

Extension Lectures Series—8

PURANDARA  
AND  
THE HARIDASA MOVEMENT

Dr. M. V. Krishna Rao, M. A., D. Litt.



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## PREFACE

This Volume is the expansion of the subject matter of the two lectures I delivered on the 13th and the 14th of February 1964 at the University of Karnataka. I am deeply grateful to the Vice Chancellor Dr. D. C. Pavate for this kind invitation for extension lectures. This is a companion Volume to my book 'A brief Survey of Mystic Tradition in Religion and Art in Karnataka' published in Madras in 1959.

Purandara was born in Purandaragad in 1484 A.D. of rich parents. He left for Vijayanagar, after a strange mystical experience, with his wife Saraswati Bai and four sons Varadappa and Gururaya, Abhinavappa, Guru Madhavapatu who later on became equally famous as 'Vaggeyakara's like the great father. During his residence at the Capital, his whole mission was propagation of the nature of true devotion. Though he was popular and friendly even with his great contemporaries and Emperors Krishnadevaraya and Achuta Raya, his life was no bed of roses, on the other hand was full of thorns. He travelled widely and visited all important centres of pilgrimage in South India and spread among the masses the supreme need of undeviating rectitude and conduct built on Dharmic foundations and on equality, righteousness and justice, without which life would be meaningless a jejune process.

Evidences are conflicting as regards his relations with Rama Raya and also the date of his death. He left Vijayanagar, according to tradition in 1564 to spend the remaining months of his life in the capital of a petty principality cursing his lot, his poverty, the bitter prejudices and the antagonisms of the Royal Court at Vijayanagar. Authenticated documentary evidence is not available, and what is extant is perhaps a mutilation in the direction of one's personal or sectarian prejudices. Very little is known of his early life, and the later years of his activity, while mystery surrounds his death. Tradition and other sources confirm that he lived for more than eighty years and his abandonment of the Capital in 1564 was an irretrievable catastrophe. The battle of Talikota was fought between the Hindus of Vijayanagar and Mussalmans of Bahamani in 1565 and the Empire was ruined beyond repair, leaving very few traces to recall in memory its original grandeur and greatness.

I have examined the life and thought of Purandara and other Haridasas, with perfect frankness and in no controversial spirit. I have wished to trace every serious form of thought with sincere respect, to trace to its spiritual roots and to conserve some underlying truths which may at once appeal to the religious sensibility and satisfy the *instructed intellect*.

The *Vachanakaras* and the *Haridasas* all alike had but one aim 'Truth', and truth presented itself in many partial phases to differently constituted minds. There were diversities of opinion but One Spirit, and all *Bhaktas* moved on different sides towards one luminous peak, where truth stood transfigured in heavenly light, far above the fogs and doubts of earth.

I have drawn too frequently, upon the poetry of the *Haridasas*, and poetry is 'the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge' and one is persuaded to agree with W. Yeats that 'Whatever of philosophy has been made, poetry is alone permanent'.

I have made use of, rather copiously, the material contained in 'The Metaphysics of Mysticism' and 'Divine Wisdom of Dravida Saints' by Sri A. Govindacharlu Swamin, the 'Karnataka Haridasa Sahitya' by Sri R. S. Panchamukhi, and 'Sharanara Anubhava Sahitya' by Dr H. Thupperudraswamy and 'Purandara Darsana' by Venkata Rao Ananda Shenoi. The last two books are in Kannada.

In concluding this preface, I desire to thank and express my gratitude to Dr R. C. Hirmemath, Professor and Head of the Department of Kannada, Karnataka University, but for whose tenderness of heart and unfailing courtesy, I would not have had the opportunity of bringing together, the reflections of years and put them in this Volume. My thanks are due to Sri C. S. Kanavi, Director of Extension Service and Publications Department and to Professor G. S. Halappa, Head of the Department of Political Science and other friends for many valuable suggestions. I warmly thank my student, Smt. M. S. Shasikala Devi for the brief index.

I express my sense of gratitude and thankfulness to Manipal Power Press for promptitude and quickness in the execution of the work in a very short time.

March 10, 1966

'Jaya Nivas'

3/1 O V Hospital Road,  
Basavangudi, Bangalore 4

M. V. Krishna Rao

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Nature of Mysticism

Among all the religious sects of Karnataka, the Vachanakaras and Haridasas occupy a position of honour and prominence as a result of their great antiquity and popularity of their creed. Vachanakaras claim the greatest number of adherents in the land of their birth. Centering round Kalyana, Veerasaivism of the Vachanakaras possesses the highest claims of being acknowledged as the foremost indigenous religious sect of Karnataka. Veerasaivism and Haridasa movements came in at a time when it was recognised that intelligence alone was not sufficient for the reception of divine knowledge. A definite, prolonged and continuous exercise of the will or intensive cultivation of the emotions, too, was deemed as inadequate for the perception of Reality. Intuition was desired for it denoted the absence of contradiction between divine knowledge and devotion and between metaphysics and religion. The performance of *Yagna* constituting the shortest Path to Beatitude had lost its significance. Abstract meditation on divine knowledge, *gnana*—as a method of attaining salvation implied the exaltation and remoteness of the Supreme Soul, the extremes of Transcendence and Immanence, and the impotency of the human will to attain it. Reason is dualistic while *Bhakti* unifies by Transcending thought. *Advaita* was a metaphysics seeking a religion, while *Bhakti* was a religion setting aside learning and metaphysics in order to attain



self-fulfilment The *Vachana* movement was a history of theistic instinct contending with metaphysical conceptions Prof Ranade says "*Veerasaiva* mysticism makes an alliance with Advaita monism on the one hand and moralistic Purism on the other" It has a Philosophy where the discussion of the nature of *Linga* is merely a symbolic illustration of certain psychological conceptions

*Vachana* or *Veerasaiva* mysticism under the great inspiration of Basaveswara had prepared the ground for the emergence of Vaisnavite mysticism A couple of centuries earlier than the birth of the Haridasa movement, Saivism had moved from absolute Idealism to absolute theism, and it had come to mean exclusive devotion to a personal God as the presiding Deity, over three processes of disintegration, reintegration and maintenance of Being, perpetually recurring in an eternal cycle Basavanna was a symbol of *Bhakti* Chenna Basavesvara of *gnana*, Allama Prabhu of *Vairagya*, Siddarama of *Karmayoga*, and Maha devi was the supreme embodiment of *Sarana Sati* and *Linga pati* doctrine These saints disbelieved in the caste system, disregarded the authority of the *Vedas* and recognised only a personal God, *Paramesvara*

The importance of Veerasaiva sect lies not only in the fact that its saintly followers have produced a vast literature in Kannada, remarkable for elegance of expression and richness of content but also in the fact that it presents a long and lovely panorama of divine mystics whose philosophy of life is deep and appealing both to the learned and to the masses Veerasaivism evolved *Sakti Visistadvaita* philosophy where the cult of devotion has been wedded to the doctrine of *Advaitism* *Sunya Sampa-*

*dane*—a unique characteristic which marks it off from the other well-known schools of thought.

The great dominating conviction in the outlook of the Advaitin is the supremacy and eternity of *Atma*. The Absolute supreme Self is *Siva* Impersonal absolute, unconditioned, self-existent One Reality. *Siva* is the ultimate Substance and the world of matter is secondary Reality with the indwelling *Siva*. The material world has no independent reality. It has appearance of reality catching the individual in the meshes of the phenomenal world and in the wheel of life. The *Atma* alone is Real and owing to its association with matter, a number of seemingly independent selves have appeared. Separate existence is phenomenal and transitory. Human life emerges into relative and momentary independence like waves rising above the sea's surface, only to sink back into the larger embrace of the all-encompassing Spirit. True wisdom consists in the escape from the wheel of life and mortal bonds binding man to a never-ending cycle of births and rebirths and concentrating on the attainment of union with the Eternal.

In the writings of the Maharashtra and Karnataka saints, metaphysics is subordinate to mysticism. The highest principles determined by pure reason are to be apprehended in mystic experience. All the Veerasaiva saints in Karnataka, generally accept, the metaphysical concepts of *gnanatatva* propounded by the *pasupathas*, *Kalamukhas* and other great saints and teachers. *Siva* the Absolute alone is regarded by them as Real and every thing else is illusory. *Siva* is again described in the *Sankhya* fashion as *Purusha* and *Maya* is identified with *Prakriti*. Though the creation of the manifold world

is the work of *Prakriti* or *Maya* there is no interaction between *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, which are entirely different from each other. Both are declared by Allama and Basava to be eternal, though they appear to be contradictory in their nature. The dualism is avoided by tacitly assuming the Reality of *Parasua*, and reducing *Prakriti* or *Maya* to non being. *Purusha* is the unmoved mover of the motions in the world. He is the spectator that excites *Prakriti* to a variety of actions, and yet himself remains unaffected just as a mountain reflected in a river is not swept away by its current, or again He is like the magnet that moves the iron filings without itself moving.

The Phenomenal world is compared to an *Asvattha* tree that has its roots in God, and cannot be determined as either Being or Non Being. The world is created through illusion. Jnanesvara and Basava try to reconcile in a higher synthesis, the contradictory principle of the world and Spirit. The world along with the individual selves is regarded as mutable while the Spirit is immutable and formless. But, both mutable and immutable, though contradictory in nature exist, simultaneously in the same *locus*, and are therefore in a state of Unity. The Supreme person, who is beyond the reach of discursive reason, subsumes and transcends the contradictory principles of both the mutable and the immutable, just as fire, that burns the fuel ultimately burns itself out, or as the knowledge, that drives away ignorance, transcends itself.

The mystic method of reconciling the contradiction however, is to regard both man and the world as identical with God. Basavesvara tells us that the Absolute expands itself as the world, and without any prejudice to its

immutable simplicity. It appears as the knowing subjects that vary with the variations of the objects that are known. The world is the sport of the Absolute. The Absolute plays with itself by assuming the form of waves. There is no difference between the fire and its flames or the diamond and its lustre. The problem of the relation between the soul and the body is only a special instance of the problem of relation between the Absolute and the world, and it is explained also by assuming the fundamental identity between the soul and the body, and of both with the Absolute.

God, the ultimate Reality is formless and hence all anthropomorphism is condemned by Basavanna like Plato. Basavesvara and Allama poetically describe Siva as the *Gubesvar* the sun of Reality. God, in truth is beyond all qualities. He is immeasurable, indeterminate, immaculate and indescribable. Monism can be expressed only through dualism, as one has to draw a circle in order to explain what a void is like.

The theory of knowledge also is subordinate to mysticism and it is the most fundamental assumption of their theory that the highest Reality, call it *Brahman* Atman or Paramesvara, must be intimately known and actually realized. Knowledge of the speculative, moral and practical science is not real knowledge, nor can excellence in practical or fine arts be so regarded. Experimental, intuitive and direct knowledge of God deserves to be called real knowledge which therefore is open only to spiritual insight. Blind faith is of no use in spiritual life; for such a faith is nothing but ignorance, and by ignorance none can ever reach God. The importance of

Reason in spiritual life cannot be over estimated. This quest of union with God takes different forms. The Advaitin starts from the conception of God as the impersonal Absolute and identical of individual self with the supreme Self, and by annihilating *Māya* or veil of illusion, arrives at Reality. Personality is a limitation, for, God is too transcendental and remote to be described in terms of personality. The ultimate goal of man is to transcend the personal and be re-absorbed in the Divine Essence.

Others, like the *Harīdasas* start from the conception of a personal God absolutely different from oneself with the conviction that the ultimate goal to be attained by Grace, is a union, in which the distinction of identity between the individual Soul and the Supreme Soul is not wholly transcended. *Sanyasa*, the way of renunciation, *Yoga*, the system of ascetic discipline, and training in the art of contemplation, and *Bhakti*, loving devotion to God, are all involved in the process of attainment.

## ORIGINS

Harīdasā movement owes much to the *Vachanakaras* of *Veerāsāivism*, and to *Alvars* and *Sāva* saints of Tamilnad not only for philosophic treatment of God but also for the mode of analysing intuitive experiences of the Divine. *Hari* for the *Harīdasā* is a great Reality, and all the common acts of life are sacraments. Though the beliefs of the *Harīdasas* and of the *Vachanakaras* cannot be completely defined, in any one credal form, the movement bred a common outlook on life, a certain common temper of mind which can be felt more easily than analysed.

The *Haridasa* movement has presented to the world a galaxy of pure and pious souls who struggled and strove for the love of Hari. Its representatives were of the *Brahmin* caste, but, as it was a devotional movement based on mystical experience, it spread to all classes and touched all hearts, both men and women of different communities. Haridasas' mystical experience was of various kinds—*Svanubhava*, *Anubhava*, *Atmanubhava*, *Brahmasakshatkara* and *Aparoksha Gnana*. While the Vachanakaras called mystic experience as *Anubhava*, Haridasas called it *Aparokshagnana*.

Christian and Muslim as well *Vaishnava* and *Saiva* mystics have certified to mystic experience *Adhyatma Anubhava*, as the ultimate criterion of truth, and the constituents of this experience being the acceptance of only one God who is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent; and the final spiritual aim and of spiritual yearning, being absorption in this *Satva* and attainment of *Paramananda*.

The name of the Haridasa sect is a contraction of the compound word formed by two words *Hari* and *Dasa* meaning servants of God or Hari. The *dasa* even if read transverse means *Sad* or *Sada*—always a servant of God. It has got some special associations in Kannada and generally designates pilgrimage made to the temple of 'Vittalanatha at Pandarpur on the bank of the river Bhima, or to the Vittala Swami temples at Hampi or to Srinivasa temple on Tirumalai Hills. The presiding deities of these temples attract on *Dvadasi* and other festive days, a large concourse of people from all parts of the Kannada country. Haridasas are of the *Vaishnava* sect devoted to the

worship of *Vittala* and other manifestations of Lord Krishna

The date of the origin of the Haridasa sect is steeped in deep mystery since the evidences available, do not lead us to any settled date. Bhagavata Dharma began with the articulation in human consciousness, about the omniscience of one God and all sentient creation deriving their life and movement from Him. Long before the formulation of *Advaitic*, *Visistadvaitic* and *Dvaitic* doctrines, *Bhagavatha Dharma* was in vogue and was practised by servants of God in several parts of India. The devotees sang verses of love and praise of God, and these were handed down from one generation to another generation, all through the centuries, broadened, deepened and enriched by more experiences of the truly devout. It was a *Dharma* that was not taught or instituted, but which inspired the pious and the devout to pour his soul out in spontaneous melody in supplication to the Divine. No definite date accordingly, can be fixed for the emergence of this mode of life, for it is coeval with the birth of distinction in the mind of man between himself and his creator and absolute surrender to him for sustenance and continuation of life. *Valmiki* and *Vyasa* may be regarded as followers of this tradition, for their Epics are a profound prayer in praise of *Rama* and *Krishna* as manifestations of Vishnu. There is reference to this tradition in the *Padmapurana* descriptive of the concert in the Court of Indra, wherein Arjuna, Prahlada and Uddhava entertained the court by melody of music as an offering to the Divine. *Kirtana* mode of singing must have been popular at the time of the *Mahabharatha* and the composition of the *Bhagavadgita*. Heliodorus pillar at Udayagiri founded in the early years

of the first century B.C. is a great monument in support of this tradition having influenced even *Yavanas* and foreigners who came to India and were converted to this way of life.

The history of this Dharma during the early years of the Christian era is not clear, though Vaisnavism, and Bhagavatha tradition along with it, spread in the Deccan and South India, as borne out by references to Ganga Vishnu Gopa as *Narayanaacharanamudhyata* and to manifestations of Vishnu in Kadamba and Ganga records. *Bhaktavijaya* mentions of an *Achalananda Dasa* devoted to Narasimha manifestation of Vishnu, and having undertaken long tours all over India during the hegemony of the Deccan under the Rashtrakutas. The text records the Dasa as being a native of Hygunapura, Bangalore Taluk, but as having lived in Turvekere most of his life practising the cult of *Bhakti* and founding centres for the propagation of the Bhagavata Dharma. The Dasa is reported to have lived in the ninth century in this part of Karnataka, but there are no historical evidences to substantiate this tradition. Inscriptions earlier in date than 1275 A.D. have been discovered in the temple of Vittalanatha at Pandarapura and at Alandi, bearing out to the importance of this centre of worship, attracting pilgrims from all over Karnataka and Maharashtra. The latest inscription is of the date 1275 A.D. from the temple itself which records that in that year the temple of Vittala was rebuilt and during that period from 1273 to 1277 A.D. funds were collected to erect a suitable temple there. It also mentions the names of those persons who contributed towards the building funds, the most prominent being the names of the king Rama Deva and of his celebrated



Minister Hemadri Pant, the famous writer of the Encyclopaedic digests or Dharma Sastra

Earlier in chronology to this inscription is the inscription of 1237 A D where we read, that a certain king called Somesvara had conquered the kings round about this territory and had encamped during that year in a town called *Pandavige* on the banks of the Bhimawathi where Pundalika was remembered by the people as a great sage"\* The Padmapurana relates the account of the manifestation of Panduranga on the banks of the Bhima near Pandavige Traditions are at one in closely associating the name of Vittala with that of his greatest devotee, Pundalika a genuine saint of great purity It is said that Bhagawan Krishna became mightily pleased with the severe penances of Pundalika The lord presented himself before his true devotee, and Pundalika having nothing at hand to offer presented him with a mere brick for his *asana* and the Lord true to his promise made to his devotee stood on it and still stands on the same piece of brick on the sandy banks of the Bhimawathi But, as to when and where the saint Pundalika actually lived, we have not any records to determine One Pundalika is mentioned in the list of the foremost Bhagavathas of ancient times Prof Ranade† is inclined to think that he was a Kannada saint, but he advances no argument in support of his surmise Pundalika was the first great High Priest of the deity at Pandarapura, and exercised great influence in the neighbourhood There is a tradition that Achalananda Dasa of the 9th century, once

\* Pangara Kara Sri Jnaneswara Charitra P 27 32

† R D Ranade Mysticism in Maharashtra P 183

visited Pandarpura and offered holy water to Vitthala, and was overjoyed at the manifestation of Panduranga, and then, in a state of ecstasy changed his appellation from Narasimhadasa, his original name, to Achalananda Vitthala. Though the dates of Pundalika and of Achalananda have not been precisely determined so far, still, we can positively assert that the Haridasa sect which was dedicated to Vitthala originates sometime before the beginning of the 15th century and that its salient features were already in evidence in the last quarter of the same century when *Sripadaraja* and *Vyasaraja* were born

The history of the sect from the 14th century to the present day, is a history of continual growth, characterised by a genuine vitality of its doctrines and by an all round success of its great mission as those of the *Vachanakaras*. Both these movements pervade the length and breadth of Karnataka and exert ennobling influences upon the neighbouring provinces of Andhra and Tamilnad. The Haridasa movement was a religious movement for the popularisation and propagation of the doctrines of the *Vaidika Dharma* among the masses. To achieve this end, the followers of the sect have produced a rich literature in Kannada and have thus been able to reach the hearts of the man in the street. It is perfectly *Vaidika* in tone, and *in its tenets and has been perhaps the greatest interpreter* of the abstract metaphysics and sublimity of sentiment of *Vedic* and *Upanishadic* teaching in simple and intelligible language to the masses

## CHAPTER II

### INDEBTEDNESS TO VACHANA MOVEMENT

Karnataka was influenced by Veerasaiva, *Mahanubhava* movement and by Maharashtra mysticism. Long before the birth of the Haridasa Movement, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had witnessed the birth of the great doctrines of Basaveswara and the spread of his doctrine all over North Karnataka. Likewise, it was the most creative period in the history of Varkari sect, of which saint Jnanadeva was the most illustrious. It was between 1275 and 1375 A.D. that the subtle Philosophy of this sect was thought out in all its strands, with luxurious sacramental details. It appears that there was a general revival of Jainism during that period, and consequently, a gradual deterioration had set in the ranks of the orthodox Hinduism. Hence, to avert the evil results of the heterodox movement, Jnanadeva wrote his monumental commentary upon the Bhagavadgita in 1290 A.D. which has been acknowledged as one of the greatest achievements of the human intellect, not merely for the lucid exposition of the deep metaphysical truths, for clear explanations of ethical phenomena and problems, but also for the elegance of style and diction, wealth of homely illustrations and pointed popular examples. Nanna Deva, his contemporary, democratised the cult by his melodious *bhajans* and enchanting *abhangas*. Nanna Deva wrote *Bhajanas* in Hindi, which exerted great influence upon the founder of the Sikh religion,\* and accordingly, many of his

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\* Misra Bhandu Vinoda Vol I

songs have been incorporated in the sacred scriptures, the Grantha Saheb of the Sikhs. The songs of Nanna Deva were sung not only on the banks of the Bhima, and the Goda in Maharashtra, but also on those of the rivers, Ravi and the Jhelum in the distant Punjab. He was the first to lay emphasis upon the *Kirtana* of *Harinama* for the realisation of the final goal, and he made a fervent appeal to the masses to turn towards God. The period of Nanna Deva which ended with his death in 1350 A D witnessed an extraordinary religious ferment provoked by a brilliant galaxy of Saints as *Nivrattinatha*, *Gopana Deva*, *Mukta Bai*, *Gora Samvrata*, *Narabari* and others \*

Likewise, the people of Karnataka were already familiar before the 15th century, with the sayings and utterances of the Vachanakaras and other Veerasaiva mystics. The religion of love and of human equality preached by Basavanna was already part of the climate of thought which had influenced the way of life of the people. The influence of loving devotion triumphed over the tyranny of caste and brought a religious awakening in Karnataka. No cult in the world, Barnett writes, in reference to Veerasaivism, has produced a richer devotional literature or one more instinct with brilliance of imagination, fervour of feeling and grace of expression. Das Gupta opines that "the kernel of Veerasaiva thought, is almost as early as the Upanishads" and it permeates the thought predominant during the Kalidasa and post Kalidasa period. The system claims a unique position among other systems of philosophy, in that the *siddhanta* of Veerasaivism is *sarva sruti samanvaya* \*

\* Ranade—Mysticism in Maharashtra

Mystical philosophy in all ages and in all parts of the world is characterised by certain beliefs, the belief in insight as against discursive analytical knowledge, belief in a way of wisdom hidden, penetrating and coercive, which is contrasted with the slow and fallible study of outward appearance by a science relying wholly upon the senses. There is a negative side of the mystic life, that an individual capable of absorption in an inward passion, may experience a strange feeling and an unreality in common objects and his soul in utter loneliness may bring forth, out of its own depths, fantastic phantoms, independently real and living. This may be a gateway to an ampler world or higher wisdom. To the *Sarana* mystic, hidden wisdom might suddenly become certain beyond the possibility of a doubt. Revelation, insight and Intuition are contrasted with sense, reason and analysis, which are blind guides leading to the morass of illusion.

### Shatsthala Siddhanta

The *Sarana* has belief in the Reality behind the world of appearance, lives in the full light of the vision and its haunting beauty. He has belief in Unity and looks upon Reality as one and indivisible. Space and time are transcended, and perhaps, even evil is taken as mere appearance, an illusion produced by the divisions and oppositions of the analytical intellect. The *Saranas* do not believe that the Creation is illusion. They look upon all natural phenomena as manifestation of the Divine who is beyond the reaches of thought and of sense, a *Svayambu*. God is described by Siddarama, Basavanna and Allama in a language metaphysical and sublime, "nimma Mahatmeya Nive Ballari", In the words of Basavanna "Amulyavu,

apramanau, agochara lingavu, adimadyantaravillada lingavu" or as Allama says "Tayi tande illada Kanda, ninage nine hutti belediyalla, Bhedakarige Abhedyanagi, ninna charitrya ninage sahaja" The essence of *Sbatsthala Siddhanta* and the stages by which the individual soul reaches *Paramesvara* are graphically given by Allama in one of his *Vachanas* become *Bhakta* by love *Mahesha* by *nisthe*, *Prasadi* by *Savadhana*, then *Pranalingi* by *Svanubbava*, by intuitive experiences a *Sarana* and the attainment of *Samarasabhava* and *nirbhavapada* and *Aikyasthala* born out of a distinction in *Nirbhavapada* Kumaraswami says "The Psychological basis of Bhaktasthala is effective, of Mahesha conative, of prasadi cognitive, of Pranalingi intuitive of Sarana, executive of Aikyasthala unitive" These are the stages by which the Sarana reaches the Absolute He is aware of the two ways of knowing Reason and Intuition Intuition leads to the beliefs which subsequent Reason confirms, for Reason is only a harmonising, controlling force, rather than a creative one Reason moves round the object, Intuition enters into it Reason is relative knowledge but intuition attains the Absolute, and is the sole arbiter of metaphysical truth

There is one Reality which is seized by Intuition and not only by simple analysis, when earth and every common sight is apparelled in celestial light Basavanna says "Kanabarada vastu Kaiseritaiya, Anubhavavembudu neladamareya Nidhana, Kaniroc—Antarangada Ratna" Basavanna shows us the way of *Yogasamanwaya*, a reconciliation of *Jnana Karma* and *Bhakti margas*, *Samyakgnana* within and *Sivasatkritya* in the world in which *Sarana* lives, and the recognition of the vital relation between *gnana* and

*Kriya* are illustrative of *Sadgasamanaya* way of life Allama, Chennabasavanna, Akkamahadevi, Madivala Machaiya, Muktayakka and the other Veerasaiva mystics not only had intuitive perception of divinity and self realisation, but endeavoured to persuade the world they lived in, to realise the Infinitude by following their footsteps

The Veerasaiva mystics worked up a revolution in the mind and in the habits of the people of their generation. They discovered that organised religion was all through conservative, traditional, and dogmatic and opposed to the progressive attitude of mind which was empirical. Our religious habits defend traditions, pulling us backwards to the past and fastening themselves to forms of life which are outmoded. The creative energy of the mind which is faced with the dilemma, whether to look to the past or to the future, demands that religion must transform itself or it will fade away. The *Saranas* were aware that love of the world was compatible with religion, while traditionalism and dogmatism were fatal to growth and development.

Religion claims the whole world of experience for itself, the mystic comes to worship, the artist to admire, and the scientist to observe the phenomenal world. Religious attitude has both the Utilitarian and the Scientific attitude but transcends both of them. Religion is an *inseparable component of human life, and the religious attitude is that attitude of mind for which our relations to other people in the world are central.* The task of religion is the Realisation of fellowship. Religion is not 'what an individual' as Whitehead says "does with his solitariness". We are so constituted that we transcend the natural order to which we belong while remaining immanent in it.

The spiritual world to which we belong by our Transcendence, is not another world but the natural world known and intended. Our intentions transform the natural world and make it a world of possibility, of significance with a meaning, a future and a destiny. MacMurray says "The rhythm of human life swings to and fro between the withdrawal from action into reflection, and the return from reflection to action, expressed, enlarged, deepened and realised; it is a manifestation of the possibility of the community for intuitive realisation of the Spiritual."

The Veerasaiva mystics spoke of the religion of the body as a temple to house the divine Purity of body and mind, protection of the body without making it an abode of desire or passion and vanity; and fearlessness, detachment, unsullied purity of the mind free from the taint of self are the necessary concomitants for a life of spirituality: "Tanuvinalli nirmoha, Manadalli nirahankara, Pranadalli nirbhaya, Chittadalli nirapeksha." While the transitoriness of the Phenomenal world with its alternating phases of smile and tear, song and the dirge, pain and pleasure, is indicated in vividly strong terms, the mystics establish the supreme importance of life in this world with its manifold problems as a prelude to the discovery of Heaven Life on earth as the necessary preamble to the realisation of the constitution of the Divine. Basavesvara says "Yilli Salluvaru Alli Salluvaraiya, Yilli Salladavaru Alliyu Sallarayaah Kudala Sangama Deva." Man is lost in impotence and inertia, depression and despair, grief and sorrow, fear and anxiety. This dullness, lifelessness, mere conformity to dead routine, bondage to law and habit, servile adherence to conventions, usages and opinions, are the opposites of the life spiritual which is a



life of absolute freedom, unbounded enthusiasm, supreme beauty, of transcendental love and divine Joy. Man is out in quest of the spirit, thirsting, hungering and pining after the immortal life of the soul. But, he is an epitome of nutritive and vital functions of the body, the sensitive and intellectual functions of the mind, and the intuitive and spiritual activities of the Soul lost in the world of matter.

The Vachanakaras speak of life as real and not an empty dream. "Badatanakke umbuva chinte, Undare Uduva chinte, hendaradare makkala chinte," so cries the soul of Chowdiah. There is a law behind all the events of life. There is a power that regulates all its joys and sorrows and all its hopes and fears. It is because life is not an illusion that there is the need of fixed laws and of the stability of social organisation.

It is the divine spirit of the celestial fire that keeps man alive and awake, active and cheerful. Just as the vitality of the seed can and does overcome the obstacles to its growth, presented by the hard, strong, rocky grounds and by the neighbouring prickles and shrubs and can grow towards height and air by the sheer force of its potentialities, so, does the soul of man thrive and prosper in an unfavourable climate of society overcoming all hindrances.

It is Purity of heart that can qualify us for seeing God. It involves strength of will, and man is a living embodiment of energy, and a reservoir of will power which can help him to make *Martyaloka* and *Devaloka* identical and sublime. This Will is based on right knowledge, that is right discrimination between the permanent and the

transitory, the true and the false, and good and evil. The power that drives the will into action and gives it an insight into Reality is the feeling of Love in every finite creature and through this, to God. Hence, Knowledge, Will and Love are interwoven into a single structure in the totality of human consciousness. Siddarama says: "Nee Yenna Kayada, Jivada, holigeya bidisa nimma Dharma". "It is through right knowledge and conduct you realise *Svarga* Heaven and by unrighteousness *Naraka* or Hell" so cries Basavanna.

The life of the spirit confers a new dignity upon each individual. In so far as, each is an expression of the infinite dignity of labour, worship through work, holiness of the commonest and the lowliest, are the necessary outcome of the recognition of the spirit behind the individual. All the experiences of our daily life serve as one unbroken thread of communion with the Infinite. That which enlarges and vivifies the soul in this direction, as all *Vachanakaras* say, is righteous conduct *Sabbyavartane*. *Nirahankara Sarva Samata Bhava* and *Anukampa* all comprehensive and compassionate love to all sentient creation.

### World and Religion of Veerasaiva Mystics:

The Veerasaiva Mystics established the vital relation between the world and religion and between the temporal and the spiritual, the sensible and the supersensible, and between the earthly and heavenly spheres of Reality. It was discovered that the old methods of practising religion outside the world and away from the society of men were just as incompatible as the injunctions of religious texts, and verdicts of religious consciousness, as allowing the mind to be engrossed by purely secular and materialistic enjoy-

ment of life. The main object was to recognise a higher ideal and a deeper longing in the spirit of man and a higher view of the world, and to discover a mean whereby the interests and dignity of both could be preserved and harmonised. Morality and religion must always go together and cannot really be separated from each other. It was a question of realising one's own self in its true nature, and in its proper relation to the entire Universe of nature and of society, and of matter and spirit. Work was worship "Kayakave Kailasavayyah". The society in which the reconciliation between the temporal and the spiritual was to transcend class and caste distinctions, and the *raison d'être* of religion was to be only work. The *Vachanakaras* condemned distinction of *Jati* and caste, and discovered the distinction only in Atma attributes "Shukla shonita majji mamsa hasivu trshe, vyasana vishayadi gallonde Bheda". Work without worship is blind and lifeless, and worship without work is barren and fruitless. Every work should be performed in the spirit and the attitude of a worshipper, and worship should be regarded as the most sacred of all works as divine service or duty, and love of God and doing works that are acceptable to Him. Allama says "Honnu mayeyalla, hennu mayeyalla, mannu mayeyalla, manada mundana Asheye maye kana Guheswara". The individual had to live well and that through work, and enjoy the fruits of his own *Kayaka* and not appropriate that of another. It was cardinal Sin that one should enjoy the fruits of another man's labour to repair the consequences of his own worthlessness. Performance of all moral duties personal and social, and acting according to one's conscience and reason with love and charity to animals, and service to humanity were

regarded as the necessary constituents of *Kayaka* or of worship. Basavesvara's line "Salekaikuliya madiyadaru nimma nilavinge kudivanallade" rings prophetic. Nirliya Chowdayya says: "Kayakadindale Jivanmukti, Jangama-vadudu Kayakadindale Veshada Pasha harivudu."

We should accept our life as a trust from God and enjoy its blessings as His gifts and at the time, we must perform all our duties as offerings to Him, and give fully every one of our fellowmen his dues, not coveting anyone else's property earned by his own labour. This is the principle of *Morality* for the individual life, and it is also that of justice and benevolence governing our social life. It is to live our life in the world perfectly in harmony with the highest religious ideal of consciousness of God. *Bhakti* is the foundation of *Kriya* and *gnana Samanvaya* *Bhakti* is the root, *Virakti* is the tree and *Gnana* is the fruit. The Spiritual embraces what psychologists as well as mystics term "the widest social-self leading man to deeds of love and sympathy for all creatures". St. John says "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us. Hereby we know that we dwell in Him and He is in us, because He hath given us of His spirit." The question is not what a religion teaches us in its best precepts and scriptures, as to how much its followers practise of what is taught, whether there is a persistent striving for the steady, though slow realisation of the ideals of religion in the general life of the people, in their individual and family life and in their religious, social and political arrangements. The *Vachanakaras* showed in their religion and in their dedicated lives that the country's rise and salvation lay in reconciling not separating the Spiritual and the Secular—reconciling them

by a wise direction of the secular activities in the light of the Spiritual. They preached the true religion, that Siva dwells in all and that caste, ignorance, fetters on the rights of women were all deviations from the true line of religion and that we need must love the highest when we see it or else, the truth becomes a fiction, though it may be paraded in prayer, worship and doctrine. When someone said to Pascal 'how much I wish I could believe your creed' Pascal seems to have replied "Live my life, and you will learn to believe my creed." This was the type of religion with one God, one Humanity and love for all, that the Vachanakaras founded in Karnataka, to become an abiding source of inspiration and guidance for the Haridasas and other mystics of later ages.

#### HARIDASAS HEIRS TO VACHANA TRADITION

The Haridasas were heirs to this *Vachana Mahanubhava tradition*. It could not have existed before Madhva the founder of Dvaita philosophy, who lived between 1238 and 1317 A D. Ramanuja and Basavesvara had already shown the way of *Bhakti* or Devotion to God, and Madhva charya accepts this great heritage of *Bhaktimarga*, however divergent his philosophy was and opposed to those who had gone before him. He asserted that there are two eternal principles instead of three of Ramanuja, and that they are related as dependent and independent, and that soul and God are distinct and would remain so, till eternity. He taught that there was only Hari and He was the One Eternal Supreme Being, and all others were subject to the law of universal periodical dissolution. It was felt neither *Advaita* nor *Visistadvaita* was fully appreciative interpretations of *Vedic* culture, because of this conception

of *Nirguna Brahman* and *Ubhaya Vedanta* respectively, and accordingly, the knowledge of Vedic Truth, was the necessary spiritual discipline for the revival and establishment of *Vedic* culture

The Veerasaiva movement had made the country responsive to new thoughts that were manifesting themselves on social consciousness. The concepts of the Remoteness and Transcendence of Brahman had made Philosophy dry and metaphysics unattractive to the common man. The advance of Knowledge dispelled the belief in the superstitious elements of religion, and only revealed the erroneous nature of the cosmogonies of the Scriptures. Majority of the priests were degraded and had elevated themselves into a self contained and self-sufficient class of aristocrats and had lent support to the principles of caste and inequality, there was sectarian narrowness and mutual jealousy and hatred among different religious sects. Forms and ceremonials were stereotyped, and elaborate codes of dogma and creeds had crushed the inwardness and spirituality of religious life. The impious persecutions, the puritan divorce from the fine arts and innocent enjoyments of life, like music and dancing, the anti social and ascetic tendencies turning men away from the world and family life and making them excessively individualistic and other worldly, the evils of impurity and dissolute life, accompanying monasticism and celibacy, the fatalistic and deterministic outlook of the people—all these elements had indicated corruption of religion and birth of a spirit of indifference to religion and social progress. The dread of erudition had mingled with the pure gold of personal conviction, while superstitious practices and outmoded customs had lent an air of un-

reality to the sincere efforts after rational theology made by *Vachanakaras* and others. The *Anubhava* Mantapa was no longer a vital part of the life of the people. But its spirit was there as the centre for the search after culture whereof the real merit was originality, and the true force lay in the conviction that humanity is one and indivisible. A new spirit was required to fuse together the vitality of the old faith and the forms of novel culture created by the *Mahanubhavas* of *Maharashtra* and the *Vachanakaras* of *Karnataka*, worshipping a deity created in the image of its own mind, composite and homogeneous.

With the dawn of the Theistic movements in the Thirteenth Century, the supremacy of religion again asserted and a new order of brotherhood arose in the shape of an ecclesiastical organisation with *Madhvacharya* at its head. For a long time, the people of *Karnataka* had not given thought to the vital problems of life and philosophy. The cultivation of active respect for thought, with adjustment of life to it, was not deemed essential to the growth of the mind. Only with this growth in its fullest sense, that the truths of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* could be realised and true Indian culture revived. The Age of acquisition of knowledge had ended. The Age of application had begun. Amidst poetical debility and moral corruption, an ideal of refinement adopted from antiquity and assimilated to modern modes of living had been formed. The richest intellectual and religious life blossomed in a swamp of corruption and of vices. It was an effort not merely to acquire a knowledge of ancient literature but also to effect a resuscitation of antiquity, in preaching and singing of *Keertanas*. This was the dream of the new *Bhakti* movement.

