅga**' in it. It is '*Ākāśasthalliṅgāt*'. It is translated as 'Ākāśa on account of the characteristic marks of that'. It is then explained as follows – 'The word Ākāśa (sky/space/cosmos) is Brahman on account of the characteristic marks of That, the Brahman, being mentioned'. Here 'Liṅga' means 'characteristic mark'.

As it can be understood from the above examples, the sūtras use very few words, and are very brief and terse. Because of this, the sūtras can be interpreted many different ways. Furthermore Brahma-Sūtra does not give any specific reference as to which text of the scripture is being discussed. Thus raising controversy as to what the explanation should be. Many scholars (Ācāryas) have written commentaries on this very popular Sūtra. In the absence of a universally acceptable explanation, each commentator is free to express whatever one considers it to be.

Despite all this, some great commentators agree on certain points as to what the Brahma-Sūtra says – Brahman is the cause of this world; the knowledge of Brahman leads to final emancipation which is the goal to be attained; and Brahman can be known only through the scriptures and not through reasoning. However, there is considerable disagreement between them on many points as to what it states, such as – the nature of Brahman, Its causality with respect to the world, the relation of individual soul to Brahman, and the condition of the soul in the state of release.

Six Schools of Philosophy

Hinduism accommodates both theistic (belief in the existence of God) and atheistic (belief that there is no God) ideas. Based on the Vēdas, there are six major religious philosophical systems which were developed by Hindu sages at different periods of time. In addition many other systems have been adopted by other Hindu groups. All these systems are so diverse that each one may qualify to be a separate religion.

Sāṁkhya System is one of the oldest philosophical systems. It was founded by sage Kapila. It is atheistic, but still it can help people attain spiritual liberation. This system recognizes two types of ultimate realities – Puruṣa and Prakṛti. Puruṣa is pure spirit, and there are as many Puruṣas as there are conscious beings. Prakṛti is primordial matter. Puruṣa must acquire the knowledge – Vivēka jñāna – that, as spirit, it is completely distinct from Prakṛti and Prakṛti's evolved products – the body-mind complex. Only this knowledge will disentangle Puruṣa from Prakṛti, and result in its emancipation. This liberation can be achieved even during one's life while still inside the body (5).

The Sāṁkhya concept of Creation without any God is more than interesting because it is incorporated into the concepts of some of the theistic philosophical systems.

Creation according to Sāṁkhyas: Sāṁkhyas recognize two Realities - Puruṣa and Prakṛti. *Puruṣa* is pure spirit and is totally devoid of matter. It is passive and remains indifferent. It does not create the world. There are as many Puruṣas as there are conscious beings. *Prakṛti* is non-conscious primordial matter. It is constituted of three cosmic factors or potentialities. These are extremely subtle substances or qualities (guṇa), and they are said to be in equilibrium. The three guṇas are Sattva, the equilibrating power or the factor of presentation that gives rise to the desire to return to the Source of being; Rajas, the projecting power or the nature of outgoing activity and movement; and Tamas, the veiling power that causes delusion and ignorance. The theory of the three guṇas is described as the most noted contribution to philosophical thought by the Sāṁkhyas, and is accepted by the other schools of Vēdāntic philosophy. In the proximity of Puruṣa, Prakṛti supposedly becomes active as a consequence of in-equilibrium of the three guṇas, and goes through a process of evolution to become the world. It evolves into 23 evolutes. Each evolute is known as tattvam, 'thing-in-itself', meaning quality of being that, basic material or inherent principle. Puruṣa, Prakṛti, and its 23 evolutes constitute a total of 25 tattvas (1, 4, and 5).

Mahat (Buddhi) or cosmic intellect is the first evolute. It is the mental faculty of intelligence with a capacity for making distinctions.

Ahaṅkāra, the cosmic ego is the second product. It has three types of ego in it.

The first type in which the Sattvagūṇa predominates, evolves into *manas* (mind), five

jñānēndrias (sense organs) – *śrōtra* the sense organ of hearing, *tvak* the touch sensing organ, *ċakṣus* the sight organ, *rasana* the taste sensing organ, and *ghrāṇa* the sense organ of smell – and five karmēndrias (motor organs) – *vāk* the faculty of communication (speech), *hastā* the faculty of manipulation (hand), *pāda* the faculty of locomotion (foot), *pāyu* the digestive faculty (anus), and *upasthā* the procreative faculty (genitals).

The second type of ego with the predominance of Rajōguṇa provides five kinds of energy - *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna* – to the first and third ego types for them to evolve further. These Prāṇas are not counted as tattvas.

The third ego type with the predominance of Tamōguṇa evolves into five tanmātras (subtle physical essences) - *śabda* the subtle element of sound, *sparsāna* the subtle element of touch, *rūpa* the subtle element of form, *rasa* the subtle element of taste, and *gandha* the subtle element of smell. And the five tanmātras further evolve into five mahābhūtas (gross physical elements) - *ākāśa* (sky/space/ether/cosmos), *vāyu* (air/wind), *tējas*, (lustre/fire/light), *ap* (water/liquid), and *pṛthivī* the earth.

These elements combine in different proportions according to the creation rules of permutation to further evolve into manifold universe.

The Yōga School was founded by the sage Patañjali who is the author of the Aṣṭāṅga (eight-limb) Yōga, the practice of which results in the Union of the Individual Self and the Universal Self. The philosophy is that, complete control over the mind's distortions and disturbances is necessary in order for the perfection to manifest itself. God can be the subject of concentration. But God as an all-powerful being to whom supplication may be made, is not recognized in this system. In order to follow this yōga, one need not believe in or accept God. Meditation on personal God is one of the methods for the attainment of the highest union. The perfection is attained while the person is still alive.

Aṣṭāṅga yōga as the name implies has eight limbs or steps, namely – *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. These eight steps are grouped into three disciplines (48). *Bahiraṅga-sādhana* which means the practice of external purification, comprises of ethical practices in the form of *yama* or general ethical principles, *niyama* or self-restraint, and physical practices in the form of *āsanas*. The second discipline *antaraṅga-sādhana* which means practice of internal purification, is the emotional or mental discipline brought to maturity by *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra* or mental detachment. The third, *antarātma-sādhana* which means the practice of purification of the inner Self, is the successful quest of the soul through *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* (48).

Yōga, when unspecified, usually refers to Patañjali's Yōga-Sūtra. Please see 'Yōga' article in this book for details. Aṣṭāṅga yōga is also referred to as Rāja yōga – 'kingly or royal yōga'. **Śūnyasampādane** (1), in its concluding remarks, states 'Śūnyasampādane is a treasury of the attainment of the great Rājayōga'. Thus, Rājayōga is part of the practice

of Viraśaivas. Please see 'Viraśaiva Yōga' article in Part I of this book.

Nyāya and Vaiśeṣikā Schools of Philosophy: The Nyāya System was founded by sage Goutama, and the Vaiśeṣikā System was founded by sage Kanāda. These two schools have similar concepts. With logic and deduction, they propound a theory that the world is real and not illusory, and that the individual souls are many and different from the cosmic Soul. They strongly affirm the existence of God and that Paramēśvara created the universe (4). Liberation is achieved by cultivating ethical virtues and acquiring right knowledge. This state of liberation called Apavarga is said to be a separation from all qualities, and is said to be beyond pleasure, happiness, pain or any other experience. There is no rebirth after this achievement (5).

Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā Philosophical School: Pūrva Mīmāṃsā System was founded by sage Jaimini. The sage Jaimini's sūtra book has 12 chapters, and discusses 1,000 topics; each subject matter is in one Adhikaraṇa. In these 1,000 Adhikaraṇas, selected Vēdic hymns are examined. The term Mīmāṃsā, in the Mīmāṃsā School of Philosophy, means an enquiry or deep analysis of a subject worthy of reverence namely the Vēdas (4). Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā stresses the importance of sacrifices and rituals mentioned in the Karma Kāṇḍa portion which is the first or older part (Pūrva-Bhāga) of the Vēdas.

For the followers of this philosophy, the matter, of whether God exists or not, is not their concern. They believe that God is not the bestower of the results of actions or karma, that every act automatically results in its fruit/reward, yielding good rewards for merit and bad rewards for bad deeds, and that, even the non-performance of daily rituals (nityakarma) results in bad rewards. Furthermore, for them the question of creation is not important, because the world has always been in existence without a beginning (4). The Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā School believes only in after-death liberation of the soul. Mōkṣa can be achieved through the right performance of rituals as enjoined in the Vēdas. The liberated soul goes to svarga (heaven, paradise) and enjoys heavenly bliss according to the early Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā System, but according to the later System, Mōkṣa is a state devoid of the possibility of rebirth, and consequently of any pain or suffering; it does not mention any heavenly bliss (5).

It is to be pointed out that their process of liberation is some times referred to as karma mārga (karma path), but it should not be confused with karma mārga and Karma Yōga of the Vēdāntins. Pūrva-Mīmāṃsākas expect a reward for every action or karma they perform. Whereas the philosophy of Karma Yōga and Karma Mārga of the Vēdāntins is that the karma should be performed without expectation of any reward, and that it should be dedicated to God.