The *Diastha Siddhanta* propounded by Madhvacharya and enunciated by Sri Vyasa Raja in his *Navarathnamala* and by Sri padaraja in his *Vagvajradhara*, contains nine fundamental tenets. Sri Hari is all supreme, *Sarvotthama*. The world is Reality, *Satya* difference is truth and there are fundamental and eternal differences between souls *Jivas*. But all *jivas* are servants and dependents on Sri Hari. The differences between every element of creation are an immutable and unchanging Law. True *Sukhamubbhava* is *Mukti*, and *Anubbhava* of *Sukha* in *Swarupadeha* is *Moksha*. *Bhakti* is the only *Sadhana* of *Mukti*. There are three *Pramanas* only *Pratyaksha*, *Anumana* and *Sabda*. Sri Hari is cognisable and comprehensible only through the *Vedas*.

The establishment of this *Siddhanta* was an answer to the sophistries and dialectics of Advaita intellect and scholastics. The essence of Sophism of the day was the establishment of semblance for Reality, indifference to truth provided a fair show was made combined with verbal ingenuity and practice in the art of expression. Some among the scholastics felt no need of forming opinions on a sound basis or of adhering to principles. Regarding thought as the subject matter of literary treatment, they were chiefly concerned with giving it a fair and plausible investiture of language. The discord between their philosophy and their conduct awakened no shame in them, because it was the highest triumph of their art to persuade by logic and to dazzle by erudition. Phrases and sentences supplied the place of feelings and convictions. Sonorous cadences and harmonies of language were always ready to conceal the want of substance in the matter presented by them. The Philosophy of the period



was full of this sophism which Basavesvara and Vachanakaras had contended against two centuries before

The peculiar turn that was given to mental training by diverting attention of the people from patriotic duty and through it to duty to God, to literature, and dry, arid metaphysics, and by distracting serious thought from affairs of the present to imaginary things of the past, had only tended to confirm the political and moral debility of the masses. The persistence and continuation of the age-old irrational customs and ceremonial, by a caste-ridden hierarchy only intensified the demoralisation of the Age.

The intrusion of the *Vachanakaras* and the *Haridasas* into the public life was a victory of the religious—secular spirit. The Bhakti movement heralded by the *Dasas* was a necessary movement in the evolution of the history of Karnataka. Without defence or safeguards they left the ground of popular convention for the shoals and shallows of an irrecoverable past, with the only regulative principle or sheet anchor of Bhakti, on this sea, they wandered with no guidance but the promptings, very often of an undisciplined self. Regarding themselves as resuscitators of a glorious past and founders of a new *Pantha* or creed, they went farther than the domain of mere knowledge and claimed the rank of sages, philosophers, and singers of immortal kirtanas. They restored to Karnataka the knowledge and wisdom of the classics, and not only recovered the style of the ancients and the use of Sanskrit, but also that of Kannada prose and verse with freedom at a time when Kannada was about to form as a universal medium of culture. Nothing could rob them of this glory.

## CHAPTER III

### QUALIFICATIONS OF A HARIDASA

The Haridasas were servants of God. Sri Vijayadasa in his *Haridasalakshana Suladi* describes the Vows that had to be taken up by the Haridasa before ordination. Absolute faith in *Sruti, Smriti, Purana* and *Itihasa*. The Haridasa is strictly prohibited from making debts, and from reserving any of his earnings for the morrow. He was to be content with his means, and never complain that he has not enough for the day. Whatever is acquired during the day must be consumed during the day, without anything left for the morrow, lest the residue should come in the way of his daily peregrinations from door to door for collection of alms to meet daily need. He should not listen to any reproach of Hari and an uncomplimentary thing said of the Lord. His life is dedicated to the service of Hari and he must be constantly contemplating the name and divinity of the Lord.

#### Faith and Prayer

Faith and Prayer are the constituents of Bhakti of the Haridasa for, by faith and prayer alone that one can acquire the *Nom de Plume* of 'Haridasa'. This *Ankita* was conferred by the Guru after being duly satisfied of the merits of the student aspiring to be a member of the Haridasa Pantha. The *ankita* as Vittala in the case of Purandara, Vijaya and Jagannatha Vittala was intuitively perceived by the guru after deep apprehension of the *Svarupa Guna* and after realisation of the immanence of

*Bimba Rupi Paramatma* in the soul of the *sishya* Purandara was known as *Purandara Vittala*, Vijaya as *Vijaya Vittala* and Jagannatha as *Jagannatha Vittala* Sometimes the *Ankita* was the *Upasana Murthi* of the *Guru* Religion is primarily and at heart the personal meeting of soul with God and conscious communion with Him If we use the power to discover and appreciate the real presence of God and miss the supreme joy of feeling ourselves environed by Divine Grace, we have dropped from a higher to a lower type of religion

Prayer is one of the deep constructive energies of life and has been a steady uplifting power in the long story of human progress Prayer raises man above self seeking and utilitarian aspiration It transcends rationalising tendencies in man The attempt to find antecedent causes for everything is bound to explain higher stages in terms of lower and simpler ones We are bound to go back and back for our causes, until we lose sight of supreme Values of life, and find ourselves enmeshed in a mechanistic scheme of movements, which is substituted for more vivid realities subjectively experienced Prayer is born of our own need for spiritual fellowship, and it is a kind of divine mutual and reciprocal correspondence, and gives a transcendental thrill of life Prayer in its highest reaches climbs to a vicarious exercise of the soul, in the sense of feeling with those who feel and suffer, and thus establish through invisible vibrations, complete identity with Humanity

Faith we *have*, and *believe* where we cannot prove like the great Unknowable Faith is not the antithesis of Reason, but *apriori* faith is the very citadel of Reason Philosopher Kant talks of this supremacy of faith over

the kind of knowledge that is possible through speculative reason through the method of argument, proof and demonstration. Faith is the beginning of action; it is propulsive, a tendency to act, an *elan Vital*, an unfailing energy and a dynamic, an adjustment or correspondence of the deepest life in us, to what is felt to be a deeper environment no less real than the one we perceive with our senses; it is a tendency to turn toward the sources of life and light. Faith begins with a pre-perception and ends with a confirming experience of Reality—what Sanatayana calls 'the soul's invincible surmise' an anticipation of Reality discovered by insight or vision.

Religion must ever be in the realm of adventure and not in the realm of catalogued and explained facts. It does not belong to the sphere of calculations. It will continue to rest on vision, insight, pre-perception, quest, adventure, moral values, and the conviction of personal discovery. It is a sudden flash of insight, by which we catch the implications in the situation before us. It is soul's insight or discovery of some Reality that fortifies it against evil. It is the power of the mind to see the invisible. Einstein has said "God cannot be proved by the method of mathematics, nor immortality demonstrated". There could have been no progress in any branch of knowledge, without intuition by which flashes of insight leap on the old beaten tract of what has been proved.

William James in his 'The Will to Believe' says: 'faith is an inalienable birth-right of our minds. It is an affirmation and an act that bids eternal truth be present fact'. St. Paul called it 'Obedience to a heavenly vision', Professor Royce calls it 'the soul's discovery of power

to stand anything that can happen in the universe. It is the shaft of vision into the very heart of the eternal mystery."

Faith and mysticism are a direct way of vital intercourse and correspondence between man and God. It stands for that kind of experience in which a person feels an overmastering conviction that actual contact is attained with a Divine life-giving and Joy-bringing presence. Transmutation of the inner life of man takes place, and the experience may not only construct personality but rise to the state of ecstasy or of an ineffable union with the divine. It may be a movement from mere awareness of fresh upsurging of life, that comes from beyond the self, to a rapturous sense of Being encompassed by a larger life and of being in complete attainment of the goal of life. There may be as many varieties of mystical experience as of love. The experience at first is fused and undifferentiated, though analysis and differentiation may come later. It is as Keats calls it "breathing the 'Pure Serene'."

It is a gradual but swiftly progressive obliteration of space, time, sensation and other multitudinous factors of experience, and the movement of all powers of the soul to be rooted in Divine Essence. Mystical experience is not only fused and integrated, but it is flooded and invaded with energies which seem to come from beyond the usual margins of the soul. There is a vast increase of vitality, overbrimming, whereby experience beholds life in "all its intoxication of loveliness, in its unspeakable joy, beauty and importance."

Faith makes for enhanced vitality and exalted state of mind. All great mystics speak in similar fashion that the soul makes its greatest progress, when it travels in

the *dark*, through the *cloud of unknowing*, when the soul attains the *dark night* of both the sense and mind in a state of contentless, mental blank of contemplation God does not communicate Himself through the channels of sense, nor does He come to the mind that is busy with fancies, imagination, reflection or with processes of thought. A naked intent stretching into God, the bush of silence, peace and serenity, the withdrawal from the surface and the concentration at the centre, do give an overflowing "interior plenitude". What is called as "the leap of intuition" is nothing more than an insight made by the unified, concentrated completely integrated self rather than the usual analytical or discursive step by step methods of reasoning. Religion is sublimated in acquaintance with God friendship and fellowship with Him.

It is in this sense, that the great Haridasas, like Purandara, Vijayavittala, and Jagannatha Vittala, realised the divine through Faith and Prayer. The *Upasa Devata* of Purandaradasa was *Vittala* of Pandarpur and the dasa constantly repeats His name for it is the *Nada Brahma* as well as the embodiment of the spirit of forgiveness and redemption from sin. Srinivasa, Lord of the Tirumalai hills was *Kanchana Brahma* and Sri Krishna of Udipi, *Anna Brahma*, Sri Purandara Vittala was *Nada Brahma* to Haridasas, who invoked His name, when they had upasana Bhajana, Music and dancing as *Sadbanas* of Bhaktimarga. Vijaya Vittala says "Tapta Mudrankita Dharisa Beku, Bhujadi Anna Panakke Avasara Beeladira Beku Andavaru Tanage Bahala Bandhugalena Beku Indriyagalanella Nigrahisabeku Bhava shuddiyali nitya tiragabeku". Thus was the daily routine of a Haridasa. While that of the followers of *Varkari* sect of Maha-

rashtra though similar in routine had a different foundation. The Varkari Dasas to which Jnanadev, Namadev, Ekanatha and others belonged, followed different *Sampradayas*. The *Chaitanya Sampradaya* consisted of two divisions one with the *mantra Rama Krishna Hari* and the other *Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya*. The *Svarupa Sampradaya* had its *mantra Sri Rama*. The followers of Ramadasa Swami belonged to Svarupa Sampradaya. The *Ananda Sampradaya* claimed Ramananda, Kabir and other saints as its followers, Ekanath, Janardhana Swami and others with the *mantra Om Namō Narayana*, followed the *Prakasa Sampradaya*.

### Varkaris

The Varkaris were the followers of Advaita school of Sankara and developed faith in the worship of all the well known five *devatas*. Yet, their foremost deity was *Vittalanatha* who is the manifestation of Lord Krishna in Child form. As followers of Pundarika after whom the image was named Pandarinatha, the Varkaris were devout Vaishnavites with Siva as one of their *istadevatas*. They never made any distinction between Siva and Vishnu, Hari and Hara. In complete agreement with their literary conception, they kept fast on every *Ekadasi* day sacred to Vishnu and on every Monday sacred to Siva. Some Scholars believe that the very name of *Vittala Panduranga* white complexioned—was originally an appropriate designation of Siva and accordingly the image of Vittalanatha is adorned with the figure Siva upon its head. The Scripture of the Varkaris were the *Gita* and the *Bhagavata* among the Sanskrit works, and Jnaneswari, *Ekanathji*, *Bhagavata* and other religious writing of the saints in the

regional language. Fortnightly visits to the temple of Panduranga, particularly on *Ekadasī* days with *Tulasī* rosary on the neck, were the chief characteristics of the *Varkaris*. The visits were followed by a dip in the the *darsana* of Vittala and chanting of *Mantras* and *Kirtanas* and conducting *Bhajana* and *Kathas*.

Their philosophy of life was absolute monism and devotion to the highest Deity. To them *Bhakti* was both *Sadhya* and *Sadbana*. *Bhakti* as an end is never incompatible with *Advaita Jnana*, and devotion comes into being, only, when the fundamental unity of all that moves and lives in this vast universe and of that who is the perennial source of every being, has been fully realised not only as a philosophical abstraction but as an article of deep conviction and firm faith. Tukaram regarded that the true religion of a *Vaishnava* was to recognise the fact that the whole Universe is pervaded by Vishnu. The doctrine of difference was fatal to auspicious results and a contradiction of religion. The *Varakaris* maintained that the Highest God was both *Saguna* and *Nirguna*—formless and endowed with form, and that *Nirguna* can be achieved only through the worship of *Saguna*. They put great emphasis upon the efficacy of the repetition of the divine name as the sole way of realisation of God. The singing of His prayers, either in the abstract or in His concrete manifestations in human life in the *Kirtana* form was taken to be of great utility in the realisation of the Supreme Being. They believed in the saying Grace of *Bhajanas* and *Kirtanas* and lived an intense religious life with forbidden zeal and unabated devotion and never practised total renunciation of the world any time. Theirs was the doctrine of *Karma Yoga* in day to day practical life and the bravest of the generals



and greatest of the statesmen among the Marathas were followers of *Varkari* sect which practised the synthesis of all the three paths of Bhakti, Jnana and Karma for self realisation and the attainment of the final goal of man as laid down by the scriptures

The *Haridasas* on the other hand, though close followers of Vaishnavism did not accept the rigid monism of Sankaracharya who had systematised and intensified the *Vedantic* teaching about the identity of the individual soul with the supreme Soul. They felt that this doctrine, however intellectually satisfying to the philosopher left no room for a religion such as the heart of man craves. The *Vedantic* doctrines of Sankara destroyed the possibility of that which gave meaning to salvation which involved personal consciousness and a real relationship between the lover and the beloved. M. T. Kennedy says in his "The *Chaitanya* movement" "The illusion doctrine of, Sankaracharya by which the reality of the soul's existence is only seeming, cut away the basis of the *Vaishnavite* conception of life, both here and in Heaven and made of *Bhakti* only a fleeting experience"

#### THE VYASA KUTA AND THE DASA KUTA

The *Haridasas* comprised of two divisions *Vyasa Kuta* and *Dasa Kuta*. The followers of *Vyasa Kuta* were required to be learned in the *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and other *Darshanas* with a true constructive appreciation of the metaphysics and of manifestations of Vishnu. They claimed to be the strict disciples of *Vedavyasa Tradition* and through *Slokas* and *Keertanas* in *Geervana Bhasha*, explained to the masses, the implications and propounded the significance of this great tradition. Those who synthesised all elements

of value enshrined in the Vedas and in those involved in Vyasa tradition and taught the masses through the medium of *Prakrit kannada*, the language of the region, were known as followers of *Dasa Kuta*. These were required to convey the message of Dvaita Philosophy and religion through the Vernaculars

There was no philosophic or doctrinal difference between the two sects. Both accepted *Dvaita* philosophy and religion of Madhva. Only the *Vyasa Kuta* was *Jnana Ganya*, intent on the philosophic aspect of the teachings of the Master, unravelling confusion in interpretation of Vedic text, convicting errors of interpretations, turning every prejudice into light and kindling love of truth into a passion, the other singing the praises of Vishnu through the intelligible medium of the masses and persuading them to follow the path of Bhakti. Both the sects used the *Kirtana* form for conveying the message of *Dvaita* philosophy and love of the divine Krishna to those for whom the scriptures were remote and incomprehensible. Both the *Kutas* had the same end in view, one used *sanskrit* and the other *Kannada* as media of the message of the love of God. The Haridasas were learned in the *Sastras* and in *Vyakarana* and *Shadangas* and other components of Sanskrit for *parasadi Nigraha*. They learnt Sanskrit because it was said that the beauty of this divine language was only for the blessed *Sugumarige*. But, they were deeply convinced that God could not be reached merely through grammar and logistics, though *Jnana* through cultivation of the intellect, was one of the *Sadhanas* of *Mukti*. Sri Srīpadaraya, Vyasaraja, Vadiraja and Sri Raghavendra may be described primarily as belonging to *Vyasakuta*, while

Sri Purandara, Vijayadasa, Gopaladasa and Jagannathadasa as belonging to *Dasa Kuta*

It is contended by a few scholars that *Dasakuta* began with Purandara Dasa and that tradition became popular and was continued down through the centuries by Vijayadasa, Gopala Dasa and a host of *Dasa Kuta Parampara*. Whether it was in existence before or both Vyasa Kuta and Dasa Kuta were one and the same, a distinction without a difference, are to-day matters of controversy. Both the *Vachanakaras* and the Haridasas believed in a supersensual world, in the manifestation of new senses unknown to the human mind, that with the enlargement of the senses, expansion of the intellect and exaltation of the heart, the Mahanubhavi would see new and ineffable visions of Reality, full of love and significance. The mind of the Dasa was inclined to see in the light of pure love beyond the veil of the material into a great beyond where subject and object would cease to mirage each other in distorted duality and would become simply an idea.

The mystic sense is latent in everybody, it can by cultivation transcend the threshold of consciousness and the border between the human and the superhuman and intuitively sense the divine: *Aparokshanubhuti*. The Dasa was aware that the divine is realised within one's own heart, for *Narayana* permeates within and without and as *Taittiriya Upanishad* says "*Antar Bahis cha Tat sarvam Vyapya Narayana Sthi-tah*" to open one's heart in purity to this intrinsic nature and to allow the immortal or divine life immanent in things to penetrate into one's soul is to listen to the music of God. This mystic insight is in the power of all and this insight is the recognition of a higher principle operating in the universe which is integrated and absolute.

Without this insight and awareness of an integrating principle, man is lost in the world. The *Haridasa* taught that thought, will and feeling were integral and inalienable elements of human personality, and that it was only by the consecration of these faculties in their quest of ultimate Reality that the individual would become a partaker of the divine nature.

This intuitional experience was within the reach of all, provided individuals made an effort towards it. To the *Haridasa*, the whole experience was a unity and the whole world an *Ananda*. Every soul is potentially a mystic with the faculty endowed by God to bring the reality of Bliss within its consciousness, by concentration and by withdrawal from all objects and self-abandonment: "Abhyasena tu Kaunteya Vairagyena cha grihyate."

## CHAPTER IV

### SOME BASIC IDEAS OF THE HARIDASA

The Haridasa had belief in the basic metaphysical ideas, such as God, Soul and Immortality. J. S. Mill once said "If there is no God, there is no mystic, if there is no soul there can be no mystic, if there were no immortality, mysticism were 'illusion' ". Life is potential in matter, mind is potential in life, Soul is potential in mind and God is potential in soul, thus mind and matter are the Sarira of God, the warp and woof of the living garment of God. "The finite world is Becoming, the Infinite world is of Being, and God is the unconditioned Absolute who exceeds and includes all", 'at the root of Reality unconditioned and conditioned are one world' says Kabir.

God is not merely Absolute, merely personal but a combination of both Absolute and Personal. Divinity is highest perfection *Svarupa*, *Svabhava* and *Rupa*—Truth, Goodness and Beauty. The Dasa seeks the explication of God which is Boundless, eternal and unchangeable designing mind approachable through the path of *karma*, of *jnana* and of *Bhakti*. God is love, lover and beloved to the Mystic who feels that there is a vacuum in the soul of man which nothing can fill save faith in God. *Kathopanishad* says that 'the mystic is able to see God. Never has any man been able to visualise God by means of sight nor is it possible for one to realise Him either by the heart or by the imagination or by the mind. It is only those who know this sublime truth that become Immortal'.

Edward Caird says "The soul of man belongs to the visible, and in his indissoluble relation to God, he belongs to the Invisible Universe" Thus, mysticism is religion in its most concentrated and exclusive form, as that attitude of mind in which all other relations are swallowed up in the relation of the soul to God<sup>1</sup> Another verse in the same *Upanishad* says "This *Atman* who is hidden in all beings is not patent to the eyes of all It is only the subtle seers who can look with the piercing faculty of Intuition (*Buddhi*) that are able to realise God The *Mandukopanisad* looks at God ahead from the moral point of view and tells us that it is only when a perfect *Katharsis* of the whole moral being takes place, by the clearness of illumination, that one is able to realise the Immaculate God after meditation, for, He can be attained neither by sight, nor by word of mouth, nor by any other sense, nor by penance nor by any actions whatsoever It is only when the whole moral being is purged of all evil that one is able to realise the greatness of God Evelyn Under Hill uses the word *Synteresis* for the divine nucleus, the point of contact between man's life and the divine The Gita (VI 21) says that the happiness of God realisation can be apprehended by means of *Buddhi* or Intuition God is exalted above time and space remaining itself at rest while it vivifies the world and gives it all the being that it has

### Immanence of God

The mystic is devoted to the idea of the Immanence of God The *Atman* is to the body what the wheat is to the chaff Just as a bird is pent up in the nest, even so is this conscious being placed in the body Just as oil is

hidden in sesamum, of ghee in curd, or fire in the churning sticks, even so is *Atman* immanent in the body. God head who is immanent in all beings, envelopes the whole universe by knowing whom alone is a man released from all bonds\* There are two kinds of Knowledge—*Aparavidya* and *Para Vidya*, and it is through higher knowledge alone that the imperishable Being is reached. The way of knowledge as distinguished from the way of realisation is graphically brought out in the conversation between Narada and Sanatkumara, confirming the means by which one can cross over the ocean of ignorance and grief. Other Upanishads too, like the *Mundakopaniṣad* give glimpses of mystic intimations of self realisation. The way of the Mystic is to attain knowledge and wisdom to disentangle the soul from the material relation and to rise by meditation and self denial above the world of sense into the pure region of goodness.

God to the Haridasa is Love or *Bliss Ananda—Maya*, and it is by his control (*Niramyā*), and by his spirit *Dharya* that the mystic soul becomes eternal. *Jnanandamaya tu atma Sesohi Paramatmanah*. 'The love of God is an outpouring and an indrawing tide'. Soul by itself as a rational being *chit* or as a vital principle *Prana*, or thinking principle *Buddhi* or as *Ajada* or *Anu* impartite, immutable *Nirvikara*, or seat of consciousness *Jnanasraya* has no significance to the Mystic, unless, it is bound to the Absolute. The soul can never have existence except by God's existence. Sri Krishna Says 'Nothing exists but by Me, the resting or the moving.'

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\* R. G. Ranade Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy P. 342

The Mystic believes in the Spirit pervading the Universe, either as energising principle or as a manifestation both in the form of *Avataras* and as an indwelling Soul in every body '*Antaryamin Vasudevah Sarvam*' The Antaryamin aspect of Godhead is particularly attractive to the Mystic, who sees that there is something in the Soul which defies all analysis and transcends all material conditions. This conception of the unity of Godhead and His nearness and closeness to the Soul has its counterpart in neo Platonic School which confirms the *Vedantic* parentage of Greek Mystic philosophy. Plotinus says "the Soul is not only an intermediary between Appearance and Reality. It is the point where all converging and diverging lines meet, it binds extremes together, and it is in vital correspondence with every region to which these lives lead. Within the Soul all metaphysical principles are represented. It touches every grade in the hierarchies of value and of existence from "the Super essential Absolute to the infra essential Matter". Aristotle says "that Soul is a Micro Cosm, the Soul is the real world, each of us is the real world, each of us is the spiritual world, and also share the Being of the universal Soul. The soul comes into this world with a reminiscence of its former glory, as Wordsworth says "Trailing clouds of glory do we come from God, who is our Home, and to which it desires to return". By raising itself to the realm of the Spirit, it sees God itself and all

The soul is the Wanderer in the metaphysical world, external life is not Soul's life, It realises itself by turning towards its principle and away from its own creations. It is thus creative, doing its work in the world of sense



which is only a shadow of the Soul. It is the effluence of the spirit touching at the same time, the phenomenal world. It is Divine because it resembles God closely. It is only separated from God as word from thought, as activity from power, as manifestation from essence.

### Immortality

Immortality consists in the union of Soul and God, which should be achieved by the Sadhana of the Mystic. Soul is the seat of consciousness. "The Soul and its attributive consciousness are in Samanvaya Sambandha, in intimate coherent relation, as the light of the sun is to the sun itself." It is the consciousness of the soul which functions on various planes, physical, vital, sensuous, *Anna Maya*, *Prana Maya*, *Mano Maya*, *Vijnana Maya* and *Ananda Maya*, intellectual and blissful. The endeavour of the Mystic is to elevate this consciousness or vision to heights of being Goodness and Beauty. God is beauty. Soul is Beauty and in this, there is kinship and consciousness devoid of all limitations, rising to Beatitude. *Sa Cha anantyaya Kalpate*. The Turiya state or what Prel calls \* the psycho physical threshold of sensibility." Feeling the abode of knowledge and bliss, he is emancipated and illumined. The waking, dreaming and sleeping states of consciousness are superseded by the *Turia* State of consciousness, where disharmonies are obliterated and identification with the Supreme is attained. As all colours merge in white, so too, the particular phases of conscious life are not extinguished but are

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\* Inge Philosophy of Plotinus Vol I P 203

Govindacharlu Swami Metaphysics of Mysticism 126

absorbed in some larger forms of consciousness. The Soul is embraced by God, which union is *Immortality*." As without life principle, nothing by itself can arouse a sleeping man, so without God indwelling the soul there can be no realisation of the soul. "The Great Soul flows *in from all sides into the resting world, pours itself into it, penetrates it and illumines it*" Even as the bright beams of the Sun enlighten a dark cloud and give it a golden border, so, God, when he enters into the body, gives it life, and immortality and awakens it from sleep. The world then guided in an Eternal movement becomes a living and blessed being.

This experience of God realisation can be tested by the same criteria of truth that are used for ascertaining the reality of sensuous experience, viz, objectivity, universality and necessity. Spiritual experience is as objective as sensuous experience, it is as independent of subjective ideas and as different from various subjective hallucinations as the certain and objective knowledge of the world. The mystic sees God as really as we see the phenomenal world, only with this difference, that his knowledge of God is direct and intuitive, while our knowledge of the world is sensuous and discursive, unlike our knowledge of the phenomenal world which involves a duality of subject and object. Mystic experience is unitive and transcends the subject object relations. Intuition is not, however, a separate faculty, but only a mere evolved state of Reason working on a higher plane. Thus, God realisation by intuition is the gift of God and an art in itself, which can be mastered only by the Grace of God and the Guru.

From the objectivity of mystic experience follows its Universality. The main experience of mystics of all ages and climes are essentially identical, though there is ample scope for richness and variety in mystic experience on account of the Infinity and Perfection of God, who cannot be exhaustively and completely comprehended by any single mystic at any time. Only progressive approximation towards complete realisation is possible. What is objectively and universally true must be necessarily true. Thus the most important feature of mysticism, recognised, supported and preached by all the saints of Karnataka and Maharashtra is the Reality of the other world and the possibility of spiritual experience for all. That even the lowest and the most sinful of human beings can attain salvation by real, sincere and intense love for Parameswara is the teaching of most of Veerasaiva and Haridasa Saints.

### God realisation by Love

The possibility of God realisation presupposes the divine nature of man. Unless there is an element of identity between man and ultimate Reality, first hand knowledge of God would be impossible. Realisation of God, therefore, means the realisation of the identity of the individual with the Supreme Soul. As this identity is *qualitative* and not quantitative, the knower of Brahman remains slightly different from Brahman itself, in spite of the identity between the two. God *implicitly* present in man is realised *explicitly* only by acquiring the necessary moral values. So, God realisation presupposes perfect holiness and it is only the holy that are admitted into the Kingdom of God. Newman says "what is religion but

the system of relations between me and the Supreme Being. Of all the innumerable ways and means that are followed by various aspirants, the surest is the whole-hearted and disinterested love of God, and only those that have renounced every thing for the love of God are blessed with beautiful visions.

There are several types of personal relations '*Mata, Pita, Bhrata, Nivasas Saram*' —the sense of dependence, humility in love involved in these relationships. The sources of religious faith are found in our ultimate sense of dependence. Human need is a cry of the heart for God. But the most intimate union between soul and God can only be expressed as the *Bharya* and *Bharta* as the Bride and the Bridegroom. Bradley uses the expression 'embraced and harmonised' even as the Vedic seers used '*Yosha Jaramva Priyam*'. The highest mystical knowledge of God is 'like the unseen embrace of lovers in a dark room', when the depths of soul are felt to be embraced by His unintelligible presence. Reality then, is extinguished and a state of attunement is reached, for the purpose of love is to find a way of escape from self into the Infinite into the life and love of God. "The true mystical marriage" Walkins says is purely a *spiritual union effected in the very centre of the Soul*", a region far removed from sense derived images. *Brihadaranyaka* Upanishad says '*Ya atmanam eva Priyam Upasate Nahasya Priyam pramayukam Bhavati*'. All forms of love disappear and are rediscovered in the state of *Ananda* of complete union of the individual will with the Universal Will. The goal of the mystic is God through love and the summit of his divine delight is the great lover *Priya* who has to be seen, heard, thought and adored, '*Atmanameva priyam Upasita,*'

'Meditate on God as the lover' The mystic assigns personality to God, declares Divinity as supra personal, personal or impersonal maintaining intimate relations with His creatures

The infinite nature and attributes of Godhead as well as His finiteness of having relations to souls are dear concepts to the mystic who personalises the Impersonal or limits the Infinite in order to pave the way for Transcendence— *Isaras saria, Bhutanam Hrid dese, Tisbtati* Another way is of looking at Transcendence as complete and perfect in the Immanent God is immanent in the soul, in all His perfection and totality

In love, the whole spiritual life of man consists, and the method of all mysticism is love, and in the whole *Bhakti movement*, love is the accepted means by which the worshipper and the object of His worship are brought together, whether it be Lord Krishna who asks for absolute surrender, or Buddha who by his nudity symbolises the attitude of the soul or Christ who by his crucifixion suffers for mankind "The whole cosmic drama is enacted by the impulse of Love", and it the Immanent principle or impulse of love that necessitates God to Incarnate and live in the heart of all beings This is variously called as *Atma Sakshatkara* and *Brahmasakshatkara*, *Atmanubhava* and *Brahmanubhava* This represents Unity as the substratum of Plurality, for, without His entering into all creation, there would be no creation at all The mystic sees the sense of Unity in all the manifold aspects of creation— '*Draanti daityah pranamanti devatah*' The Unity of God head embraces all the other diversities The Immanence urges from within and Transcendence attracts from without, and the human

soul is neither self derived nor self-existing but exists in God. God is Bliss to the Mystic, and this makes the mind of the mystic always optimistic, to believe that the world is good or at least good outweighs evil, and that there is marriage of Heaven and Hell, and Good and Evil are inexpugnable elements of human life and evil is entirely due to the way men take the phenomena. The mystic who has cultivated equanimity and balance *Samya Yoga*, looking upon pleasure and Pain, good and evil as ebb and flow of human life, installing his soul in divinity, faces everything cheerfully by admitting the hardness of evil, despising its power, ignoring its presence and turning his face away from it. Evil and good are born out of one's own thoughts and it is the ruling of one's own thoughts that is the principal concern in *Samya Yoga*; it is energising according to the best life, and becoming the same with a nature truly divine, and "to see One changeless in all life, and, in the separate, one Inseparable."

God intoxicated *Haridasa* is indifferent to disease and death, for disease and suffering are a chastening penance, and death and cremation are taken as final ablution into all-purifying God. The Dasa's valuation is transvaluation of all values, for he is conscious only of ultimate connotations '*Paryavasana Vrittib*'. He believes in God, Soul and Immortality and in the intimate kinship between Soul and God, and in the potentialities and possibilities of development of the mystic Sense in course of time, by successive stages and correlated experiences to realise the Absolute. In this process of Unfoldment the soul is cleaned because of mystic relationship between soul and God, and therefore indicative of the expansion of the consciousness potential in the soul towards Cosmic consciousness.

## MYSTIC LIFE ESSENTIALLY ETHICAL

Mystic life and mystic process of expansion are essentially *ethical life* and processes. The mystic must acquire not merely the moral force to overcome temptation, but the strength not to be mentally disturbed by it. Senses must be under control, passions subdued, and instincts disciplined. Any lack in this, will mean withdrawal of higher centres of control and the birth of mischievous ideas keeping the field of consciousness in a state of perpetual tension.

The *ethics* of the *saints* is practical. The attainment of ethical life is regarded as an essential condition of mystic life. Ethics is only preparatory to mystic realisation. Virtue is associated with knowledge and spiritual insight. Humility, non injury, purity, devotion to God and detachment and dispassion are to prepare one for real knowledge, while the opposites of these, make for ignorance. The same truth is expressed in other words, when the divine and demoniac heritage are distinguished from each other, and identified with knowledge and ignorance respectively.

The divine heritage consists of Virtues, while the demoniac of the vices. The Soul is constituted by the knowledge of Oneness with the Atman, while the other is made up of pride, anger and ignorance. Man's mind is swayed by three qualities *Satva* (Purity), *Rajas* (activity) and *Tamas* (inertia). The first and the last are responsible for the divine and demoniac heritage respectively. *Satva* is the source of knowledge and joy, and leads to God. *Rajas* is the source of activity that keeps us engrossed in worldly ambitions. *Tamas* is the source of pure infatuation.

and ignorance taking us to Hell. God realisation is the highest end, and anything that comes in the way of God realisation should be summarily dispensed with, however good or valuable it may be. The most precious thing, the most loving, and intimate relations like those of parents and friends, and even that of a spiritual teacher should be straight away abandoned, if one is likely to be separated from God, by associating oneself with any of these. The time required for the attainment of the ideal, depends on the intensity, fervour and firmness of faith and love.

Success in life worldly or spiritual is impossible without heroism. The foremost qualification for the mystic is infinite capacity for effort. He should be all patient and undaunted by difficulties, and disappointments. His zeal for spiritual life should only be sharpened by his physical sufferings.

Everything in this world is holy except the mind of a person not devoted to God. One should make one's mind pure and holy by purging it of various passions. The importance of practice in spiritual life cannot be overstressed. Nothing is impossible of attainment through practice. The realisation of God is supremely aided by self control and constant meditation and these are attained through practice. Those who are given to sex and money are bound. Freedom from these attachments is the first step towards God realisation. God immanent in our body, will not be seen until emotions are purified and transmuted. No wicked feeling should arise in the mind. There should complete annihilation of the egoistic feeling, a man should not let others know of his spiritual progress as it is likely to make him proud and arrest his



spiritual progress Repentance is of great value in spiritual life, for, it burns up all sins committed through ignorance and passion and enables even the most despised sinner to become a saint The brave souls who have sought after imperishable truth have confirmed that light broke upon their consciousness only after watching disappointment and frequent weariness of heart The awareness of the Imperceptible is only possible to the expanded perception which lovingly learns to trust and relies on God The Transcendental Vision is not easy *Yogi Pratyaksha* The path too is not easy for the entry of the soul upon spiritual experience is an entry into a cloud of *Unknowing, Divine darkness*, or a fathomless abyss

The method of the mystic in his search of the Divine is through different stages and degrees of intuitions of eternal life, and through all arts, poetry, music and dancing and "working up even to a sphere of raptures and dalliance" This experience cannot be demonstrated by purely intellectual processes Intellect is blind and cannot move of itself It is feeling that works and moves with speed infinitely superior to electricity or anything else Vivekananda says "Do you feel? If you do, you will see the Lord" By the movement of 'the God awakened impulse, the spirit of the contemplative flows into the Divine and in the ecstasy becomes transfigured"

Mystic experience is with God and it is *immediate* through Love Lord Krishna says "*Bhaktya Mam Abhyanat*" 'By Bhakti alone you can realise Me' In moments of inspiration, intense enthusiasm and religious ecstasy, the far vistas of the Unknown are opened up for the gaze of the mystic He is then convincingly made

aware of the presence of a sphere of life, larger and immensely more powerful than his usual consciousness. The experience of the mystic is not abstract but definitely empirical, within the reach of every body who has made a search for it.

Many mystics in different parts of the world have borne testimony to the universality of experience and to the existence of a process which is the continuous unfolding of a Plan that has eternal significance and beauty, and inclusive of an experience that does not stop at the Rational but transcends into the domain of love and Bliss. The highest mystic experience is in touch, in co operation, and in tune with not only God's Cosmic processes but even with the functioning of his Infinite Nature.

#### STAGES OF THE PROGRESS OF THE SEEKER

Many saints and seers have testified to the emerging of a new sense or to the appearance of a new faculty lying dormant within them. New emotional or moral changes occur and new perspectives dawn on the soul. Some saints have after long concentration and slowly, in the *Pipilika* way have obtained *Krama Mukti*\*. Few have obtained *Sadyomukti* in the *Vibhanga* way. The mystic strength lies in actual experience. He is empirical not speculative. In loving his individual personality he realises his *true personality*, in the wider personal life.

During the long and strenuous process of purification and contemplation, the beginner is blessed by the Grace of God, with mystic experiences, like visions and auditions, which refresh him or strengthen his faith in the

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\* Govindacharya The Metaphysics of Mysticism

spiritual life But these visions are entirely different from dreams and hallucinations, as they are marked by the presence of full self consciousness, and are objective experiences and not subjectively induced states of consciousness We also see Him unexpectedly on various occasions, and His form is seen, as Purandara puts it, even when we shut our eyes, nay we see Him even when we try not to see Him Thus such visions are super-sensuous is proved from the fact that they can be seen by the blind and His words are heard even by the deaf The elementary mystic experiences are meant to create and sustain the interest of the aspirant in his search after God Purandara tells us that he was delighted to see a panorama of an inconceivable variety of colours He also mentions that he saw invaluable and beautifully shaped things of a bright colour and that he became all eyes and saw eyes everywhere

The progress of the seeker on the path of spiritual life is not uninterrupted and smooth Though he sees forms, light and colours and hears some mystic sounds at intervals, yet when a certain stage of development is reached, he finds his enthusiasm for mystic life slackened, his progress arrested, and his mind overcome by various doubts as regards the reality of the spiritual life itself This stage in mystic life is marked by all sorts of disappointments, combined with a variety of calamities that are hurled on him by the jealous God, as if to test his love and faith in Him This stage in spiritual life is known in mystic literature as the *dark night* of the soul Most aspirants have to pass through this stage which Carlyle calls 'the centre of *indifference*, before they reach the stage of further illumination or the stage of eternal light' Rare

indeed are saints like *Jnanadeva* and *Purandaradasa* whose progress in spiritual life is absolutely continuous.

The dark night of the soul is ultimately transcended and the mystic reaches his destination. One's mind is absorbed in hearing the mystic sound that destroys all passion. The sound is like the loud beating of the cymbals or jingling of the anklets: it is sometimes so extensive that one feels as if the heavens were reverberating with it. *Jnanadeva* had a combined experience of both light and sound. The sound heard, further developed into automatic speech or writing. He realized his identity with God in the supreme Light beyond the Sun and the Moon and in the midst of the loud beating of drums.

The divine love that fills the mystic's heart overflows in the form of *words*, which are therefore not his words, but God's: God is speaking through him. Equally important is the experience of *light* and *form*. God seems to light His devotee by bearing a torch in His hand and there is light everywhere. One sees a shower of stars, the light of the crescent and full moon; there is an end to all darkness, and one experiences the light of the Sun at night and of the moon by day. One sees the bright light of the dawn that fills the earth and knows no setting. *Purandara* saw God in infinite forms and dresses and had all his doubts resolved.

stands up, the body perspires and trembles with joy, tears trickle down, excessive joy wells up in the heart, the throat is choked up, the tongue is tied tight, and the breathing is quickened, one feels as if one was suddenly made the master of a rich heritage. But however much, the spiritual bliss may be enjoyed, the mystic does not feel satisfied, for such bliss knows no satiety.

The last stage in the mystic life is the experience of the Unity of the Self with God. This is known as the *Unitive* life in God, a thing experienced by the majority of great saints all over the world, in all times. The Haridasas and Maharashtra saints had the experience of the identity of the self and God, for they tell us that, they found the form they were seeing to be identical with their own self. Jnanadeva, Purandara and Vijayadasa experienced this oneness with their Guru. They ask, 'God, His devotee, and the Guru are united together, three rivers merge in a confluence when everything becomes God, how is one to worship Him?' A devotee, who is blessed with this experience has no duties to perform except to remain absorbed in the Bliss of the Unity with God. Jnanadeva speaks of his being crowned as the king of the realm of the Unitive life in God to the beating of drums. Now it is in that state of psychical exaltation, that they possess complete sovereignty over everything in the world, even over death. Jnanadeva remarks that the devotee's life long service of God would be of no avail if this does not happen. He considers it no wonder that the devotees who have attained to *real* Swarajya the sovereignty of the Self, or the state of the resplendent *Atman*—in this very life, are eternally united with God, to become one with Him after bodily death.

Accordingly, the Mystic aims at *Turya consciousness* or *avastha* by which to intuit Reality. Jnanadeva says if you want Moksha you need not torture the senses, Love is the guide of the mystic from the start to the goal and also its beginning and its end. Love leads the mystics in their search for Absolute Truth and Beauty to a state in which the soul is permeated with the Divine. It is love that makes the mystic see beyond the end of the solar spectrum other ether waves and rays of which one has no knowledge. It is love that awakens the sense of an eternal in a hush of the mind processes within. Love makes mystic experience a matter of perception, not conception.

Love of God urges the soul towards more and more apperception of *Sat Chit Ananda*. Love engenders Faith in God, *Yo Yat chiraddas Sa eva sah, Sraddhavan*. Faith is a yearning of the heart, gratification of the spiritual sense, and this faculty is obtained by concentration and meditation. The Lord says

"In me alone plant thy heart, in me alone place thy mind. In me alone shall thou abide. All doubts dispelled." It is Faith born out of love that indicates, deep in the recesses of soul, beneath all understanding, superior to all logical knowledge, the existence of a faculty by which Truth, absolute truth might be known.

Love makes for progress in the attainment of difficult areas of consciousness by training the mystic to the perception of the spirit in all objects, the perception of God in all, and all in God, the worship of God everywhere the *Sarva Bhuta sthitam* and in the feeling of every other's pleasure and pain as one's own. Just as we feel presence of our bodies when we remain motionless or close our

eyes, so too, the mystic feels God and in a very simple way accomplishing the mystic union (self feeling—Coenasthesis) This feeling of God is evoked by practice Not only the mystic practises the presence of God, he also practises the presence of soul, the recognition and acknowledgement of the equality of individual consciousness involved in cosmic consciousness 'Samadarsinah' He loves God for love's sake His values are all values of God As God is love, and from love all is born, and God makes others to love, the mystic loves and serves God with all his heart God evolves Cosmos prompted by love, and therefore Cosmos is *Lila*

The Haridasas' way, thus, was the way of Bhakti or devotion What St Paul meant by Faith, the Dasas meant the same thing—Loving devotion to God and self surrender is absolute trust in God Narada Bhakti Sutra describes Bhakti as intense love of God which is like the food of the immortals, for it makes a man perfect, deathless and satisfied A man who loves God has no wants nor sorrows, he neither hates nor joys nor strives with zeal for any ends of his own for through love he is moved to rapture, and through love does he attain peace, and is very happy in spirit For love is an experience pure and selfless, subtle, unbroken and ever expanding, a man who has once experienced love will see that alone, hear that alone, and speak that alone, for he ever thinks of that alone Haridasa does not allow any distinction to the individual soul Madhwa says "*Mahatmya Jnana Purvastu Sudhirah Sarvatodbikah Sneho Bhaktiriti*" As the Absolute is in essence Beautiful, and Divine Beatitude environs all, being both Immanent and Transcendent, most pervasive and omnipresent and most inclusive of all

creation—the rational, the ethical and the aesthetical,—the discovery by the soul of divine beauty is the overwhelming factor in this divine complex. Says Basavanna “*Sivanu Veda Priyanu alla Nada Priyanu alla Bhakti Priyanu namma Kudala Sangama*” The nature of this passion is “*Karpurada Girige Kidu tagalidante!* Allama Prabhu says *Advaitava nudidu Abankariyade namma Sharana Sangha Sanidhya* Purandara says *Bhakti Beku Virakti Beku Sakti Beku Muktya bayasuwege* Vyasaraya says *Harinama Tirtha Viralu Duritada Bhayaveke* Similar sentiments were voiced by Vijayadasa, Gopaladasa and Kanaka Dasa.

There are certain elements in *Haridasa Bhakti* which are found amongst all the sects that practised this mode of worship. The first is the conception of God as one who loves mankind and thirsts for the response of man's love. God is conceived as a personality in love, and the soul of man is attracted to the beautiful in God. Belief in the existence of a personal God evokes the emotion of worship which is love, which may find expression in praise or adoration, supplication and aversion to the dreadful. Though transcending the human conception of personality, still He is personal, a Being responsive to prayer and devotion.

The second conception is that God has become incarnate many times for the sake of his devotees. The idea behind the *incarnation* is *sacrifice* and Sacrifice embodies suffering. As the universe is *Rasa Lila* and God is love and gives himself to his devotee all His great *Avatars* share the life experiences, the agonies and the travail of all created beings, in whatever strata they find themselves in. He lifts them up from the torrents of *Samsara*. The whole process of creation is the reciprocation of love.



between the lover and the Beloved, the minutest part of anything is expressive of the whole, and the Supreme Being is present in every part of the Universe. As the *Avatara* is "the descent of the Supreme spirit to be an *Antaryami* of every thing—an indwelling of creation. The spirit appears as an Infinite sphere in a point, and an immensity in a centre and an eternity in a moment. In the language of William Blake 'it is to see a world in a grain of sand and a Heaven in a wild flower, Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand, and Eternity in an hour'"

Incarnation has taken place, whenever *Dharma* has failed and lawlessness prevailed and the Infinite spirit has manifested itself to guard the righteous, and, to destroy the evil doers, and to establish the Law.

All the schools of *Bhakti* are agreed as regards the way of deliverance or salvation, which has to be attained not by sacrifices and austerities or any outward way of worship or service but by the Grace of God in answer to the devotion of the individual soul. This way of salvation is open to all castes and creeds, rich and poor, learned and ignorant. This way does not involve the abandonment of ordinary occupations and it is open to the contemplative *Sanyasi* and to the busy householder.

In this pilgrimage of the soul, the individual does not fly from passion but transforms it and raises it to a higher level where it is freed from the limitations of sense. The deeper and most intense of earthly passions are transcended and the passion of *Bhakti* can have unlimited satisfaction, unlike earthly passion which is like a candle flame compared to the fire of the Sun. The individual has

to make elaborate preparations for this Ascent to see God face to face which is the highest essence of all religions. The Pilgrim has *Bahirpragna*, *Antahpragna* and *Ubbayatapragna*. He has to acquire spiritual things before he can spiritually discern or intuit God, which is the religion of the Eternal. His capacities can be so enhanced so as to intuit God, to transfer his subjective nature into inert objects and meditate on *Janma Mrityu Jara Vyadhi Dukha Doshanudarsanam*. His expansion may be physical, ethical, emotional and ecstatic. He has dispositions to transcendental faculties revealed in states of ecstasy, and these are the anticipations of transcendental existence. The individual moves on from *annamaya kosa* to *Prana mayakosa*, then *manomayakosa*, *Vignanamaya Kosa* and lastly to *Anandamaya Kosa* which are all pointers in the direction of this great quest. The soul tends to concentrate its forces and to fix them for greater and strong flights. It is a movement from synthesis to synthesis and height to height till an absolutely universal consciousness is reached. This movement is a genuine part of human nature and has a dialectics of its own, by which it can be cultivated so as to make by concentration and *Sadhana*, the pursuit of ultimate objective Truth possible. This dialectics distinguishes the permanent from the temporal and as Plotinus says "Pastures the soul in the meadows of Truth."

As the world is suffused and interpenetrated with universal consciousness, neither intellect nor emotion exclusively, can be an intruder in this Ascent, nor mere susceptibility to passionate or rapturous emotion, nor logistics can shape the mind of the pilgrim who is for an extension of the mind to God by means of the longing love.

## CHAPTER V

### ROLE OF MUSIC IN SPIRITUAL ASCENT

It is the whole personality unified and harmonised under the leadership of this faculty—the spirit in love as Spinoza calls “amour Intellectualis Dei”, that leads the individual up the pathway to Reality. Emotional qualities are required and great virtues as honesty, candour, courage, fortitude and others cannot be acquired without the exercise of the intellect. Accordingly, the *Dasa* mystic aims at a discipline of these faculties before launching on the adventures of the spirit, for without the gleam and the discipline of the faculties, the quest is in vain, thus establishing the truth that the spiritual adventure is only for those who are spiritually inclined. Though the power which leads the individual up the Ascent to ultimate Reality is possessed by every one, very few are inclined to cultivate this power and use it for the apprehension of the Divine.

It is said that the soul of a nation is enshrined in the temple, in its literature and in its arts. All these are venerated in India and are represented to have emanated from God who is believed to be the fountain head of all that is True, Good and Beautiful in life—*Satyam, Swam, Sundaram*. A divine origin was assigned to music by the ancient Aryans, because music is the language of the emotions. To a Hindu, God is Infinite and the entire Universe is a manifestation of the Infinite and it is the same sublime idea that is symbolically and beautifully expressed when the sage and Rishis of India described *Sangeeta*

and *Sahitya* as two limbs of the Goddess Saraswathi Music is perhaps the oldest of the Arts and it can be traced back to the Vedic period, for there is in the *Rig Veda* reference to *Vina*, the perfect string instrument and *Vana* the hundred stringed instrument and the wonderful music concert of ineffable melody (in Yama's court) of music of Vana, Vina and other musical instruments India venerates music and none of its arts is more perfect, more loved, more widespread, more interwoven with its life than its music India's musical tradition was, that music was first created from the *Sama Veda* by Brahma

One of the most valuable contributions of *Karnataka* to world culture is the system of Music described as *Karnataka Music* as distinguished by what is known as *Hindustani music*, a system of music, prevalent in Northern India The two systems are also known as the *Dakshinadi* or Southern and *Uttaradi* or Northern systems of music though the latter has taken root in certain areas of the Kannada country as well Though the two systems differ from each other in their peculiar and characteristic treatment of Ragas, their fundamental principles are similar Both the systems have melody for their object, unlike the Western system of music which has harmony for its object Both the systems recognise that there are twelve notes in an Octave and use the same srutis Both the systems classify Ragas under different *Melakartas* Janaka Ragas—as derivatives or Janya Ragas It is also very interesting to note that certain ragas of the one system correspond to particular Ragas of the other though under different names, for example, ragas Shubha Pantuvarali, Hindola and Mohana of Karnataka music

correspond to ragas Thodi, Malcos and Bhupali of the Hindustani music respectively, while many such counter parts may be readily found in the two systems of Indian music

Indian music began says Annie Beasant in the higher emotions, and passed on into the spiritual world. As we listen to some exquisite Indian melody, we lose the sense that we are present in the body at all. We find our minds stilled and quieted and the mind vanishes with the body and we find ourselves raised to a purer and subtler region. After the advent of Islam and Muslim rule in India, music was secularised and almost ceased to be the handmaid of religion and spiritual devotion, while Palaces instead of temples became mainly its abode. But, music in Southern India was never divorced from devotional fervour and all the great composers were scholars and Saints. These were God intoxicated men of extraordinary ability and of transcendental experience.

The Vijayanagar Empire stood as the bulwark of Vedantic and Saiva culture and civilisation, and music as the Sadhana of devotion to God against secularism of Northern Muslim India. As the Vachanakaras, so too, the Haridasas, moved by intense love and devotion for their own people in Karnataka energised the impulse towards consolidation of Hindu forces, against the thread of the mono theistic and Iconoclastic religion of Islam spreading slowly but inexorably in the Deccan and the South. The religious revival in Karnataka under the inspiring leadership of Basaveswara had awakened the spirit of the people to an acknowledgement of the values of equality, unity and social solidarity. This religious

current had spread and had saturated the climate of Karnataka to make a bid for the defence of ancient culture and civilisation against the ruthlessness of Muslim flood. The soul of the Karnataka people had been awakened from the slumber of ages, through the fervour of religion, in order to make Vijayanagar, the citadel of ancient culture and a bulwark against the proselytising vandalism and the aggressive tendencies of Islam. Music was the most powerful medium of communication of great and living ideas among the masses of Karnataka. There is something very wonderful in music. Charles Kingsley says 'words are wonderful enough but music is more wonderful. It appeals not to our thoughts as words do, it speaks straight to our hearts and spirits, to the very core and root of our souls. Music soothes us up, stirs us up, it puts noble feelings into us, it melts us to tears, we know not how, it is a language by itself just as perfect in its way as speech, as words, just as divine, just as blessed. Music has been called the speech of angels, it is the speech of God itself.' Music teaches men not to be self-willed and fanciful, but to see the beauty of order, the usefulness of rule, and the divineness of Law.

It is for this reason that the Haridasas resorted to music as the medium of communication of sublime thoughts of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* to impart instruction and to enlighten the people. It was their firm conviction that God would manifest Himself when the soul craved His company through music and dance. Of all modes of apprehension of God, music was the most effective and powerful, and when employed would persuade the Remote and the Transcendental God to bless with His living presence. Sri *Madhvacharya* and

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LIVES OF A FEW SAINTS

Sripadaraya of Abbur, reputed to be the founder of Haridasa Sahitya in Kannada was the first saint to sing *Ugabboga* and *Suladi*. We have no knowledge of them earlier to Sripadaraya as literary or epigraphical evidences bearing out to the prior existence of the movement and references to *Ugabbogas* and *Suladis* are not at present available. Since the days of Narahari Thirtha in the early years of the foundation of the Vijayanagar Dynasty in 1336 A D the singing of praises of Hari through *Sankirtanas* was in vogue, and was maintained uninterruptedly till the close and fall of the Vijayanagar Empire, to be revived again, under Vijayadasa in the early years of the 18th century. *Akshobhya Thirtha* and *Vedanta Desikar* contemporaries of *Vidyaranya* had withdrawn from Vijayanagar, with the establishment of Advaita school of thought at the capital, by *Vidyaranya* and his followers. An inscription on rock (M A R 1896) at Mulabagal records the well known disputation between *Akshobhya* and *Vidyaranya* about 1350 A D. The inscription mentions of *Akshobhya Thirtha* of having blessed Kumara Kampana, son of Harihara at that time, the Viceroy at Mulbagal.

*Akshobhya Thirtha* afterwards moved to the banks of Bhumarati river and propagated Madhva philosophy and system of thought. Tradition records that a great warrior Narasimha, after a wearisome war renounced the

followers of his *dhrista* philosophy regarded *Kirtana* mode of approach to Reality as one of the nine forms of Bhakti. To the Haridasa, music and poetry *Sahitya* were twin born and one would not exist without the other. *Sripadaraja* says in one of his *Ugabhogas* 'Dhyana in Krita Yuga, *Yagna* and *Yajana* in Treta Yuga, worship in Dwapara, and *Gana* in *Kaliyuga* are the forms of devotion to Keshava'. The same Tatva is echoed by Purandara when he says 'that *Dhyana*, *Yagna* and *Archana* and *Keertana* are the forms through which *Purandara Vittala* bestows *Moksba* on the devotee'.

The philosophy of Haridasas was the realisation of Paramatma through music and poetry, for the Lord is the *Samagana Priya* and both music and poetry are the *Sadhana* of *Adhyatma Vikasa*. The Lord says '*Mad Bhakta Yatra Gayanti tatra Tishtanti*'. The Haridasas sing the praises of Hari. Bhakti was enshrined in poetry and transmuted into living excellence by music, for poetry and music were both dear to the Lord. Every Haribhakta was a composer, a poet and a devotee with soulful music.



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world and became *Jayathirtha*, and he was the next *Pontiff* after Akshobhya and contemporary of Vidyaranya. The Dwaita system of philosophy stood on the foundation of the immortal work of Sri Madhvacharya, Jayathirtha and Sri Vyasaraja.

Madhva religion had enjoyed great patronage even during pre Vidyaranya days in the courts of Kalinga, Kerala and Anegondi.

Chronologically, after Jayathirtha, the most outstanding personality among Vaishnava Pontiffs was Vyasaraja whose life has been vividly described by poet Somanatha in his *Vyasa Yogi Charitam*. Somanatha was himself a disciple of Vyasa Yogi whose Matha was the principal University in the city of Vijayanagar. Natesh Sastri in his article in the 'Indian Antiquary' records that Mathas in Vijayanagar were seats of learning. They answered the purpose of a University, and *Kavya*, *Nataka*, *Alankara*, *Vedangas*, *Bhugola*, *Lilavati* and well known departments of knowledge were taught.

Whenever parents wanted to give a sound and liberal education to their sons, they sent them to the nearest Matha. Vyasaraja was holding a great court '*Mahitum Asthanikam Adhirudhasya*' surrounded by Yogis, disciples and *Aparavasumati Pratibhibh* *Alankarikas*, *Grammarians*, *Nyayayikas*, poets, medical men and astronomers. Narayana Yeti presented Somanatha to Vyasaraja who was the Chancellor of the Imperial University at Vijayanagar,

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Mysore University Magazine 1923

Sankarshanacharya Jayathirtha Vijaya

Somanatha Vyasa Yogi Charitam

Jayindrodaya Mss Oriental Library Mysore K. Srinivasacharya

Vyasaraja is credited to have been the author of *Tatparyachandrika*, *Nyayamrita* and *Tarka Tandava* and himself taught these subjects at the *Saraswathi Peeta*. He was also the guardian saint of the Vijayanagar Empire, and according to Somanatha's description, he spiritually dominated the Empire from 1470 A D till his death in 1539 A D. He was to Saluva Narasimha I as Dattatraya, was Kartivirya, to Saluva Narasimha II a Brhaspathi, to Narasa the guardian angel Badarayana and to Krishna Deva Raya as Lord Krishna to sons of Pandu and Kunti. Vyasaraja was *Kuladevata* to the Royal family and he founded many *Agraharams* and was closely associated with the rulers in their conquests and administration, and by his proselytizing zeal and fervour spread Vaishnavism to Kalinga, Bengal and other places.

Vyasaraja was not a sectarian and he was tolerant of all forms of belief and variants of Hindu religion, this is borne out by the conferment of Inkita on Purandara, Somanatha and Kanaka of Kurubar community, and at the same time receiving from Basava Bhatta of Kalinga, a *Sivalinga* and worshipping the *Linga* installed in his *Matha* and *Saraswati Peeta* on Mahasivaratri days. Records mention that Vyasaraja by performances of *Homas* and *Yajnas* saved the life of Krishna Deva Raya from *Kuba Yoga*, and inspired him to fight the battle of Raichur against the Bahamani Sultans of Bidar, Ahemadabad and Gulbarga and that success would follow the war. In one of the Keertanas, Vyasaraja says "Ninna Nodi Dhanyanadeno nenna manadi Nintu Suprasanna Dayamadi Neenu Munninante Salahabeku Desa Desavannu Tirugi Asebadhanade Swami Kutu Janaka Kelo Yenna Antarada Seveannu Antaravillade Salahabeku hontakari Muddu

Krishna" "Blessed am I in having seen you I have travelled over many lands and come back with prayers And yet the prayers are not for me Lord of the Universe, dear Krishna accept my inward prayer and save us from peril "

The battle of Raichur was fought in the period of Kuhu Yoga The statues of Krishna Deva Raya and his queens were probably put up at Tirupati during the period of Kuhu Yoga after Krishna's return from Gulbarga Achuta Deva Raya was associated with the ruler after the Kuhuyoga in the administration of the Empire Somanatha says that Achutha Deva Raya was ruling the kingdom with ease bearing the orb of the earth lightly as an upper armlet over the bracelet on his arm when Krishna Deva Raya went to Sri Vyasaraya to seek his blessings to take with him to Heaven on his last journey Sri Vyasaraya was the dispassionate adviser of the right policy to the Emperor of Vijayanagar 'Narahankara Chittaya Niti Margopadeshine' and he contributed in no small measure to the greatness of the rule of Krishnadeva Raya who was Siromani Bhupatinam and whose rule was like the shower from Heaven which makes the world burst forth into verdure at the coming of the spring *Samasta bhivana mangala Kandala Samaya Salila Dharaya mana Sasana Chaturikah* Vyasaraja returned to Vyasa Samudram after Krishna's death, perhaps because of Rama Raya's inconsistent and hostile Policy and the confusion that prevailed in the Empire after Krishna Deva Raya's death Krishna Deva Raya's message for the revival of Hindu culture and his benediction at the

close of his work *Jambuvati Kalyana* breathe the air of toleration and compromise and a reflection of what Sri Madhvacharya and Vyasaraja had taught that to make a proper synthesis, all knowledge must be sought and reconciled

Sarvepi Vedavyaharah Prakriti dhuram  
Vibharam Babhuhuh

Vyasaraja recognised the Reality of the world and taught that the world was not an illusion, but was very real and unless that was recognised and the people realised it and acted up to it their lives and of the Rashtra were in grave danger of being destroyed by alien forces This teaching galvanised the people of Vijayanagar to a new life of righteousness He loved mankind and was in sympathy and love with all sentient creation He was Bhakti incarnate He sang of Lord Krishna as the saviour of the fallen

“Patitarolu Yennantha Patitarobbaru Kane  
Gatiyu Neenallade Anyarilla!  
Patita Pavana Nembo Biruduntumaduva  
Kshiti Pati Sree Krishna Raya Neenahadu”

Vyasaraja in one of the Keertanas says that the way to Sri Krishna does not lie through pretensions Neither *Snana, Dhyana, Japa, Upavasa, Sanyasa, Kanyadana, Jati, Bbuti, Bandhutva* will ever turn out to be the *Sadhanas* of the divine

‘ You are Yourself, kindly protect me,  
I cannot discover to myself any Sadhana  
Can I earn you by Snana? the frog has always a bath  
Can I attain you by Dhyana, the crane is always meditative  
Can I earn you by Japa? My mind is not my own in concent  
ration and meditation

Is fasting the Sadhana of attaining you? the reptile always fasts

Shall I take to Sanyasa as a mode of reaching you? The wicked Ravana was a Sanyasin

Can I by Kanyadana the gift of my daughter in marriage attain you? But can I do it to Kamsa and Jarasanda

Is Jati the mode of Salvation but Diti Kasyapa sutas were Daityas

Can I join you by bandhutva—relationships? What kind of relationship had Sisupala, Oh! Madusudhana I am mandamati, feeble minded, You are my creator, forgive my sins and protect me and earn the distinction that you are always the protector of those who surrender and supplicate themselves to you' \*

The Epoch of Sri Vyasaraja profoundly influenced the subsequent history of culture in India † Purandara Dasa was a favourite disciple of Vyasaraja and has sung keertanas in praise of him who gave the lead in the composition of *Padas* and *Suladis* Vyasaraja had Purandara, Venkatadasa, Kanaka, Vadiraja, Vijayendra and other celebrated Haridasas, and poets as his intimate disciples, whose '*Haridasa Sahitya*' *Sudhavahini*, purified the heart of the great *Karnataka Samrajya* (Empire), and established *Vedanta Samrajya*

#### VADIRAJA

Vadiraja with *mudrika Hayavadana* is reputed to have been the contemporary of Vyasaraja and Purandara He studied all branches of philosophy as a disciple of Vyasa raja He is reputed to have been learned in *Rajanti* and

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\* Vyasarya Keertanas, Udipi collections

† Somanatha '*Vyasa Yogi Charitam*' Historical Introduction by B Venkoba Rao

other sciences. He is regarded among the Harīdāśas as one of the four great pontiffs who spread the doctrine of *Bhagavata Dharma* among mankind. He was the author of several works like *Rukmiṇī Vijaya*, *Yuktimalikā*, *Sarasabharatī Vilāsa*, *Tatvaprakasikā Tippanī*, *Tantra Sara Tīkā*, *Mahābhārata Tippanī*, and others in Sanskrit, his works written in Kannada include *Vaikunṭa Varnane*, *Gundakṛīya*, *Bhramaragīta* and several hundred *Suladis* and *Devaranamas*. Vādirāja belonged to Svādī Mutt and there are interesting anecdotes about his birth, the outcome of a intuitive perception of Vagīśa, about the incarnation, and also Vādirāja's association with the mutt. Vādirāja grew under the protection of Vagīśa and in a short time, became famous for his *Suladis* and *Ugabhogas*, and commentaries on Madhvachārya's *Tatparyā Nirṇaya*. He was a great champion of Vaiṣṇava faith, and since early boyhood engaged himself in disputations with Saiva Śīdhāntins and always came out of such disputations, victorious. After the demise of his Guru, he left for Vijayanagar for higher studies in Nyāya, Sūdhā, Tarka, Tandava, Chandrikā and other subjects which were then being taught by Vyāsārāja, for *Bala Sanyāsī* only.

Vādirāja one of the most distinguished debaters and a scholastic soon obtained recognition of all and the Emperor who conferred on him the title *Prasāṅga Bhārāna*. Vādirāja was reputed to be gifted with miraculous powers and several stories are popular among Vaiṣṇavites, about the miracles Vādirāja performed during his peregrinations in Karnataka and elsewhere. He introduced many reforms with regard to the worship of Krishna at Udipi, '*Bhagavatara Bhajāna Paddatī*'. He took to his fold, *Svarṇakaras*, *Kotīśvaras*, and even those who were considered to be

of lower orders in the social hierarchy Vadiraja was a Sagunopasaka and had rare visions of Hayagriva, Vyasa, Madhava and through them, used to experience the beauty of the transcendental effulgence of Lord Krishna. He made extensive travels all over Karnataka, visited Belur, and other centres, in order to propagate *Bhagavata Dharma*. His pontificate was one of the longest in the history of Madhva Mutts, and during this long period, he visited Svadi State, blessed Arasappa Naik, and saved him from danger from the enemy. There are many stories current among the followers of the faith, of Vadiraja's superhuman powers.

Many of his Suladis and Ugabhogas are sung even to day by men, women and children all over Karnataka. The two popular Ugabhogas are

Guru bhakutiya Beku  
 Hiriyara Karuna Beku  
 Harikathegala nitya Keluthirabeku  
 Virakti beku  
 Vishnuvinaradhane beku  
 Vara mantra japa beku  
 Tapa beku parogatige  
 Siri Hayavadana Paramanugraha beku  
 Vishaya nigraha beku  
 Yeegalo yinnavagalo yee  
 Tanuvu pogaradiradu  
 Bhogadaseya Vidisayya Naga shayana nalina nayana '

Jagannatha Dasa and several others have composed many songs in memory of this great saint who was the contemporary of Vyasaraaja and Purandaradasa.

#### PURANDARA

Sri Vyasaraaja who was Guruvarya and Svarupo dhāraka, himself has sung in praise of his own disciple



Purandara in the words "Dasarendare Purāndara-dasarayya"

Nityellavanaritu Nigama

Vedyana nitya

Vatasutanallihana Varnisuta Geetanartanadi

Sri Krishnalli pujisuva

*Putatma Purandara Dasarivarayya* It is rather unusual that the Guru should sing praises of his disciples in such eulogistic terms but Vyasarayya had the vision that Purandara was the incarnation of Narada who was born as Purandara to practise the Bhakti Sutra which he had composed earlier Purandara owed his conversion to be a Haridasa to his wife, and in token of gratitude he sang

"Dandige Betta hidiyuvadakke

Hendatu Santatu Saviravagali

Dandige Betta hidisidalayya"

The daily life of Purandara was one of going from door to door collecting alms and maintaining the family by what was collected thereby There are many stories current about his daily rounds, his embarrassments at the visits of his rich relations, his extreme struggle to wean himself and his family from the temptations of wealth and fortune, his conflicts with the orthodoxy and the rich, who were disdainful of Purandara's casteless, universal outlook and of his *Bhajana Goshti* which consisted of all classes of people His *Dasa Kita* was the target of opprobrium and obloquy and the Dasa had a very hard time with the ignorant and the obstinate who missed no opportunity to malign him and his mission

Many compositions of Purandara breathe the atmosphere of the many miracles that he performed during his long life at the capital His song.

Tanuva Nirolagaddi Phalavenu Tamma  
 Manadalli Dhrudabhakti Yillada Manujaru  
 Danadharmagala Maduvade Snana  
 Jnana Tatvangala Tilivude snana

and song,

Achutarpitavendu Dasarenalu Ka  
 Lgachhu Kudida Kano Vijaya Vitthala Mechhu

reveal some of the important incidents and miracles of his life

Purandara was reputed to have composed about 4,75,000 *padas* inclusive of descriptions of the heavens, *Devaloka*, *Kailasa* and *Brahmaloka*, of the various centres of pilgrimage, of the holy lives of Vyasa, Madhva and Guruparampare, Ahnika Paddhati, Murthu Dhyana, Keerti Mana, Suladis and Devaranamas. There has been a popular belief that of the most productive poets Vyasa, Sankara, Madhva and others, Purandara came next only to Vyasa 'Vyasara Nantara Dasara'.

Vaikunta Dasa who belonged to Belur was also a contemporary of Purandara Dasa. He was a Vaishnavite of the Ramanuja School. Vaikunta Dasa met Vadiraja at Belur and gave him the vision of Keshava, the incarnation of Narayana. Achuta Dasa was his contemporary.

#### KANAKA DASA

One of the most remarkable saints of the period of Purandara was Kanaka Dasa of Kaginele. He was a great disciple of Vyasara, though a shepherd by birth and a great critic of caste hierarchy. Kanaka was born to Biregowda and Beechamma, at Bada, and he was a Saiva in the beginning, and later on became a close follower of Vaishnavism, and a devoted Bhakta of Tirupati.

Venkateswara whom he visited often, in spite of the hazardous nature of the journey up the hills. By reason of his devotion to Venkatesha and contacts with the *archakas* of the temple, there is a belief that Kanaka was a Vaishnavite of the Ramanuja School, and never accepted *Taratamyā* aspect of Madhva Philosophy, as is borne out in the opening lines of his work 'Mohana Tarangini' "Sattvikollasa Sri! Ramanuja Muni Saranu!"

But Kanaka dasa spent his youth and his later years mostly in company with Vyasaraaja, who spoke in admiration of him as he did of Purandara. Kanaka was of the warrior community, perhaps his defeat in the field of battle, directed him to the path of devotion. He was already an author of *Narasimha Stotra*, *Ramadhyana Mantra*, *Mohanatarangini* before he became a follower of Vyasaraaja and followed most of the tenets of Madhva religion. He never became a Madhva though he accepted the *Taratamyā Tatva* in the hierarchy of God like *Brahma*, *Vayu*, *Girisha*, and others. Perhaps, he was already very much influenced by Vyasaraaja and his tenets before he gave to the world *Nala Charitre* and *Haribhakti Sara*. He was essentially, a Madhva mystic seeing the manifestation of Keshava in the meanest creation as well as in the highest, coloured by all the attributes of God and partaking of *divine powers*. There is a popular story that Kanaka being rejected entrance at the temple at Udipi, went round the Prakaram and burst in tears of song, appealing to the Lord to give Darshan when the idol turned round, made a slit in the wall where Kanaka sat and gave darshan to him. He composed hymns in moments of exaltation and when he sang them, he felt himself enveloped with melody and ecstatic lyric poetry.

Most of the compositions of Kanaka have the *Mudrika Kagmeleyadi Keshava*. There is a class of compositions called Kanaka Mundige full of abstract imagery, subtlety of metaphysics and inscrutable implications, challenging the finest in the Bhakta, for instance

Ombtattu Huvige Onde Nalavu!  
 Tumbi Nala tudı tumbi Bhanuprabha Chandramama  
 Kallellacantnu hatıdanamara Chandamama  
 Kailadatnu Koyadanu a Hanna Chandamama

Kanaka in many of his Padas, reveals the unity and universality of spiritual experience, and flouts the iniquity of caste distinction and prejudices, born out of race, creed and class divisions. He is perhaps, the only great non-Brahminical saint who by his Aparoksha Jnana and glimpses of the Absolute, neutralised the dissidences of Caste and groups and attempted at the solidarity of all castes by abrogating references to Jati, Kula and other distinctions. Vaidika and Avaidika distinctions are invalid and only Bhakti is valid against the Absolute. Moksha Sadhana Samagram Bhaktireva Gariyasi! There are no separate regions in the empire of Bhakti, no distinctions of caste, class, creed, sex and servitude, Dharma, tapas and Acara, are not correlates of the absolute. Bhakti is the only means by which emancipation from *Samsara* can be realised. Every one born in this world has the fundamental right to attain the Absolute by Bhakti. The Bhakta transcends the limitations of *Varna* and *Asrama* Dharma. Vyasaraja who had this intuition, treated Kanaka though of lower order, on the same footing of equality with the rest. Very often the Guru had to suffer embarrassment and veiled criticism of his followers for the preferences he showed to Kanaka

and Purandara, who delighted the bhaktas by their heavenly compositions

Kanaka was totally absorbed in Hari Keshava! and he saw the vision of the Lord in the mountains, in moonlight, in sun set, in living plants, in the flowing stream, in the lovely face of the child and the wrinkles of the old. He was possessed of Hari's invisible transcendental Beauty. Kanaka disdained servility and service at others' feet or wandering for the satisfaction of the belly like a street dog without any sense of self respect. Like Purandara, Kanaka suffered poverty, privation, degradation, distress, acute misery without a wife or any soul to comfort him. He was humbled and mortified in the flesh by the visitations of misfortune. But undaunted, he struggled hard in this Dark night to find a sheet anchor at the feet of the Guru and through his ministrations to gain the glimpse of the divine. He pleads for protection against sensuous temptations, sins of the spirit and aberrations of intellect and will. Vyasaraaja nursed this intuitive presentiments in Kanaka and enabled him to blossom out into mystical ecstasies in the same manner he had done for Purandara. In a song Kanaka says

“Badukidenu Badukidenu Bhava yenage hingitu  
 Haritirtha Prasada Jihvege dorakitu  
 Hariyanamamritavu Kivi Goda gitu  
 Haridasaru Yenna Bandhugaladaru  
 Muktaradaru Yenna Nurundu Kuladavaru  
 Muktimargake Yogyananadenu  
 Tande Sri Kagineleyadi Keshavaraya  
 Bandenna Hridayadalli neleyagininta ”

Kanaka made supreme effort in reforming the lower castes, weaning them away from ignorance, superstition and barbaric practices, in order to favour the growth

of Bhakti and devotion in them. His love of his own people compelled him to disregard his own life and to shed the blood of a martyr for the sake of their transformation into a life of Ahimsa. God does not ask for blood, what he wants of you is only Bhakti.