Uttara-Mīmāṃsā System or the Vēdānta Philosophical School: Brahma-Sūtra forms the main treaty in this system (see 'Brahma-Sūtra' article). The authority behind Brahma-Sūtra is the Upaniṣads. It deals conclusively with the goal of the Sannyāsis, and it is an enquiry into Brahman. The sūtras use very few words, and are very brief and

terse. Because of this, the sūtras can be interpreted many different ways. Furthermore Brahma-Sūtra does not give any specific reference as to which text of the scripture is being discussed, thus raising controversy as to what the explanation should be. Many scholars (Ācāryas) have written commentaries on this very popular Sūtra. In the absence of a universally acceptable explanation, each commentator is free to express whatever one considers it to be. Based on these commentaries, this Uttara Mīmāṃsā System has branched out to different Philosophical Systems. Three of these Philosophies are based on the three famous Philosophers – Śaṅkarācārya (8th century CE), Rāmānujācārya (11th century CE) and Ānanda Thīrtha, more commonly known as Madhvācārya (1199 to 1278 CE) – who have written their versions of commentaries on Brahma-Sūtra.

Śaṅkarācārya's Advaita Philosophy is the one that is usually referred to as 'Advaitism' (45). According to the Advaitins, Brahman is the only Reality (*Satya*), one without a second; therefore, it follows that everything other than Brahman can have no real existence and must be regarded as false (*Mithyā*). Brahman is neither male nor female, and has no active consciousness. It is pure knowledge. The Jīva or the Individual Soul is Brahman itself. There can be no real birth, death or origination for the Jīva – it is described as being in par with the Jīva in a dream. From Brahman's standpoint, the world has not really been created; it is real to those who are under the spell of Māyā (illusion). A rope in partial darkness may appear to be a snake to an observer; at that moment the observer perceives the snake to be real. But when the light shines, the misperception disappears. Here the rope is real and the snake is not; the rope represents Nirguṇa Brahman and the snake represents the universe.

The Advaitins stand by very firmly on their belief that only Brahman is real and everything else is false. However, in order to appease the others, when Advaitins declare Brahman is real and the world is false, they do not want to assert that the world is absolutely nonexistent. The world is only relatively *Mithyā*. So long as the knowledge of the one Reality Brahman is not securely cognized, the world is a reality which can be experienced. The Advaitins declare that to make matters clear, they are prepared to concede that there are two states of Brahman – the Higher and the Lower. The Higher Brahman represents the **Pāramārthika state** where the Vedas, Sutras etc., serve no purpose. The Lower Brahman representing the **Vyāvahārika state** affords ample scope for any one according to one's ability to strive for the goal of one's choice. Even in this state it is understood that the person follows the Sūtras that are based on the Śruti texts. The person has full liberty to meditate upon or worship any deity one likes, provided that one understands that all this is a preparatory stage to enable one to reach the Higher Brahman.

Both Śaṅkarācārya's and Vīraśaivas' Advaita philosophies agree with the concept of oneness and that God is real, but they disagree with regard to whether God has active consciousness or not. Śaṅkarācārya's Advaitism believes in the reality of Knowledge alone, whereas Vīraśaivism believes in the reality of both Knowledge and action. It is one of the cardinal principles of Vīraśaivism that knowledge is action, and action is knowledge.

The term *samarasa* conveys the sense of complete harmony between knowledge and action (1). Both systems believe that one can attain oneness with the Absolute, even when alive. The spiritual aspirant has to first go through various moral and ethical practices, worship of personal God, etc., and then go through intense meditation which enables the aspirant the knowledge of the inner Divine Self. Both systems believe that worship of, or meditation on the monosyllable Ō̄M̄ can lead to the highest knowledge. When ignorance is completely eliminated, and all sense of I or Thou is wiped out, oneness is attained (45). See 'Jñāna-yōga' in the 'Yōga' article.

Rāmānujācārya's version is known as **Viśiṣṭādvaitism**. It is said to be a qualified monism. It holds the view that there are three entities – God, soul, and matter or Prakṛti – which are steady factors, and the three form inseparable elements of one. God is the Supreme Ruler, the soul is the enjoyer, and matter is the enjoyed. All these three exist together both before the creation and after the creation. Creation is simply the manifestation in different forms by the will of God (46). If so, some state that, it can be categorized as trinitism (belief in three realities), not Advaitism (45). Viśiṣṭādvaitins believe that only Bhaktimārg/Bhaktiyōga can lead to Mōkṣa (salvation). They also believe that a person can attain Mōkṣa only after the person's death. This Mōkṣa means living blissfully in Vaikuṅṭha (God Viṣṇu's abode), subservient to God Viṣṇu, not becoming one with the God.

Madhvācārya's version of the Vēdānta Philosophy is dualistic – **Dvaita Vēdānta**, and thus not Advaitism. Dvaita School believes in liberation only after death. A person who has gone through rigorous ethical and moral disciplines, followed by, acquiring right knowledge, right action, non-attachment and devotional meditation on the personal God, becomes fit for release or Mōkṣa. There are four gradations of Mōkṣa; the first one is the lowest, and the fourth one is the highest. Depending upon the person's spiritual progress, the departed soul may achieve any one of the four kinds of Mōkṣas. In Sālōkya, the departed soul resides blissfully in the abode of the personal God. In Sāmīpya the soul enjoys the bliss of extreme proximity to the personal God. In Sārūpya, the soul enjoys intense bliss by acquiring the form of the personal God. In Sāyujya or Kaivalya the soul becomes blissfully absorbed in the personal God (5).

Śūnyasāmpādane at the beginning of its fourth chapter (page 25, volume II of reference 1) says that Basavaṅṅa restored the practice of Vīraśaivism which had been tarnished by the six philosophical systems and six creeds. The 'six philosophical systems' are as above; the 'six creeds' refers to the doctrines of Śaiva, Śakta, Vaiṣṇava, Gāṅāpatya, Soura and Kāpālika which are the tāntric creeds (see 'Tantra' article).

Śaṅkarācārya

Śaṅkara who is respectfully called as Śaṅkarācārya has been acknowledged as one of the greatest philosophers Bharat (India) has ever produced. Although there is some disagreement as to the date of Śaṅkarācārya, it is generally accepted that he lived from 788 A. D. to 820 CE (45). Another reference (5), however, gives his date to be 700 – 740 CE. He was born at Kālaḍi in Kēraḷa (one of the states in India). His father died when Śaṅkara was 6 years old, and his mother permitted him to take Sannyāsa at the age of 12. He was the pupil of Govinda Yati, on the Narmada River, from 797 to 805. Yati himself was a pupil of a great yogin Gauḍapāda. After Yati died, Śaṅkarācārya, with his disciples, travelled incessantly through India to propagate his Advaita view. He established Maṭhas (Centers of Learning) at Dvārakā in the west, Jyotir in the Himalayas, Govardhana in the east, Śṛṅgēri in the south, and another one at Kāñḍi where Śaṅkarācārya himself became the first Pontiff. He died there in the year 820 CE (45).

As many as 400 works are found attributed to Śaṅkarācārya. It appears that his successors acting as Pontiffs at the different Maṭhas have written most of those, and tradition accepted those as homage to Śaṅkarācārya. It is generally accepted that Śaṅkarācārya wrote Bhāṣyas on the ten principal Upanishads – Īśāvāsya, Kēna, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitarēya, Ćhāndōgya and Bṛhadāraṇyaka, and also wrote his Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya. Kauṣītaki and the Svetāśvatara Upaniṣads are frequently referred to in his Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya, therefore, the Bhāṣyas on these two Upaniṣads may also have been written by him; however, it can not be definitely determined to be from his work. Śaṅkarācārya has been noted to be a master of Sanskrit prose style, exhibiting uniformity, regularity, precision, and balance (45).

According to Śaṅkarācārya's Advaita Philosophy, Brahman is the only Reality (*Satya*), one without a second; it follows therefore that everything other than Brahman can have no real existence and it must be regarded as *Mithyā* (false). Śaṅkarācārya was firmly convinced that Śruti texts describe Brahman alone as the Absolute Reality, and the world and everything else as false. He preached his Advaita doctrine with vigor and relentless logic.

At the time it became unbelievable that the world could be dubbed as unreal by Advaitins when everything is actually being experienced, perceived and enjoyed day after day by all. To clarify this situation, the concept of *Adhyāsa* (superimposition) was put forward. *Adhyāsa* makes one wrongly apprehend a thing as it is not, and this wrong apprehension persists till one is able to understand the thing as it is. Śaṅkarācārya states that the *Adhyāsa* is there from the beginning, rather it is beginning-less, and the people are really not to blame at all. If anyone is to be blamed for this, it is the creator Brahma who created the sense organs which can be described as 'tools of trade' for the people, as facing outwards, with the result that they can not secure the knowledge of the Atman within.

Śaṅkarācārya faced difficulty to convince others the authoritative nature of his philosophical position. Swearing by the Śruti, Śaṅkarācārya takes great pains to harmonize the conflicting relevant texts. He finds a way out of this chaos and solves the problem. There are two states of Brahman – the Higher and the Lower. The Higher Brahman represents the Pāramārthika state where the Vēdas, Sūtras etc., serve no purpose. The Lower Brahman representing the Vyāvahārika state affords ample scope for any one according to one's ability to strive for the goal of one's choice. By declaring all views excepting Advaita are valid for particular individuals in the Vyāvahārika state only. This is how Śaṅkarācārya disarms all opposition based upon the Śruti texts. He has no quarrel with other philosophical doctrines such as Dvaita, Dvaitādvaita, and such, so long as their validity keeps within the limits of the Vyāvahārika state. These different doctrines described as compromises with Advaita, do not do any damage to Advaita, they in fact are flattering the Advaita philosophy.

With a stroke of a genius, Śaṅkarācārya declaring that the world is an illusion and that there is only one Reality, and at the same time taking interest in the practical dealings of the world, was able to lessen the tensions between the various sectarian doctrines that had been flourishing in the country.