Mikka Marimasaru Chandī Mylari Modalada Yintha!  
Thakku daivada godavebeda naraka tappadu

The body is sacred, the sense of the sacred is an ultimate category of the human soul. It is of infinite worth and therefore imposes an absolute obligation. He says "This body is Yours, life within it is yours, the power in the ear, the vision in the eye, the pleasure of fellowship, and participating in the fragrance and ebullition of life and the enjoyment of the senses are all Yours. As the body is to be in tune with the holy spirit, Kanaka prepares himself for the journey to meet his Lord. O' Hari, never do I desire the company of the wicked who are unrighteous, quarrelsome, acrimonious, enamoured of the pleasure of Samsara and of women and wine and who do not know the importance of the Vedas. Oh! Kaginele Adikeshava, remove these afflictions, arising from the association of the wicked' Kanaka is conscious that the senses are inexpugnable elements of life and their eradication involves considerable penance and self denial. It was no easy task to keep away from temptation and exempted from their irresistible charm. "What can I do? Just like the moth fascinated by the luminosity of the flame jumps into it, so too, my eyes dart at beautiful and elegantly ornamented women. I fall down to the ground, like the bee that has sucked the fragrance of the Champaka, at the fragrance of the flowers worn by women whose steps resemble the 'mandagamana' of an elephant. I die

like the fish that has swallowed the worm at the tip of the angler's stick. When I think of the nectar on the lips of young women, Oh! Adikeshava, 'Thou art my guide, help me to fix my mind on Your Lotus Feet' Kanaka is deeply conscious of the painful aspects of Samsara and worldly life. The body is like a bubble on the surface of water and all the actions of the body are an illusion, which has no power, no belongings or possessions. It is the intoxication of pride that persuades him to imagine himself to be what he is not in reality, to believe that he is the crown of creation, quite oblivious of the transmigration of his soul through several births, conceived in sin, born in sin, living in sin and ending his life in sin. Man is so engrossed in earning food for his belly, that he steals the property of others, tells falsehoods, seeks ostentation and display, and does a hundred things which bely his fundamental nature.

In the context of the allurements of the Senses, he talks of caste, of several distinctions which are man made and not God made. The world talks of caste but what is the caste of the righteous? Is not a lotus which grows in the bottom of the pool in mud brought and used in worshipping God? God's bodies are pasted with the musk, obtained from the musk cat. To what caste does Narayana, Lord of the world and Iswara Lord of Parvati, belong? What is the caste of the Soul, of Siva, and of the principal organs of Knowledge? When Adikeshavaraya, the indweller is pleased, where does the question of caste remain?

When Kanaka was questioned by the Mahant of the Tirupati temple, he replied,

“Pachhada melinnu rochuubiddante tanu  
 Muchhukondiddu henagaduta  
 Nischanta nirdosha neleyadi Keshavana  
 Huchheridenage Yinnyatara Kulavayya ’

What is the caste to me who is intoxicated with the love of Adikeshava? In another place, Kanaka condemns hypocrisy in the name of sanctity and such other deceits, sins and wickedness practised by the people. What is the use of practising meditation and penance without realising the true meaning of the Vedas and the nature of the Primeval Being?

Kanaka pins his faith in the Lord, in all His unity and Absoluteness with the result he repudiates *Taratamyā* and worship of Yellamma, Mari, Durga, Chowdi and other goddesses. Sri Hari is the Supreme Lord and he seeks His mercy. ‘Oh! Parama Hamsa! Thou art the ocean of mercy. I am a microscopic creature imbued with hunger and thirst, and other miseries envelope me and make me helpless, while Thou art a Being, Omniscient and Omnipresent in all the known and unknown worlds.’ Kanaka appeals to the mind to struggle and to forbear for he knows that God will protect without delay.

‘Salahuvanu Yidake Samshayavilla ’

“Who waters the trees that grow on the mountain tops?  
 Who has painted the peacock with variegated colours?  
 Who has painted the parrot green? Who has created  
 food for the frog and for the all sentient creation? When  
 God has created you and has undertaken that responsibility,  
 he will assuredly protect you, why should there be  
 any doubt about this? Oh! Adikeshava Thou art the  
 bestower of my life, You will protect me, and it is not  
 possible for me to forsake Thy feet” Kanaka was a



great mystic and like Purandara, was convinced that every thing moved and had their being at the initiation of Sri Hari; all the animate and inanimate objects of the Universe moved according to His law and fulfilled themselves according to His purpose. God is omnipresent and all-mighty and omniscient. Kanaka asks the question 'Oh! God Art Thou in maya or is it within thee? Is the eye within the mind, or mind within the eye, or both within Thee. Is the flower within the fragrance or the fragrance within the flower or are both these in the nose?'

But it is certain that everything that is beautiful, fragrant, moving or immoving are all within 'Thee.'

Kanaka was an Aparoksha Jnani with the direct cognition of Sri Adikeshava, who was his Supreme Preceptor and he was convinced that Adikeshava saved him from the field of battle and picked him up like a pearl dissociated from water to show the way to join His feet. Kanaka was unrivalled for depth and originality of feeling and for piety and sense of the purest attachment to Sri Hari. For rhythmic flow of verse and gracefulness of style he was as great as Purandara. "Adikeshava is my refuge and there is no need for any other ceremonial or meditation." Like a parrot nourished within the cage and taught sweet speech, You teach me true wisdom, and make me recite your name incessantly. So long You are not meditated upon, the mind wanders forth in search of the necklet which is over its own neck. There are the oil, the lamp, the wick and the fire, but not till the lamp is lighted is there light, nor is darkness destroyed!

Purva janmadi nanu madida karmadin  
durviyelagi janma talideno Krishna

Karunya Nidhi Yenna Kayabekayya Hare  
Varijanabhane Muddu Udipiya Krishna

Kanaka in many of his Keertanas, sings the nature of *Paravastu* the distinction between *Paramayogin* and *Aviveki* and *Agnani*, and like Purandara recognised the supreme manifestation of Hari and repudiated all distinctions of Kula, caste and creed as the inevitable corollary of worship of the divine. He lived in Belur for a long time and sang the praises of the Lord Keshava in the temples along with *Vaikuntadasa Haribhakti Sara* in *Bhamini Sbatpadi* was written in Belur, and Kanaka who travelled widely all over Karnataka alone unattended and without conveyances, spread the light of Vaishnavism and love of Sri Hari and Paramabhakti, for Adikeshava among the millions who came in contact with him on his peregrinations.

Kanaka was strongly denunciatory of caste and class distinctions and in all his compositions, his message was one of hope and love towards fellow human beings, and sentient creation. Aesthetic art, compassion, sensitiveness to the beautiful in nature and in the actions of men, marked his outlook on life, as one of the corollaries of a life of divine blessedness.

Tanu ninnadu Jivana ninnado  
Anudinadali Baha sukha Dukha ninadaya  
Savinudi veda purana Sastrangala  
Kivialli Keluva kathe ninnado  
Nava mohanangiyara Rupa Kanninda  
Yeveyikkade Nodida Nota ninnadayya  
Maya Pashada Baleylage silkiruvanta  
Kayapanchendriyagalu ninnado  
Nyayadi Kanakanodeyannadikeshava  
Raya nee illade nararu swatantrave?

Jalave Sakala Kulakke Tayallave  
 Jalada Kulavedadaru ballira  
 Jalada bobbaliyante Sthiravalla,  
 Neleyanaritu Nee nene Kandyia manuja  
 Kula Kula Kulavendu Horadaditu  
 Kulada Neleya Nenadaru ballira  
 Mettida bhumigalilla  
 Attu unnda Vastugalilla  
 Guttu Kanusabantu hiridennu kiridennu  
 Nettane Sarvagnana Nene Kandyia Manuja

### RAGHAVENDRA SWAMI

Guru Raghavendra is one of the greatest saints of Haridasa Pantha, and most representative of the Brahminical Haridasa tradition in the Seventeenth century. His period synchronised with the disintegration of the Vijayanagar Empire which was the bastion of *Vedic* dharma, and *Rajaniti* consistent with the highest principles of Dharma. After the battle of Talikota, many viceroys declared their independence of suzerain power which was now effete, incapable of maintaining political unity, and religious and social solidarity. Sankara's Advaitism, Ramanuja's Vaishnavadvaitism and Veerasaivism were contending with one another, for the establishment of the supremacy of their faith. Religious prejudices, sectarian outlook and mutilation of truth by partisanshp, and lopsided approach to problems of religion had created a certain instability in popular faith and had fomented dissension among the masses. The infallibility of the Vedas and the equally infallible guidance of Bhakti as incorruptible legislators of the soul for reaching out into the Absolute, had suffered an eclipse and the whole fabric of thought built up by *Vachanakaras* and the Haridasas seemed to crumble down.

The saint who saved the supremacy of Vedic religion and the gospel of Bhakti as a means to the divine, was Raghavendra, whose ancestors belonged to Kumbakonam. He was born at Bhuvanagiri near Kanchi, and his great-grand father was the Veena Krishna Bhatta who adorned the Court of Vijayanagar as a great musician and Sanskrit scholar. Thimmanna Bhatta, grand son of the musician and equally famous for knowledge of *Sastra* and music, was the father Venkata Bhatta who was trained at Madura in all branches of knowledge and music. It was Venkata Bhatta who came under the spiritual influence of Sudhindra Thirtha and wrote one of the most famous commentaries on Madhva philosophy by name *Parimala*, which established the ascendancy of Venkata Bhatta in the field of religion and learning. He vanquished Govinda Dikshit and Yagna Narayana Dikshit, and other great scholars in a disputation organised by Raghunatha Bhupala in his Court at Madura, and became conspicuous in the assembly of the learned for logistic and dialectical skill.

The fascination of his Guru's influence, the dependence on the Matha, because of poverty, deep predilection in the direction of mysticism, made him forsake a young wife and child and don the robes of a Sanyasi under a new consecration as 'Raghavendra Thirtha' by Sudhindra Thirtha. Raghavendra's Consecration was in 1621 A D and after this he made an extensive tour of South India, inclusive of Madras, Sriranga, Kanchi, Udipi, Harihara and Hampe. He wrote while at Udipi *Chandrika Tantra Dipika* and *Nyaya Muktavali*. He visited various centres of pilgrimage all over India, like Kashi, Ayodhya, Badrikasrama, and returned to Kumbhakonam along the route to Pandarpur, Kolhapur and Bijapur. He wrote com-

mentaries on Vedavyasa's Brahma Sutra, Gita, Upanishads and other sacred texts and inspired the learned and the lay people and students of the day to make a detailed and deeper study of the great writings of the past. Raghavendra brought the *Vyasakuta* and *Dasakuta* together and inculcated that the learned in Madhva religion and metaphysics, should propagate the Haridasa ideals through *Dasa Kuta* among the common people.

Nearly forty eight years after taking *Sanyasa*, Raghavendra decided under a divine inspiration to enter *Samadi* at Mancholi and in 1671 A D in the presence of a large number of devotees entered the pit stacked with Saligramas and other holy materials and entombed himself permanently to be consecrated as *Brindavanam*. To day he is worshipped by thousands of pilgrims drawn from all communities and from different parts of India.

Guru Raghavendra revealed in his life, that *Vedanta* was not a philosophy beyond the reaches of thought and imagination of the people to be studied only by the learned, but could be made a guide to practical life and a rule of conduct for the common man. His great service lay in bringing abstruse metaphysics within the reach of the ordinary, and employing the *Vyasakuta* followers to co operate in making, through the medium of Kannada, the knowledge of the sacred texts, intelligible for the ordinary intellect and the illiterate.

The *unkuta* of Raghavendra was *Venu Gopala* and often he was reputed while playing on the vina and singing the praises of Gopala, he would fall into a trance.

Yinou yenege Govinda nunna Padara  
Vindava Toro Mukundane  
Mandarodharane mandagopanakanda

Indiraramana Govinda Gokulananda  
 Nondenaiya bhava bandhandolu siluki  
 Munde dari kanade kudide jagadolu  
           x          x          x  
 Tande Nee Kayo Kandarpa Janakane

### VIJAYA DASA

Dasappa and more popularly known as Vijayadasa was born at Chikalaparuvu near Manvi, Raichur District of very poor parents and suffered in early life extreme poverty and distress. He escaped from home unable to withstand the rigors of wretchedness, travelled all over India as an orphan and returned home after several years of absence illumined by contacts with the learned and the devout, and by the glimpses of the divine in dreams and in solitude. He found himself suddenly transformed into a great poet pouring out in spontaneous melody his torrents of love for Vijaya Vittala. Vijayadasa during the last three decades of his life composed padas and suladis which in number emulate the example of Purandara. So diverse are the themes, so sublime is the spiritual content and so elegant and graceful is the expression of the compositions that among the Haridasas, Purandara and Vijayadasa stand prominent as most distinguished Keertanakaras. Of the five classes of *Siddhapurushas*, *Nitya Siddha* Mantra Siddha, Kripa Siddha, Hata Siddha and *Svapna Siddha*, *Vijaya Dasa* belonged to all the categories having the components of each one of them in the texture of his spiritual personality. Riches and famines, fairs and festivals, poverty and prosperity, strength and weakness, right and wrong and every facet of man's social and spiritual existence were all attributed by the Dasa to Vijaya Vitthala.

Ninna Ollumeyinda Nikhila Janaruvandu  
Mannisuvaro Maharaya

In another place when describing the nature of a festival and how to observe it he says

Kamakrodha biduvade balu habba  
Bhumiyolage Jnanu yaguvade habba  
Gunavantanagi Sancharisuvade habba  
Chunmaya muruthi Vijaya Vitthala na manasilolu  
nayeekshiduvade habba

Vijayadasa's dialogue with Kallur Subbannacharya, a learned arrogant pandit and his subsequent conversion to Haridasa Vritti, the Dasa's many peregrinations all over the country, breathing the gospel of love, by abrogation of caste, class and other distinctions, and persuading the common people to acknowledge the supremacy of *Bhakti* over everything else, have made his name a household word in Karnataka

Vijayadasa like Purandara suffered great privations, and groped in the dark to get a glimpse of the divine who would be his everlasting solace. His unpitied misery made him often to burst out in plaintive cries seeking the guidance of merciful Providence "Oh! Lord, Physician of the world, I beseech Thee to diagnose my ailment in its manifestations, eyes cannot see, the nose cannot smell, the ears cannot hear, the Sankirtanas of *Hari*' *the hands cannot move, the tongue cannot taste,* while the other organs of the body have become immobile. Oh! Thou physician, cure me of this malignant disease." Vijayadasa like Purandara asks God to give him good company, to take away riches and ornaments and to comfort him with the everlasting favour of His sweet name. He established the supremacy of *Hari* and discarded all those doctrines that did not recognise this truth. One

should have the unconquerable will and strong determination to carry out God's will at any cost in order to attain bliss

Vijayadasa discovered suffering as the inevitable corollary of the vision of God. Light may be out and one may be enveloped in darkness of the night, but, night covers the day and reveals a universe, starry heavens above and the moral law within. Everything might appear dark and untenable, but on the crest of it appears the dawn of a new hope, that the cause is just and he is going to win, provided he has allowed no fear, sophisticated no truth, and loved no darkness. Vijayadasa was an uncompromising devotee of Sri Hari and he preached that by intense, unending, unbroken love of God alone that man would attain Vijayavallabha. Furthermore, the individual is to meditate on the name of Hari, carry out the Sankalpa of Hari, and every act of the individual, eating, sleeping, pain of the body and of mind and other manifold activities, physical and psychological are a series of salutations of the Divine who is ever present, omnipotent and omniscient.

There are innumerable stories of miracles the Dasa performed and the wonderful transformation wrought in the minds of those who came into contact with him. The story of the despised woman and child, the rescue of the child, named after, with the *anketa* Mohana, his visits to Adavani and to the Tahsildar's house, his conversion of the farmer of Chikalaparavi, to become later a great builder of temples—are all an eloquent testimony to his message of devotion, of the supremacy of Hari and of the attainment of salvation only by earnest prayer and devotion. He propagated Madhwa Philosophy and the



way of life and a verse confirms the great service, he did in spreading the message of Haridasa.

Shudda tatva sara Suladi pada madi Vijayaraya  
 Hridayadi Dhumakendu Hariya kunisideyo Vijayaraya  
 Yellaralli Siri Nallana Amsava Vijayaraya  
 Nillisideyo ninna bageya ballavaruyaro Vijayaraya

He was a true enquirer of the abode of God and in his search to find Hari, he questions "why did the soul come from its divine abode to lose itself in *Samsara* and thus miss the way to Heaven. There is the paramount need of sovereign self mastery, that perfect self control, in which the mysterious will of man holds in harmonious subjection, all the passions and faculties of his nature and brings into man's character, that unity, consistency, harmony and proportion which are the essence of virtue. The dasa's heart strings always throbbed to the touch of the Lord, he understood Him and felt he could never exist without Him. He had infinite compassion for even the fallen who were as sacred as any other creation, for suffering endowed them with divine Grace.

Vijayadasa had a large number of devotees who like him composed *padas* and *Suladis*. The most celebrated among his disciples were Bhaganna, Mohana and Thimmanna. "Bhaktiyali Bhaganna, Yuktiali Mohana, Saktiyali Thimmanna" Bhaganna obtained the *anketa* of Gopala Vittala and he belonged to Raichur District, to a village called Mosarukallu. Gopaladasa has been considered by the followers of Haridasa Pantha as one of the Karnataka Haridasa Chatustayas, the others being Purandara, Vijayadasa and Jagannatha Dasa. Gopaladasa did not attach value to the external of religion, but preached only the love of Hari and that true renunciation.

was not in mere abandonment of the life of the senses, and mortifying the body with all kinds of austerities. The Dasa travelled widely and had both male and female devotees, and of this Vyasa Tatvagna, Jagannatha Dasa and Helavana Katte Giramma are the most celebrated in Haridasa history.

Gopaladasa seems to have had as Unkita, Gopala Vittala, Venugopala Vittala. Like his great Guru, he saw the manifestations of Hari in every creation, in the smallest crawling worm and in the sublime face of the Bhakta. He was a confirmed believer of the all pervasiveness of Hari, and he composed several Suladis to indicate this great truth and the many attributes of the metaphysical substance intelligible only to the Bhakta. He was a close follower of Madhwa Philosophy and instructed his followers to meditate in *Bimba* in the posture of *Padmasana* having purged oneself of all impurities. There is devotional Suladi describing the various methods by which the Bhakta could attempt at the attainment of *Aparoksha Gnana*.

Contemplation of Hari as *Bimba* in the heart and by offering of *Jnana*, *Bhakti* and *Vairagya*, above that, one could please Sri Hari. Gopala Dasa says *Dhana Parityaga* is not pure *Virakti*, eludication of house and relatives and others and retirement into solitude is not *Virakti*, forsaking of body and mind and of the notion of self too is not *Virakti* but contemplation of Gopala Vittala is the attainment of permanent happiness. In a different context Gopala Dasa says —

Gunisalu Yee Kala Purushana |  
Anubhavadhadinda Naninnul danidenu

Ghana Karuna Soubhagya Sampanna  
Gopala Vittala Binnapavannu chittasi manussayya  
maharaya

Gopala Dasa in a fine Suladi describes the nature of  
purity—

Madimadidaradu madiyagaballade Kan  
dedeyalli vyaptanada Gopala Vittalanendu  
Droha nudiyanomme mudidumadi madidava  
Madivanta madivanta madivanta  
Gurumukha Virabeku  
Haridava venabeku  
Para Upakara Yirabeku pratikhana  
Pararu tannavaru samarendu tiliyabeku  
Yee pariyailli tilidare avane muktiyoga

He is who is blessed by a Guru, whoever contemplates  
Hari, does selfless services to others, and recognises the  
fundamental equality of all creation and discovers that  
every atom is a manifestation of the divine is Mukti Yoga,  
competent for emancipation from births and deaths

Yethanintharenu Yellipodarenu  
Chittabandante chugidadidarenu  
Chittadalli Hariya Kanuva Bhaktarige  
Uttamottama namma Gopalavittalana  
Cittanusara nadedavane Dhanyano

The lost words of Gopala Dasa were:

Poguvenu, baratare marali yilli  
Naga Girivasa Yeesha Srisha

### GIRIAMMA

The other great disciple of Vijayadasa, was Giramma  
who is known all over Karnataka for her exquisitely  
lyrical compositions Chandrahasa and Kaliya Mardhana.  
She was born at Ranibennur and was married to Tipparasa

by her father Bistappa. She was a great devotee of Hari and always meditated on Ranganatha in the temple at Helavana Katte. She was dedicated to Ranga as Akka Mahadevi was to Chenna Mallikarjuna. In spite of the devotion of her husband to her, she withdrew from all worldly attachments and retreated to the serenity of Ranga Mantapa, where she by Rangavalli paintings, conjured up images of Balakrishna and his sport among the Gopis and fell into a state of samadhi. This was her daily habit and this provoked great hostility among her relations and others, but still undaunted, she carried on her daily meditations and prayers through dancing and singing

"Ranga Sri Raghunandana Madanakoti Mohananga!  
Madhava Punyacharita Karunapanga!"

In another context when people feared famine would follow, if rain failed, she supplicated before the Lord

Maleya daya mado Ranga ninna  
Karuna tappidare Uliyadu Loka  
Pashu Jati hulle Saranga mrigagalu bahala  
Hasidu bayari battida kerege bandu  
Trishi yadagade tallanisi murchegondu  
Dese desege baibiduttuhanayya Hariye

Giriyamma like other great saints is reputed to have performed many miracles. She built temples and consecrated them for the worship of Maruti and Ranganatha. She is unique among women who took to the vow of celibacy and lived a dedicated life devoted to Hari.

A number of dasas in *parampara* carried on the great Haridasa tradition. Prasanna Venkobadasa, Mohanadasa, Panganama Thirumaladasa, Vyasatavagna, Mahipathadasa and several others, too numerous to mention spread the doctrine of Hari Sarvothama, and Bhakti as the sole means of salvation.

## JAGANNATHA DASA

One of the most celebrated among the galaxy of the great Dasas, was Jagannatha Dasa, a devout disciple of Vijayadasa Jagannathadasa, a great scholar in Sanskrit and traditional learning and with an instinctive repugnance to Haridasa ways of thinking and living, was changed to be an ardent disciple of Vijayadasa and Gopaladasa by infinite compassion shown to him by his guru during his severe illness. Many of his Suladis and Ugabhogas make mention of his gratitude to them who showed him the way of release from the wheel of births and deaths. Vijayadasa in his dream ordained him

Dhyanavanu mado

Bimba Murutiya

Anandadalli Kulitu Antarangadolage

Sadacharanagi dvadasa gurugaligeragi

He who meditates on Sri Hari is liberated from Samsara. All those who sing and dance contemplating the sweet name of Madhusudhana, Rama, Keshava get emancipation. *Vishayas* and *Indriyas* are overcome at the mention of the name which is the source of victory and defeat, honour and dishonour and omission and commission of Karmas and the modes of subjugating and sublimating them for acquisition of merit. The flower of the *Dwaita* religion of Madhvacharya with *Taratamyā* gnana is liberated, for it is the highest Being who makes the Jivas endure the consequences of their actions, happiness and misery, merit and demerit. The grace of God is Heaven, without it, it is Hell.

Jagannatha in one of his sublime devotional verses says "Oh! mortal, life is impermanent, you have come to be born a human being after crossing many circles of

births and deaths, life as a mortal is extraordinarily difficult to attain and you have to discover for yourself by your own powers, the quintessence of living by abdicating the life of the flesh and surrendering yourself at the feet of the Lord. You live like a Haridasa ever at the feet of your Guru and elders and unmindful of praise or blame of fellow human beings and worship at the feet of the Holy. You have *Jnana Sakti*, *Yicbha sakti*, *Kriya sakti* bestowed on you by the grace of Sri Hari, the relationships between your *Svarupa*, *manas*, *indriya* and *Vishaya*, are determined by Hari and are awakened and regulated by Him, with the result there is no *Swatantrya* for the *Jiva*. *Swatantra* is *Svarupa*, *pramiti* and *pravritti* directed to Sri Hari. Jivagalu Jagannatha Vittalagavasayogyavendariyo santata

The nature of a devotee is vividly described in one of the sublime songs that Jagannatha has composed. The devotee knows only Hari in whose contemplation, his life is totally absorbed. God is genius by Himself, the underived source of all being through whose creation and inflowing life, we become 'Persons'. He is himself the perfect sum and inexhaustible source of reason, righteousness, and love and from that infinite sea we draw our tiny measures. In Him we live and move and have our being, He is incomprehensible and he is most incomprehensible when we contemplate Him from the highest peaks of faith, when we look into His eternity and infinity within which all times, all worlds, are but a passing dream but

"Aritavarige sulabha  
 Hariyapuje, Ariyadava Nir  
 bhagya Yitara Lokadolage

Brahmandave Sri Hariya Mantapa  
 Bhumandala Atanu Kudatakka Pitha  
 Surya Chandraru Dipa, Vrikshagalu  
 Chamara, Akasa Mandala  
 Chatra, Maleyu Sri Hariya Snana ”

We can only think and speculate, though we cannot comprehend, but the *bhakta* has no doubt that far beyond the confines of his thought, stretches the limitless unknown and a new spiritual sense would bring before him unimagined visions. As a Saint has put it, in things relating to God, ‘the confession of ignorance is great knowledge’ The feeble brains of man cannot wade far into the doings of Sri Hari whom to know is life, and it is joy to make mention of His name, yet it is knowledge to know that we know Him not, as He is, neither can we know Him, our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence, when we realise that His is inexplicable, greatness above our capacity and our reach. His will concerning us is revealed in the conscience, His love towards us in the heart, and when the blind eyes of the soul are opened.

Sri Hari is Sarvothama the One, and the only One, supreme and absolutely perfect Being to whom we give undivided worship. Jagannatha has given the world in *Bhakti Shtatpadi* metre one of the most remarkable works dealing with the essence of God by name ‘*Hari-kathamritasara*’ which is an epitome of the philosophy and religion of Madhwa. The work has thirty two Sandhus or chapters, written by Jagannatha and deals with all the philosophical problems that were raised in India, allthrough the Ages, and interpreted in the light of Madhva philosophy. The Grace of Hari, the relations

between God, world and individual soul, the nature of God, the concept of total self surrender as the Sadhana for the attainment of Moksha, the spiritual merit accruing by the recital of Hari's name, and other aspects are vividly described in a lucid, fascinating and chaste style

Jagannatha is totally absorbed in Hari's transcendent beauty and sees the unity of Godhead in every manifestation. There is in God the manifoldness which seems immanent in the unity of all personality. In the phenomena of nature, we are confronted, not with various independent agents, but with various modes of one and the same activity. The same laws reveal themselves everywhere and in a Universe of such inconceivable vastness that the imagination faints before it is bound into one by the most subtle ties. Gravitation is found far beyond the confines of the solar system. Heat darts across millions of miles that separate us from the sun, Light visits us from distances which we can measure only by the years that it has taken to reach us, and stars too remote for any eye to see them through the most powerful telescope record themselves on the photographic plate. The whole Universe, from spectrum analysis, is such a mass of sensitive tissue, that each event impresses itself on the whole and makes us realise one universal sway.

In the love of Jagannatha Dasa as in other Haridasas, the foundation of their existence and activities was love towards God and towards fellow human beings. The language of Shelley is reminiscent of Dasa's mood of love. The fountains mingle in the river and the rivers with the ocean, the winds of heaven mix for ever with a sweet emotion, nothing in the world is single, all things



by a law divine, in one another's being mingle, why not I with Thine.

See the mountains kiss high Heaven, and the waves clasp one another, no sister flowers would be forgiven, if it *disdained its brother*, and the sunlight clasps the earth and the moon beams Kiss the sea, what are all these kissing worth, if Thou kiss not me."

Svendenborg the Mystic quoted by Emerson says 'Do you love me? It is only when you leave, and lose me, by casting yourself on a sentiment which is higher than both of us, that I draw near and find myself at your side; and I am repelled if you fix your eye on me and demand love. In the spiritual world, you love the worth in me, that I am your lord, but it is not me, but the worth that fixed the love. I adore the greater worth in another and I become his wife.

Love in God must be perfect, like all His attributes. You see the Trinity if you see love, for there are those loving, loved and mutual love. This highest love must have an object which is worthy of itself; as this cannot be creation, it must be a divine and coequal person. Since God's love is eternal, this person also must be eternal. Further, the highest love, being free from all egotism, wishes its object to love another besides itself; perfect goodness cannot be without perfect love: nor perfect love without communication, nor to an unequal, for them it must be inordinate. So a second coeternal is necessary for perfect love. Love is only conceivable as a personal relationship of a lover and a loved. If God is eternal love there must be an eternal object of His love. Likewise, an eternally perfect mind postulates an eternal object for its contemplation. The life of will means the

passage of will into effect, an eternally living and satisfied will postulates, an eternally adequate product

The secrets of His infinite and eternal life, the method of His thought, the outflowing of his affection, we cannot penetrate. He is incomprehensible and known only to Himself. The warmth of His love towards us we can feel, rays of supernal Light from His transcendent reason we can see, the mandates of His righteous will we can revere. We have enough for faith and life, but beyond lies the infinite expanse, where our highest wisdom is to acknowledge our ignorance, 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for us, it is high, we cannot attain into it, and here the highest seraphs could no more than veil their faces, tremble and adore' \*

It is only through love therefore, that we can enter into perfect communication with God. "Love is from God" and He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in Him." Love is the essence of God, and is eternal life. As loving God He communicates of Himself, of His own life and spirit. The Dasas wait for this Kripa, grace, for the free and undeserved nature of the divine love, flowing forth with powerful manifestations in order to convince and win the estranged heart. Love of God is brought close to the human soul, for man alone in this world is a spiritual being, in whom love can become an element of conscious experience. To the Dasas Sri Hari is the object of highest veneration and love, for He is the bounteous Giver and the wise Disposer of all things. Jagannatha says

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\* James Drummond Studies in Christian doctrines p 148

Ava dehava Kodali Hari mattava lokadalidali  
 Yee vidhadī Jadadachetanadolu parayarareshana Rupa  
 Gunagala Bhavisuta Sujjanara Bhaktiya Bedu Kondadu  
 Sarvamatugallella mantrava Sarva,elasagalella Pujeyu  
 shyaru vandyana vimalamurti Dhyanaavallavage  
 Ava kuladavanadadeninnava Dea dolliddadani  
 nnava Karma madale ninnava kaladali  
 Sreevarana Sarvatradaī Sambhavisuta Pujisuta  
 Modipa Kovisarigunteno Bhava Dukhadī Doshagalu  
 Naraka Svarga Galembendu Yillihavu  
 Vismaraneye Naraka, Smriti Svarga vire Bahyanaraka  
 Yendendu

The life of the Dasas was a life of love. It was also a life of faith and prayer. The quest of faith is not simply an intellectual exercise in dialectic as to whether there is a God. It is far more than that. It is essentially a personal quest undertaken not by the speculative side of man's nature but by the whole of his nature, and therefore what it seeks is not a mere category of thought, but what will meet and satisfy personal needs. It is much more profound, complex and passionate than a merely intellectual speculative spirit. As the Hebrew psalmist says 'My soul is a thirst for God, even the living God'. To the Dasas, faith in the fact of Hari and His Incarnations were both a historical as well as a spiritual witness, and they instructed Society to recognise this fact and to love Him and to follow His path through Bhakti. It is incarnation alone that gives faith its supreme word about God's character—that God is love which is sacrifice, unselfishness and giving of one's own and oneself. The Dasas preached a life of faith and of Prayer and of love and along with it a supplication to Hari Sarvothama through Music. Like light and shade, music and word were inseparable adjuncts to each other and one could not exist without the other.

God would hear his prayer only when man spoke the language of music. Perhaps, no one school of thought has ever emphasised as the Haridasas have done the supreme importance of the vehicle of music as a *sadhana* of emancipation. To them God was love, was melody and harmony and could be approached only by those who could sing praises of Him.

The Dasas mirrored in their compositions the grim realities of social life and by their critical examination prepared the individual for an escape from it, to realise the divine, through Bhakti. Many of the compositions of the Dasas speak in derision of pedantry, ostentation, display and the superficialities and artificialities of social life. In their inimitable, simple and charming style, they ridiculed the anchorite, the bigot, the snob, the dishonest and the learned without love. Purandara says

Gutanama hodedu Gundutambige hididu  
Kotanchu dhotara madīyanuttu  
Datukaliduta nadareyelagebaralenna  
Butukatana wodi sadiri janare bhrami

Kanakadasa sums up the reality of social existence in the words

Yellaru Maduvudu Hottegagi  
Genu Battegagi mattu huttegagi

He distinguished different types of orthodoxy, with outrageous caste marks and other symbols of distinction and indicates that he does not accept any of these as the attributes of a dasa /

“Srigandha Kumkuma Sadu Javajika  
Sthivi Tilaka niduva nanolle”

Likewise, just as he deprecated mere symbols of orthodoxy without love and faith, he denounces also the

worship of Tantric and other primitive deities and the offer of bloody sacrifices to these gods and goddesses.

“Banagu Devvada Godave beda naraka tappadu  
Balutippa Kona Kuriya Yelabina Korala Koyudu  
Beelabedi Narakakendu helabandeno.”

The Haridasas dedicated themselves to the reform of the ways of living of the lower orders, and to change, reorder and transmute their animal and brutal habits of living and thinking into patterns of excellence. The rawness and hideousness of their nature was to be transformed into a thing of beauty, and balance, by their attention being turned to the worship of Hari Sarvothama, Keshava and Purandara Vittala.

The common people learnt also at the feet of the Haridasas, the very essence of Vedic teaching, given to them in simple intelligible language by the Haridasa reformers. Thereby, they made the common people improve their habits of mental and physical cleanliness, the manners and courtesies of living, the habits of concordance by a right and a discriminating knowledge of principle, and of practice. The Haridasas turned the mind of the common man to a recognition and acknowledgement of the inner realities of existence. All knowledge gave the individual an acquaintance of the external world and man's relationship with them, or a means of understanding and regulating one's own conduct and behaviour with others. But, so far, no serious attempt had been made by any school of thought except the Vachanakaras to study the inner life of the common man and to know its nature, because it had a profound significance in its own right.

The object of this religious and social thought was

to give fullness and richness to life, to explore the reservoir of energy and the unexplored provinces of human nature and to reconstruct them for the purpose of individual and social good. What the Dasas aimed at, was not acquisition of knowledge but the exploration of feeling, not teaching of grammar and subtlety of thought, but the building of attitudes to life and to God; not mere ordering of relationships with the world of nature and of society, but to turn the attention inwards, and to the deeper and irresistible urges of the human spirit. The Dasas desired that the individual should cultivate charity, justice, mercy, tolerance and compassion, and to feel for others passionately and poignantly, and to come out of his own petty ego in order to embrace the sorrows and joys of human existence. The compositions of the Dasas breathe the serene air of pure universal toleration. They acknowledged the manhood of each and every individual, irrespective of class, caste or creed or sex, and spread the all-comprehensive, universal compassion to all fellow human beings and sentient creation. Purandara's reference to 'Jangamaru Navu Jangamarolu, Jangamaru navu Lingangigalu....Vibhuti namaguntu Visvesha namaguntu Virabhadra Priyabhaktaru navu'.. indicates the broad human sympathies and toleration of other sects and castes, by the Haridasas. They loved the company of the learned and the wise and the noble and taught that strenuousness *Prayatna* alone backed up by Grace of God, *Daivabala* would earn merit in this world and in after life.

The Haridasas maintained in their philosophy of conduct and activity that they should exert themselves to the utmost doing everything that could be humanly possible

and seek the Grace of Hari Sarvothama, for successful accomplishment of their objects. Mere Daivabala is indolence and mischievous, without effort; mere effort without God's grace, is only dogged perseverance without end. The Dasas showed in their dedicated life, that man is the fabricator of his own salvation, depending always on the sheet anchor of the Grace of divinity. The life of effort is a life of sacrifice, of love and compassion. The ambivalence of love is sacrifice and the consecration of a life of love is sacrifice and total surrender to God. The value of the Haridasa Sahitya is expressed in the words "Take away the Dasas from public life, the high principles of Vedanta and toiling masses are poles as under. The difficult thoughts of the Upanisads have been analysed into simple and charming Kannada and rendered into melodious verses which are sung at the door of every cottage in the country. What human heart cannot grapple with immense joy the divine pleasure that these songs in praise of the Lord convey! Oft quoted are the lines of the padas and keertanas composed by these classes." They suffered hardship and privation exhorting the people to live a life of virtue, truth and devotion to God and they spoke the language of music which is the language of the soul to soul communicating the fellowship of the deepest things of the spirit, community with the highest thoughts and sympathy and compassion for noble adventures of the human spirit in search of the divine. Through their songs and their voice the Dasas tried to correct the disparity between worldiness and other-worldiness and showed that Moksha and reward hereafter, lay in the service of God through the service of mankind.

## CHAPTER VII

# PURANDARA DASA AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO INDIAN CULTURE

### Introduction

#### Age of Purandara:

The Age in which Purandara Dasa was born, was one of turmoil and of conflicting controversy, about religion, bigots complained that people were losing their way in the dark, dogmatists demanded conformity to their way of life, the more adventurous were trying to catch a glimpse of something new and patch up a new religion out of scraps and tatters of half understood metaphysics, the simple minded followed the traditional way in the midst of screams and curses of rival religious quacks. People were wading through a bewildering welter of cultural ideals. Few realised at the time that truth was above everything and that one would discern in the past history of mankind, a slow approximation towards truth—a gradual substitution of more comprehensive and accurate view of the world and the universe, for the narrower and the less verifiable.

Politically overthrown, India was fast coming under the sway of the exotic Muslim civilisation. It looked as though that with the breakdown of her political power, her faith, in the potency of her age old culture would be shaken. Islamic ideas and ideals were slowly surging forward sweeping India off her old cultural moorings.