Yōga

The word yōga is derived from the Sanskrit verb root 'yuj', meaning to join, to unite or to yoke. Yōga means both 'union' and 'discipline', and it is the unitive-discipline. Yōga is a unique process, by the disciplined practice of which an aspirant, the individual Self, is united with the Universal Self. It is to be noted here that Vīraśaivas consider that the 'union' does not mean union of two separate entities which may imply duality. It is considered as 'union-less union' because it is the reformation of the same entity, which under the influence of Māyā (the power that obstructs the understanding of Reality), falsely appears to be two. Hindu philosophy is unique in that its different methods of yōga practice can lead to the same highest goal. For the psychic type of person, Rājayōga is suitable. The discriminating or the reasoning type of person is suited for the path of Jñāna yōga. Bhaktiyōga is suitable for a devotional type of person, and Karmayōga is for an action oriented person. A general study and practice of the principles of all types of yōgas may be more beneficial to an individual. **Śūnyasāmpādane** (1), in its concluding remarks, states 'Śūnyasāmpādane is a treasury of the attainment of the great Rājayōga'. Thus, Rājayōga is part of the practice of Vīraśaiva (see 'Vīraśaiva Yōga' article).

Yōga, when unspecified, usually refers to **Patañjali's Yōga-Sūtra**. The Yōga School was founded by Patañjali who is the author of the **Aṣṭāṅga (eight-limb) yōga**. The Yōga School's philosophy is that complete control over the mind's distortions and disturbances is necessary in order for perfection to manifest itself. God can be the subject of concentration and meditation. But God, as an all-powerful being to whom supplication may be made, is not recognized in this system. In order to follow this yōga, one need not believe in or accept God. Patañjali prescribes meditation on the personal God as one of the methods for the attainment of highest union (47). Aṣṭāṅga yōga is also referred to as Rāja yōga – 'kingly or royal yōga'.

Aṣṭāṅga yōga as the name implies has eight limbs or steps, namely – *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. These eight steps are grouped into three disciplines (48). *Bahiraṅga-sādhana* which means the practice of external purification, comprises of ethical practices in the form of yama or general ethical principles, niyama or self-restraint, and physical practices in the form of āsanās. The second discipline *antaraṅga-sādhana* which means practice of internal purification, is the emotional or mental discipline brought to maturity by prāṇāyāma and pratyāhāra or mental detachment. The third, *antarātma-sādhana* which means the practice of purification of the inner Self, is the successful quest of the soul through dhāraṇa, dhyāna and samādhi (48).

Yama consists of five very basic ethical principles that are to be followed in everyday life. The first one is **ahimsa** or nonviolence. The thought of non-injury is stressed to be as important, if not more important than non-injury by word or deed. One must love and sympathize with fellow beings, and must not harm anyone in any way. There is no room

for aggression, cruelty or harassment of others. If one is jealous, rude or unjust to any being, that one is said to never enter the gate of yōga, because the mind will be so disturbed that it will frustrate all effort at meditation (47). The second one is **satya** or truthfulness. Truth is to be observed at all times, not only in speech but also in action and thought. Lying, cheating, dishonesty and deception are not acceptable. Every gesture of the body, the body-language, must speak the truth so that the life becomes a living illustration of it (47). Truth will not cause any fear or uneasiness, and will bring one closer to perfection. Thirdly **asteya** or freedom from avarice or greed, also applies to both action and thought. It is more than just not stealing – one must not misappropriate someone else's property or right which may be gross, emotional, intellectual or spiritual. Misappropriation may inflict injury to one's consciousness, which may make it difficult to attain the path of perfection. In addition, one should recognize and acknowledge service done by others. Fourth, **brahmaçarya**, 'roaming in Brahman' is chastity. Behind the sex instinct, there is the instinct of immorality which is unacceptable. One must develop moral strength from within. Sex-energy is to be understood, managed, and converted into another channel of energy that will lead one towards the highest realization. The fifth ethical principle **aparigraha** is freedom from accepting gifts with strings attached. One should not accept any gifts from anyone who expects something in return. These types of gifts are considered equivalent to accepting bribes, and therefore should not be accepted. Maintenance of independence to fully uphold justice where applicable is important in maintaining clear consciousness.

Niyama is cultivation of good habits that give positive feelings. It also has five basic principles. **Sauçā** is cleanliness, both external and internal, and both physical and mental. Cleanliness must be cultivated within and expressed outwardly. **Santōśa** is contentment. Dissatisfied individual does not make any progress in any field. Discontentment makes chaos in ones mind. Contentment induces cheerfulness and mental calmness. **Tapas** is austerity. It involves self-discipline to purify body, senses and mind, and devotional attention to God. **Svadyāya** is regularity of study and steadiness in practice. This regularity of study and practice becomes a rhythm that helps one to accomplish things without much effort and with much ease. **Īśvarapranidhāna** is devotion or practice of surrendering oneself to the higher authority – God.

Āsana is a physical performance of a steady and sustained posture that is comfortable to the individual. Āsana is not just a mechanically assumed posture; it involves thought, at the end of which a balance is achieved between movement and resistance (48). Performance of āsanās results in a perfected body that has beauty, grace and strength. As the performances become effortless, synchronicity and harmony of the body-mind develops. Simple posture for yōga meditation that can be held for a sufficient time without any discomfort is the sitting position - sitting straight and cross-legged with eyes looking straight out and with hands resting on the lap. Effortless performance of the āsanās helps to reach the infinite being within. It is to be pointed out here that there is another category of yōga called Haṭhayōga that concentrates its efforts on the physical aspects of various āsanās to 'harden the body'. That is not the purpose here in this yōga system.

Prāṇāyāma is complete control and distribution of vital energy in the body by means of regulation of breathing. For details please refer to 'Prāṇa and Kuṇḍalini' article in this book.

Pratyāhāra is to disengage all sensory input, particularly about the objects of desire, coming from the sense organs, and release the mind from the power of these senses, so that the mind can then be directed to carry out the function of concentration for meditation. It requires regular and repeated practice to steady the mind. The process of steadying the mind is compared to stopping the flickering of the flame of a burning candle by freeing it from the influence of the wind.

Dhāraṇa: Once some control over the mind has been achieved as above, one must now practice holding the collected consciousness together for some period of time. One has to focus the thoughts to the object of meditation or the inner Self. Once this unwavering focus on the object or the inner-Self has been maintained for a period of time, then dhāraṇa state has been achieved.

Dhyāna is meditation proper. Meditation is described as a continuous stream of image making in one's consciousness (47). One continues the deep focused meditation. After about fifteen minutes or so of uninterrupted meditation, the image drops from consciousness, and only super-consciousness remains (47). This kind of meditation flows into the next stage, Samādhi.

Samādhi is achieved when continued meditation leads the knower, the unknown, and the known to become one (48). This is the state of total absorption where self-awareness is lost (48). In this state there is no bondage, no limitation, and no imperfection of any kind – perfection has been attained (47). When one meditates on an object, there is a subject-object relationship, and the Self is poured into the object which becomes the All, the abstract Truth. This kind of samādhi is called savikalpa samādhi ('with variation'). When no object is used for meditation, the Self, free from all modifications, reveals its own nature. This is nirvikalpa samādhi ('without variation, or changeless') (47). When lower self-consciousness vanishes and super Consciousness manifests in the highest state of samādhi, the perfectness has been attained. This complete realization is the goal of yōga.

Jñāna Yōga is the path of knowledge. The method of attaining perfection is based on the philosophy of non-dualism – advaitism (monism). The philosophy is – Brahman is the only reality; the universe as we know it is unreal; by the influence of Māyā the inscrutable power that obstructs our understanding, Brahman appears to us as the universe with its manifold manifestations; and the reality of the individual soul is nothing but Brahman. Here the contention is that there is nothing to be 'attained'. The veil of ignorance that obscures the knowledge has to be removed. As soon as the veil of Māyā is removed, 'you become what you have always been'. Discrimination and dispassion are the fundamental requisites for this goal of Jñānayōga. Discrimination here refers to differentiating the Self

from the non-self with one's self-consciousness. Self is the Observer, and should not get mixed up with the functioning of the faculties of the body-mind non-self. Superimposition of the non-self on the Self must be understood and stopped. This discrimination leads to the non-self merging with the Self (47).

Five preliminary practices – control of speech, not accepting gifts, avoiding hope, freedom from activity, and living in a secluded place – will bring one's mind to a state of steadiness and strength with less need for support from external world. These practices will prepare one to become an *adhikāri* – a student who has developed a capacity to retain spiritual teachings. A guru, then, using three methods of instruction - *śravaṇa* meaning 'hearing' or the process of taking in; *manana* meaning argumentative assimilation; and *nididhyāsana* meaning 'meditation towards' a constant and spontaneous flow of knowledge – unveils the inner potentiality of the *adhikāri*. The knowledge becomes part of oneself. These disciplines purify one's consciousness until it shines in its own pure splendor that is *nirvikalpa samādhi*, a state beyond all duality. That is the goal of *Jñānayōga* (47).

Bhakti Yōga is the path of Love. There is a subject-object relationship, and is dualistic to start with; but in the end it brings the realization of Oneness by merging 'I' into 'Thou'. Love is a positive expression of the emotion within an individual. By purifying this love, inner perfection may be realized. *Bhakti* is the supreme devotion to God, and one who has this devotion is a *bhakta*. *Bhakta's* lovable God is projected out of *bhakta's* consciousness as a concrete and finite *Iṣṭam*. Guru discovers this *Iṣṭam* for the disciple, and gives the disciple a mantra to go with it. According to the guru's instructions, the *bhakta* carries out spiritual practices (*sādhana*) on the *Iṣṭam*, and develops a state of being, 'bhāva', which is the attitude of the aspirant towards the *Iṣṭam*. *Bhaktiyōga* includes the following components (47).

Niyama is same as in the *Aṣṭāṅgayōga*. *Niṣṭa* is adherence to certain rituals, and to practice them with tenacity. *Upāsna* is worship. It has four components – *pūja* is ritualistic worship, *japam* is repeated chanting of a mantra, *smaraṇam* is constant remembrance, and *dhyānam* is meditation. *Dinata* is modesty and humility that comes with realization of something very great. *Sēva* is service to others which is considered as service to God. And *Ātmasamarpaṇam* is self surrender to God. It is the conclusion of the *Bhaktiyōga* that any primary emotion consistently cherished and intensified, and carried out to its logical conclusion, unfolds the inner potential perfection in the individual (47).

Karma Yōga is the path of selfless work. It is a method of attaining perfection through dedicated action or work. The word *karma* is derived from the Sanskrit verb root 'kri' which means 'to do'. *Karma* includes everything we do – all actions, both physical and mental. It also includes the subtle law of cause and effect. Every action has its effect on something else, including the effect on the cause of future action. Every action is the result of previous action. Cause-karma-effect is one three-fold link in a chain with multitude of links. This wheel of motion of causation and effect, action and reaction,

produces karma which results in agitation, and disturbed perfection. This karma has to be effaced to attain perfection. The karma cannot be extinguished by avoidance or non-performance of action. It must be destroyed by Karmayōga (47).

There are three types of karma. *Sanċitakarma* is the accumulated or stored karma. This karma may be drawn upon at will which may explain a sudden acquired ability. One may be able to control this sanċitakarma by proper analysis, understanding, culture and discipline. *Kriyāmānakarma* is being acquired now, and can be controlled by performance, by discrimination/discernment, and by discipline. *Prārabdhakarma* is the discharged karma, the consequences of which are being experienced now. One has no control over it. It will run its course until its effects are exhausted. However one should not be dejected by it and one should make sure that more karma is not created. Karma is also classified as good and constructive, or bad and destructive. Good karma is the action that uplifts the doer and produces the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people. Bad karma is the opposite of that (47).

A student has to fulfill three requirements to become an adhikāri, the yōga student – first is simple willingness, but not subservience; second is capacity or capability including health conditions, background, resources, etc; and the third is absence of any obstructing conditions such as dependents who need to be looked after. Some aspirants may be slow, and others may be medium or fast in learning. The aspirant must continue to learn at one's own pace; competition is said to be a hindrance to spiritual progress. In Karmayōga, work is never done in anticipation of a reward or recognition. Advancement occurs in three stages. The first stage is that of self-purification where all work is done to purify self-consciousness. Any work done with desire leads to 'I and mine'; desire and attachment create the relationship of cause and effect, and must be avoided. As self-consciousness becomes purer, Divinity begins to shine out of one's activities. The work is then performed in the form of service. Goodness becomes one's nature, and one feels the presence of the Divinity in the Self. Then the work is done in the form of worship. One will sense the Divinity in all beings. One will be in a state of bliss without any happiness or unhappiness. One has reached the samādhi of Karmayōga which is called sthita-prajña samādhi – it means 'a process of steady wisdom' (47).

Tantra

Another set of scriptures, parallel to the Vēdic scriptures, is called Tantra, the scripture by which knowledge is spread. The Tantra scriptures include a vast array of śāstras. They fall under five categories – Śaiva, Śakta, Vaiṣṇava, Soura, and Gāṇapatya. In addition, there are Buddhist Tantras. From the outset, Tantra has straddled both Hinduism and Buddhism, and the tantric style teachings can be found even in Jainism (49). **Śūnyasampādane** at the beginning of its fourth chapter says that Basavaṅṅa restored the practice of Vīraśaivism which had been tarnished by the six philosophical systems and six creeds. The six creeds refers to the doctrines of Śaiva, Śakta, Vaiṣṇava, Gāṇapatya, Soura and Kāpālika (1).

Although Tāntric ideas and practices are found in traditions and teachings of a much earlier Vēdic era, the full-fledged Tāntric cultural style extending over both Hinduism and Buddhism seems to have developed around 500 CE. Tantra denotes a particular style of spiritual teachings that affirm the continuity between Spirit and matter. Tantra also requires a scripture in which such teachings are revealed. Traditionalists speak of 64 Tantras, but many more Tantras have been known to have existed. Only a few of those have survived the ravages of time (49).

The Tantra System is an all-inclusive religious system which is capable of all levels of spiritual growth. The experts of Tantra believe that it is possible to attain liberation or enlightenment even in the worst social and moral conditions. Anyone, including the so called outcaste, is said to be able to achieve this. The Tāntric path is referred to as *Sādhana/Sāadhanā*. A practitioner of Tantra is called *sādhaka* if male and *sādhikā* if female. An expert in Tāntric path is known as *Siddha* meaning an accomplished one, and the spiritual achievement is called *Siddhi*. (49).

Tāntric mode of worship seems to have originated as far back as the Vēdic period when both enjoyment and renunciation were sought to be combined in the Karmakāṇḍa or the ritualistic portion of the Vēdas. The goal of human life then seems to have been the regulated enjoyment of the sense-objects by propitiating the gods through sacrifices and worships, and then when the mind became tolerably divested of lower desires, to practice the pure course of discipline of the Upaniṣads. However, the human natural tendency is for enjoyment, and not for renunciation. Thus, instead of gradually weaning the mind from enjoyment, worship has been combined with enjoyment and renunciation (49).

Tantras do not seek God by negation but by firmest affirmation that all this is nothing but the concrete manifestation of the Absolute. Nothing is to be shunned or given up. Everything has to be accepted, assimilated, sublimed, and integrated with the very stuff of one's being. This total and complete acceptance of life as it is makes the Tantra widely popular. So the aim of the Tantra is to make the enjoyment free and absolute by establishing a complete mastery over the objects or forces of Nature. In order to acquire

this Lordship or mastery over the forces of Nature, one must acquire Power (Śakti). Therefore, in search of Power, one has to rouse the latent power Kuṇḍalini Śakti, and make it manifest (see 'Prāṇa and Kuṇḍalini' article) (49).

In the Tāntric discipline, God is looked upon as both a Male and a Female Principle, called Śiva and Śakti. Śakti is the creative power of Śiva. Śiva and Śakti are inseparable, and the relationship is compared to the fire and its burning power. The scriptural texts of Tantra are usually in the form of dialogues between Śiva and Pārvati. Pārvati is Śiva's consort, and is another name for Śakti. When Śiva is preaching, it is Āgama, and when Pārvati is speaking it is Nigama (5). But this distinction between Āgama and Nigama is said to be artificial (49)

It is said that 'When we speak of Tantra, we think primarily of the sacred books of the Śaktās'. A specialty of the Tantras is that they preach the motherhood of God, and simultaneously with it, a glorification of the women. This idea is not seen in either the Vēdas or the Purāṇas. The Tāntric literature essentially represents a very important part of Indian spiritual lore, so far as its practical aspect is concerned (49).

Śhivāgama

Śivāgamas are said to have come directly from Śiva. Most of these Śivāgamas deal with religious rights and practices pertaining to the Śaiva sect, and are considered to form the main scripture of the Śaivas (1). Some parts of the Śivāgamas known as Uttarāgamas lend some of their concepts to the philosophy and practice of the Viraśaivas.

It is said that the antiquity of Āgamas goes back to the period of the Āraṇyakas, and that the older parts were composed during the period of 2,000 BCE to 1,000 BCE. But the growth of the astoundingly voluminous literature has been gradual, and has gone up to very recent times (50). The full development of Śivāgama literature seems to have occurred in the 8th century CE, and the Uttarāgama literature seems to have fully developed in the 9th century CE (7). However, there have been continuous additions to the Uttarāgamas even to the times after Basavaṇṇa of the 12th century CE (50).

There are twenty-eight principal Āgamas. The following is the list taken from page 376 of volume II of Śūnyasāmpādane (1). Kāmika, Yōgaja, Ćintya, Kāraṇa, Ajita, Dīpta, Sūkṣma, Sahasra, Amśumān, Suprabhōda, Vijaya, Niśvāsa, Svāyam̃bhuva, Anala, Vira, Raurava, Makuṭa, Vimala, Ćandrajñāna, Mukhabim̃ba, Prōdḡita, Lalita, Siddha, Santāna, Śarvōttara, Pāramēśvara, Kiraṇa, and Vātula. Each of these Śivāgamas has one to sixteen subsidiary Upāgamas. The total number of Upāgamas comes to 208.

Each Śivāgama and so also each Upāgama has four divisions called pādas (feet), namely, Kriyāpāda, Ćaryapāda, Yōgapāda, and Jñānapāda. The Śivāgama-Upāgama literature is very vast, but much of it has been lost and is not available. Also, of the Uttarāgama literature that is of interest to the Viraśaivas, only about seven or so Uttarāgamas are available, and that too only some parts of Uttarāgamas are available. More importantly, none of the Yōgapāda and Jñānapāda parts of the Uttarāgamas are available.

The available Kriyāpādas of Uttarāgamas describe Dīkṣā (initiation), Aṣṭāvaraṇa, Pañcācāra, Ṣaṭsthala and such. The available Ćaryapādas deal with last rites and such. Therefore it appears that mainly the ritualistic practice aspects are available. Information for the following brief descriptions is obtained from reference number (7).