At the time when the process of disruption of her inner life was being accelerated by the trend of Muslim administration and spread of education, a mighty movement and a religious efflorescence heralded by Vachanakaras and Basavanna worked vigorously to stem this tidal wave and to deflect its course in other directions

The second Act of this drama of resistance against an alien culture and civilisation was enacted with the foundation of the Vijayanagar Empire by Hukka and Bukka under the inspiration of Vidyaranya. The Deccan became the bastion of ancient Dharma and indigenous ideals, to resist the attack from the North. The period of Devaraya and of Krishnadevaraya synchronised with the surging freshet of ideas and ideals rushing in the train of Vaishnavite domination of the Deccan and the South. The whole peninsular India was under the sway of the Vijayanagar Emperor and political unity induced a religious revival for Hindu solidarity.

That is the reason why, the sacred country between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra became the centre of intense religious activity, once again, after a lapse of a couple of centuries separating the great Saivite revival under Basavanna from the one that was witnessed under the inspiration and guidance of Vyasaraaja and Purandara. This Krishna and Tunga Doab was the home of Mahanubhavis and Aparokshagnanis who came in orderly succession to teach unity of God head, brotherhood of man, and love of God as the only means of emancipation. The great Maharashtra mystics, Gnyana Deva, Nama Deva, Tukaram and others belonged to the neighbourhood of this region. The great Saiva mystic Basaveshvara, Allamaprabhu, Chennabasavanna, Akkamahadevi,

and others were born in this region to dedicate themselves to a life of service of God Mahesvara Purandara Dasa, Vyasaraaja, Gopaladasa, Vasudeva, Vittala, Sri Jagannatha Dasa among other celebrated Aparokshagnanis lived in this region to transmute this land of ancient culture into a pattern of divine excellence Other regions of Karnataka were remote from religious danger, and were slower in assimilating the new movement

There was continuity of tradition, culture and of religion, but to gain even a show of continuity, the people had to limit their view to a few scattered men of exceptional spiritual eminence One cannot safely detect the stepping stones from one great movement to another, though there were periods of many centuries, when thought was stagnant or retrograde and when countless millions remained in placid ignorance, plunged in error long detected by the few

The torch was not really passed from hand to hand by the masses Solitary watchers upon rare eminences, caught a glimpse of distant lights across profound valleys, or rather vast breadths of continent, steeped in supine indifference Religious thought is a little continuous, as philosophical Ancient philosophers had reached truths, destined to long ages of oblivion, and had opened paths which had fallen into complete disuse It had to be opened again, by a new set of inquirers who were to set up some new aspects of religion like unity and love of God as invulnerable barriers against the threat of an exotic culture The inner urge for spiritual realisation ushered in new socio religious movements to resuscitate the ancient culture of India and lead her once more, to evolve a glorious future

The revival of this new attitude invited the advent of a saint who was profoundly learned in the Vedas, with rare intuitive experience and apprehension of God and absorbed in an unbroken communion with Hari Sarvothama, to command the faith and devotion of the masses of the land, by his rare flashes of illumination and intellectual speculation, and investing religion with a rationale that could stand the severest scrutiny of reason and common sense and hold its ground against intellectual heresies. To discover a creed capable of clothing the vague emotions of the contemporaries and of succeeding generations, required a genius of the rarest and highest order, and the concentrated activity of many men of genius, combined in unconscious co-operation, by the collective sentiments of the Age.

The capacity of such a personality is very great, for, he gathers into one focus and utters in articulate language the thoughts and emotions indistinctly fermenting in the minds of innumerable contemporaries. No one can safely predict the appearance of such a man at a particular ambit of time, for, he baffles, statistical or scientific analysis. The founder of a religion belongs to an order, still more exalted than that of poets, philosophers or statesmen. When the saint or the man of religion has solved the problem of the Age, the answer is simple enough. But till he has solved it, people will be blindly groping in the dark, conscious of a want, but totally unable to give it a distinct utterance or to predict what will satisfy it. A religion is a synthesis of a philosophy and a poetry. To convert philosophy into a religion, to give to abstract speculation the form and colouring which alone can bring it within reach of the ordinary

understanding, was a task requiring the loftiest genius under the most congenial influences and environment

No one could foretell the advent of such a spiritual genius as Basavesvara or Purandara, still less what their religious message would be like, for, if their religion was simply a philosophy one would have some specious basis for speculation. It was something infinitely more exalted and transcendental in its conception and content. The masses could not exist without leaders, while the leader could not dictate, but only turn out to be as much a follower and guide them by sharing the popular impulse. The man of genius could only insinuate some element of advanced thought. Thus there was a reciprocity, a continual give and take, in which the new religion or outlook would be permeated and coloured by the higher elements of thought of the Age and thereby undergo some transformation in the process. Few can equal the saints in power and in insight and spiritual penetration, for, unless much is performed by ourselves, spiritual life cannot be described to those who are not living it. They demand a strict moral discipline as well as intellectual capacity for learning. Indian mysticism has summed up the results of more than two thousand years of untravelled thinking the longest period of free speculation which the human race has enjoyed. Mysticism takes man in troublous times from the miseries of the world to the pure air and sunshine of eternal truth, beauty and goodness.

### His early Life

Purandara the great mystic was born in Purandara Gadh in 1484 A D of very rich parents of strong Vaishna-

vite leanings. The language which the family used was Kannada and it is not improbable as Purandara Gadh was once a part of the Chalukyan Empire witnessing continuous rule of Kannada Emperors; it was also a part of Karnataka and Kannada speaking areas. Varadappa, was a well known diamond merchant and had amassed a huge fortune and he wanted his only son to continue the profession of his father and accordingly gave Srinivasa the necessary instructions in the art and technique of diamond cutting and of sale of diamonds. After his death, Srinivasa inherited his father's vast wealth and carried on a very prosperous business for some time, growing as years rolled by more and more miserly and resisting any impulse of generosity and charity to the poor. He married a very pious lady, of generous dispositions by name Saraswati Bai and during the first few years of his life there was nothing unusual about him. Four boys and a girl were born to him and before long, Srinivasa stumbled into the region of a spiritual adventure which he had not dreamt of. The kind of education and early training the various disciplines to which he might have been subjected to, while his father was alive, are matters on which there is absolutely no information. Judging from his life, in later years, one gets the feeling that his entire being was spiritual and his texture and stature were incomprehensible to those who were not spiritually inclined. His parents too, could not realise the depth and immensity of his spiritual life, while he was young, given to spiritual ecstacy and realisation. There is no record whatsoever, of his early mystic states, the mode of expression of his spiritual personality and the mysteries of his inner life.

A miracle happened, one day, while he was at his business distributing large hoards among those who borrowed at a high rate of interest, and making a record of these loans in his register. It is a Vaishnavite belief that Hari Sarvothama in his infinite mercy for this great but deluded soul, and to direct his attention to the Eternal, appeared before him as an old needy Brahmin asking for alms. He was refused again and again, in spite of repeated entreaties and at last the old man desperate and starving, approached Saraswathi Bai and solicited her nose jewel as she could not give money to him, for meeting the expenses of the Upanayana ceremony of his grand son. The jewel was given and the old man appeared with the jewel before Srinivasa and demanded money on the nose ring as the pledge, he was told to come back to him after some time, when the authenticity of the stone would have been tested. Srinivasa put the jewel in the safe, returned home and found his wife without it and asked as to what happened to the jewel. Unable to produce the nose ring, she went to the Puja room, bolted the door, ground her diamond bracelet into powder and put it in milk, and while she was in the act of swallowing it, she heard the sound of a hard thing in the cup, and to her utter bewilderment, found it to be her own nose ring, and came running to her husband to show it. Srinivasa was confused in mind, and he could not reconcile this discovery with the one he had deposited in the safe in the shop. He went back to the shop with a flood of inexplicable emotion clouding his voice and his judgement. When he opened the safe-door, the nose ring was not there. He returned home in great excitement and learnt the whole story of the old man and her gift to him. He

discovered for himself the marvellous web of his own spirituality in a flash light of intuition. He returned back to the shopping centre in joyless reverie, tormented by a writhing agony, and tossed mercilessly on a sea of anguish, distributed all his wealth to the poor and the needy. With a piteous look and pathetic cries, and frantic struggle to tear off the intolerable veil of Samsara, he left Purandara Gadh with both his wife and children, and without any possessions, in search of the old man who had given a glimpse of the Eternal source of immortality to be realised through the piety, renunciation, purity and contentment.

*In this mood of spirituality he reached Vijayanagar, enrolled himself as a disciple of Sri Vyasaraja, obtained Ankita from him and accepted the dualistic philosophy and religion of Madhva; and as a humble citizen of the capital carried on his life in poverty, distress and sorrow instructing mankind in the Love of God, till merciful Providence took him away from the world perhaps on the eve of the battle of Talikote in 1565. Srinivasa who now became Purandara lived the entire spiritual history of his great people throwing himself heart and soul into this mad quest on uncharted seas of spiritual adventure and communicating to his people the exhilarating experience of self-realisation and of mystic states.*

Similar incidents have characterised the lives of great mystics all over India. Tulasidas the author of Ramacharita Manasa, passionately loved the companionship of his wife, and to him by a strange occurrence this passion was transmuted into ecstatic love of God and he became intoxicated with the love of Rama. Sant Surdas had a similar transformation. There may be an air of

plausibility in these stories, because the ways of the mystics are inscrutable, and one can never plumb the depths of their minds and visualise the mysterious currents of divine love that make the mystics talk and move about in a strange rhythm setting aside the entire body of codes and formulas of conventional life. The shackles of society are not meant for them, for they belong absolutely to a different plane.

Purandara given to strict austerities and exalted spiritual moods required a competent Guru to harness his wandering mind away, into the Eternal and direct all his ecstasies according to prescribed principles of Yoga and sciences. It is not improbable that Vyasaraaja took him as his disciple and gave him the necessary discipline in *Darsanas*, *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and other *Sastras* before he could land him on the road directed towards the sublime unfathomable and mysterious Universe of God. He was initiated to all Sadhanas and he must have had a long course of practice in all the accepted disciplines of the day. Purandara's knowledge of the technique of music and dance and of tala, laya and Raga was the outcome of a long period of training and it is not clear as to who were the masters of these fine arts, to take kindly to Purandara and give him the basic notions of the great branches of knowledge.

The tradition current that Purandara suddenly discovered himself after transformation on the conferment of Inkita by Vyasaraaja, to be a great poet and Keertanakara does not appear to be quite plausible. Purandara in poverty, saddled with a wife and children, passed his days with difficulty, but in the ecstatic bliss of a constant vision of the divine Krishna. His ego was



attenuated and chastened to perfection; all barriers in the shape of time, space, causation were cast aside, and all other relationships were transcended and intimate union with the divine beloved was consecrated. He had really nothing more to attain and had come within a short time to the transcendental realm of the divine which marked the terminus of his long and agonising adventure, serenity of mind attained far beyond the reaches of thought. Purandara perceived the Transcendental unity behind all diversity which could be realised only by *Bhakti* marga.

The forty years of his stay at Vijayanagara turned out to be very eventful. With the background of the phenomenal synthesis of contradictory phases of life, *bhakti*, and *Jnana*, *garaharya* or the life of a householder and *sanyasa*, the life of renunciation, work and preaching, thought and emotions, and selfless love and purity—Purandara analysed the deeper aspirations of the community, scanned its doubts, and confusions, traced the causes of its failures, and miseries, studied the life of society in its different facets and phases and stages, and pointed out to society the path that might lead to a great future.

Vyasaraja, the great pontiff of Vijayanagar, discovered Purandara by his Aparokshagnana, and inspired him to dedicate himself entirely to the service of humanity and God. The meeting of the two was a spiritual union and symbolised a beaconlight appearing at a critical moment, in Vijayanagar history, to illumine the upward path of Hindu Civilisation and to help its emancipation from the welter of conflicting ideas and interminable controversies and to direct it towards a great world-wide spiritual awakening. Vyasaraja, the Chancellor of the Imperial

University, at Vijayanagar, was the founder of a new tradition and one of the Apostles of the *Bhakti Marga*. His life and teachings were echoed through the voice of his disciple and the two lives practically made one complete whole.

Purandara Vittala of Pandarpur was the Kuladevata of the saints of *Maharashtra* and *Karnataka*. All the dasas obtained their *Ankita* from their *Guru* and created great poetry and Keertanas. There is a tradition current that Sri Vyasaraaja obtained in the bed of the river Bhimarati an ancient image of Krishna, worshipped by Arjuna and he brought this image to Humpti and installed it for worship and used this *Ankita* for worship and also at the end of all his compositions. It is rather difficult to explain because of paucity of evidence, why all the *Haridasas* refer to Vittala at the end of their *Suladis* or *Ugabhogas*. It seems to be beyond doubt that Purandara Vittala was the *Ankita* of all the dasas, and there is the possibility of river Bhima and the town of Pandarapur once being a part of *Karnataka* and known at that time as 'Pandarigi'. Jnanadeva mentions of Purandara Vitthala as the deity of the *Kannadigas* '*Kanada ho Vitthala Karnataku*'

### The sweet name of the Divine

Purandara was a widely travelled bhakta. In his verse "Muyyige muyyi tiritu" and in another verse "Kattiyalli Karvittanu" one gets the impression that he must have been a constant pilgrim to Pandarapur, to worship at the feet of the Lord. He seems to have made pilgrimages to Kanchi, to Tirupati, to Ahobala Kshetra and to Belur. The following Keertanas bear testimony to this fact.

“Kannare kandenachutana Kanchi Punya  
 Koti Kaviraja Varadana Ahobala Narasimha”  
 Kande Kande Swami Bedikombe  
 Aluvadyako Ranga

Purandara's devotion to Vyasaraja was intense bordering on the divine, for, it was this *muni* who discovered the hidden, incipient gifts dowered by God on Purandara, and proclaimed to the world almost with prophetic vision that Purandara would be the Creator of a new vision in the world, that of turning the mind of man towards Heaven, and thus, indirectly he would forge the most heterogeneous peoples of the Kannada country into a unity in the name of God, by supplication to God through Bhakti and thereby realise the brotherhood and solidarity of the human community. Vyasaraja had to contend against orthodoxy, hostility of the envious and the rancour of the close adherents of the faith, by the preference he showed to Purandara. He loved him as an Avatara of Narada.

Vyasamuni spoke of Purandara as “Dasarendare Purandara Dasarayya” Purandara mentioned of Vyasaraja with the greatest reverence as Prasiddha Sangita Vidya Sampradaya as the promoter of the musical tradition, as Vidya Simhasanadhyaksha presiding authority on the throne of learning, Kalpanachaturaanana and ativishruta the most celebrated and well known.

Purandara was a shrewd judge of human character and many of his compositions were a reflection of the miseries, confusions and doubts, of the wickedness and instinctive turbulence of human nature, and of the peculiar ways and manners of the people of his times. He studied the diversities, and infirmities of human nature, weighed

his observations of them in the balance of unsophisticated reason, and from their examination indicated the supreme importance of love of God. The loves of the young, the deceit and dishonesty, the transvaluation of values by popular public opinion, paradoxes of family and social life, the disparities between the rich and the poor, the vices to which wealth is given to, sanctimonious hypocracies, corruption, simony, dissipation, treachery, ingratitude, and iniquity and various other phases of society are mirrored in his Keertanas.

Man is aware of his limitations and folly. There are "shushumoha, Satimoha, Jananijanakamoha, Rasika-janara moha, Rajara Moha, Pashumoha, Bandhumoha, Bhumoha" these have made me to forget you." Purandara was a profound student of human nature and he deplored that instead of singing the praises of Hari Sarvothama, the people grow in society like the Jali Plant which is full of thorns, without flowers, or fruits, to satisfy the hungry, and without fragrance to offer to the Deity. He condemned ostentation, show, folly, display of ignorance, and pursuit of wickedness. He asks who is to be loved? Nari, Dharini and Vipula siri? None of these is permanent. He pleads for the recognition of the Haridasas as the servants of God, and enjoins on the common people to respect them, and adore them, as they are their emancipators from the fetters of existence. Life is full of anxiety, and of woes and worries, and Karma is inescapable destiny even for God and Goddesses. The wheels of Karma roll inexorably catching souls in a never ending cycle of births and deaths to undergo the fruits of their thought and action in previous births. Firm realisation of these operations of the law of Karma and

the inevitability of retribution therefore, make for the supreme importance of remembrance of Hari Sarvothama every moment of one's life as the antidote for the antipathy that exists between man and man and all sentient creation.

Purandara regards, birth as human beings is a great opportunity and therefore he says every effort should be made to make it holy, useful and beneficent. A life of self-sacrifice and love is ordained and unbending and unending love of Lakshmvallabha must be practised for He is Moksha Dayaka, Sakshi Swarupa, Sarveshvara, Pundarikasha and Purushottama \*

The easiest approach to God is Bhakti and the best way to realise it, is to recite incessantly the name of the Lord. Constant recital of the name is a warrant against inferior excitements and of vice. It is intrinsically superior in spiritual merit, to the visits to holy places, Japa, Tapa, Satsanga and Maunavrata. To recall the name of Hari Sarvottama with intense love and devotion is to ensure emancipation from the web of Samsara. No action will be productive of merit without the Grace of God. "The heart does not blossom by constant cleansing of the body, for it would be like a frog who is constantly in water' And a granite slab does not get transformed into marble by being dipped in water.

To be entitled to the recital of God's name and perpetually to remember Him is to earn first the qualifications of self-sacrifice, love, internal purity and the discovery of the nature of one's own soul. Purandara says "first one has to plant the seed of the name of Narayana at the tip of one's tongue, the heart shall be converted

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\* Panchamukhi Haridasa Sahitya P 138 (Kannada)

into a field with the ploughshare of the mind, attached to Svas and Uchhvas which are like oxen bound to the plough by the rope of *Jnana* and ploughed in the field of Nirusama. The trees of mada and matsara shall be cut, the shrubs of Kama and Krodha shall be plucked and the tower of panchendriya shall be erected to protect the field of the heart and cleared of chanchala, lust, greed and avidity and such wild birds. Thus to collect the harvest of Purushottama, day and night with the measure of one's life of Dhyana, is to earn everlasting Bliss. Purandara says.

Omkarinama Uppinakayi  
 Shankadhara nama Tarakarī saru  
 Keshavanama Karigadabu  
 Sahasra nama Savige Paramanna  
 Yedunattiya nama Holigeya rasi  
 Madhusudanana nama Mandige  
 Govala nama Bisambarige  
 D3vakisutana nama Mosarannada Mudde  
 Ravanirya nama Dose  
 Garudavahanana nama Tuppa neerumosaru panīya  
 Paramapurushana nama panniru pana  
 Karivadana nama Karpurya vilya

The appetising quality of the name of Sri Hari is described in many and varied similes. In another place, he says.

Rama nama vemba payasakke  
 Krishna nama vemba sakkare  
 Vitthala nama vemba tuppavannu haki  
 Kalasi Baiyannu chapparasiro

Let the flour of Ahamkara be ground in the grinding stone of Vairagya and boiled in the pot of the heart, with the fire of buddhi, then be served and eaten with the voice of the supremely satisfied stomach in the form of

Ananda and Ananda The ignorant and the wicked cannot comprehend the beauty of God's name By adorning a baby monkey one cannot make it a beautiful child The Manda Jnani is like the born blind who cannot see the rising moon The cobra does not shed its poison, by taking milk, the tail of a dog cannot be straightened by sticks Costly and valuable ornaments do not make a low born a princess, the cock cannot dance, while the peacock does at the sight of a cloud, as the deaf cannot enjoy the melody of a musician

Purandara Dasa compares the sweet name of the divine to a jewelled necklace and gives a vivid account, in one of his most delightful compositions, of the several incarnations of Srīman Narayana The miraculous powers of the Divine Name are delineated in glowing colours, while narrating in beautiful prose, the story of Gajendra Moksha, of Prahlada and Hiranya Kashipu and of the incidents of Draupadi Vastrapaharana, and of Vishnu Bhaktha Ajamila and of Dhruva and of Vibhishana Purandara pleads that the divine name should be the sheet anchor of life, for it is the only raft that takes the pilgrim amidst storms and monsters of the deep, to the Heaven of Eternal Bliss

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NATURE OF GOD IN PURANDARA BASED ON THE VEDAS AND UPANISHADS

Purandara was the follower of Madhva philosophy and accordingly, believed in the existence of two eternal principles, related as dependent and independent. The visible has emanated from God, and remains as a distinct entity to all Eternity. Madhvacharya declared the separate existence of Jivatma and Paramatma and the relationship between them, was one of Isa—Dasa Bhava. Paramatma is the sole lord of the Universe. He is Hari Sarvothama, the supreme God transcending the fetters of existence and the Universe of spirit and matter. "He is independent, omniscient and all powerful. He is the embodiment of knowledge and bliss and there is no difference between Him and his attributes—Svagata Bheda Vivarjita. He is Nitya-Mukta and Nitya Abhivyakta-svarupa. He permeates the Universe, and is unaffected by contact with the three Gunas—Tamas, Rajas and Satva."\*

Sri Hari has eight important states, though He possesses an infinite number of them. Creation, protection, dissolution, control of all things, imparting knowledge, manifestations of Himself, involment of souls in the knowledge of the world, and deliverance. He is as Purandara puts it

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\* Panchamukhi "Karnataka Haridasa Sahitya "



Sakala Grahabala Neene Sarasī Jaksha  
Nikhila Rakshaka Neene Visvavyapakane

SRI HARI is the abode of compassion and of all auspicious qualities. He is associated with Lakshmi, likewise, the abode of knowledge and Bliss, and the other close associate of Sri Hari is Vayu the every embodiment of Satva standing midway "between the chetanas unassaulted by sorrow" and carrying out the commands of the Lord of the Universe as Veda Samvadi and Jagadguru and interpreter of Prasthanatraya and also as Abhimanadevata of the Universe.

### Purandara as a Nirgunopasaka

The individual souls are subject to the bondage of Prakriti in the state of Samsara. There are five Satvika Jivas, Devas, Rishus, Pitris, Chakravartins and Naras of a high order. The other category of Jivas is a *pratibimba* of the high order. There are various grades of souls not only in the Satvik, but in the Rajasic and Tamasic orders. There is niramsa and Samsa Jivas, and also Uttama Jivas, Madhyama Jivas and Adhama Jivas, those with true knowledge, with mixed knowledge, and with perverted knowledge. Lastly, while the Jivas are Sukshma or Sthula, the inanimate creation drawn out of the world of matter or Prakriti has also its differential manifestations. Creation and world are Real, the differences between different constituents are Real, as well as the differences between spirit, matter and God, these are natural and eternal differences and these differences of Bheda persist even in Mukti or Beatitude which is the Sat Chit Ananda.

No soul can attain Mukti or freedom from fetters and trammels of existence without Bhakti and Prasada of

Sri Hari True Bhakti will grow from Virakti in the world and by dedication to Hari as the Ultimate sheet anchor of the soul By regular practice under the guidance of a Guru, the coarser and gross elements of the body and soul are to be eliminated and a satvik plane attained wherein by the infinite Grace of Hari, the soul will experience the manifestation of Him in his psychical and spiritual state It is a movement of the soul from Vividha Samsarika Dukhadarsana to Virakti, then to Dama and Shama, ultimately terminating in Mumukshu When God who is Svarupa Satta, Pravritti Satta and Pramiti Satta permeating all Universe, will give a glimpse of His Divinity

Purandara Dasa had drunk deep in the perennial fountain of Vedic and Upanishadic knowledge, before he became a convert to the tenets of Madhva faith He is metaphysical as well as ethical in his outlook He flows past us like a river of destiny wonderfully fertilising but unpredictable, he captivates us by his mystic visions and experiences and one can never comprehend him fully From his keerthanas one gets the conviction that he wholly accepted the philosophy tatva vada of Madhvacharya with its regard to Vedic injunctions of Varnasrama vibhaga and the installation of Sri Narayana as the highest and ultimate authority in the Universe

Vishnupurana says "Lord Janardhana though essentially one assumes the name of Brahma at the time of creation of the Universe, that of Vishnu while maintaining it, and that of Siva while destroying it" Narayana is imperishable, Infinite, Omnipresent and untainted by Maya He pervades the whole Creation consisting of sentient and insentient beings That ever young primeval Deity is

called by some, by the name of Siva, others by the name of Vishnu, who is always existant, and by still others by the name of Brahma. He has always existed and shall exist for ever. He is all knowledge, all intelligence all Bliss. He is absolutely pure, consisting of nothing but knowledge Jnanasvarupa and self sufficient Purna. He has no beginning and no end. He is eternal Nitya and peerless Advitiya. Though One, He manifests Himself in various forms. This Purana Purusha, eternal being who is luminous and unborn, who is the supreme Lord and who is known by the names of Narayana, Vasudeva and Bhagavan is illuminating every form, created by Himself and persists within as well as without in all three stages, of dream, and inspires and stirs the body along with its various sense organs, and Hridaya and Prana. Just as sparks cannot penetrate the fire, in the same way, our mind, our speech eye, intellect and others are incapable of comprehending the ultimate Principle, and they cannot approach it, much less describe it.

The Vedas, the Smritis and the Puranas are all unanimous in declaring that the supreme Deity is immanent in Fire, in water, in air, and in the whole Universe, in all herbs and plants and in all living creatures. The Svetasvataropaniṣhad VI 9 says "He has no distinguishing mark. He has no origin, no originator, no protector. The Gita says 'He dwells in the hearts of all living beings.'" The sage Yajnavalkya has put in a nutshell the view point of the Vedas on the question of the Abode of Narayana. "In the midst of the arteries of the heart, there is an orb, as luminous as the disc of the moon, and in the core of that orb shines the Atma emitting a steady light like that of a lamp. That is the only object

worth knowing as its knowledge frees man from the cycle of births and death. That Atma is present alike in all forms of life, from the human body down to the minutest creation.

God's light shines alike in every living being. One can see it with the mind's eye after one has fully, composed and steadied the mind, "That God" the only imperishable Substance among all perishable things" says Srimad Bhagavadgita "the illuminator of all lights, shining beyond the darkness, having knowledge as His essence, the only knowable Substance that which is grasped through Knowledge and who is installed in every heart." The knowledge that 'Sri Vasudeva is dwelling in the heart of every living creature is the Eternal and Abiding Principle of Sanathana Dharma and He is undifferentiated in all creatures. He should be regarded as the greatest Yogi who looks upon all, as equal, on the analogy of his own self so far as pleasure and pain are concerned. So, Vedavyasa has said 'Know this, to be the essence of religion and then practise it, refrain from doing into others what you will not have done into yourself—what you may resent, if done into you."

Purandara's mind was completely absorbed in the quintessence of ancient Vedic philosophy and religion. In one of his songs he says "The Charvaka has denied the existence of God, the Naiyayikas attribute only eight qualities to God, the Advaitin says God has no qualities, no form, no parts and at last, thought of himself to be God, Madhvacharya alone declared that Purandara Vittala alone is the highest God." In one of his Suladis he says "Some rejected Vaishnavism, thinking it incongruous with the Vaidika teaching like the Mimamsakas and

the Saivas, others like the Ramanujyas gave up Vedic injunctions thinking that they followed Vaishnavism, but Madhvamuni proclaimed that Vaidika and Vaishnava are inseparable and this is acceptable to God Purandara Vittala ”

Purandara believed that Vaishnavism was the religion and philosophy of the Vedas. Purandara likewise propounded the doctrine of Pancha Bhedas and explained the distinctions between Iswara, Jivas and the world and the differences between those who had attained Mukti and those who had not. The will of God and not the will of man shall be fulfilled and the various omnipotent characteristics of Sri Hari are described by Purandara in one of his great Suladis. Thou art the Sun, the Moon, Rahu and Ketu, Jupiter, Saturn and Mercury, Thou art day and night, the destroyer of Samsara. Thou art the Solar and Lunar Universes, and Punya Kala and the galaxy of stellar Heavens. His description of Hari Sarvothama is resonant of the melody of the words of Purusha Sukta “Sahasra Sirsha Purusha Sahastaksha Sahasrapat ”

“Visvathomukhanagi Visvatobahuvagi  
Visvato Chakshuvagi Purandara Vittalanu  
Taniha Kaniro Visvato Chakshuvagi ’

Sasira Purushane Sasiralochanane  
Sasira Konthane Sasira Bhujane  
Sasira Charanane Namu Purandara Vittalane  
Yelli kanderave Yelli Kondaduve  
Pullalochana namma Purandara Vittala ”

In one of his Suladis sublime like an Upanishadik utterance and revealing an intuitive presentiment of the nature of the Universe, he describes the intensity of human devotion to the Spirit hidden in the Universe

“Bommanandave Mantapa Jyotishchakra Dīpa  
Mahameru Simhasana Mahalakshmi Yemba  
Abharana Mandara Parī Jata male  
Purandara Vittalarayage Amritave Naivedya ”

### As a Sagunopasaka:

Purandara as a mystic was a Sagunopasaka but he was equally great as a Nirgunopasaka and as a Yogi. He is comparable to Hindu mystics like Tulasidas, Surdas and Kabir in his absorption in the effulgence of the Transcendental Deity. Purandara is as great as Kabir in the Upasana of Nirguna Brahma when he says ‘Ramamantrava Japiso hey Manuja’, and when he touches the extremes of Immanence and Transcendence in his Keertana:

Anuvagballa mahatagaballa  
Anumahatteradu Ondagaballa  
Rupavagaballa, arupavagaballa  
Rupaarupa Yeradu Ondagaballa  
Vyaktanagaballa avyaktanagaballa  
Vyaktaavyakta Yeradu Ondagaballa  
Sagunanagaballa Nirgunanagaballa  
Sagunanirguna Yeradu Ondagaballa  
Aghatinaghita Saktya Chintadbhuta Mahima  
Svagabheda Vivarjita Purandara Vittala ”

Purandara the mystic, forlorn, desperate unable to probe any farther in the limitless infinitude, flings a rebuke at his Lord “My Lord, listen, if a man accepts You he

cannot get even a handful of alms." Like a vine clinging to its support, in a violent gale, Purandara sometimes seeks the magical name of his Lord. You are a Paradesi without parents, while I am a Svadesi with You and Lakshmi as Parents; why do I want You or be obliged to You for mercy. It is enough if I have the support of Your name which helps me, to separate right from wrong and to walk in the path of spirituality and righteousness."

Neenyako Ninna hangyako  
Ninna Namada balavondiddare sako.

In another place Purandara says "I contemplate and talk about You, I sing prasies, about You, I have become weary by incessant supplication at Your feet....I catch hold of Your feet and implore You to protect me; if I desire to see anybody it is my desire only to see You; if I sing I sing only the praises of my Master:

"Neene Dayalu Nirmala chitta Govinda  
Smaraneyonde Salade Govindana  
Smarane yonde Salade  
Rama Yembuva Yeradaksharada

Purandara says "I am the thief who has stolen the treasury of Thy name, put me in fetters of love of Thee, and carry me to the domain of Thy citadel Vaikunta and protect me there as an eternal prisoner." Prof. Ranade in his "Pathway to God in Kannada Literature" says "To my mind, Purandara dasa occupies the same position in Kannada literature, which Tulsidas occupies in Hindi literature. They can hardly be surpassed so far as their literary ability and poetic genius are concerned. Tulsidas stands on a Saguna level on the whole, but Purandara has advanced further.... There are three stages of his thought; he began with Saguna, later equated the Saguna

with the Nirguna and ultimately he became a great Yogi and a mystic ”\*

There are many points of similarity between Purandara and the Saints of Northern India. In elegance of expression, sublimity of devotion, severity of renunciation, in singing the glory of God's name, yearning for the company of the good, deprecation of an artificial, ostentatious life, strenuousness in escaping from the coils of samsara and worldly existence, in the most painful groping for the anchorage of the Lord, and in the piercing cry of the soul for the union with the beloved, Tulasidas, Kabir and Surdas, and Purandara have many common points. But in the mode of expression of the yearning of the soul, in the exploration of the hidden provinces of human nature, and in the comprehension of the deep energy of the soul and of the far and infinite vistas of possibilities of realisation of the great Reality, and the intensity and the sustenance of the Soul's passion and love for the supreme Beloved, Purandara stands alone among the mystics of India. While Tulasidas apotheosizes Rama Purandara glorifies and covers Lord Krishna, the most loved object of perennial desire and pursuit. Like Surdas, Purandara made Lord Krishna the centre of Universal love and devotion. He is particularly fascinated with the boyhood of Krishna when he sings:

Yendappi kombe Rangayana

Pogadirelo Ranga Bagilindachege—

Madhava ba Madhusudhana Yadavakula Ranna ba

Some of the Keertanas are rhapsodies of vivid realisation of the Divine Krishna, of an indescribable ecstasy

\* R. B. Ranade. The Pathway to God in Kannada Literature P 6



as a result of communion with Him who is Akhilantha-ratma. There is sublimity in the love of Radha, a new touch of passionate tenderness and glow of loving sacrifice. Purandara gives a vivid portrayal of Sringara Rasa or the mood of love in the love of Rukmini, Satya Bhama and Krishna. The babyhood of the Divine Krishna is inexplicably dear to Purandara. The Mystic sees Him, sports with Him, enjoys His company and incessantly cries for more and perennial companionships.

“You are my pledge, I am Yours; for both of us, *the Bhaktas are the pledge. Oh! do not go out of doors, Ranga; The Bhagavatas will lift and carry You away with the heavenly comfort that they have acquired what is unattainable.*”

Purandara's mind is invested with the grandeur of the Epic past and often he retreats from the pomp and glory of the present and the visible life to gaze for inspiration in the invisible holy past. The emptiness of life without love of God, the infinite compassion of Hari Sarvottama dawn before his eyes in the form of great mythological characters as Bhima, Arjuna and others in daily and intimate contact with the Omnipresent and Omniscient Krishna the Lord of the Bhagavad Gita. The great and hidden truths of the Vedas and the Upanishads imprisoned in the message of the Gita are revealed to him in all their mystery and simplicity. The most transient emotions awakened by holy communion with the Epic heroes are suddenly touched by the pathos of an infinite destiny. He sees in the babyhood of Krishna, his early nursing in Yashoda's house, in his concerts and amours with the Gopis, as the Divine cowherd, in His divine flute fascinating all Creation, in that Beatitude, Brindavan

something that impressed on his mind, the presence of inexorable moral powers working out in the predestined doom of mortals

All the ten Avataras of Narayana are the subject matter of Purandara's vast creation. The illustrations are drawn from the Epics "Indiraramana, show me Thy lotus feet, when I cry for You, why don't You say Oh! do come" "Krishna, lotus eyed Hari, Ocean of compassion and protector of all Creation," and again 'Kusanu Kandira Jnanigalella Kusanu kandira', "Kandena Kanasi nali Govindana" and so on. The description of the ineffable beauty and loveliness of the divine Balakrishna far surpasses any similar description in the history of Indian literature. The vision is vivid in its details of ornamentation, in its costume, in its auspicious marks, and this confirms the belief that Purandara the Aparoksha Jnani had attained self-realisation and Sanidhya of his Beloved "Krishnana kandu bhava bhayavanu hingisi konde"

### As the Yogi on the Nirguna and Saguna level

Purandara the Yogi provides the metaphysical Substance as the background for the luminous, lucid, simple wonderfully clear and intelligible language which he employs for instructing mankind. A few Keerthanas may be cited to show how metaphysics, mysticism and love are woven into a mosaic of wonderful beauty and elegance. "Isabeku Yiddu Jayisabeku" is an expression of Karma Yoga, "Kallusakkare Kolliro, Gudugudiyanu sedu nodiro" are examples of worldly wisdom, giving the glimpses of unearthly Reality. The Upanishadic utterance "Dvasuparna Sayuja Sakhaya Samanam Vrksham

Parishasva Jate! 'Tayoranyah Pippalam etc has its counterpart in Purandara's famous Jogipada which reads as follows.

Jaya Jayavade Yeemanetanake  
 Bidu Bidu Bidu Mana Samshyava  
 Sukavemba hakki helutadappa  
 Jagavemba Gida huttitanna  
 nimma Yogyate tilidamyale  
 Purandara Vittala Sthala Kottanu

another famous metaphysical Keertana is as follows.—

"Ako hangihane Yiko hinghanu  
 Parabramha Narayana Hangihanendare  
 Kalillade nadisuva Kaillade hidisuva  
 hallillade unisuva hottellade unisuva  
 Kannige kanisadante Olage Horage tumbiruva  
 Swetadveepadalli Kulita Anantasanadimalagida,  
 Purandara Vittala

Purandara Vittala is one who makes us move without feet, without hands makes us grasp, without tongue makes us eat, who fills us both within and without Language cannot adequately describe the All-knowing, quality less but with quality, the formless still with forms The philosophy of approach to Divinity is given in the simplest and most attractive manner in his Gudi Gudi passage

"Gudi Gudi yanu Sedi Nodo ninna  
 Odalolagina kamakrodha veedvayado  
 Manavemba Sanchaya Bichhi ninna  
 dinada Papagallemba Bangiya kochhi  
 Tanuvemba chilumeya chuchhi Achutana  
 namavemba kichhanu hachhi "

Burude Yembude ninna Sira  
 Sira vembade kolaveyakara  
 Suri Narayananemba neera, svada  
 Aritu Takkollo yelo Mojugara  
 Medda mele Amaleruvudu ninna  
 hoddidda Papavu Suttuhoguvudu Heddari  
 Vaikuntakidu

“Where there is spiritual vision, and is exempt from passion and suffering, there It truly lives, That which is divine is ineffable and cannot be shown to those who have not had the happiness to see it W R Inge says “Caught up in ecstasy, tranquil and God possessed, the Mystic enjoys an imperturbable calm, the soul shut up in its proper essence is in a state of perfect stability, the soul then occupies itself no more even with beautiful things, it is exalted above the Beautiful, it passes the choir of the virtues It is not vision, it is rather another mode of seeing an ecstasy and simplification, an abandonment of oneself, a desire for immediate contact, a stability, a deep intention to unite oneself with the Deity itself”\*

A living realisation of Hari Sarvothama takes the place of abstract conceptions It is an experience which is not distinct from the normal operations of the mind, but arises from profound concentration which every one is capable of, if only he has practised the disciplines of *the body and mind* *God realisation is an experience in itself as objective as anything that we see about us, but “thought cannot reach the Absolute, for thought must have a thing and the thing cannot be one Those who live as Purandara lived, will see what he saw: Purandara says “He who has seen it, knows what I mean ”*

\* W R Inge *The Philosophy of Plotinus* Vol II P 144

To Purandara, the ascent of the soul involves a continual rejection of outwardness, shows pedantry, ritualism, and ostentatious display. Continuous self-denial is the way and there is no contradiction between his personal religion and his speculative metaphysics, for the latter is not a mere intellectual feat but an earnest attempt to think out his deepest convictions. To see Lord Krishna in Brindavan is the goal of his religious life, and this Beautiful vision is "the only highest and deepest kind of Prayer which excludes all multiplicity, and discursiveness of thought, and all distinct acts and creations of the Will." Spiritual progress is expansion and also an intensification and concentration, and "the soul perpetually constructs a synthesis out of what it has seen and apprehended and these in turn, will be destroyed successively in the ascent lest these syntheses detain the soul in a world of shadows."

Everything extraneous to Reality will have to be removed in order to have the vision of Beatitude. The struggle for spiritual life is intense, and this mystical life to Purandara is not morbid excitement, dancing, convulsions and other physical manifestations like standing on one's head seeing, hearing and smelling wonderful things, which is an ecstasy of a vulgar kind from which Purandara would fly away without even examining whether they are good or evil. The ecstasy that Purandara gets into, is intense, calm and contemplative, and not bodily showings of the unnatural life of a contemplative ascetic or the mystic of the cloister given to morbid, unhealthy, melancholic introspection.

This ecstasy is not the prerogative of a few, but a gift to mankind by God to be induced by proper disciplines before approaches to Him are made. Any concentrated mental activity may produce this ecstasy which is a fusion of the Will and Imagination in which the character of both is changed. As Purandara loves all God's manifestations, and knows of no evil and active malignancy in the nature of things and believes that the ultimate source of all is good, true and beautiful, and capable of inspiring love, he desires breaking down of the barriers which make for separate existence, for being depersonalised and through a process of purification and enlightenment by the ungenue of love, to reach the Highest, all-knowing Deity.

The mystics like Purandara, declare that their message is love and that there are many religions but only one God. Infinite as are the diversities of ways, so manifold are the paths to saintly character fulfilling itself in only one goal. The mystics act under the infallible guidance of love and of the works of righteousness done by great men in the past. Purandara like others has given to the world two great ideas: the Immanence of God and the Solidarity of man.

### Jiveswara Tatwa:

Purandara Das is one of the greatest mystic saints of India and of Karnataka in particular. He has often been compared to Saint Tulasidas and Surdas and Kabir for having exerted through Yoga, Gnana and Bhakti to attain the Sakshatkara of Nirguna Paramatma. Prof. Ranade in his 'Pathway to God in Kannada Literature' remarks that 'Tulasidas stayed at the Saguna level and Kabir at the Nirguna level; Purandara Dasa began at the

Saguna level later equated the Saguna with Nirguna and ultimately became a great Yogi and a mystic, as is illustrated in his insight into the metaphysical substance which he describes as

Anuvagaballa, Mahatagaballa, Anumahatteradagaballa  
Rupavagaballa, Arupavagaballa, Rugarupa Yeradu

Ondagaballa

Vyaktanagaballa, Avyaktanagaballa Vyakta, Avyakta

Yeradu Ondagaballa

When Purandara cries Kanninali Nodu Hariya or when he says in his Jogi Pada "Bidu Bidu Bidu Manasamshayava, Jagavemba Gida huttitanna, Hakkigaleradu Kodudave Hannugaleradu idavappa," he is revealing the mysteries of creation, the unity and oneness of celestial matter, the transmutation of primeaval matter into Primaeval energy and such other deep and sublime metaphysical implications of the Universe in the simplest language, for the understanding of the common man

Purandara recognises the unresolved dualism of human nature, and man as a compound of dust and deity with evil as an inexpugnable element of good. One is ambivalent of the other, and it is only by continuous Sadhana blessed by the grace of Hari, man can be the fabricator of his own Salvation. When he says 'Isabeku iddu Jayasa beku', he is indicating that strenuousness is the path of immortality and sloth the path of death. The sweetness of divine love cannot be experienced without effort and without devotion commensurate with the magnitude of the object to be attained 'Ambarada Alavanu ravisashu allade Taladalli Aduva Pakshigalu ballave, Jalada Pramana Tavare Gallade Tarugalu Yenu ballavu, Mavinahannina Swada Aragiliyallade Chiruva Kagegalu Yenu Ballavu'

While he enunciates the Jiveswara tatva, he is equally clear about the supreme gift of human life and the moral responsibility of the individual to make the most of life's opportunity 'Manava Janma Doddadu Ida hanu madali Beda hucchappagalira' The ultimate use of all our life's plans is that they are the scaffolding by which we build up the Soul into the likeness of Sarvottama Self sacrifice, and devotion in whatever cause, in whatever form, is the struggle of the soul to unfold its wings Life has its smiles and tears, the song and the dirge, following each other like surge upon surge But all these apparent contradictions and cacophones that exist, rasp the ear, quiver the foundations on which we stand, but they are like gorges which open out into valleys of beauty made more beautiful by the contrast, so much so, that in another life, we shall see that the things that in this life seemed such hard things were working out results that were beneficent and beautiful past languages Man's purpose in life is like a river born out of the thousand rills in the mountains, and when at last it has reached its manhood in the plains, all its mighty currents flow changeless to the sea When Purandara says 'Badatana Vembudu Kadetanakavirali' it is the piercing cry of an agonised individual who feels that it is the sorrow of poverty that makes our experience, and it is sorrow that teaches us to feel rightly for ourselves and for others We must feel deeply before we can think rightly, it is not in the tempest and storm of passions that we reflect, but afterwards, when the waters have gone over our souls, like the precious gems and the rich merchandise which the wild wave casts on shore out of the wreck it has made, as Gopichandana which Sri



Madhvacharya collected on the shores at Malpe, so, too, are the thoughts left by the retiring passions as a precious legacy to those who experience suffering

### Contradictions in human nature

Purandara describes vividly the contradictions in human nature and man's involvement in sorrow due to Annamada, arthamada, Akhila Vaibhavada mada, and jealousies which are the most passionate form of egotism, the glorification of a despotic, exacting and vain ego which can neither forget nor subordinate itself. He describes the normal conduct of ordinary human beings — "Pattadarasiya Bittu Parasatiya bayasu! Kotta Salava nungikollalenisru! mutti bhasheya kottu mosavane madu varu!" Purandara also refers to the existence of backbiting, gossip mongers and slanderers who adopt the personal view, the small view, the critical fault finding view. Gossip is a beast of prey that does not wait for the death of the creature it devours, while backbiting is an infallible sign of an innate vulgarity of the human spirit and should be avoided like a pestilence. Purandara says 'Nindakarirabeku Andandu madida Papavemba mala tindu hoguvaraiya Nindakaru' for the backbiters like the animals that keep the sanitation of a town clean, serve a useful purpose in society. When society is an interminable medley of discordant elements, one has to suffer in society, and adjust himself to the vagaries, caprices of social organisation. One must stand in society like a rock in matters of principle, but swim along with the current, in matters of taste. He says "Kallagirabeku, Kathinabhava Toreyolage, Billagirabeku ballavarolage!"

Purandaradasa saw suffering and himself suffered in

society by calumny, poverty and listlessness of humanity, but it was out of suffering he emerged triumphant as the massive characters in history who were seemed with scars or like martyrs putting on the coronation robe of fire and through tears of suffering first saw the gates of Heaven

He was convinced that the Grace of God alone would redeem man from the complexity of the web of life. He seeks the permanent anchorage of Hari to hold fast while journeying in 'the darkness of the night of the soul' for he is aware that he is a tiny raft on the uncharted sea of Samsara, unmindful of the monsteors of the deep and storms that come up in the night "Eeprithiviyolu vyapaka nagiha Sripathi Purandara Vittalane Paradaivavendu Dangurava Sarirayya Dingarikarellaru "

Purandara in many of his Kirtanas admits of human infirmities due to wealth, and possession of power, intoxicating the individual, and involving the soul in the complexities of Samsara as to make emancipation difficult "Take pity on me, by your Grace, Think not of my failing. I shall not let go off your feet" He deplores the fate of the individuals in Samsara, but his message is to look upon birth as a great opportunity and to garner merit before it was too late and to escape from the whirls of false living and Samsara through detachment and strenuosity. He says It is to the firm minded disciplined soul with an unswerving love of truth and with a determined effort to see God that Lord answers, the wandering, the lazy and the indolent have to wait in vain for His mercy. The man of faith and of strenuosity has the Grace of God and His infinite compassion " Success will visit only a full life, and failure shall haunt a diseased

life given to Paraninda, abuse of others, Paradara Paravitapaharana, Atipana and Atibhoga.

**Life—a great responsibility:**

Purandara enjoins as Basaveswara and the Vachanakaras did before him, that the abdication of the life of Samsara for a life of complete renunciation was anachronistic, for, self-realisation was possible only, in and through Samsara which was inescapable destiny and struggling bravely and courageously against the irritants of earthly existence before realising illumination and Moksha. Ignorance, folly and unrighteousness in society had to be fought incessantly and continuously before evil could be extinguished and sublimated. Caste hierarchy and gradation into castes and Jatis, orthodoxies and punctilious observance of all the ceremonial ordinances of religion without a pure heart, pedantry, and display of learning while violating decencies of human existence had corrupted the individual in body and mind. Soul and character were important in a life of virtue, which meant not the mortification of the body but the sacrifice of bad impulses and qualities on the altar of righteousness. Purandaradasa says 'What does it matter to what religion or caste one belongs; if he only knows Atmabhava. The sugar cane is twisted and crooked, but the juice is not so. The cattle are of different complexion, but do they yield milk in different colours and according to the colour of their skins? For Heavens, do not act on the basis of Kula, for there is no caste, colour or creed for the Jnani.' In one of his Kirtanas, he says: "It is a matter of unconcern to a Jnani whether the worshipper is a prince or a pauper. Oh! Atma unite Kula and Gotra; matter and spirit be

the personification of virtue, truth and goodness and become a Parama Punyatma ”

Purandara commends, in such an equalitarian society, organised on the basis of identity of atmabhava of individuals, acquisition of the gift of nature, Bhagya as the supreme gift to be exercised as a Sadhana in a life of emancipation. He sings “Bhagyada Lakshmi Baramma”, and thereby invites a life of Bhagya, of prosperity for every individual only to use it as a means for the supreme goal of life. The battle of Samsara has to be won with glory by one swimming in the ocean of life. To battle against life and its problems with courage and serenity of mind was the purpose of existence, as illustrated in the sutra of Isavasyopanishat “Tena Tyaktena Bhunjatah Jyaikishet Samah” and in the equally famous Upanishadic Sutra ‘Isavasyamidam Sarvam Kurvanevaha Karmani ’

Purandara had a horror of moral turpitude, of folly ignorance, and of wickedness, and he desired that unceasingly, war had to be carried on against wrong doers in order to win, by courage, lofty herosim and fortitude, the battle for a life of Righteousness in society. Purandara looked upon the world as a foothold for personal emancipation from the complexities of the web of Samsara.

The Dasa’s Vyavaharika Jnana was as great as his Paramarthika Jnana. He touched all facets of social reality, and was equally at home with the Brahmin contemplating the sublime Brahman, as with the lowliest in degradation, poverty and squalor. His similes and metaphors were drawn from a profound experience of all stages of social life. The ingenuous explanation of a housewife to scare away beggars at the door, intimate

conversations with the Bhangis, sporting with women and children, humorous allusions to Gods and Goddesses are a part of the repertoire of Purandaradasa's versatility. How intimate was his experience of the ways of common day to day life is borne out in his padas "Madike Toleyu thidene, Hogi Baro Dasaiya, Maneya Sarisuthidene Hogibaro Dasaiya, hudagarobbaru Kane Hogo Dasaiya, Attada Mele Akki Tegeyabeku, Hottenoyithide Hogo Dasaiya "

The great mystic had profound knowledge of human nature in its diversified manifestations in society. He had humour fed from the deep perceptions of the incongruities of human life and this quality of the mind helped him to prepare for the expansion of the sense of human fellowship into an impulse strong enough to compel the individual to live for others. The characters in the stories of the Mahabharata, of the Puranas and Itihasas are employed usefully to illustrate some amusing situation or the other and incidentally reveal how Infinitude could be the smallest of the smallest and biggest among the biggest. Purandara has not spared even Iswara from ridicule and has made fun of Gowri's strange choice of Iswara as husband, an ascetic, smeared with ashes, Naga round the neck, Ganga falling down from the head and a third eye on the forehead. Purandara likewise, with affectionate humour underlies the confusion of Rukmini in the choice of Gopala as her husband. Yenu marulade yamma Yele Rukmini Heena Kula Golla Sri Gopala Krishnaga. Purandara has made us understand that Hari and Hara are one and the same Substance by a delightful dialogue he builds up between Bhavani and Rukmini, one ridiculing the other for the choice of the partner.

ultimately to discover that the two are merely facets of one metaphysical substance

### Purandara's conception of Society and infirmities of human nature

Purandara reconciled conflicting creeds and brought compromise between Saivites and Vaishnavites by a rare magnanimity and spirit of toleration. Conflicts with regard to doctrinaire philosophy, mode of worship and ritual, were many during the Age of Purandara and Royalty had often to arbitrate in such delicate matters of religion and effect a compromise between contending religions. Purandara in one of his Padas says "*Janga maru navu Lingangigalu, Mangalavantaru navu Bhavigalu, Viraktaru navu Silavantaru, Virabhadra Priya Bhaktaru navu, Karanakarta Sri Purandara Vitthalana Karunyakke Bhagigalu navu!*"

Purandara repudiated the accident of birth and heredity and associated virtue with merit born out of self effort and triumph of character. The Haridasas and Purandara in line with the great Virasaiva tradition in considering that high caste and low caste belong more to the ethical and spiritual quality of the individuals than to his occupation or birth, made a rich contribution to social solidarity in their proper evaluation of caste. Purandara in a noble song, describes the characteristics of an untouchable *Holeya* and untouchable woman *bolati* and the colony of untouchables *Holageri*) "There is no *holeya* or *bolati* in the *Holageri*. He is *holeya* who is harsh to his father and mother and in his infatuation to his wife. She is a *bolati* who hates her husband and conspires with her sons against him, he is a *holeya* who having acquired

learning and happiness learns to scorn the aged, She is a *bolati* who panders to other men and is constantly irritating and cantankerous to her husband, he is a *holeya* who remains unaffected by tenderness at the sight of those who are feeble and wretched, she is a *bolati* who is always quarrelsome, jealous and lustful, he is a *holeya* who does not love or worship God, she is a *bolati* who seeks to live oblivious of God” Purandara asks the question in another *Keertana* “Is *Holeya* always on the outskirts of the town? Is he not here in our midst?”

Haridasas repudiated caste superiority and associated high distinction irrespective of birth or caste to those who were the abode of virtue ‘*Sakalaguna Sandra Kanakadasa echoes Purandara’s bhava* when he questions which is it that is well born or ill-born to the Good? Tell me to what caste does Narayana belong? Of what caste is the Soul, of what caste is life, love and the fine senses, When Thy soul is wedded to Lord Keshava, why talk of caste! Purandara who is ever present in social interrelationships, in sections and cross sections of the Social *strata*, irrespective of caste, sex and occupation, addresses the *Bhangis* given to opium smoking “*Mahavemba Samechaya bichhi dimana papagalemba bhangiya Kochhi, tanuvemba olumeya chuchhi, Achuta namavemba Kichhannu bichhi*” Open the doors of Thy heart, eradicate the poison of sin, daily committed, eschew the love of the body, and light up the conflagration of the love of Achuta”

Purandara transcended the narrow orthodoxies, prejudices and presumptions of the intellect and realised that pity, indignation and love felt and not made into acts of pity or of self sacrifice, would lose their very heart and

turn into their opposites. Our animations and activity of love inexperienced become like the unused muscle attenuated. The worst wretchedness of these losses, does not consist, in the damage we do ourselves but in the loss of Power to benefit mankind, in the loss of Power to do God's work, for the salvation and the greater happiness of man. The soul must be full of pity for the sickness of this world, which must be healed by uttermost renouncing and strong strife. Heroism of this type is the most brilliant triumph of the soul over the flesh, over fear, over fear of poverty, of suffering, of calumny, of sickness, of isolation and of death. There is no serious piety without heroism which is the most dazzling and glorious concentration of courage.

### **Ills of Society and how to overcome it**

The material for Purandaradasa's Kirtanas are human earthly, and divine under a thousand varieties of form and circumstance. The essential greatness, the boundless possibilities of moral nature, the obstacles which resist the strength of will which makes man the master of his destiny and that through the protecting influence of Hari, the struggle of duty with necessity, the collisions and conflicts, and the play and strife of the great but normal passions by which character is made, the unsounded depths of joy and sorrow, love, charity, truth and tenderness—are all woven into human life by a master hand. This feature, Purandara reflects in his Keertanas for the joy and amelioration of mankind. Purandara says 'the greatest of hymns, is the hymn of the victory of Dharma, the supreme art of life is to know the secret of Dharma, and live in conformity with it.'



Purandara's religion was the worship of the beautiful in God, in nature and in divinity. Man's deepest thoughts about things invisible, and spiritual, his highest hopes, his loftiest admittations, and his most exalted reverences find expression in his compositions. Lordly forms of human Grace and nobleness, freed from the sense of human imperfections, and man's deepest susceptibilities find vent in his worship. The Aesthetic and the sacred, the poetical and the mythological are interwoven in the worship, and thus in a sense, Purandara is the creator of the country's divinities, and revealer of its theological beliefs.

Purandara though a follower of Madhva religion never any time in his life discriminated against other sects and creeds. Mere theology and dogma of any particular religion did not create interest in him. He had the courage to expose the superficialities of religion and teach true religion to the masses, whether they were Saivas or Vaishnavas. It is not purity to merely cleanse the body. Purity is in sweet remembrance of Achutananta. One does not destroy sin by washing the skin. Purity of living is in singing the praises of Purandara Vittala. Accordingly, in one of the great *Keertanas* he describes the nature of an impure person *holeya*, transcending, in the imputation of meaning to the common social terms, the limitations of caste hierarchy. An impure Brahmin is a *holeya* and the mere accident of birth does not absolve him from the taint of sin. He says the holy bath is in the eschewal of the company of the wicked, in the constant companionship of sistas, in the perennial dip in *jnanatirtha*. One does not acquire spiritual merit by mere performance of *Karma*, by holding *Kusa* grass in hand, and observing

all the ceremonial ordinances of his faith. In an oft quoted celebrated *Keertana*, Purandara gives us the quintessence of all truth and of divinity:

Kuladamele hogabeda manuja  
Kulavilla Jnanigalige!  
Varada Purandara Vittalana  
Padava Seri Neenu Muktanago!!  
Avakulavadarenu Avanadarenu  
Atma Bhava aritamele

Oh! Mortal do not act on the basis of *Kula Jnanis* do not belong to any *Jati* or religion, obtain *mukti* by worshipping the feet of Purandara Vittala. What does it matter to what *Jati* and to what social *strata* one belongs, be he a prince or a pauper, so long he knows *Atmabhava*.

Purandara reveals in his vast compositions, a universal mind touching many phases of human life, and admonishing man to eschew bitterness, smallness, worship of mamon, meaningless ritualism, love of one's self and his body, in order to concentrate on his Creator. Many of his verses breathe an air of profound wisdom and love of the universal and the permanent, as distinguished from the ephemeral. Expressions like:

"Isabeku Iddu Jayisa beku"  
"Nambadiru ce dehanityavalla"  
"Manuja Satira videnu sukha"  
"Higguve yeko ce dehake"  
Allidenamma mane"  
"Aruhitararu nunage"  
"Chunte Yeko bhava branti yeko "

are a proof of intimations of immortality.

Since the foundation of the Vijayanagar Empire, it was one of uninterrupted effort to stem the tide of Muslim invasions and save Hindu religion from total annihilation. Hindu India appeared crumbling down, and therefore

the theory of illusion that the world is unreal, had to be fought, the value of the individual and that of society raised, by giving the motive force of the ideas of faith and hope, and the grandeur, solemnity and inspiration of a united devotion for the defence of the citadels of Hindu Dharma and culture, overpowering all minor emotions. Vidyaranya had inspired the foundation of a Dharmarajya and the rulers, made stage by stage their own contribution by building up intellectual strength and moral energy for the defence of the kingdom.

There was a new born sense of a divine and hitherto unapprehended mystery in the glory of a Dharmarajya. The Empire reached its highest glory in the time of Krishnadevaraya, described by poets as Andhra Bhoja. He was a patron of arts and learning, besides himself being a great poet, musician and painter. He respected all religions alike, though his personal leanings were in favour of Vaishnavism. He played the role of conscience and of Providence touching the rectitude of each man's life and thereby preserving the integrity, substance of character and of conduct, and of righteousness, both of act and of mental habit against corruption and of vice. He was a great administrator and a great builder and many great temples were built or renovated marking his intense devotion and love of God.

Purandara was the contemporary of Krishnadevaraya and in the midst of the fabulous wealth and prosperity of the Capital, he preferred a life of voluntary poverty and carved out his existence, by *Uncha Vritti*, of going from door to door collecting what alms were given, lovingly, voluntarily, and unenforced, to be used for the maintenance of the family and himself. *Uncha Vritti* was

the inevitable corollary of a life of a saint in the past, for his life was one of total absorption in God and in meditation and constant recital of His holy name, while he went from door to door, singing the name of God, the people gathered round him, and participated in his ecstatic dances and found themselves for a moment, oblivious of their surroundings and exalted to a realm of pure adventure of the spirit. The songs of Purandara exposed sanctimonious hypocrisy, callousness, sloth, imposture, sensuousness and evils of drink and of a life of dissipation, for the vices which drag men and women into crime spring as often from unhealthy bodies, as from weak wills and callous consciences.

Vile fancies and sensuous appetites grow stronger and more terrible when a feeble physique and low vitality offer no opposing force. Deadly vices are nourished in the weak, diseased bodies that are penned day after day in filthy crowded streets of the great city. Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart. Where the mind is clouded by passion, it is incapable of clear thought, harsh stinging words are spoken without thought, rash deeds which result in most serious consequences are performed without thought. It is not necessary for a man to be actively bad in order to make a failure of life, simple inaction will accomplish it. Every thing which ceases to struggle, which remains inactive, rapidly deteriorates. It is the struggle towards its ideal, the constant effort to get higher and further which develops manhood and character.

~ The weakness of human character, due to infirmity of the mind and the possibility of their being sublimated towards God, constitute the content of a large part of the

compositions of Purandara During the daily rounds, in the crowded capital he brought home to society, its errors, folly, ignorance, inaction and reaction, of unrighteousness, *in thought and in conduct* In a very delightful but poignant manner, Purandara introduces precepts for society and laughs at those people who love others' women, nurse illicit love and hatred, and masquerade in society as the most learned and the pious

"Nage barutide Parara Vanuteyolu  
Managolidu  
Hariva neeranolage muligi  
Berala Yenisivavara Kandu

AND

Patiyasevebittu Parasatiya kuda  
Sarasavadi halavu vratava madia Satiya  
Kandu Kama Krodha manadolittu  
Tanu Vishada Punjanagi  
Swami Purandara Vittalana nama  
neneyuvara Kandu"

Purandara warns his fellow citizens against jealousy, anger, pride, uncharity, cruelty, self righteousness, sulkiness and doggedness The passing cloud is composed of drops and the drops there be token an ocean, foul and rancorous, seething somewhere within the life—an ocean made up of jealousy, cruelty, self-righteousness and pride lashed into a raging storm Society is full of such people who have a touchy and sensitive temper which takes offence at a word, the irritable temper which finds, offence in everything whether intended or not, the violent temper which breaks through all bonds of reason, the jealous temper which wears the cloud on the face all day, the discontented temper brooding over its own wrongs, the severe temper which always looks at the worst side of whatever is done, the wilful temper which overrides

every scruple to gratify a whim. Many a soul is stirred to evil impulses; many an emotion of true affection are turned to bitterness. All these kill the sweetest and warmest of domestic charities:

“Nechhadiri Bhagya Yarigu  
 Sthiravalla, nischayavechharike  
 Podavipanolimeya Kadunechhi  
 Garvadi nadajadirechharike  
 Badabaggara Bayabadadu papadi  
 hejje yidabedaechharike

The cares of life as often choke the growth of love of God as the deceitfulness of riches. The mind can be profaned by the habit of attending to trivial things, so that all pure thoughts shall be tinged with triviality. It is not Sin so much as triviality that hides God.

Oh! mind! why should you be fascinated by this body, try to be happy with the sweet remembrances of Vasudeva. The feet are trembling, the eyes have become dim, and old age, decrepitude and decay have appeared with the passage of youth. The body is ephemeral, like a bubble on the surface of the ocean. So, do not be enamoured of land, riches and women. Seek and join Sri Purandara Vittala. Oh mind! Does thou not seek serenity away from the trivialities of existence? In another song, he describes the transitoriness of human existence. “What is this struggle for? Wealth, house, husband, wife and children all deteriorate and vanish with efflux of time. Why are you fascinated with this body given to decay and death and a prey to diseases and to the ingredients of Hell?”

In the Keertanas, there is a helpless admission of human infirmities due to pride of wealth, of possession,

of youth, and of power, that the human soul intoxicated has not even the tongue to sue for pardon

Binnahake Bayilavayya

Ananta Aparadha Yennolage Yiralikke

Purandara refers in many Keertanas to the soul being caught up in an ever ending cycle of births and rebirths, struggling in the complexities of Samsara to emancipate itself from its meshes "This samsara is very wicked, and you have fallen into it with your legs tied up, this body which makes for samsara an object of Hell, does not bow down at the lotus feet of Purandara, because of the intoxication of arrogance Miseries and sorrows of existence and the natural state of inequality and differences immanent in sentient creation, are the result of ones own Karma in this ceaseless evolution and transmigration of souls from one birth to another By one, right is done, by one right is undone, by one, evil is done, by one, evil is undone Man is the fabricator of his own salvation which he can realise by his own good deeds and Grace of Hari The inexorable fate overtakes everybody and Karma works itself out in an imperceptible and relentless manner and is no respecter of prince or pauper, Ravana or Dushasana, or Abhimanyu or Sita All these suffered great hardships and misery, because they transgressed the ordainment of Purandara Vittala "

As there is no way of escape, he pleads for complete surrender to Hari "Take pity on me by Your Grace Think not of my failing You who sleep on the great serpent Adishesha, look on me as your own " I shall not let go off Your feet, Whatever You do, I shall still cling to you, for, Yours is the task of taking me across Samsara "

## Life a great opportunity

Life is a great opportunity provided by God, but one should live in Samsara as ordained by his previous Karma Purandara in beautiful similes, gives a vivid description of the illusory nature of Creation, and the evanescence of the floating phenomena of existence "A bird came and sat in the open space and flew away The little children built houses of sand and afterwards destroyed them, indicating the close of the game A traveller came in the night seeking shelter, to move out at day-break, towards his village, Oh! Purandara, protect me by destroying this illusion of Samsara "

The attitude of Purandara is not pessimism, but the outcome of the full realisation of the alternating phases of light and shade, and life and death One should have a clear comprehension of the grim reality of life, as of death, and of illusory existence With the full knowledge of the transitoriness of existence, one should have the strength and fortitude to face it and transmute this illusion into a living excellence of God-realisation Purandara says "We must live in the midst of Samsara and conquer it, with the knowledge that life is a fleeting show and Moksha is reality "There shall never be one lost good, what was, shall live as before" In the language of Robert Browning "All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of God shall exist" Not its semblance, but itself, no beauty, nor good nor power, whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodies When eternity confirms the conception of an hour

The high that proved too high  
The Heroic for earth too hard



The Passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky  
 Are music sent up to God, by the lover and the bard  
 Enough that heard it once;  
 We shall hear it by and by."

Purandara pleads for a life-long preparation for emancipation from the trammels of Samsara, by heroic reaction against ignorance and folly. The spectral form of an awful Fate dominating all things and obtruding itself on human life, is vividly described by Purandara as a warning against triviality and dissipation! Why fear and have illusions? You are in the grip of *Prachina Karma*... Don't become weary by the weariness of thought and of pain."

Geruhanninali Beeja Scridante Samsaradi  
 Meeriasemadadahange Dhira Krishnana Nenevarella  
 Mamsadasege matsya Siluki himsepattapariyante  
 Mosa hogadahange Jagadisa Purandara Vittalaneneyuta.

It is to keep a man awake, to keep him alive to his own soul and its fixed design of righteousness that Purandara's attention is directed; not only that of words, and of saints but the sharp ferule of calamity under which we labour till we die. Our lives must climb from hope to hope and realise our longing. If a man constantly aspires, is he not elevated, is the question which Purandara asks. Our lives must preach, for all the world is the temple of God. Its worship is ministration and the commonest service is Divine Service. Heaven does not make holiness but holiness makes Heaven, and holiness is infinite compassion for others; Greatness is to take the common things of life and happiness is great love and much serving; the fixation of thought and effort on the attainment of righteousness in public and in private homes, to have the courage to attempt what seems impossible, through love

of the ideals of Truth and Beauty, and to prefer to die on the field of work and self devotion rather than to live in idleness and luxury ”

Tasubarisutide Keli  
 Hari dasarellaru!!  
 Srishana Bhajaneya  
 Madada manujara Ayushya  
 Vyarthavayitendu

### Strenuosity the Path of Immortality

The Dasa proclaimed God in love as eternal, true Harichitta is Satya, Hari is Jivanasarvasva, he proclaimed Sadachara, a life free from ostentation and display, a life of Sraddha and Bhakti and prayer which is the highest aspiration of the soul “a breath that fleets beyond this iron world and touches Him who made it ” When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as Sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of corn Purandara preaches faith in God and that continuous and unremitting service at His feet, contemplating talking and preaching of his Glory, would protect him against wickedness and sin “Bad men cannot do harm when I am dwelling in thought of You, for one who lives all the moments, in thought of You, the Eternal One, *Jagat antaryamin*, none can be evilly disposed towards me The dust of a galloping horse cannot besiege the Sun, the blow of the wind cannot shake the hill, to become Your servant is the fruit of the accumulated merit of many lives ”

Purandara declared the paramountcy of the magical name of the Lord You are a Paradesi, without parents, while I am a Swadesi with You and Lakshmi as parent, Why do I want you or be obliged to you for mercy It is

enough if I have the support of Your name. . . . to help me to walk in the path of spirituality and righteousness. . . . If I desire to see anybody it is my desire only to see You, if I sing, I sing only the praises of my Master. On another occasion, Purandara sings in one of his Keertanas:

Nitya Upavasaviddu hasidu balaleke,  
Matte Chaliyolu Ganga Mulagaleke  
Hastavapididu maduva japaveke  
Muktige Sadanavallave Hari Nama  
Sati Sutaranu hittu Yetigalasrama  
vrata Krthsra nema niste galeke  
Pritiviyolage namma Purandara Vittalana  
Atishayadindomme nenedare Salade!!

Purandara repeatedly asserts that the way of Moksha is not through knowledge which does not bear fruit in Bhakti for the divine. What is the use of repeating formulas when the heart is impure? I fear not poison nor fire, not prison, nor the edge of a sword; one thing, I fear, only one, I dread within, the wealth of others and other's women. Men who claim goodness without being worthy of it, men who do not give up evil and talk of saints. . . . do not know the way of Moksha which is surrender at the beatious feet of Purandara Vittala.'

Language cannot describe adequately the All-knowing *qualityless, but with quality, the formless still with form.* Thought and imagination cannot comprehend and encompass the Infinite, why quiver says: Purandara 'in the meshes of controversy about *Tatvavichara*? Why mortify the flesh in vain pursuit of *Tatvasastra*? Why injure yourself of talking of Bhagavadgita, the essence of all religions as Advaita? Hari is *Puradaiva Jnana* of Purandara Vittala who alone is *Kaivalya Sopana*.

## Importance of Moral discipline and control of desire

Accordingly, Purandara asserts 'mortal human life is great, do not injure it by any means *Manava Janma doddadu Yidu Hanu madalu bedi buccbhappagalira!* On another occasion he says

Kannu Kai Kalu Kivi Nalige yiralikke  
 Mannumukki marulagavare!!  
 Honnumannigagi Harinamamrita  
 Unnade upavasaviruvare khodi

There should be the proper regulation and use of the sense, emotions and impulses and an unceasing effort to fulfil the obligations of life. From this effort, there can be no release, and the effort itself becomes more difficult as human relations grow fuller, wider and more complex. Character is formed by what we do than by what we refrain from doing. Every personal gift and possessions should minister to the common welfare as an offering of love. It reaches to the springs of action and gives to the most technical toil, the dignity of a divine service. A purifying discipline is to be filled with visions of hidden beauty and memories of heroic deeds. Life's discipline must enable us to lift up our eyes to a pattern of human society which we have not yet dared to contemplate, a pattern which answers to the constitution of man animated by divine love.

It forbids us to seek repose, till, all labour is seen to be not a provision for living but a true human life, all *Sadhana* a preparation for the vision of Harisarvothama. This mode of expression is possible only for the human being and therefore, it is a supreme opportunity for consecration and service of God.

Krimi Keetanagi Huttidendu  
 Harisaranentalunte  
 Katte Karadiagi huttidandu  
 Hari Saranentendunte  
 Handi Sukaranagi huttidandu  
 Hari Saranentalunte  
 Marateeye Manava runna hindina Bhavagala ondu  
 Manusha Deha bandecto ninageega  
 Bega neneyalu Purandara Vittalarayana

## AGAIN

Naranada mele Hari nama jhve yolirabeku  
 Bhutadayaparanagirabeku  
 Pathakavella kaleyalibeku  
 Matumatige Hariyennabeku

Purandara realises the tamasic aspect as an inexpugnable element of human life, and until that is conquered, the mind could not turn towards the Divine. The spiritual in man involves not only the element of self-determination. The element of inner life should be taken up, transformed and recreated by the free self assertion of the rational will and by the grace of God.

Tamasa biduvadanaka  
 Kolaluduvanige Sarpa  
 Taledugidandali

Purity of heart attained by the conquest of *Mada*, *matsarya*, *Kama*, *Krodha* and *Chanchala*, is the field for the plantation of the holy seed of Narayana.

Madamatsara maragalane taridu  
 Kamakrodhagalemba kaleya Kithu  
 Panchendriyavemba manchuke yenehaki  
 Chenchalavemba hakkaya hodiyaaya

The objects of natural desires and impulses are particular and limited, while the end to which the spiritual element in man points, is universal and boundless. However, poor and imperfect a man's actual intellectual and

other attainments of thought or of self consciousness, there is a capacity which no conceivable multiplicity of particular experiences can exhaust and this is the form of an infinite content. Appetite and desire have no ideal, but that which makes a man a spiritual being makes him also a restless being and reason is the secret of divine discontent—an implicit revelation of a future to which all particular attainments are immeasurably inadequate. It is a call to be adequate to an ideal which dwarfs every realised height of knowledge and which is perpetually breaking the bonds that appetite and desire would bind around the spirit.

Not only appetite and desire have no ideal, but they grope in the dark and are content to grasp instinctively at their destined satisfaction. The tendencies of the lower nature seek their ends blindly. Purandara discerned the discord in man's nature, an internal division or antagonism which marks man's nature as a being, at once of sense and spirit, of natural impulse and rational self consciousness. Man is a compound of transient impulses and the sharer of a universal life, conscious of an infinite hunger and cloyed with every isolated shallow satisfaction, living in the light, liberty and love of the Spirit and shut up in the darkness and bondage of sense.

This discord in man's nature is not really an antagonism between two irreconcilable tendencies. The solution of the contradiction between man's higher and lower nature is accomplished, by the transformation of the lower into the organ or expression of the higher. It is absolute surrender to a higher or universal end, and morality is the renunciation of the private or exclusive self and the identification of our life with an ever widening

sphere of spiritual life beyond us. It is when the moral life of society flows into an individual, that this nature reaches a fuller development and then only are his social duties adequately fulfilled when they cease to have the aspect of an outward law, and pass in love and devotion into the spontaneity of a second nature. In moral life there is an extinction or annulling of the individual private self, but it is an extinction that takes place not by extirpation of desires and impulses but by transmuting them. The death of *Mada Matsarya* or *Kama Krodha* is one, not of annihilation, but of transmutation.