Viraśaiva: Derivation of the term 'Vira' is given as follows. 'Vī' stands for 'Vidyā', the knowledge that is obtained from Vēda and Upaniṣads. 'Ra' stands for 'Ramate' which means takes delight in it. Thus 'Viraśaiva' is a Saiva who takes delight in the Knowledge of the Vēda and Upaniṣads.

Dīkṣā, in brief, is the granting, by a Guru to a disciple, of the three Liṅgas - Bhāvaliṅga, Prāṇaliṅga and Iṣṭaliṅga – to the Kāraṇa śarīra (causal body), Sūkṣma śarīra (subtle body) and Sthūla śarīra (gross body) – by removing the three taints or impurities namely, Āṇavamala, Māyāmala and Kārmikamala – through Vedhā, Māntri and Kriyā Dīkṣās

respectively. It is said that there are a total of 21 types of Dīkṣās under the above three Dīkṣās, and that many ritualistic practices are utilized.

Aṣṭāvaraṇa: Religious practice is said to require these eight-fold external coverings or shields. Most of the components of Aṣṭāvaraṇa are in the Upaniṣads, but the term Aṣṭāvaraṇa is not in there, and they are not put together as such. **Guru** is necessary for conferring Dīkṣā on the disciple, and to show the path that leads to Mōkṣa/salvation. Greatness and meritorious characteristics of the Guru are given. In addition characteristics of an unworthy Guru who should be avoided are given. **Liṅga** is described as '*Bindunādātma*'. Bindu in it is Śakti, Nāda is Śiva, and Ātma is the Self. Three-fold Liṅgas - Bhāvaliṅga, Prāṇaliṅga and Iṣṭaliṅga – and their six-fold subdivisions - Ācāraliṅga, Guruliṅga, Śivaliṅga, Jaṅgaliṅga, Prasādaliṅga and Mahāliṅga – are given. **Jaṅgama** is considered as the 'wandering Śiva', and is unique in this respect. Different types of Jaṅgamas, characteristics of them, code of conduct for them, and devotion one should have towards them are elucidated. **Pādōdaka** and **Prasāda** of Guru, Liṅga and Jaṅgama, and their greatness are elaborated. Pāda refers to feet, and udaka is water; Pādōdaka is the water that has washed the feet of Guru and Jaṅgama, and that has washed the Iṣṭaliṅga. Prasāda is everything that has been consecrated by Guru, Liṅga and Jaṅgama. **Bhasma** is the sacred ash. The sacredness, preparation, different types of Bhasmas, and application of Bhasma on the body are described in detail. **Rudrākṣa** are the beads obtained from the Rudrākṣa tree (rosary beads). Sacredness of, different kinds of, places on the body where they are to be worn according to the number of the Rudrākṣa faces, are given. **Mantra** considered here is the Pañcākṣara mantra, and then the Ōmkāra and the Ṣaḍakṣara mantra. Pañcākṣara mantra is the five-syllable mantra 'Na maḥ Śi vā ya'. Ōmkāra is the Ōm-form. Ōmkāra is the source of power for the Ṣaḍakṣara mantra 'Ōm na maḥ Śi vā ya'. This six-syllable mantra represents the six Liṅgas (mentioned above under Liṅga), six sthalas of Ṣaṣṭhala, and all consisting of the six tattvas, the principles. Three types of Japa (for using of the mantras) are described – Vācika is when the mantra is voiced aloud, Upāṁśu is when it is faintly uttered with lip-movement, and Mānasa is a mental Japa cherished only in the mind.

On page 55 of volume I of the referenced Śūnyasaṁpādane (1), it is stated that Prabhudēva was the teacher who established Guru, Liṅga, Jaṅgama, Prasāda, Pādōdaka, etc. as well as Pañcācāra. Furthermore, on page 370 of volume II of the same reference (1), it is stated that Basavaṇṇa gave a definite shape to the three cardinal principles - Liṅga, Jaṅgama and Prasāda; these three existed before Basavaṇṇa's time, but Basavaṇṇa removed the impurity and revealed their true nature. Furthermore, Vīraśaivas interpret the Pādōdaka as the knowledge flowing like water from Guru, Liṅga, and Jaṅgama to the disciple (personal communication from Dr. Guru Bale of Edison, NJ).

Pañcācāra is the practice of the five codes of conduct. **Liṅgācāra** is the worship of Liṅga - concentrating on the Liṅga, synthesis of Iṣṭa-Prāṇa-Bhāvaliṅgas, and such. **Śadācāra** is to lead a simple and virtuous life – it consists in the rendering of respectful service to Guru, Liṅga and Jaṅgama with what is earned only through righteous means.

Śivācāra consists in the firm conviction that there is no other refuge apart from Śiva the Parabrahman. **Gaṇācāra** consists in the stubbornness in non-reacting to the condemnation of Śiva or Śivācāra and/or Śivabhaktas under all circumstances. **Bhṛtyācāra** is of the nature of humility that one is the servant of all the devotees of Śiva. All these are explained in Śivāgamas.

Śūnyasāmpādane (1), on page 55 of volume I, states that Prabhudēva was the teacher who established Pañcācāra.

Ṣaṭsthala is the spiritual hierarchy of six stages through which the seeker rises stage by stage. The six sthalas are Bhakta, Māheśvara, Prasādi, Prāṇaliṅgi, Śaraṇa and Aikya. These sthalas branch into Aṅga and Liṅga sthalas. The six Aṅgas or bodies of Śiva are given – Sarvajñatā, Trṛpti, Anādibodha, Svatantratā, Aluptaśakti and Anantaśakti. The six Liṅgas are - Ācāraliṅga, Guruliṅga, Śivaliṅga, Jaṅgamaliṅga, Prasādaliṅga and Mahāliṅga.

Śūnyasāmpādane (1), on page 55 of volume I, states that Prabhudēva was the sovereign of Ṣaṭsthala, the six-fold hierarchy – Bhakta, Māheśvara, Prasādi, Prāṇaliṅgi, Śaraṇa, and Aikya. Furthermore, it states that, drawing mainly on the knowledge of the contemporary Śaraṇas, Ćennabasavaṅṅa, the nephew of Basavaṅṅa, systematized the Ṣaṭsthala Philosophy (in the 12th century CE); this statement is on page 26 and also on page 359 of the volume II of reference 1.

Rites and rituals: many rites and rituals are described that include the following - daily duties of the Vīraśaiva, preparation of the sajjika, a carrying case/pouch for the Iṣṭaliṅga, the thread (Śivasūtra) that holds the sajjika of the Iṣṭaliṅga so that it could be worn on the body, materials for worship, worship of Liṅga on the palm of the hand, method of Yōga for the Vīraśaivas, and many such things.

Last rites are also described. Vīraśaivas bury the dead body of a person; the site of burial is referred to as 'samādhi'. Some of the recommendations are as follows. After placing the Liṅga on the samādhi, a temple is to be constructed there, and in the land surrounding the samādhi, a spacious garden, an orchid, an orphanage, a hospital, or any such useful development is to be made according to one's ability and resources. Rites to be performed on the 'Siddhi' day or on the 'Tithi' of death; dāna (donation) to be made at the site of the samādhi; free facilities for the people to come and spend their time there, the construction of a hall with dais for conducting lecture programs for the benefit of all irrespective of their caste or creed, and such are suggested.

It is to be noted that although the Ṣaṭsthala, Pañcācāra and Aṣṭāvaraṇa features existed before, particularly in the Śivāgamas, the Vīraśaivayōga concepts are the modified concepts developed in the 12th century CE.

Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi

Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi is composed in Sanskrit. Siddhānta means doctrine, and Śikhāmaṇi means crest-jewel. It is said to be the crest-jewel of all the doctrines. It is considered to be the basic scripture, if not the main scripture, of the Vīraśaivas, the main scripture being the Śūnya Saṃpādane. Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi is said to have been compiled by Śrī Śivayōgi Śivācārya. It has been developed in the form of a dialog between the sage Śrī Rēṇuka and the sage Agastya, and is also called Rēṇukagītā. It is a teaching of the doctrine of 101 sthalas. It harmonizes the concepts of duality and non-duality (oneness). It is a collection of ślōkas (stanzas) grouped into 21 chapters called paricchedaḥ. Although many commentaries have been written on the Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi, the one most often included in the Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi text itself is the Sanskrit commentary called 'Tattvapradīpikā' written by Maritoṇṭadārya in the seventeenth century CE. It is interesting to note that Śūnyasaṃpādane (1), the main scripture of Vīraśaivas, also has 21 chapters (upadēśa). The first four chapters of Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi are preliminary chapters; the teaching of the 101 sthalas is in chapters five through twenty; and the twenty-first chapter is devoted to some concluding topics (7).

Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi being such an authoritative document, it would be advisable to know more about who the author was, and when the doctrine was composed. Some of the information is in the Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi itself. After obeisance to Śiva in the first chapter, the author gives an account of his heritage. He is the fourth in the lineage of four Ācāryas. The first one in the lineage is described as Ācāra Siddha who was well known as Śivayōgin, who was foremost among the Śaiva saints, who was the great ocean of Śiva knowledge, and whose speech was pure in the form of devotion towards Śiva. The second one is a Śivayōgi by name Muddadēva who was known as such because of his giving delight to all beings and because of his granting enlightenment to those who surrendered to him. The third in line is named Siddhanātha who has been described as one with a calm temperament, of pure mind, an authority of Śiva doctrine, and the one whom the teachers praised as the crest-jewel of the Vīraśaivas. From that Ācārya arose the fourth in the lineage by name Śivayōgin.

Controversy: From the above account of the heritage, it is not clear who the first one in this lineage is. In the Sanskrit commentary on Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi called Tattvapradīpikā, the commentator Maritoṇṭadārya of the 17th century CE states that he was the one known as Siddharāmēśvara who was born from the womb that was sanctified by the sight of Rēvaṇasiddhēśvara, and he was a well known Śivayōgin. Another commentator Sosale Rēvaṇārādhyā, also of the 17th century CE, the author of a Kannaḍa language commentary called Siddhāntabōdhinī, also has stated that it was Śivayōgi Siddharāma (7).

As Vīraśaivas very well know, the great Śivayōgi Siddharāma was the contemporary of Allama Prabhu and Basavaṇṇa. If that is the case, the Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi was composed

post-Basava after the 12th century CE. Furthermore, there is an intense discussion of this issue in the referenced Sakhare book (50) which concurs with the above and categorically states that the author Śivayōgi Śivācārya lived some time after Basavaṇṇa's period. There is another very intense discussion that brings up the controversy. It is in the English version of Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi referenced here (7). It states that the first Ācārya in this lineage was not the great Śivayōgi Siddharāma of the 12th century, and that the Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi was composed sometime between the 8th and the 10th centuries CE. The controversy continues.

Obeisance: The first chapter starts with obeisance to Śiva. It is advisable not to use the English word prayer for obeisance. Prayer is an earnest request for something, as in the act of petitioning God to grant a favor; it indicates duality. Viraśaivas do not pray; they worship and completely surrender. The worshipper and the worshipped are one and the same. Namaḥ, in Ōm Namaḥ Śivāya, means obeisance, or bow-down to show respect, or submission. There are 12 verses of obeisance in the first chapter, and again the second chapter starts with two verses of obeisance.

Creation: After the obeisance, the second chapter gives an account of the Creation. There is 'That One' of the nature of Saċcidānanda (existence-intelligence-bliss) which is in an indefinable abode, without any difference, without any form, without any impediments, beyond reach, not dividing, can not be cognized or perceived, self-luminous, free from all defects, omniscient, omnipotent, tranquil, all powerful, free from any obstructions, called differently as Śiva, Rudra, Mahādēva and Bhava, it is without a second, and is no other than Parabrahman.

In That, the animate and inanimate universe had merged in the past, and that the universe was to be manifested anew.

That Parabrahman, also called Śiva, desiring to create the universe, assumed a form with exuberance of joy. This form had the following characteristics: without any relation to defects, without any adjuncts, indestructible, eternal, blue-necked and three-eyed, wearing half moon on its crest, pure, resembling clear crystal with a complexion of clear pearls, with pure knowledge, being an object of meditation for the Yōgis, with brilliance of millions of suns, with the luster of millions of moons, with extraordinary virtues, and the abode of infinite greatness.

His Supreme Śakti of the nature of existence-intelligence-bliss, of the form of the inherent cause inseparable in the creation of the entire world, on His desire, became one in keeping with the form. The inseparable relationship of Śiva and Śakti has been compared to the fire and its burning power. The universe including the worldly existence is created in Śiva's consciousness.

But here in Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi the description continues. Śiva, with the desire to create the universe, first created Brahma as the maker of all beings and all the worlds. To His

first son (meaning Brahma as above), Śiva taught with grace all the sacred knowledge. According to Śiva's order, Brahma was ready to create the world, but became covered with Māyā, and as a consequence was without any knowledge as to the means to create the world. To attain the means to create all the worlds, Brahma went back and requested Śiva, who gave the necessary means. Even then the four-faced Brahma could not create the diverse world. Again Brahma went back to Śiva; stating that he could barely grasp what was taught, requested that Śiva create the first beings, and then after learning the means, he would create the world. Accordingly, Śiva created Pramathās, the first Lords, who were endowed with all powers, and were capable of creating the world and effecting its dissolution. It appears that this section of the creation is stated here to introduce Śri Rēṇuka who is one of the Pramathās.

[The Vīraśaiva concept of the Creation is explained in the article 'Vīraśaiva Concepts in Rgvēda' in Part I of this book.]

Śri Rēṇuka: The third chapter states that Śiva instructed Śri Rēṇuka who is said to be one of the Pramathās as above, to 'establish "My advaita" Philosophy on earth in accordance to Vēda and Vēdānta so that it is beneficial to all'. 'My advaita' is Śiva-advaita/**Śivādvaita**; it is the Śiva's oneness philosophy. Rēvaṇa is the Kannaḍa version of Rēṇuka.

The fourth chapter states that Śri Rēṇuka is from a place called Kollipāki on the northern side of Śriśaila in the Tri-Liṅga region. The three Liṅgas are Śri Rēṇuka's Sōmēśvara-Liṅga at the present Konalupāka, Rāmanātha-Liṅga at Drākṣārāma, and Mallikārjuna-Liṅga at Śriśaila; all three are in the present Andhra Pradesh State in India. The chapter describes the nature of Śri Rēṇuka, among other things, as the leader of the lineage of Siddhas, and as a proctor of Siddhānta. It describes his journey to the hermitage of sage Agastya in the Malaya Mountain, and describes the pleasantries of the meeting between Śri Rēṇuka and sage Agastya.

Various doctrines: In the fifth chapter, before the actual teaching of the sthala starts, there is a teaching about various doctrines. It states that there are many Siddhāntas which propound different tenets and practices. Sāṅkhya, Yōga, Pāñcharātra, Vēdas and Pāśupata are quite authoritative and are not to be refuted with arguments. Where as Sāṅkhya, Yōga and Pāñcharātra are based on some parts of the Vēda, Śaivasiddhānta is based on the entire Vēda, and hence, is superior to others. The Āgama scriptures are classified as Śaiva, Pāśupata, Sōma and Lākula. Among them, the Śaiva Āgamas are of four kinds, namely, Vāma, Dakṣiṇa, Mīśra and Siddhānta. Vāmatantra has the predominance of Śakti; Dakṣiṇatantra has Bhairava as its deity; Mīśratantra is dedicated to Saptamātrikas; and Siddhānta is agreeable to the Vēda because it advocates Dharma that is taught in the Vēda, and also because it opposes whatever that is unacceptable to the Vēda. In the latter part of the Siddhānta, the supreme doctrine of Vīraśaiva is advocated. It is because of the special experience of bliss in the knowledge that the great souls are called Vīraśaivas. The knowledge which arises from the Vēdānta (Upaniṣads) is

called Vidya. He who takes delight (ramate) in that knowledge is Vira. 'Vī' stands for Vidya, and 'ra' stands for ramate. Viramāheśvara on the other hand, not only takes delight in the knowledge, but also detests and completely detaches from Māyā. The Viramāheśvaras are engaged in the sacrifice in the form of action, and perform external Liṅga worship, where as Viraśaivas are engaged in the sacrifice in the form of knowledge, and perform internal Liṅga worship.

One hundred one sthala doctrine: Then the teaching of the one hundred one sthala doctrine starts with the presentation of the order of Ṣaṭsthala - Bhaktasthala, Māheśvarasthala, Prasādisthala, Prāṇaliṅgisthala, Śaraṇasthala and Aikyasthala. Each of the main sthalas has many subdivisions, and they add up to a total of 101 sthalas. There are two categories of these sub-sthalas, namely, Aṅgasthala (there are forty-four) and Liṅgasthala (there are fifty-seven). Here Aṅga stands for Jīva (soul) and Liṅga for Śiva. Bhaktasthala has 15 Aṅgasthalas and 9 Liṅgasthalas; Māheśvarasthala has nine each; Prasādisthala has 7 Aṅgasthalas and 9 Liṅgasthalas; Prāṇaliṅgisthala has 5 Aṅgasthalas and 9 Liṅgasthalas; Śaraṇasthala has 4 Aṅgasthalas and 12 Liṅgasthalas; and Aikyasthala has 4 Aṅgasthalas and 9 Liṅgasthalas. All 44 Aṅgasthalas are described first and then all 57 Liṅgasthalas are described. The first sthala is Piṇḍasthala and the last one of the 101 sthala doctrine is Jñānaśūnyasthala.

[Śūnyasāmpādane (1), in the prose section prior to vaçana #20 on page 143 of volume II, and in the notes and comments section on pages 388-389, says that Basavaṇṇa is the founder of the one hundred one sthalas.]

Sthala: 'Stha' in sthala is derived from 'sthīyate' meaning stand or originally stood, and 'la' in sthala is derived from 'līyate' meaning absorbed or merged. Thus sthala stands for Paraśivabrahman from where the universe/world emerged, and to where it dissolves. However, the term sthala is used here to mean a stage, a temporary resting place for a progressing soul on its spiritual journey to Paraśivabrahman. At each sthala the aspirant gets more spiritual experience sufficient enough to advance/ascend to the next higher sthala.

Aṅga: Aṅga stands for Jīva (soul). The word Aṅga, as used by Viraśaivas, has a special meaning. It is not an ordinary soul Jīva. Any ordinary soul can not be an Aṅga. Only when the soul yearns to become one with Liṅga then only it is an Aṅga. It is said that Jīva is called Aṅga because it moves to Paraśivabrahman; the word Aṅga is derived from 'Am' meaning 'Brahman' and the verb root 'gam' for 'gaççhati' meaning 'goes to'; thus the persons learned in Viraśaivism call Jīva as Aṅga.