The moral progress of the ideal does not stop in the mere resolution of the contradictions of life, one has to be carried beyond the sphere of morality into that of religion, whose essential characteristic is that it changes aspiration into fruition, anticipation into realisation. Instead of leaving man in the interminable pursuit of a vanishing ideal, it makes him the actual partaker of a divine or infinite life. Whether we view religion from the human side or the divine—as the surrender of the soul to God, or as the life of God in the soul, as the elevation of the finite to the infinite, or as the realisation of the infinite in the finite—in either aspect, it is of its very essence that the Infinite has ceased to be merely a far off vision of spiritual attainment, an ideal of indefinite future—perfection, and has become a present Reality. God does not hover before the bhakta as a transcendental object which he may conceive or contemplate. The very first pulsation of spiritual life, is the indication that the division between the spirit and its objects has vanished, that the ideal has become real, that the finite has reached its goal and become suffused with the presence and life

of the Infinite Religion is the surrender of the finite will to the Infinite and the abnegation of all desire, inclination and volition and identification of the will of the individual with the will of God attainable only by interminable progression, it is the elevation of the Soul into a region where hope passes into certitude, struggle into conquest interminable effort and endeavour into peace and rest Professor Galoway in his 'Ideals of Immortality' says. "An ethical God is the security for the harmonious working out of individual destinies, neither in Pantheism nor in Pluralism, but in genuine Theism is the best support to the hope of human Immortality." Lord Krishna says that "it is in the mental attitude of self-surrender and utmost resignation that Immortality abides and the attainment of Supersensuous Consciousness is a possibility only by performance of Duty in perfect selflessness Self-sacrifice is the supreme activity and assertion of the human will in the service of God It is neither struggle for one's own existence nor struggle for others existence, but it is struggle and sacrifice for God

It is Love that leads to sacrifice and God reveals himself most fully in the Supreme activity of Love that is self-sacrifice Love is the means and Bliss the Goal and Ananda is both love and Bliss, and the quest of love itself is blissful The wider the contemplation of Creation, the greater is one's conception of God, whose beauty surrounds and fills those who understand Hari The Mystic Sees Reality everywhere both within and without There is an intense desire 'to see and realise perfection, to be free of all contradictions of earthly life', and to return to the Lord, where the pangs of separation are no more



The lover of God is disinterested in everything in the world and most of all in love. It is unrequited love erected into a rule of life which indicates that there is in each one of us 'a hidden man of the heart who can love and be loved superindividually.' Such mystics are rare among mankind, and they are given either to one of the two roads of Ascent:—The road of disinterestedness, and the road by personal affection for man. In any case, the pilgrimage of the Soul is alone, and unattended. 'Their loneliness' says Inge 'is the loneliness of the great mountain solitudes;' the air which we breathe at those heights is thin, but pure and bracing. His love is worship for a Divine Being, the source of all that is lovable, and desire for spiritual communion with the Power that has brought life and immortality to light.

there is neither pain nor pleasure, nor thought, nor hatred nor affection nor any desire Brihad Upanishad speaks of this *Rasa* as something which should be heard, known, seen and contemplated

Atma va are drashtavyasa Srotavya mantavyo  
nidhidhasitavyahl

This *Rasa* or *Passion* is the blossoming of the heart in the search for ultimate Reality This passion is more intense than earthly or physical passion This transcends the sensuous love, that forms its immediate fuel and tends to pass over into the spiritual passion of an Infinite love Freedom from the idolatry of its finite object, from the bondage of sensuous conditions, is a difficult process as bondage is not so much due to external circumstances as to the conditions inherent in its very nature The saints did not fly from passion and accidents of life, which had separated them from God Saint Tukaram says

I am a mass of sin  
Thou art all purity  
Yet Thou must take me as I am  
And bear my load for me

Me death has all consumed  
In Thee all power abides  
All these forsaking at Thy feet  
Thy servant, Tuka abides

South Indian mystics, likewise, have expressed their longing for release from sin "Since I am false, and false my heart, false my very love, However, I weep, still held by deeds, can I reach Thee above? O'honey, nectar, O'essential, sweetness, great as sweet, Grant Grace to me to find the path that leads into Thy feet "

All the mystic saints are agreed as to the way of deliverance and salvation This is not to be attained by

## CHAPTER IX

### BHAKTI

**Bhakti or the love of God · the easiest way to Reality —**

Purandara recognised early in life, that of the four well established *Sadbanas* to ultimate Reality, *Karma Marga*, *Gnana Marga*, *Yoga Marga* and *Bhakti Marga*, the last one, was the easiest and most fruitful

Anyasmath Saulabhyam Bhakti  
Tasmim Sajjane Bheda Bhavat  
Sri Satyasya Bhaktireva gariyasi!!

Purandara has enriched the literature on Bhakti by amazingly versatile compositions, illustrative of all the eleven modes of approach to *Paramatma* through *Bhakti*

Dharmave Jayavendu divya mantra  
Marmavanu tulidu Acharisuvudu Tantra

Of all the passions, the unappeased hunger of the heart for God, *Bhakti* is ultimate This passion is called *Santa* or *Sama Rasa Bhavodreka* in mind is *Rasa* and *Samnaya* and *Visbesha Chitta Vritti* is *Bhava*, the reason for *Bhava* is *Vibhava*, essential excitant, which is the emptiness or vanity of all things, by reason of their not being lasting and God being the only entity that is Real The enhancers or *Anubhavas* consist of holy hermitages, places of pilgrimage, society of great men and the like Its accessories *Vyabhischaris* are self disparagement, joy kindness towards all sentient creation This attitude is also known as *Sancharibhava* The integration of these *Bhavas* results in *Rasanishpathi*, and *Rasa* is one where

there is neither pain nor pleasure, nor thought, nor hatred nor affection nor any desire. Brihad Upanishad speaks of this *Rasa* as something which should be heard, known, seen and contemplated.

Atma va are drashtavyasa Srotavya mantavyo  
nidhidyasitavyahl

This *Rasa* or *Passion* is the blossoming of the heart in the search for ultimate Reality. This passion is more intense than earthly or physical passion. This transcends the sensuous love, that forms its immediate fuel and tends to pass over into the spiritual passion of an Infinite love. Freedom from the idolatry of its finite object, from the bondage of sensuous conditions, is a difficult process as bondage is not so much due to external circumstances as to the conditions inherent in its very nature. The saints did not fly from passion and accidents of life, which had separated them from God. Saint Tukaram says:

I am a mass of sin  
Thou art all purity  
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South Indian mystics, likewise, have expressed their longing for release from sin. "Since I am false, and false my heart, false my very love; However, I weep, still held by deeds, can I reach Thee above? O'honey, nectar, O'essential, sweetness, great as sweet; Grant Grace to me to find the path that leads into Thy feet."

All the mystic saints are agreed as to the way of deliverance and salvation. This is not to be attained by

sacrifices and austerities or any outward way of worship but only by the Grace of God, in answer to the loving faith of the soul. *Samarasa*, peace and joy are the fruits of selfless surrender to God, and this peace is the first stage in an ascending scale of feeling.

There are eleven kinds of *Rasa* and these are — *Guna*, *Rupa*, *Puja*, *Dasya*, *Smarana*, *Sakhya*, *Kanta*, *Vatsalya*, *Madhurya*, *Atmanivedana*, *Tanmaya* and *Virah*, of these *Rasas*, *Santa*, *Dasya*, *Sakhya*, *Vatsalya* and *Madhurya*, are more pronounced than others. *Madhurya* love is embodied in the passionate love of Radha and Krishna. Accordingly, to the Vaishnava mystics, this is the highest mode of *bhakti*, implying all the great elements of true God love, faith, absolute trust, service and abandonment of all notions of self. The language of the mystics, is purely allegorical and illustrative and there is no idealisation of carnal emotions. *Chaitanya* in a parable describes the love of Krishna thus: "In roving through the universe, lucky is the man who gets the seed of the creeper of faith, *Bhakti*, through the Grace of his *Guru* and Krishna. He sows the seed like a gardener, waters it with the hearing and the chanting of the holy name. As the creeper grows, it pierces through the Universe, passes beyond the *Viraja* Brahma world, to the *Para Vyama* and above, that to heavenly Brindawan where it creeps up the wishing tree of Krishna's feet, spreads, and bears fruit in the form of *prema* "\*.

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\*Chaitanya Natesan & Co P 37 38  
Metaphysics of Mysticism P 374  
Gita Chap XII

### Modes of Approach:

These modes of approach are favoured because of the difficulty of *Jnana Marga*, wherein God is conceived as *Nirguna* and *Nirakara*, remote and transcendental. Gita says:—

Kleshodhikatarasthesham avyaktasaktachetasam  
Avyaktah gatirdukkham Dehavadi Bharava Vapyate.

In the 14th verse of the Gita, Lord Krishna says that the location of both *Manas* and *Buddhi* in *Paramatma* is adequate for the realisation of the Divine.

‘Mayorpita Manobudhuyoh me bhaktah same Priyah’

Bhakti is as Narada says: “Satvasmin Paramapremarupa.” *Sagunopasana* of *Paramatma* is the infallible symbol of *bhaktimarga*. The yearning of the *bhakta* is not the attainment of the Absolute but unending continuous love of God. He needs God and opportunity for devotion, birth after birth and not the communion with *Paramatma*. Thus, *Bhaktimarga* is unique, in transcending *Karma Marga*, *Jnanamarga* and *Yogamarga*, and the easiest mode of approach to Reality. It makes the *Bhakta* a member of the order of divinity: “*Tasmin Sajjane Bhedabhavat.*”

This *Bhakti* may cease to be the sensual prurience of rebellious adolescence and become the true soul's ardour of a Radha to Krishna; then earthly beauty may be seen to be but a tiny, evanescent spray of the Immortal ineffable sea of splendour; the life may be deemed as a travail of the spirit towards fuller and longer realisations, and death not as a grisly phantom, but as a merciful awakening into a more spacious existence.” The *Bhakta*

seeks the companionship of God all through, and the *Paramathma* is always a fellow traveller with him. He limps when the pilgrim limps, walks with the *Bhakta* when he walks, and induces him to move on till the very end. It is this association that binds the two with the tie of blood as in the case of the mother and the child, and the little one is never weaned away from the mother, whose existence and movements are intuitively sensed by the child.

*Samsara* or family existence is full of sorrow and the individual is committing daily, either through the flesh or mind or the senses, sins of the spirit or of the flesh from which there is no escape except through the *bhaktimarga*. The daily contemplation of God has cathartic effect, in that it purges the individual by a slow and a continuous process, of his sins and prepares his mind along the path of *Bhakti* to a reception of divine inspiration. The mind of the *Bhakta* is filled with divinity of God. He is never separated from Him. All thoughts, all passions, all delights and whatever stirs this mortal frame, all are but ministers of love, feeding his sacred flame. This love is the fruit of his *Sadhana* or strenuousness.

It is the love of the moth for the star, of the night for the morrow. The devotion to something afar from the sphere of our sorrow. "*Papoham Papakarmanam Papatma Papa Sambhavam*" It is a life conceived in love, nourished and sustained in love, and ending in love, and therefore, in sorrow, surrounding the individual as an atmosphere and the escape is only through the path of *Bhakti*.

Trahmam Kripaya Krishna Saranagata Vatsala  
 Anyatha Saranam Nasti Tvameva Saranam Mama  
 Tasmath Karunya Bhavena Raksha Raksha Janardhana

God is present in the past, in the present and in the future, and it is the daily vision of Him, absorption of His holiness, and saturation of this sweetness that prepares the mind of the individual for the great Journey. Lord Krishna says at the end of Yogadhyaya in the Gita that His message of love is *Dharmamrita*.

It is the message of love not merely of Vatsalya expressive of the love between parent and child but of sweetness which implies the passionate love existing between man and woman, that is felt to be the fullest and truest symbol of the soul's devotion. The emotion aroused is so intense and passionate an ardour, that the only human parallel felt to be adequate to adumbrate it, is the passion of devotion existing between the sexes, 'My Beloved is mine and I am His' I will draw near to Thee in silence and will uncover Thy feet that it may please Thee, to unite me to Thyself. Make myself Thy bride, I will rejoice in nothing till I am in Thy arms.'

### Guna Mahatmya: Praise of God

Purandara sees in this *Adhyatma-Vidya Vidyanam* a sense of harmony and unity translated into the language of the spiritual-marriage. The saint's devotion to God is such that he experiences all the eleven kinds of *Bhaktirasa*. *Gunamahatmyasakti*, *Rupasakti*, *Pujasakti*, *Smaranasakti*, *Vatsalyasakti*, *Kantasakti*, *Atmanvedanasakti*, *Tanmayasakti*, *Paramavirahasakti*. Purandara always yearns to sing the praises of the Lord, illustrative of his *Guna-mahatmyasakti*.

Narayana Nimma Namada Smaraneya Saramrita Yenna  
Naligege barali.

In one of his *Kirtanas* he says:



Kashtadalirali Utkrithatadalirali Yestadare  
 Matigettirali, Krishna Krishna Yendu Sishyaru  
 Heluva Ashtakshara Mahamantrada namada

Purandara contemplates Krishna as an *Istadevata* and clothes Him with celestial light, when he sings "Krishna *Murthi Kanna munde nuntide*"; another *Kirtana* he sings, "*Kandena Kanasinali Govindana*" or "*Dbanyanade Nanee Jagadalonanne Gatianana Kannindale Kandii*" Continuous and incessant worship of the Lord as illustrative of *Piyasakti* is in the lines

Yendendu ninna Padave Gati Yenage  
 Govinda barayya Yenna Hridayamandirake

*Smaranasakti* is expressed in:—

Smarane onde Salade Govindana nama onde Salade  
 Ninyako Ninna hangyako ninna  
 Namada balavondiddare sako

The remembrance of Govinda's name, is it not adequate? What more is required! Purandara sometimes flings an exasperated rebuke at the Lord baffled as he is, by failures in an attempt to catch a glimpse of the Lord Forlorn and desperate, unable to penetrate in the jungle of darkness and go any further in Infinitude, he administers a stern rebuke at his Beloved—"Who that trusted You has prospered, My Lord, listen, if a man accepts You, he cannot get even a handful of alms"

This mood is evanescent and gets completely transformed into an attitude of complete and unreserved surrender to Hari *Paramatma* is his lord, and he is the servant at His feet Purandara says "Oh, the thousand-named Venkataramana make me Thy servant, I will become Thy servant on this earth, and I am conscious that I have not even an iota of *Bhakti*" Service implies

self giving, there is service which is just self satisfaction, but true service implies, giving the surrender of time or taste, the subjection of self to others, the gift which is neither noticed nor returned. No one is useless, in this world who lightens the burden of it to any one else.

### God as a friend

Sometimes Purandara develops intimacy with his Lord as a friend and a comrade. "Walk towards me so that we can resolve our difficulties, Oh Lotus born one." On another occasion he says

Yenagu Ane, Ranga, Ninagu Ane  
Yenagu Ninagu Yibbarigu Bhaktara Ane

Both of us are bound together indissolubly, in the name of the *Bhaktas* there shall be no severance. The importance of *Sakyasakti* is realised by the saint, for, he knows for good or evil a man's moral and spiritual outlook is altered by the ineffable influence of his comrade. It is inevitable, and in all true comradeship it makes for truth and generosity and freedom.

Friendship is an incalculable enlargement of human responsibility, because, it constitutes us, in a measure, as guardians of each other's soul, for there is a fuller and deeper self realisation on either side. It is deliverance from bondage, a refuge from pride. The great gifts of the Lord, as a comrade, makes the *Bhakta* recognise his own deep unworthiness and bow his head in unspeakable gratitude. It is fellowship in the deepest things of the soul, community in the highest thoughts, and sympathy with the best endeavours. The friendship of the Lord is not checked or foiled by the discovery of faults or blemishes in the *Bhakta*, whom he has taken into His life,

for the essence of friendship is entirety, a total magnanimity, and trust Human nature abhors isolation and ever leans upon something, as a stay, and support and it is this which makes the *Bhakta* lean on God

Euripedes once said that 'in distress, a friend comes like calm to the tossed mariner' Likewise, the saint realised that the Divine Lover is one to whom he can speak almost in a language of his own, with the confidence that all his broken hints are recognised with a thrill of kinship, half uttered thoughts discerned and shared, one with whom he need not cramp his meaning, into the dead form of an explicit accuracy, and with whom he can walk in undoubting sympathy over vast tracts never before touched or visualised

Sometimes, Purandara imagines that he is the mother of God, himself, the son of God and so on, expressive of the love between parent and child "I embrace you dear Rangiah, and caress You to hear Thy smattering of the soul on the lips of infancy In another song, he asks the *Jnanis* whether they had seen her baby which she had missed "The thousand named effulgent, transcendental, resplendent baby with the *Tejas* of thousand million Suns, the baby—the *Sukhamaya Jnana*"

### Unreserved Surrender to God

Some of the songs of Purandara illustrate *Atma nivedanasakti* of unreserved surrender of everything to the Lord "I am not poor I am not an Orphan So long You are with me I fall at Your feet and so long I am at Your feet, why should I be afraid of anybody" Sometimes there is the intense appreciation of God realisation as when he says

Badukidenu Badukidenu Bhava hingitu  
Padumanabhana Padadolome Yenna Gaytu!!

I live, I have realised the Divine and emancipation from  
*Bhava*, ignorance and illusion

Yaru Olidarenu namaginyaru munidarenu  
Kshira Sagara Shayi Yadavana Seridanta Haradasarige!

The realisation of the Spirit may come by *Karma*, or by *Jnana* the power of the analytical will of the philosopher, or by faith or by love *Bhakti* or by Grace *Kripa*. All senses and experiences are centered in the fundamental fact of meditation on God *Paravidya*, and all ecstasies and mystic experiences are simply expressions of this one supreme universal Love. God is love, from love all is born, God makes others to love

Mystic experience is all pervasive transfusion *Svarupa Vyapti*. It is conscious fullness *Vigraha Vyapti*, that is the finality of the mystic Haridasa who is for purity of heart, inward stillness and peace of conscience, highness of thought, loneliness of soul, feeling of Grace and of love. God is love and He gives Himself to his devotee. The Universe is *Rasa Lila*, signifying quintessence of all emotions, that is love, which is always Beautiful, expressive of *Shanti* or peace in God. The way to this Bliss in the words of the Gita "*Asantasya Kutassukham!*" The way to this Bliss is through peace. The content of peace is love of God which is manifested in Truth, Goodness and Beauty, and the Purest human satisfaction and ultimate value being identified with the restful contemplation of Beauty.

The attainment of Bliss through peace and through practice of *Vairagya* and *Abhyasa* is commended in all the sacred scriptures, and the Gita. Wealth, pleasures and

liberation—'Artha Kama Moksha' acquire value and infinite significance only by *Dharma*, for the Summum Bonum of *Dharma* or right means, is knowledge of the Divine. The Lord of the Gita says "I am the rightful desire of all sentient creation. Accordingly, the four *Purushartas* and *Varnasrama Dharma* are only the steps in the ladder leading to the apex of the soul or perfect unity or *moksha* which the western mystics describe as Synteresis. The mystic knows that "*Atanyatikam Sukeham*" Bliss is immanent in the very nature of being and that Infinitude '*Ananta*' is '*nava nava Bhavati*' and nearer the same any moment, for the eternal rhythmic march of cosmic evolution is ever new and renewing, and its dynamics ever producing novel situations everywhere.

It is perpetual creation and what the Haridasa witnesses on his pilgrimage to Beatitude is only an infinitesimal aspect of divinity in continuous manifestations. The ultimate value to him, accordingly, is a gathering and never ending series of values, eternal and never extinguished. The Absolute is the synthesis of all values '*Vibhuti Vistara*' Becoming and Infinite. It is in the analysis, synthesis and sublimation and conservation of all values, old values are born, as new values, and the dispositions which manifest themselves in personality are merely the results of former life habits transferred to the subject in a ever ending cycle of births and rebirths. All values acquired in this transmigration of souls converge to the ideal of Beauty and Bliss. The *dasa* anticipates values and attains blissfulness for the movement, to be transformed into new values. *Bhagavat Kamkarya Rupa* is the ideal of the *Sankalpa* of the mystic and it is ever realised in divine consciousness.

The Universe is Beauty and Lila to Haridasa *Lokavat tu Lila Kaivalyam*, and no experience, *anubhuti* that he acquires in time, is ever lost, for, *Lila* circumscribes all things, transcends all other experiences, and abolishes all time and space. The instant is stretched to Eternity or eternity is contracted into the instant. It is this Universal experience transcending Time, Space and Causality that the mystic aspires and strives often, in order to grasp infinite Beauty.

### Unending love and yearning after the Beloved

It is *Parama Virahasakti*, something similar to the striving madness of a mother in desperate search of her lost baby. She has no hunger and thirst, no desires for satisfaction in this frantic effort to discover the baby as she is totally absorbed in the contemplation and recovery of the baby. This is *Vyakula Bhava*, wherein the Dasa is prepared to mortify the flesh and suffer unending and ceaseless torture for the sake of his Lord. The agony of separation and desire for union is similar to the shrill, moan and full throated cry of the young deer, separated from the herd in the density of the jungle. Purandara says "Why do you look at me, that look of indifference. Are You not the ocean of mercy? Are You not aware of my distress and have You no mercy on this pitiful dasa, *Pannangasayana*."

The Dasa is tormented in mind and there is indescribable pain of separation and the extremity of grief. Utterance is stifled and the Dasa is mute with intensity and depth of sorrow, which he experiences, but cannot communicate. "Oh! Hari I am weary in travelling through this Samsara. Have you no Kripa for this forlorn sinner? *Ananta Apa*

*radha Yennolage Viralsikee!!* "Sinner as I am, I cannot implore for mercy" In another song he says "If I am to suffer for my own Karma which works, like an inexorable law, then what is Your part in this Universal Scheme? Oh! Hari protect me "*Bhavadolage Balalidenu*"

There are many songs of Purandara which are illustrative of this Arta Bhava. The immensity of the Universe is ceaseless perpetual creation, with Suns blown like sparks and the void strewn with the wreckage of worn out worlds and planets appear like annihilating man to nothingness. Still, the Haridasa pilgrim of the Eternal strives boldly, dauntless and invisible from star to star on his endless pathway to perfection, for he is aware that what appears to be 'a vast totality of things is nothing else than that of one Soul' Hari Sarvottama and that he is a fragment of Eternity and his soul is the birth tie which unites him to the Lord. It is only those who rise above the material, perceive that the realisation of the Infinite is in the Infinite small, and the principle of intrinsic worth binds all together, with the result, all distinctions of age, birth, sex, creed and other categories get completely effaced. The ultimate value is always clear to the mind in the midst of interminable complex phenomena. Hari is a necessary concept and Immortality, is not something to come, but it is an ultimate experience shared by the conscience of the Haridasa who does not seek it in some world beyond but in his own world, fully comprehended and taken in its complete relation to the soul.

The dasa with love, holiness and wisdom, feels a new sense of delight, in the very act of living, and blessed with a new vision of the beauty of things, a new faith in

the moral constitution of the Universe, and a new enthusiasm for the service of humanity. The saint sees the spirit universal, in each and every individual, sees all things, great and small, animate and inanimate, in the all embracing love of the Infinite Being. He sees into the life of things and as Wordsworth puts forth in the song

That serene and blessed mood  
 In which the affections gently lead us on  
 Until the breath of this corporal frame  
 And even the motion of our human blood  
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
 In body, and become a living soul,  
 While with an eye made quiet by the power  
 Of harmony and the deep power of joy  
 We see into the life of things

### Dasa's faith in moral Government through Love

The Dasa's faith in the moral government of the Universe, reveals to him the truth of the Immortality of the Soul and inspires him with reverence and awe, for the majesty of the Divine Law, seen in every action, word and thought of individuals. He experiences the loving touch of the Divine, in the whole drama of life. Nature too reveals its meaning, the soothing, moonlight, the starry firmament, the majestic and sublime range of mountains, the surging waves of the sea, the floating clouds, the terrible silence of the solitary forests, and the sweet melody of the birds—all convey a loving message from the Divine. The kingdom of Nature is transformed in the light of spiritual life into a realm of ends, for the welfare and perfection of souls, as when Purandara says "It is only the Sun and the Moon that know the depths of the Heavens, and not the birds flying low in the Valley,



it is the green parrot that knows the sweetness of the mango and not the crow that shrieks with unspeakable horror

The life of the Spirit confers a new dignity upon each individual in so far as each is an expression of the Infinite Dignity of labour, worship through work, the holiness of the commonest, and the lowliest of our duties, are the necessary outcome of the recognition of the spirit behind the individual. All the experiences of our daily life serve as one unbroken thread of communion with the Infinite. The seer in his devout meditation and rapturous contemplation realises that the whole of this visible Universe in its true nature and inner meaning, is nothing but a sacred temple of the Spirit and that there is *Puja, Arati* and *Upasana* worship going on everywhere at all moments of time.

A man is seen at his best, truest and highest when seen through the eye of Love. Purandara imagines that he is the forlorn bride in search of *Paramatma*, the Beloved.

I fall at Your feet, and beseech You not to make noise, all those who are asleep if awakened when You come, what impressions will they have of You Oh! Ranga

Saddu madalu bedavo ninna kalige  
biddu na bedikombe  
Niddegayuvarella Yeddare ninu  
bandiddu Kandare Yenembuvaro Ranga

Likewise, in another song full of *Madurabhava*, Purandara says

Idesamaya Ranga barelo  
Ide Samaya Krishna barelo  
Baro Nee Yenna Hridayamandirake  
Tadamaduvuduyake

Marajanaka Hari Ninnaggulike  
Smarisuve Kshana Kshanake

“This is the time, Ranga come Oh! come! This is the time come Oh! Come! Why do you hesitate, come straight to the Mandir of my heart, second to second I nurse You in my affection Oh! Marajanaka Hari”

A man bathed in the love of God has the true vision of the beauty and loveliness of the Universal and the holiness and perfection of humanity. Love is subjective, but the very nature of truth and justice is the abdication of subjective feelings and passion and seeing things in their objective reality and universal aspect. Reason is suggestive, in a sense in that it detracts from the totality of a thing by analysing it into its constituent elements, and seeing it through the prism of thought, excluding feeling and will, the aesthetic and teleological aspects of a thing. To this extent, Reason corresponds to the lower stage of love. But there is a higher view of Reason which presents to us, a systematic unity of experience in a coherent and consistent whole, and which is thus identical with Reality as such.

So with Love in its higher aspect, it is in one sense the *neplus ultra* of Viraha for the Beloved. Narada says

Naradastu tadarpitakhilacharita  
Tadvishmatane Parama Vyakulateti

The Lord says

‘Naham Vasami Vaikunte Yoganam  
Hridaye ravatu, Mad Bhaktya Yatra  
Gayantu Tatra Tishtami Narada

Love in that divine form is Rational and Universal. It is no mere attachment to a particular object, but a specific attitude towards the Universe as a whole. Love sees

things from the point of view of the whole, overcomes pride and passions, prejudices and partialities, endures all trials and temptations, sorrow and griefs and dangers and difficulties without fear, and can discover beauty in ugliness, and elements of goodness in things apparently evil. The fulness of life and the fulness of love are one and the same thing, the fulfilment and perfection of humanity. Yagnavalkya says "It is not for the sake of the son, we love the son, but it is for the sake of the Supreme Spirit, the *Atman* that we love the son."

The deepest of all spiritual Realities is the love of God, spiritual life attains its highest development and reaches its supreme perfection in the life of love, for love expands, and grows till it embraces the whole of humanity. Love is the consummation of religion and the centre and crown of life.

### Love through Service

Purandara was learned in the Vedas, in the Upanishads and the Puranas, he was an Aparokshagnani and drew from divine inspiration, lines of ineffable poetry and song. His similes and metaphors were from the ten *Avataras* of Vishnu and from sacred books. He was the founder of Karnataka music, of Gitas, *Suladis* and *Padas* with which he adorned the Kannada language. He realised more than any body that music was the ineffable *sadhana* of *Moksha* and thus founded the Dasakuta and popularised great truths through the medium of music.

He achieved for Karnataka, what the Alvars had done to Tamilnad, by giving the Great essence of Vedic thought for simple comprehension and daily practice. His *Padas* are described as Purandaropanishat by Vyasaraja

and these are the Vedas in Kannada for the common People

He tried to reform society of its maladies by preaching toleration, moderation, spirit of compromise and love of God and His manifestations in human form. Vijayanagar was at the height of prosperity and splendour when people intoxicated with wealth and power, were turning out to be listless to the claims of *Dharma* and conscience which are incorruptible legislators of the human soul.

Purandara scented in the midst of the stresses and storms of the world, the decay of virtue and the excellences and the beauty of living, a life of righteousness and *Dharma*. He soon saw that all measures of reformation are effective in fact in exact proportion to their timeliness, partial decay may be cut away and cleansed, incipient error corrected, but there was a point at which corruption of the body and soul could no more be stayed. It was suicide to remain passive until the precise period to leave everything to perish, and then, make frantic expressions to raise the dead and reform the dust. No losses or misfortunes can hurt 'the hidden man of the heart' our real self, still less can they impair the welfare of the universal life in which our little lives are included. The real or spiritual world is a kingdom of values, nothing that has real existence can ever perish. No earth born cloud can long prevent the beams which stream from the eternal front of light from illuminating the dark places of this lower world, we can achieve without running away, for the spiritual world is all about and within us when we have reached this stage, all earthly troubles fade into insignificance.

Purandara was convinced that no noble life can possibly be extinguished by death. The cause of justice and righteousness cannot suffer final defeat. Purandara by initiative in calling the people back to *Dharma* and sense of duty was timely, and he vindicated for all time to come the Supreme principle that in the syllogistics of the human spirit life and love are convertible terms and that love of one's culture and religion and concomitant sacrifice was synonymous with love of God. The complete liberation of one's self in the fire of God's heart is *Prapatti* as Sri Vaishnavites call it, an unreserved surrender, achieved by a mingling of ecstasy and pain, of profound humanity and rapturous joy, boundaries of selfhood done away, and by the attainment of complete selflessness.

Purandara pleaded that by unrequited love that is not wasted on shadows, but focussed on God, the individual would solve his personal as well as social problems. *Bhakti* that is love of God through love of all sentient creation is characterised by *shanti* or *Samarasa*, which is its permanent mood, repudiating emptiness or vanity of all things only to acquire *Anubhava* with a view to rise above pain and pleasure and hatred and affection. Purandara says that love is woven like warp and woof and shows rhythmic principles of all life and action, and there is a synthesis of action and contemplation in the process of divine love wherein the incomprehensible light unfolds and penetrates the soul as the air is penetrated by the light of the sun.

Purandara showed in his own life, that *Bhaktas* do not fly from passions, but they transform them and raise them to a higher level where life is freed from the limitations of sense. The deepest and most intense of earthly

passions of *Bhakti* for God then attains unlimited satisfaction and the marriage of soul and God is "a harmony without discord, freedom without bond, reality without illusion, satisfaction without striving, love without longing, and life without death."

The contribution of Purandara and of Haridasas to the culture of India is great and in broadening, deepening and spiritualising India's culture, the Movement has been one of the genuine historic causes of great potency, transforming the world and leaving a very precious legacy for posterity. The healing of the world lies in its saints. Each separate star seems nothing, but a myriad of scattered stars break up the night and make the world look beautiful. Haridasas like the stellar heavens have given beauty and light to human existence.

## CHAPTER X

### THE ART OF PURANDARA

There was a great literature in Kannada by the time Purandara appeared on the scene. Since the sixth century, the language and literature had grown under the patronage of Karnataka kings and emperors, and had made one of the greatest contributions to Indian art and culture. Even epigraphical and lithic records are an eloquent testimony to the beauty and elegance of Kannada style and reveal the adaptations of *Vibhakti*, *Pratyayas* and *Hrasvas* in consonance with the prevailing practices among the Kannada speaking people. *Hale* Kannada compositions were already masterpieces of Kannada literature and style, by the time a new Kannada style emerged with the growing intelligence and developing culture and civilisation of the people. With the growth of the Empire of Vijayanagara and wide contacts among diversified peoples of peninsular India, old modes of expression were yielding place to new morphological changes in the dialects of the Empire. There was considerable freedom in the use of *Sandhi*, *Vibhakti*, *Pratyayas* and *Arisamasa Padas* in conformity with the popular tongue. The Haridasas employed various modes of speech popular among the people and among the different classes in the Social hierarchy and thus have enriched Kannada literature. The greatness of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards, for great literature 'rises from the heart of the seer and from the distant home of truth,

and the greatest poetry gives expression to the realisation of the Divine in the world and in Man."

Macaulay says: "We think that as civilisation advances, poetry almost necessarily declines. Perhaps, no person can be a poet or even enjoy poetry without a certain unsoundness of mind." By poetry, we mean the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words, what the painter does by means of colours. Truth indeed is essential to poetry but "it is the truth of madness; the reasonings are just, but the premises are false. Hence of all people, children are the most imaginative." They abandon themselves without reserve to every illusion. Every image which is strongly presented to their mental eye produces on them the effect of Reality. "In a rude state of society men are children with a great variety of ideas. It is therefore, in such a state of society that we may expect to find the poetical temperament in its highest perfection. In an enlightened age there will be much intelligence, much philosophy, abundance of verses and even good ones, but little poetry." Art does not analyse or abstract or classify or generalise, it does not lay bare the mechanism of thought, or evolve by the process of rigid dialectic, the secret order and system of nature and history. The teachings of rock and streams, the moralities addressed to us by the stars and the flowers, wood and mountain solitudes do not teach the common man in the form of argumentative disquisitions, but of feelings and of emanations which win their way insensibly into the soul.

The simplest songs of Purandara have in them the ring of genuine inspiration which constitutes a real



addition to world's spiritual wealth. They possess some scintillation of the higher incommunicable element which is a source of perennial delight. His songs have the idealising faculty, a capacity to infuse vitality and consciousness into the lifeless objects and scenes of social life that surround him and to create for society, a region of imagination that charms the world. He has a kindred sympathetic insight into the noble elements of society, the essential greatness, the boundless potentialities of man's nature, the obstacles which resist, and the strength of will which makes him master of his surroundings, struggle of duty with necessity, the collusions and conflicts, the play and strife of the great normal passions, unsounded depths of joy and sorrow, love, charity, truth and tenderness, that are all woven into human life—are mirrored in Purandara's songs. There is not a single facet of Society's life whether it be the life of a pedant, a scholar, a woman, a child, a seer, an anchorite, an opium eater, a juggler, that has escaped his attention.

Purandara picks up or selects a limited number of such incidents and characters and gives relief to some, throwing others into the shade, and arranges them all, in such a way as to convey an idea of the unity, the harmony and moral significance of the whole. What is most significant of the soul is disengaged from what is purely arbitrary, what belongs to the inner essence of man is so grasped and rendered into song, that all that meets the eye-look, attitudes, action and expression is instinct with meaning.

Purandara is not merely concerned with realism, though his songs are replete with vivid delineations of an infinite variety of social experiences. He gives a facsimile

of a portion of such experiences, and tries to make his work, a representation of what he conceives to be its significance as a whole, or of the hidden moral meaning of some phase of it. His mind is not merely observant but creative or poetic, it has a capacity of simply not reflecting what lies on the surface, but of seeing under it, and getting at the heart of Life's mystery. He had the wonderful capacity of taking up the scattered materials of experience and fusing them in the fire of imagination into a new organic whole.

It needs the insight of a master mind to see and the touch to disclose, "the wonders, and the greatness, that are latent in the homeliest details, its passion, its power, its pathos and tenderness and often more than tragic interest with which common life is replete. He catches up and arrests the evanescent fugitive play of light and shade on the surface of Society, its baseness and meanness, and so doing, he perceives the grandeur that is hid under its apparent meanness, the good that lies at the basis of its seeming evil"\*

The chief element in the perfection of a work of art lies in that which is deeper than expression, the creative faculty, the ineffable gift of genius. It lies in that intuitive insight into the life of nature and man, that strange susceptibility to what is noble, tender and beautiful. This element is independent of tradition and education. It comes as an inspiration on elected souls fresh and direct from the divine.