Liṅga: Literal meaning of the term Liṅga is 'mark' 'symbol' or 'characteristic'. Liṅga of Viraśaivas represents the Ultimate Reality, the Absolute, the Śūnya, the Paraśivabrahman. It is described as '... the Undivided Liṅga (Niṣkala Liṅga), indivisible, without a second, peerless, without parts, spotless, inclusive of the entire void which is existence, knowledge, bliss, eternity and perfection ...' (page 52, volume I of reference 1).

Aṅgasthalas: From Bhaktasthala to Prasādisthala of the Aṅgasthalas the concept of duality progresses to the concept of non-duality (oneness); from Prāṇaliṅgasthala onwards, it is all oneness philosophy. After going through the spiritual practices of all the Aṅgasthalas, the Yōgi attains oneness, and becomes a container of the riches of liberation. Although liberated, the Yōgi is still inside the body, and is called a Jīvanmukta.

Liṅgasthalas: Śivādvaita Philosophy continues in all the Liṅgasthalas. The devotee, who has completed the good practices of the Aṅgasthalas, has become a Jīvanmukta. Jīva has attained Mukti; it has been liberated from the cycle of births. But the Jīva is still inside the body. Liṅgasthalas pertaining to the Ṣaṭsthala are for the benefit of the Jīvanmukta where Jīva becomes completely indifferent to or devoid of the body. There are fifty-seven Liṅgasthalas that are distributed as sub-sthalas into the six main sthalas of Ṣaṭsthala. Many terms are used for the Jīvanmukta, namely, Yōgi, Śivayōgi, Parayōgi, Paraśivayōgi, Guru, and many terms of the sthalas as they are attained. It is said that it may not be possible to depict the true meaning of the attainment of Oneness, because of the intricacies involved.

In the one who has attained identity with Oneness, the knowledge is Śūnya; the means of getting values of life is Śūnya. There is no cause or consequence; and there is nothing beyond it. The One is Immortal (Eternal). The One is in Infinite Bliss. And the One has become the Supreme Knowledge itself. The One with one's own illumination is the Jyōtirliṅga itself. For more information the reader may refer to a concise composition of 101 sthala doctrine Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi (18). Also, may refer to the electronic version of the second edition of the doctrine Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi published by Veerashaiva Samaja of North America in 2013. This electronic version is at the web site of VSNA. Go to vsna.org and check for Publications under Resources. You can download it; it is free.

Vēda References in Basavaṅṅa's Vaċanas

Basavaṅṅa was very well versed in the Vēdas. At Kūḍala Saṅgama, Basavaṅṅa studied Vēdas and other sacred religious material under a learned scholar Īśānya Guru. In order to ascertain what exactly Basavaṅṅa says about the Vēdas, some of his vaċanas that have already been translated into English by scholars were reviewed.

One of Basavaṅṅa's vaċanas stating 'Dēvanobba nāmahalavu' meaning '**One God, many names**' seems to have been taken directly from Ṛgvēda, maṅḍala I, sūkta 164, verse 46 which says 'They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuṅa, Agni, and He is heavenly nobly-winged Garutmān, **To what is One, sages give many a name**, they call **It** Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan'.

There is another vaċana of Basavaṅṅa that is taken verbatim from Ṛgvēda X.81.3. This sūkta # 81 is titled Viśvakarmā which means 'maker of the universe'. The first part of the verse 3 is as follows. '**Viśvataśċakṣu viśvatōmukhō viśvatōbāhuruta viśvataspāt** ...'

The corresponding Kannaḍa vaċana is transliterated as follows: '*ettetta nōdidaḍatta nīnē dēvā; sakala vistārada rūhu nīnē dēvā; viśvataśċakṣu nīnē dēvā; viśvatōmukha nīnē dēvā; viśvatōbāhu nīnē dēvā; viśvataspāda nīnē dēvā Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā*'.

The vaċana starts with 'wherever we look you (God) are there'. And the words taken verbatim have the same meaning in Sanskrit and Kannaḍa: Having eyes everywhere, having face everywhere, having arms everywhere, and having feet everywhere.

In the Śūnyasāmpādane chapter called 'Prabhudēva's Apotheosis', Basavaṅṅa sings as he waves the propitiatory lamp on the occasion. It starts with 'Jaya jaya Śrī Mahādēva' sung three times; it means 'Hail hail to the glorious Great God'. The song has the following mystic words taken from the Vēdas – '*Ōm bhūḥ ōm bhuvāḥ...bhargō dēvasya dhīmahi - śaraṅembudenna manavu*'.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad I.5.1 says - Bhūḥ, Bhuvāḥ and Suvāḥ are the three celebrated mystical utterances. What is called Bhūḥ stands for this world, the fire, the sacred verses called Ṛks (of Ṛgvēda), and the air that is breathed in (Prāṅḥ). What is denoted as Bhuvāḥ stands for the intermediate space between heaven and earth, the air, the Sāman chants (of Sāmavēda), and the air that is breathed out (Apāṅḥ). What is noted as Suvāḥ stands for heaven, the sun, the sacrificial formulae called Yajus (of Yajurveda), and the vital airs that sustains life when the breath is arrested (Vyāṅḥ) (30). These mystic words are also in many other Upaniṣads such as Ćhāndōgya Upaniṣad II.23.2 and Bṛhadāraṅyaka Upaniṣad VI.4.25.

The mystic words 'bhargō dēvasya dhīmahi' are part of the famous Gāyatrī Mantra which

is the celebrated verse of the Vēdas (Ṛgvēda III.61.10; Yajus III.35; Sāman 658,662). These words have been translated as 'may we attain God's glory'. The full Gāyatrī Mantra is something like this 'Let us contemplate the beautiful splendor of God Savitur, that he may inspire our visions' (3).

Basavaṇṇa's vaĉana number 8 on page 23 of reference # 52 is as follows:

Ascribe not love of music to the Lord,
 No lover of music He;
 Nor lover of Vēdas for Vēdic lore loves not He.
 Consider Rāvaṇa,
 For muses' favor forfeited half his life's span!
 Or Brahma, versed in Vēdas,
 With head, paid he his fee!
 No lover of music, nor lover of Vēdas He,
 Save; hold the devotee in felicity,
 O Kūḍala Saṅgama Dēvā.

The explanatory note on this vaĉana is on pages 77-78 of the same reference is as follows. Rāvaṇa was the king of Laṅka; he had sung the Sāmavēda in praise of Śiva; but this did not rescue him from being killed by Rāma whose wife he had kidnapped; Vēdas did not prevent his life being cut-short by half. Brahma is said to have uttered a lie to Śiva; Brahma, his name itself meaning Vēda, is well versed in the Vēdas; but this did not prevent one of his heads being cut off by Śiva. The Vēdas did not prevent these incidents.

Here, Basavaṇṇa is not saying that reciting or singing his vaĉanas instead of the Vēdas would have prevented the above two incidents. No, not at all, nothing can rescue from such atrocities. Basavaṇṇa is merely making the point that it is not necessary to know the Vēdas, and that true devotion is more important.

Two vaĉanas, 93 and 94, are on page 67 of the same reference, and they are as follows.

Like the lamb led to the sacrificial fire
 Blithely nibbles the green leaves adorning the altar,
 Unmindful of its doom awaiting,
 Deeming most the passing present,
 So prospers all mortal life,
 O Kūḍala Saṅgama Dēvā.

O dear lamb!
 Cry unto the Lord and lay thy cause before Him.
 In vain were thou slain to flattering unctious claim,
 This, thy slayers have done!
 Make thy pleading known

Before those that propound the Vēdas and Śāstras.
 Thou shall surely be avenged
 By my Kūḍala Saṅgama Dēvā.

The explanatory note on these vācānas is on page 81 of the same reference, and this is what it states – The lower classes believe that diseases like small-pox are caused by the disfavor of petty gods such as Mari, and that sacrificing sheep or other animals, and offering them to her, she will be appeased. Similarly, the higher classes believed that by sacrificing goats and other animals in what were known as Yagnas, and offering to the Gods, they would acquire merit. Both these practices are condemned, and it is asserted that all religions are based on kindness. Here, the sacrifices are condemned, not the Vēdas.

Basavaṅṅa, Prabhudēva, and other Śāraṅas, do not condemn the Vēdas. They condemn the sacrificial rituals contained in the Vēdas, and also they condemn the people who perform those rituals. However, they make it known that the study and the knowledge of the Vēdas is not necessary to attain the Absolute (Śūnya).

Vēda References in Prabhudēva's Vaĉanas

Allama Prabhu was very well versed in the Vēdas. In order to ascertain what exactly Prabhu's vaĉanas say about the Vēdas, some of his vaĉanas that have already been translated into English by scholars were reviewed.

In the referenced Śūnyasaṁpādane book (1), on page 25 of volume I, in the introductory chapters about Allama Prabhu, two of Prabhu's vaĉanas are given with some introduction and then a comment. The introduction for the vaĉanas states that if the seeker is to gain strength in the pursuit of truth, the seeker can not have it by blind belief or perverse argument, it is necessary for the seeker's faith to be coupled with thought and practice; only in this sense that Prabhu has said of the Vēdas in the following vaĉanas.

The Vēdas failed because they could not weigh;
 The Śāstras failed because they could not seize;
 The Purāṇas failed because they could not prove;
 When the elders failed
 Because they did not know themselves,
 And were consumed by their own brains,
 How could they know Thee, O Guhēśvara?

What you call Vēda is a work to be read;
 What you call Śāstra is market news;
 What you call Purāṇa is a bullied boast;
 What you call Logic is butting of rams;
 What you call Bhakti is only a show for profit of a meal;
 What you call Guhēśvara is the Absolute beyond bounds.

The comment on the above vaĉanas states that, this does not mean that Prabhu belittles the Vēdas; he merely suggests that if they become feats of intellect, their very purpose fails; thus Prabhu upholds direct experience of the Divine. Here, the scholars have stated that Prabhu does not belittle the Vēdas, and that he upholds the Upaniṣadic views of the Divine; no further explanation is needed.

In volume I on pages 210-211 and 261 through 263 of the same reference (1), the vaĉanas are in the context that Prabhu is guiding Siddharāmayya, an accomplished Śivayōgi, through his spiritual transformation. Prabhu tells Siddharāmayya that the One who has neither form nor body nor motion, and is beyond the reach of word or thought, cannot be attained by praise, for the One transcends praise and scorn alike:

All those who have known Him in singing His praise,
 Lo! They have become the slaves of form!
 Look you, Siddharāmayya!

The three worlds know through Guhēśvara's witness,
 The scriptures (Vēdaśāstras) and several
 Paths cannot attain to Him
 By hymns of praise!

Siddharāmayya submits to Prabhu:

Thou art not fond of the Vēdas, good sir,
 Thou art not fond of the Scriptures, too,
 Thou dost not love the music of hymns; ...

Prabhu then responds by telling what true devotion (Bhakti) means:

He is truly devout who unaware of self
 Has flung all else away, to such, Śiva responds!
 Lip-homage without works is not the way to the goal;
 That is not the way at all of making Śiva respond.
 Will our Guhēśvaraliṅga respond
 To one who spits fire in a state of forgetfulness,
 And the moment knowledge comes,
 Says here I lie at thy feet?

Here again Prabhu does not belittle the Vēdas, he makes the point that true Bhakti is not merely reciting/singing the hymns of praise of the Vēdas, it is much more than that.

Volume V page 227 and page 256 (1): After Prabhudēva takes the Śūnyapīṭha, the seat of the Absolute, He, Basavaṅṅa, Ćennabasavaṅṅa and others start praising one another. In the first instance Prabhu is praising Basavaṅṅa, and in the second Ćennabasavaṅṅa is praising Basavaṅṅa. The same theme of praising continues, and there is nothing derogatory about the Vēda there.

Volume V page 367 (1): After predicting the coming of the end of the Śaraṅa movement in Kalyāṅa, Prabhudēva prophesizes about himself in this vaĉana.

Compassion, powerless to compare,
 Declared it was beyond compare;
 Awareness, unaware that
 It was screened from knowledge,
 Declared it higher than the highest;
 And meditation not knowing to meditate
 Was lost in meditating itself
 Since, he transcended all efforts of meditation.
 What other knowledge can there be
 To knower, knowledge and the known?

The 'That Thou art' and other sentences
 The Vēda regards as knowledge,
 Are turned to falsehood and are gone.
 All who expound Brahma –
 The dualists and the non-dualists –
 As Being, Bliss and Consciousness
 Are routed and destroyed.
 He comes and does not come;
 He joins and does not join;
 Guhēsvara is one, the Absolute Tranquility.

Once Prabhudēva attains Śūnya, the Absolute state, there is nothing else, not even the Vēdas. Knowledge of the scriptures and the knowledge of everything else, are considered as the lower knowledge; all this knowledge along with the identity of the individual-self is lost in the Supreme State.

Prabhudēva, Basavaṇṇa, and other Śaraṇas, do not condemn the Vēdas. They condemn the sacrificial rituals contained in the Vēdas, and also the people who perform those rituals. However, they make it known that the study and the knowledge of the Vēdas is not necessary to attain the Absolute (Śūnya).

Summary of the Evolution of Viraśaiva Concepts

Present form of Viraśaiva philosophy and practice is from the 12th century CE, as has been composed and presented in the 15th century Śūnyasāmpādane which serves as the main scripture of the Viraśaivas. There is a long prehistory of evolution of the Viraśaiva concepts. This prehistory goes as far back as the Ṛgvēdic period. The beginning of this Ṛgvēdic period is believed to be 10,000 BCE. The Ṛgvēda period had been well established during that period prior to 3,100 BCE.

The Vēdas proclaim that Brahman is the goal, and Dharma is the means to attain Brahman. Furthermore, the goal ever remains the same, but the means to attain it is subject to change according to time, place, and person. The goal to attain Brahman or Śūnya or Liṅga has remained the same; the means to attain it has changed or has been modified over the years. Most of the important Viraśaiva concepts have been taken from the Ṛgvēda, the Yajurvēda, and both the major and the minor category of the Upaniṣads. Many concepts have remained the same, but many more have been modified into the present day form. Some of the concepts taken from the Vēdic scriptures are as follows.

One God Argument in Ṛgvēda: 'To what is One, sages give many a name' is the same as '*dēvanobba nāma halavu*' meaning 'one God many names' of the Viraśaivas.

Rudra as this one God: Rudra is portrayed in Ṛgvēda as the aggregate of all the Divinities that are worshipped thereof. Ṛgvēda uses the term Śiva many times to describe different Divinities including Rudra so that the meaning of 'Śiva' is brought out clearly.

Viraśaiva concept of the Creator: 'God' as the creator of the universe is given in the Viśvakarmasūkta of Ṛgvēda. 'God' is described as omniscient and omnipotent. Seekers of God are induced to contemplate/meditate.

The Viraśaiva concept of everything is One only: everything that is projected out of God (created) is still within God and that everything is still one, is given in the Puruṣasūkta of Ṛgvēda.

The Viraśaiva concept of Praḷaya/dissolution of the created universe gives rise to the concept of re-absorption into God in the reverse order of creation.

Creation: Nāsadiyasūkta of Ṛgvēda gives the details of creation as accepted by the Viraśaivas. 'In the beginning there was not the non-existent, nor the existent' is the same as 'In the beginning there was nothing, not even Śūnya (Void) or Niśśūnya (Primal Void)'. The concept of Power/Śakti as in 'breathed by its own nature (power)' and the concept of 'desire' are part of the Viraśaiva philosophy of creation.

Liṅga and Liṅgadīkṣa: Ṛgvēdic mantra IX.83.1 is as follows. 'God' pervades all the

devotees as Liṅga. Liṅga is sacred, pure and expansive. The body of the ignorant not purified by the process of dīkṣa/initiation does not get It. Only those who are processed and possess the knowledge, and who resort to that Liṅga, attain the Liṅga. Please note that the term 'Liṅga' does not appear in the original Ṛgvedic mantra.

Then in Yajurveda, the following concepts of Vīraśaivas are affirmed. Rudra becomes Śiva, and is addressed as the Supreme Being. There is this pañcākṣari/five-syllable mantra 'Namaḥ Śivāya' in the IV.5.8.11 mantra.

Two of the most important principles of Vīraśaivas are 'dignity of labor' and 'equality among all irrespective of caste, creed, gender and such'. These two principles are exemplified in the Yajurveda.

The saying in Yajurveda 'May everything in this world be offered to God as worship, and May it be granted to me also' gives rise to the concept of 'Prasāda' of the Vīraśaivas where everything is offered as prasāda with a sense of self-dedication and self-surrender, and without any type of attachment.

The term 'Ṣaṣṭhala' and the concept of what Ṣaṣṭhala means, do not appear in the Upaniṣads, but the Ṣaṣṭhala philosophy is derived from the Upaniṣads.

The Vēdas and the archaeological findings concur that the development of Vīraśaiva concepts and practices occurred during the Vēdic period. However the term 'Vīraśaiva' does not appear during this period. It has been recognized that Pāśupatas, who carried portable miniature Liṅgas with them, were present then. The Vaidika Pāśupatas who practiced Vēdic concepts, not the Avaidika Pāśupatas who did not, have been considered to be the Vīraśaivas of the Vēdic period.

Bhagavad-Gītā is the essence of what is in the Upaniṣads; therefore, Bhagavad-Gītā is a good referral source for the Vīraśaiva concepts.

It is said that the practice of Vīraśaivism which had been tarnished by the six philosophical systems or Dharśanas, and the six creeds or the six doctrines of the Tantra philosophy, were restored in the 12th century CE by Basavaṅṅa, implying that the Vīraśaiva concepts existed before, and that they were modified in the 12th century.

Some parts of the Śivāgamas known as the Uttarāgamas lend some of their concepts to the philosophy of the Vīraśaivas. The terms Vīraśaiva, Pañcācāra, Aṣṭāvaraṇa, and Ṣaṣṭhala, are explained in these Śivāgamas. The concepts of these have been modified in the 12th century because the original ones were somewhat ritualistic, and were not acceptable to the Vīraśaivas of the 12th century.

The philosophy and practices of the Vīraśaivas have been reformed and reiterated in a modified form in the vaṇanas of the 12th century CE. In the 15th century CE, these

'Śivādvaita' vaĉanas have been compiled into the form of the main scripture of the Viraśaivas known as 'Śūnya Sampādane'.

Śūnya Sampādane gives this list of statements in its concluding remarks:

This is the best guide, the philosophical system of exalted Viraśaiva doctrine.

This is that which expounds and firmly establishes the Viraśaiva practice.

This is the crest-jewel of the divine Vēdānta.

This is the chief mirror of all the sciences.

This is the teaching of the highest Experience to promote the Supreme Knowledge.

This is a catalogue of those who, endowed with all kinds of religious practice, have attained the Height.

This is a treasury of the attainment of the great Rājayōga.

This is a happy feast of the ambrosial essence of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, eternal and perfect.

This is a great conference of Prabhudēva on the attainment of Śūnya – an instrument to remove ignorance.

This concluding remark is a profound statement. It has a great impact on the philosophy and practice of the Viraśaivas.

Om

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