The direct function of art is not to teach, but it does teach. Purandara stood alone at the summits of

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\* M. V. Krishna Rao. Survey of Mystic Tradition in Karnataka

literary creation His Age was one of the great Ages full of colour and animation redolent of a literary perfume inexperienced for some centuries by the people of the country There was a great literary effort and many were known for their talent and cleverness to write well and to write with a seeming flow of ideas and facility of language Sripadaraya, Vyasaraja, Kanaka Dasa and many others were making themselves intelligible to the common people by employing Kannada as the medium of expression and resorting to literary art of a kind There were literary craftsmen too, who had all the stage properties of literary art, like the machinery of versification, pleasing arrangement of melodious syllables, vast repertory of poetical effects, choice words, happy epithets graceful images, metaphors and similes drawn from every realm of nature and of society

Purandara too was a master of these aspects of writing God reflects Himself in the mirror of his mind, but the image may be, in some cases opaque or dim, sometimes distorted or fractured, and reflection takes its character from the medium by which it is produced Purandara's mirror was of the purest ray serene, reflecting through word, meaning and metaphors and similes, the diversified phenomena of social life, and awakening certain intuitions and emotions in society which pertained to the intellectual, the moral and the aesthetic side of man's nature

Several of his Suladis are replete with spiritual significance, and the aesthetic and religious elements are inextricably interwoven, and man's deepest spiritual susceptibilities find vent in Purandara's worship of the divine and the beautiful The poetical and the mythological,

the aesthetic and the sacred, are woven together We find *Anuprasa* in a line like·

Ranga baro Panduranga baro Sri  
Ranga baro Narasinga baro

a *Yamaka* in

Devabanda namma Swami Bandano  
Naragoludava banda Narayana banda

a beautiful line like

Adidano Ranga adbhutadindali Kalingana  
Phanyalli

is illustrative of *Stabhavokti* Purandara is unique in his similes, *rupaka*, illustrations, *Virodhabbasa*, *Arthantar anyasa*, *Vakrokti* and *Nindastutti*,

Geruhannina Beejadante horagiddu  
Sala Udaraposhanege tale  
hulukunayeyante

The illustration for *Rupaka* in the lines *Narayananembo Namava Nirmayavemba Guntilibaraviraya*

Arasa muttalu dasi Rambheyahalu Deva  
Surjanara sangavillade saphala  
Vairagyya Bhagyya Sambhavisadante

is an example for *Dristanta*

An illustration for *Virodhabbasa* is in "Neenyako Ninna Hangyako" A beautiful *Keertana* illustrates *nindastuti*

Kottuhogenna Salava Kanna  
Bittaranjuvanalla Hogu Krishna

A number of illustrations for *Arthalankara* may be given Purandara compares the name of God to the ever green parrot, varieties of dishes and delicacies, fruits and flowers, spiritual and material medicines, sugarcandy, sweet meats and Gudugudi The body is compared to the town and the agonies of the soul to the life of the daughter in law

suffering afflictions of the body and the spirit in the house of her parents in law

One of the *Alankaras* which Purandara employs and which made his *keertanas* famous is *Vyajasthuti*, Rebuke or Satire in order to hold up the object for the admiration of the world or it may be profound eulogy concealing rebuke and censure 'Oh Ganga what a cleverness is yours, you transport all sinners to Heaven There are graphic and beautiful delineations of the scenes of the ten *Avataras* of Narayana, of Krishna Lila, of the devotion and merit of the *Bhaktas* and manifestations of Parasiva "Why ornamentation to Vishnu who is dark in colour? Why fragrance for one who is always in water like fish illustrative of Fish Incarnation, why rosewater to the tortoise? Why a mirror to the boar faced Vishnu, why a necklace of pearls to the lion faced Narayana The description of scented fragrance, rose water, mirror, necklace, anklets, beautiful embroidered shawls and others, is given by Purandara in order to establish that all these external ornamentation is not necessary for the Divine

A fascinating illustration of *Vyajasthuti Alankara* is to be found in the passage

Kottu Hogenna Salava! Kanna  
bittaranjuvanalla! Hogu Kalla Krishna!!  
Kalatugi Bhumidadeyolivare  
Melenegedu bayibittare!!

Yelubarshada baddi mula sahitavagi  
Talavunella Yello Tiruka Mundali!!!  
Koralu Goyeka Purva Salava Kodade  
Tirugodu vana vana uchitave

Yeradelu Varshakke Yennage Nee Sikkī  
 Oralige Kattade biduvane Kalla  
 Battale nintaru biduvane bennahattu  
 Ninage Sada tiruguve Hattira  
 Kudare Sahitavagi hudi tandu  
 Chittake Kattuve Purandara Vittala

In another *Keertana*, Purandara indicates the imperfection of Hari to Bhavani, and imperfections of Hara to Rukmini and makes the two divine mothers ridicule each other's husband

Torale ranne Kappu mayava Yetara chaluvane?  
 Kariya Jadeja Jogiginta uttamanene?

What type of beauty is this black one? For this Rukmini replies he is better than the anchorite with tails of black hair. The dialogue is the most amusing but profound and ends with Purandara Vittala as Sarvothama "Purandara Vittala Sarvothama Kele Bhavani"

In another equally profound passage, Purandara brings in Rukmini and ridicules her for marrying Gopala Krishna

Yenumaruladeyamma Yale Rukmini  
 Hina Kula Golla Sri Gopalkrishnage

Obbarali hutti obbarali beleda  
 Obbarige maganalla, Jagadolagella  
 Abbarada Daiva Sri Purandara Vittalana  
 Ubbubbi maduveyade utsahadinda

Purandara not only gives a vivid description of all the ten *Avatars* of Vishnu and thus reveals His great attributes, but also refers to Siva and ridicules Parvataraja for having given his daughter Parvati to Him

"Yantha Chaluvage magalanukottanu  
 More eidu mura Kanna"

To Purandara, literature is Revelation Literature

amuses too and the technique of expression interests and rouses the strongest faculties and gives varieties of human nature. Many normally get a delight in reading the great Epics because it takes them somewhere, to discover something, to find a light which will illumine for them, either some question of the moment or the great riddles of existence, perhaps, sometimes they go to these original fountains, to grasp the ideal of a Purity that has been won by struggle and conquest and a Peace that has triumphed over temptation and evil. The study of the Epics and of the stories of the ten manifestations of the divine Vishnu will open up hidden springs of joy to the heart of man, the radiance of a loftier hope, and the light of a deeper divine blessedness.

Purandara was one of the greatest poets who brought the great mysteries of thought enshrined in the Vedas and the Upanishads and the Puranas particularly the *Dasavataras* of Vishnu, within the easy comprehension and range of the common man. Purandara had in him the element of revelation which he never crystallised into formulae. There is something which radiates from his songs, *Keertanas* and *Suladis*, an inspiration which sweeps gradual gospels unobtrusively into the minds of man, and this element is more active than moral precepts he has given expression to occasionally. There is a certain intense power of vision and feeling which runs through all *Padas* and *Keertanas* which express themselves in the form of religious dogma in some places, the value of such a study lies in its power of suddenly directing the attention of the common man and the whole focus of his will and imagination towards a particular part of life. The stories of *Matsya*, *Kurma*, *Varaha* and *Narasimha* and other

*Avatharas* are most fascinating to read and particularly when revealed through the songs and Suladis of Purandara; not a single important episode or a character or an event is left out by Purandara when giving the very essence of *Vedic Dharma* and of the epics and of the *Puranas* to the people.

This is great Art by which the thought and culture of India and the spirit of the Age, are revealed. His art is the repository of its richest intuitions, its deepest reflections and its purest aspirations.

Purandara in many of his *Keertanas* compresses an ideal of the moral life of the nation or the spirit of the Age which no literary record of facts could convey. In his simple luminous and easily intelligible verses, he makes the individual understand things, make him see a hundred details, every one of them significant, that he would never have noticed by himself; with the result the individual is not only filled with knowledge, but made alive with interest and a sense of movement. He feels that his feet have been set on a road into the future and sees some things with an intensity that has revealed what was before unsuspected and made an illumination in one part of life. Purandara's *Keertanas* come as a revelation to human beings, not as statements of fact, but as cries of distress, calls of encouragement, signals flashing in the darkness, for those to whom many parts of life are imperfectly charted.

Many profound problems of philosophy, involving diversities of outlook and of experiences are given expression to, sometimes, in a phrase or a line or in a whole Suladi or *Ugabboga*. He draws words and phrases suitable



for the theme or the occasion from his inexhaustible reservoir of vocabulary and weaves a *Suladi* or a *Keertana* which is a pulse of delight to the individual who contemplates it or sings it.

Sishuvada Prahladana badhe  
 bidisida mantra  
 Naramriga rupadi Harinindakana  
 Samharisida mahimeva

In the story of '*Bhasmasura Vadha*' Purandara says: '*We ribasta nettidare Hara odibandane.... Yelaya belagayte*' Vivid and elaborate descriptions of the stories of *Pralaya* or creation during the churning of the ocean, Parvati's Plight, of the story of Rama and Vibhisana, of Yashoda, of Akrura, and Ajamila, Prahlada, Dhruva, of Gajendra Moksha, and of Draupadi, drawn from the Epics and the *Puranas* are given to enliven interest not in the ephemeral, but in the permanent elements hidden beneath all things, as the essence of all Universal Creation. Many incidents from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, like Draupadi's *Manasamrakshana*, Sita's *Vanavasa*, Hanumantha's message to her, and his *Lila Vinoda* in Lanka, are taken for inculcating the great moral truths and ethical principles of Universal Validity.

Purandara had a profound knowledge of the Vedas and the Upanishads and the Epics Mahabharata and the Ramayana and also of the Puranas. His words applied not only to the moment for which he spoke them, but to the permanent or constantly recurrent needs of humanity. Purandara is among those very few in the world who have like the Plato and Aristotle\* felt most profoundly and expressed most poignantly those facts about life which are always important and always easily overlooked, those

visions and aspirations in which the human race is always afresh finding its calm in the midst of storm, its deliverance from the body of this death.

## CHAPTER XI

### PURANDARA'S CONTRIBUTION TO MUSIC

The science of music was systematised in India, many centuries, before it could be called a science in Europe. Pythagoras derived his knowledge of music from India. Wagner seems to have been familiar with Indian music through Latin translations and is indebted to Indian music for his principle idea or 'leading motive'. Leopold Stokowski, the famous conductor of Philadelphia Orchestra expressed the great indebtedness of European music to the subtle intricacies of Indian rhythm. An eminent French author and critic has said that the music of India is without doubt one of the greatest proofs of the superiority of her civilization. The Indian system of music has been admittedly formed on better principles than those of the West and is far superior to the occidental music in as much as the Western system of notations does not admit of any sound less than half a tone, while the Indian music has quarter tones which render it too difficult to be insulated by Europeans.

It is on account of these quarter tones and certain other characteristic features, that Indian music is more perfect than its Western counterpart. The system of Karnataka music has the well known scheme of seventy-two *mela Karta ragas* or scales, and these offer an ever expanding *lista* of possibilities for enriching music of other countries. A Western musician well known for mastery

of Indian and Western systems of music says with reference to the seventy two *Melakarthis* or scales of Karnataka music. "What do we find in the West? Only three out of these seventy two are used, and the fact remains that all Western music is formed from *Dhira Sankarabharana*, *Kirvani* and *Gowri Manohari Ragas* according to South Indian Terminology....Nothing of the beauty of *Mayamalava Goula*, and the strength of *Todi* are known to the Western world....If Indian gift of three *Ragas* only, has already enriched the West artistically, what joy will they not bring to the world when she freely and lavishly pours forth her full musical wealth?"

It is not only in its science of *Ragas* that the East can teach the West, whose music has built itself up on three only out of the seventy two *Melakarthis*, what it calls the major scale, the harmonic minor and the melodic minor scales. The teeming millions of Indian people are trained by tradition in at least sixteen different root-scale combinations, and their trained musicians, have a working knowledge of over forty and a theoretical knowledge of seventy two. It is the pride of Karnataka Musicians that Karnataka music can enrich and metamorphose the entire system of Western music enhancing the artistic pleasure and self expression of the concerned people which is no mean contribution to the world's aesthetic wealth

Music as the medium of a language, all its own, converges the feelings and sentiments of a man in a remarkably effective manner. Music resembles architecture but in the case of architecture all dimensions such as height, width, and thickness are linked together by numerical relations.

The history of Hindu music is buried in deep antiquity. The ancient Hindu, cultivated music, to a greater extent, than other nations, and all the famous works on music as Bharata, Kolala, Nandi, Bharata, were composed in ancient times only, and music was cultivated as a necessary accomplishment of religion. The origin of music at first, seems to have been to convey the idea of our passions to others. In course of time, when language had attained a certain degree of intelligibility, its use began to be restricted to the worship of the Supreme Being. It was afterwards extended to the commemoration of great events, the celebration of praises of chieftains and heroes, and lastly to the alleviation of the cares of society. The cultivation of the aesthetic arts was a special feature of the Indian, and, like diversity luxuriant in unity, variety developing into a wild harmony became the essence of Indian Art. This was a variety controlled by regularity, whether consistent in sequence of time or in proportion. Musical rhythmic regulate the sequence, a succession of equal divisions of time upon which musical times in their variety and subtlety play and awaken the emotions which are inseparable from the activity of the intellect. Melodies are built on a succession of tones, and harmonies upon their simultaneity. Harmony arises from the agreeable concord of simultaneous notes, whereas melody is produced by a combination of successive notes into a realisation of harmony. Melody is retrospective harmony depending on the perception of a harmonious relation between successive notes artistically arranged. The mechanism of the human ear is such that the first note which one hears, lingers for some time in the ear, and blends readily with successive notes into a

harmonious relation, thus partaking of both succession of tones and harmony. The tenor of the Aryan soul was mirrored forth in this manner in their music.

Music was practised by the *Rishis*, *Gandharvas*, and other inspired mortals and was considered sacred, because it softened and refined the mind and elevated its devotee to the Creator of the Universe. It is positively established by documentary evidence, that long before Christ, India had developed a musical notation, the seven notes were scientifically arranged, each note being divided into three, the sharp, the flat and the proper note itself. The system of singing Vedic hymns, indicated of opening modulations soft, steady and slow, in its progress, it is followed by notes where the pitch is high modulation strong, varied and rapid in its flow, it is then followed by a combination of both, leading to an agreeable cadence.

In a treatise on Music, written several centuries before Christianity, a connection between physiological conditions of the human blood during the course of a day, and the change of temper which these conditions necessitate, is very vividly described. Indian music based on this analysis and in its variety of soft, strained notes, copious tunes trilling and adapting to particular times of the day, was particularly suited for relaxation and recreation. From time immemorial, Vedic chanting had indicated in the ascent and descent of the voice, the importance of *Udatta* and *Anudatta* and in *Svarita*, of the *Samatva* of the human voice, and in course of time, the combination and permutation of *Swaras* in the form of *Archika*, *Gatika*, *Samika*, *Svarantara*, *Andava* and *Sampurna* combinations became popular and enriched the growth and development of the system of Indian music.

There is indisputable evidence that the *Vachanakaras* of Karnataka and *Mahanubhavas* of Maharashtra, long before the Haridasa movement employed *raga*, *laya* and *tala* as the supreme spiritual *Sadhana* for the establishment of the identity between the individual soul and his Creator, and thereby, sought the emancipation of the soul from the fetters of *Bhava* and *Samsara*. A *Vachana* of Basaveswara reads like this “*Talamanasarasavananariye amritagana devagana nanariye Kudala Sangama Deva ninage Kedillavagi anolidantebaluve*” Music was popular and even the technique of music had attained a certain perfection. The Ramayana itself gives evidence of the existence of an independent Dravidian culture and the fine arts having attained a very highly developed form called *Dakshinathya Padhati*.

There must have been an unbroken continuity of this tradition, since the days of the Ramayana, for Sarangadeva in 1210 A D in his “*Sangita Ratnakara*” makes mention of many commentaries on Bharata Natyasastra, Kashinatha 1420 A D of the time of Immadi Deva Raya of Vijayanagar, was not only a faithful exponent of the musical and *Natya* theories of Bharata, but himself was the originator of a new method of classifying *Ragas* called *Melaprastana Padhati* in which the ancient system of classification known as *Grama Murchana Jati Raga* system is preserved, and the evolution of *swara*, *laya* and *varna* into *raga*, *tala* and *Prabhanda Kavya* or *Pada* was most successfully accomplished and described as *Swaraviveka*, *Layaviveka* and *Vargaviveka*. *Talas* were classified into *Margatala*, *Desi Tala* and *Prastara Tala* and poetic compositions were set to music so that harmonious combinations of sound *per se* might create ineffable melody stirring the deepest emotions and urges of the human spirit.

Melodies of *Madhyama grama* were assimilated to *Shadja Grama*. It was also during the time of Kallinatha in the early fifteenth century, that a new system of music called *Ugabhoga* style of music a corruption form of *Udgraha Bhoga* became very popular in Karnataka, due to the inspiration of Saranga Deva and Gopala Naik.

The most luminous of the composers and originators of Karnataka style of music was Pundarika Vittala. According to some writers, his period synchronises with that of Krishna Deva Raya and he is reputed to have founded *Mela Prastara Ragas* by the system of *Melas* and also the system of *Parivara Ragas*, and these are vividly described in *Sadraga Chandrodaya*, *Raga Manjari*, *Ragamala* and *Nartana Niryana* and other works. According to a writer "The honour of founding *Raga Mela Padhati* belongs to Pundarika. Aggregation of historical circumstances combined with linguistic dexterity have tended to the honour being wrongly appropriated by Rama Amatya and Venkata Mukhi who have both grievously missed the meaning of *Raga Lakshanas*\*. Karnataka *Melaprastara* was stated by Sarangadeva about 1250 A.D., it was made explicit by Kallinatha about 1420 A.D. and the number of *Melas* was raised from 90 to 162 by Pundarika Vittala at the close of that century."

Accordingly, by the time Purandara became prominent *Ugabhoga*, *Suladi*, *Gita* and *Prabandha* forms of musical compositions had already become popular, uplifting the soul of the common people to higher reaches of thought and sublimity of Vedic and Upanishadic speculation.

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\* Vijayanagara Sixth Centenary Commemoration Vol 1936  
Halguru Krishnacharya P 367



which so far had appeared unapproachable to those who were unfamiliar with Sanskrit and Philosophy

Sripadaraya Swami, Vyasaraja and his great disciples, Purandara, Kanaka and Vadiraja carried the great intricacies of philosophical thought, to the doors of the common people, through *Geeta* and *Prabbandha*, characterised by the dominance of *Laya* and *Tala*—*Laya, Tala Pradbana*—and through *Ugabhoga* characterised by the dominance of “*Swara Raga Pradbana*” Raghunatha Nayaka of Tanjore, records in *Sangita Sudha* in the second chapter of the *Ragadhyaya* that he developed the theme after consulting *Sangitasara* of holy Vidyaranya ‘*Sangitasaram Samavekshya Vidyaranya bhida Sri Charana Pranitam*’ There is also a reference to several statements by Sri Vidyaranya with regard to the method of *Alapana* of *Raga*, and to the technicalities of *Raga* and to terms like *Ayistam, Raga Vardhini, Vidhari, Sthayi* and *Nyasa* Vidyaranya is supposed to have recorded fifteen *Melas* and *Janyaragas* in relation to them, which all indicate that the tradition of classification of music into *Swara, Laya* and *Tala* and *Alapana* of *Ragas*, had already come to stay in Karnataka by the time of the foundation of Vijayanagar Empire

The Haridasas were the first saints in the world, to whom *Bhakti* through music was the only mode of attaining salvation. All these, inclusive of Sripadaraja, Vyasaraja, Purandara, Vadiraja and Kanaka and others accept the religion of Madhva and his dualistic philosophy. Purandara was a devout follower of Madhva philosophy. His system *Bhajana* as described in the Vedas is called *Taratamyapaddati*. “The *deva taratamy* or the order of merit in *Bhajana Paddhati* is Vinayaka, Parvati, Siva, Sesha, Garuda, Bharati wife of Vayu, Gayatri, Saraswati, Vayu,

Mukhya Prana, Brahma, Lakshmi and Sri Hari Sarvottama According to the *Paddhati*, the first invocation starts from *Mangalacharane*, *Devi Taratamya*, *Darshana Kutobala*, *Ahavana*, *Agamana*, *Karna Yachane*, *Stotra*, *Dvaita Bhakti Prameya*, *Sri Krishna Leela Stava*, Moral teaching, *Devaranamas*, *Suladis*, *Ugabhogas*, *Mangala* and finally *Harivana Seva*

The *devaranamas* echo the words Hari Sarvothama and Vayu Jeevothama and the contents of the *Devaranamas* are *Bhagavata Upakhyanas*, *Upanishadic Sara* and the intuitive presentiments of great sages and unearthly and divine incidents from Ramayana and the Mahabharata Sri Hari who is *Sarvothama* and an *Antaryamin* of all creation is not only the Lord of all Universes, but also the supreme director of all *Karmas* according to the *Gunas* of *Jeeva svarupa*

*Amala Bhakti* which is the outcome of continuous *Sadhana* practice of *Satkarma*, *Chitta Suddhi Gnana*, *Dhyana*, *Aparokshanubhuta*, lands the Haridasa in Beatitude or *Moksha* Sri Hari is described by *Madhva* as *Bimba* who is *Poorna* and *Sarva Suatantra* The *Jeevas* are *Prati Bimba* and therefore are *Apoorna* and *Asuatantra* There are vital and primordially eternal differences between *Jeeva* and *Hari*, and five *Bhedas* or differences are dug out from perennial philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads and these are *Jeevesha Bheda*, *Jeeva Jada Bheda*, *Jeeva Jeeva Bheda*, *Ishta Jada Bheda* and *Jada Jada Bheda* This *Bheda Siddhanta* or Dualistic philosophy confirms the great truth that the world is Real and not an illusion, for, what is created by Hari Sarvothama will never be an illusion as borne out by *Pratyaksha*, *Agama* and *Anumana Pramanas* There is fragrance in God, Music in God, sweetness in God, and He gives us new life, by taking us through the

experiences of death and sacrifice for the sake of his love one moment with the Beloved bears the signet of eternity Beauty is light and it gives us wisdom It is goodness and it gives us purity of moral life Beauty is love and and it makes us gentle and tender All manifestations of Nature are a revelation of His beauty The saint is absorbed and possessed by His beauty and he longs for his Incarnation in human form, when he can partake of a fuller, purer and nobler life

The Dasa sees that this deity cannot be comprehended without love, and without music One of the Dasas before Purandara had said that ““*Ganadi Keshavanendare Kargudmani Rangavittala* Purandara himself in one of his songs says. “Mere *Tala* and *Mela* are not adequate, there must be love and soulful music. God does not manifest himself to music bereft of love.”

God does not listen nor suffer music without love though *tala* and *mela* are its component parts:

Kelano Hari Talano

Talamelagaliddu Premavillada Ganall

To Purandara, God is beauty sanctified and love Perfected and it is the fullness of divine love that rewards the fullness of religious life Spiritual life attains its highest development and reaches its supreme perfection in the life of love, which is the consummation of religion Love of God gives the true vision of the beauty, goodness and loveliness of the universal and the holiness and perfection of humanity. Joy springs from love, service springs from love, knowledge too, is a product of love Beauty is

1 K Satyanarayana Purandara Sovenir P 44

2 Purandara Sovenir P 41

where love is, and beauty creates love and love is the fulfilment and perfection of humanity. The roots of love of the divine are lost in invisibility like the roots of a tree, and therefore, mere knowledge, skill and technical perfection and intellectual excellence do not take us far into Reality unless punctuated with love and devotion.

Tala Beku Takka Mela Beku  
 Shanta Vele Beku Ganavannu Kelabekembavarige  
 Yetu Prasavirabeku Gatige nilisa beku  
 Ratipatipitanolu ati Premavirabeku  
 Gala shuddha virabeku Tilidu pela beku  
 Kalavala bidalu beku Khale mukha vira beku  
 Aritavarirabeku harushahechhalu beku  
 Purandara Vittala Parada vavenabeku

All the great lakshanas of a Haridasa are transcendental love of *ratipati*, *galashuddhi*, cheerful and radiant face, freedom from agitations of the world, equanimity of mind, serene atmosphere and a voice of reason and of experience. For, love of God is the realisation of human life, a spontaneous longing that flows from the human heart for the attainment of infinite Bliss. To love God is to serve God, to realise God and live constantly in the Lord is complete identity of the individual soul with the whole of mankind and the universal soul. Purandara pleaded for increase of intelligence and discriminating knowledge for peace, for holy passion and a bouyant melody of existence.

Purandara inspires the common man by his great *Sabitya Geeta*, and *Padas* to a sense of his destiny, a confidence of development of personality through *Bhakti*, to a realisation of the dim Vistas of infinite possibilities, an assurance of the deep and unexpressed springs of human nature maturing into strong currents to break through

the density of ignorance and *Tamas*, and a self persuasion that the omnipotent world is within reaches of the mortal by His Infinite Grace, and by the strenuosity of the individual soul Purandara built a ladder between Heaven and Earth for even the common man, to climb up through Hari's Grace and through his own *Sadhana* or effort. This was his universal message.

Purandara came as a saviour at a time when classical music was being threatened with contamination by western influences. Muslim power had come to stay in India, and along with it, its system of religion, of Government and of fine arts with their exotic flavour. Purandara who combined in himself a devoted saintly life with the qualities of a great composer and singer saved Karnatic music from extinction by systematising it, setting high standards in its aesthetic appeal, and spiritual value, and fixed the vital outlines of all *ragas* in vogue in his days, with precision, and protected it from mutilation by vulgar hands.

He was in a way, the founder of *Keertana* form which in its melody is based on technical compositions like *Gita* whose purpose is to elucidate *Raga* forms and *Tala* patterns. The emphasis in the *Keertanas* is on its aesthetic excellence and that is why it is considered as the most important part of Karnatic classical music. The great master composers who came after him, faithfully followed the tradition and form which Purandara established. The *Raga* and *Tala* aspects are followed by composers like Dikshitar and Shama Sastri and the purely *Raga* aspects by composers like Kshetragna. But it was Tyagaraja who brought out in the fullest measure all the three aspects viz *Raga Bhava* and *Tala* of the tradition, founded by

Purandara The most notable feature of the music of Thyagaraja, says a Writer is its appropriateness in the *Bhava* of the song The *Raga* selected and the song thus improvised are such as to bring out the emotional content or *Rasa* of the song The soul of Shama Sastri found its solace in the beauties of *Tala* and when he handled a *Raga* it bore all the impress of intricate rhythmic phrases and that gave it a tilt and swing all its own \* Dikshitar worshipped *Ragas* as divine personalities and was in raptures in contemplating their features ”

There is a prevailing opinion supported by scholars that South Indian form of music, first flourished at Deogiri and with the continuous Muslim invasions, threatening the life and culture of the Deccan and the South, it retreated for shelter to Hampi under the Vijayanagar rulers, to be revitalised and then recreated by the master artist Purandara He systematised music by giving it a prescribed scale, the Malava Gowla scale in the place of the existing Kharaharapriya scale He also framed a gradual mode of lessons *Swaravalis*, *Janti Varase*, *Alankaras*, *Gitas* and *Svarajatis* which became the most popular and effective mode of learning music Prof Sambamurthi opines that Purandara's *Gitas* in *Malabari Raga* are ideal *Dvidhatu Prabandhas*, through his first *Gita* in *Malabari Raga*, he has shown that in the evolution of *angas* in musical compositions, it is *Charana* that existed first and then came the *Pallavi* The *Anupallavi* came later It is well known that we sing *Sri Sri Gananatha Sindhuravarana Karunasagara Karwadana* and then sing *Pallavi Lambodhara Lakumikara*

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\* T S Venkatarama Iyer Purandara Sovenir 1964 P 12

Purandara is the founder of Karnataka Music and his songs range from the most homely to the most philosophical. His songs are so emotional that any one can be moved to tears. Purandara knew the conditions of liberation was mutual understanding and the prime condition of understanding was a language which could convey the subtlety of experience from mind to mind and designate the subtlest and supersensuous of the mind powers in our inward state, for, this marked the height of human experience and illumination in the perception of Divinity as Lila, as Hari, as Truth, Beauty and goodness.

This language is the language of music which takes the individual above the Immanent to the Transcendental. It is in a suspended state of animation that music inspires, that the *Bhakta* sees the pillars of the forest, pyramidal mountains, columnal cliffs, as the images of a divine architect, models of living forms and shining fantasies of the skies, the mountain lake in the light of the rising moon and the first stars twinkling against the dusky silveriness of twilight, will give him an image of a divine sculpture or a celestial Painter. All these represent in the *Bhakta* a kind of restoration of the inner Reality.

Music sums for Purandara the strange story of man's life. Music strips away the mask of accident that conceals the Eternal, and by its power reveals the grandest spiritual effects. It is the function of music to idealise not only the divine nature but human life. It compresses into brief compass, an ideal of the moral life of man, and conveys some idea of the unity, the harmony, and the moral significance of the whole. Music gives the capacity

not simply to reflect on what lies on the surface, but to see under it, and to get at the heart of life's mystery. Purandara Dasa reflects through musical renderings of his *Keertanas*, the life of society. It is no small talent which makes a man to catch up and arrest the evanescent, fugitive play of emotions on the surface of society, and to reflect in fixed tones, human experiences with the light, flow and ripple of its follies, its vanities, its absurdities or to portray without exaggeration, its vulgarity, manners or baseness.

Purandara was born in Kannada country and very early in life must have mastered the theory and practice of music of his day, after a deep study of Upanishads, the *Shastras* and the literary works on the one hand, and of monumental works on Indian music like Bharat's *Natya Sastra* and Saranga Deva's *Sangeetha Ratnakara* on the other. His mother tongue was Kannada. It is not known how he was initiated to music, and who gave him the first lessons in the theory and technique of music. But, Purandara's outburst in sheer spontaneous delight in *Ugabhoga* and other artistic creations, was the outcome of his contact with the great Vyasaraja and other saints. He must have had considerable experience in singing songs composed by great *Shivasaranas* and *Vachanakaras* and by great Haridasas like Sripadaraya, Vyasa Raja and others. With the help of his unsurpassed originality and imagination, he systematised the music of his day in his own admirable way, enriching it with his own charming and masterly creation of compositional types. He laid the foundation for the system known as Karnataka Music.



It was the genius of Sri Purandara Dasa that created Keertanas on the basis of which Kritiform was evolved. He was also the creator of compositional types including both *Lakshana* and *Lakshya Geetas*, *Choka*, *Tala*, *Keertanas*, *Ugabbogas*, *Suladis*, *Tanavarnas* and *Tillanas*. It is a pity that only a few of the *Lakshya geetas* composed by him are available to day; all the other *Lakshya geetas* indicating the characteristic features of the concerned *ragas* composed by him have been lost to us. His *Keertanas*, *Tana Varnas* and *Thillanas* served as models to renowned composers of later ages, like Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Adipatah who all improved on Purandara's technique. The *Nayaka-Nayaki* aspect of Purandaradasa's *Keertana* was a source of inspiration for the composition of *Padams* by Sri Kshetragna and other Vaggeyakaras. It is a significant fact to be noted that the subject matter of a few of Sri Thyagaraja's *Kritis* closely resemble that of a few of the *Keertanas* which Purandaradas had composed earlier. Thyagaraja refers to Purandara with great respect and admiration, in one of his monumental works.

South India is the only country in the world, wherein music students practice the early solfa exercises in the Malava Gowla. While in North Indian and Western music, the major scale corresponds to Sankarabharana. "It is the Mayamalava Gowla scale that paved the way for the enunciation of the scheme of 72 *Melakartas* by Venkatamukhi later. It may be pointed out, that in the process of modal shift of tonic, the Rishabha of Mayamalava Gowla gives the Seventy-second *Mela Rasikapriya* and the Nishada of *Pantumarali* which is the parallel of Mayamalava Gowla *Pratimadhyama* with the *Kanakangi* the first *mela*; when the *Adi* and *Antya melas* with distinct

*Purvangas* and *Uttarangas* were isolated, it became easy for *Venkatamukhi* to evolve the scheme of 72 *Melas*”\*

Purandara has composed soul stirring *Keertans* rare *Ragas* like *Manjeesa*, *Bhairavi*, *Dvijavanti*, *Syama*, *Kalyani*, *Maravi*, *Madhumadhavi*, *Vasanta Bhairavi*, *Dhanyasi* *Begade*, *Varali*, *Kanada*, *Arabhi* and *Mohana*

Purandara was both master of *Lakshya* and *Lakshana* though many of his *Keertanas* are made only for *Bhajana* or *Sankirtana*, they possess purity of *Raga sanchara* and beauty of musical structure which have made them, an authority on *Raga sanchara* as cited in *Sangita Saramita* of *Tulajaji* and other *Lakshanagranthas* † Purandara was also a composer of *Tanas* and *Varnas* It is said that *Adiappiah* the celebrated composer of *Veeri Bonu* modelled his *Tanavarnas* on those of Purandara Dasa

A great number of *Keertanas* of Purandara, is in *Madhyamakala* All varieties of *Tala* have been used, greater preference being given to *Chapu* and *Jhampa Talas* The music of his *Keertanas* is not of a plain recitative character, but offers full scope for the revelation of *manodharma* Though most of them are in the nature of *Dwyanama Sankirtanas* “a majority of his songs is replete with musical excellences of the highest order, except where he did not impose set *Sangathis* of a sophisticated nature, the compositions themselves are brilliant examples of *raga sancharas* of great beauty As *Lakshya* for *Lakshana* they possess such high value that they are cited in distinguished *Lakshana Granthas* of unquestioned authority for *Raga Sanchara*” ‡

\* Purandara Sovenir Academy of Music 1964 P 7

† D Ramaswamy Iyengar Purandara Sovenir Academy of Music 1964 P 15

‡ Purandara Sovenir 1964 P 20

The first great change effected by Purandara was to introduce the Malava Gowla scale as the basic for music instruction. Not content with prescribing this, he framed a graded series of lessons, which even to day prevails in the teaching of music. The Svaravalis, *Janti Varase*, *Alankaras* and *Gitas* form the surest road to the mastery of Karnataka music with all its intricacies of *Svara* and *Tala* and *Prastaras*. The Madras Music Academy Volume records that in the number of compositional types he created, he has no equal. In every one of them, the same perfect communion of senses, word and music, is noticeable, the type of composition which exhibits his extraordinary mastery of the technique of music is in the *Suladi*. The *Suladi* is a learned, elaborate and difficult piece giving a most comprehensive view of all the important *Raga Sancharas* and combinations and permutations of a variety of *Talas*. Tulajendra cites in his *Sangeeta Saramrita*, numerous *Prayogas* from *Suladis* of Purandara Dasa, as classic authority for *Lakshana of ragas*. Purandara is the author and founder of that very system of which we are the proud inheritors, he enriched and adorned the system with thousands of his compositions, he never sang but composed, and never composed but sang and all his creations bear the impress of the sad touch of humanity and the sublimity of the soul in search of the Divine. His place as a *Vaggayakara* and *Lakshana-kara* is unique. "He is to Karnatak music what Valmiki is to Sanskrit literature."

Purandara's compositions range from the simplest Svaravalis and Gitas to the most elaborate and complex *Suladis*. His synthesis of *Sahityakshara* and *Svara Raga* and *Laya* is the very acme of perfection. His language is

poetic, full of fresh imageries and similes and metaphors. His parables and allegorical utterances reveal a depth of penetrative insight universal understanding and uncommon metaphysical subtlety worthy only of creators of Epics.

Purandara is credited to have created nearly five hundred thousand *Padas* and any way, most of them have been lost, along with Sri Vyasaraaja's compositions, when the city of Vijayanagara was razed to the ground and the libraries were burnt by Muslim Vandals.

The *Dasa's* originality in the development of the *Lakshanas* and *Lakshya* aspect of music is unquestioned. Annamacharya, a great Telugu composer was Purandara's contemporary, though very much older in age. The two saints might have met in Vijayanagar for a time; or they might have met at Tirupati, for in one of his *Keertanas* as recorded in Annamacharya Charitam, there is an eulogistic reference to Purandara by Annamacharya, and Purandara reciprocated the sentiment. Purandara is mentioned as an incarnation of Hari. The saints knew each other rather intimately and this lends support to the contention by a few Telugu scholars that Purandara very much younger than Annama, was very much influenced by the latter and therefore was indebted to him in making musical compositions. This contention is not borne out either by written or oral evidence. Likewise, there is a theory that Pundarika Vittala, author of many treatises on music and founder of *Mela Prastana* was a contemporary of Purandara Vittala and that Pundalika visited the court of Akbar in 1609 A.D. and presented himself as a great formulator of Hindustani system of music. Contemporary records, neither literary, manuscript nor biographical make any mention of their contemporaneity. There

“The entire composition, though in one *Raga*, has different parts of it set to difficult *Talas*, in such a way that the composition though sung in the *Tala* with which it commences. Throughout, the rhythm only, changes according to the different *talas* adopted to each of the various parts.” In some *Suladis*, different *ragas* are given to different divisions, and in some others, there is one *raga* for all the divisions. The subject-matter of *Suladis* is both mythological, devotional and psychological.

The precise connotation of the word *Suladi* is nowhere given. It is presumed, however, that it means easy path for the attainment of the eternal Bliss—*Sula hadi*. They are *talamatrikas* and very difficult of musical rendering, as singing them involves a profound knowledge of *Tala* and *Raga*. The singing of *Suladis* is not much in vogue now because of the difficulty of rendering them with permutation of *Talas* and *Natya* technique. *Suladis* are usually didactic and were intended for imparting moral instruction and insight into profound metaphysical truths to those, who could not know ancient wisdom, through the medium of Sanskrit. In an Age of great spiritual unrest and confusion, created by pedantry and polemics of contending religious groups, it was difficult to bring the common man within the perimeter of spiritual ideas, and experience, without a ready resort to a medium and a mother-tongue of thought which could be no other than music. Music and poetry had to flow full, conveying the great traditions and consecrated wisdom of ages, before the common man could ride the full crest of the wave of this flood and partake something of its divinities. Attempts in this direction had already been made by some of the poets and saints of the period to communicate

is also a tradition current in North India, that Tanappaiah who was instructed in music under a Haridasa, somewhere on the banks of the Tunga, was the celebrated Tansen of Akbar's Court

The personality of Purandaradasa says 'a great musician and an impartial critic', is the greatest that a combination of spirituality, art and culture could produce. In the realm of music, his services are precious beyond estimate. He is the father of Karnatak Music which stands unparalleled as the most highly evolved system of music in the world. Thygaraja was indebted to him, and Muthuswami Dikshitar though a composer, with a distinctive style of his own, was a faithful adherent to the tradition of Purandara Dasa, in the frequent use he made of the *Suladi Sapta Talas* and in the shaping of melodious forms of antique *ragas* embodied in the *Devaranamas*. The great composers themselves of South India and their compositions are themselves, Purandara's supreme gift to the Indian Nation. The change which he effected from *Kharahara Priya* to *Maya Malava Gowla* as the starting scale for learning music, is alone enough to immortalise Purandara Dasa as the supreme artist, for *Mayamalava Gowla* is described by Ramaamatya as the best of all *Ragas* 'Raganam Uttamothama'

Purandara is the originator of the *Suladis* which are lengthy compositions set to definite *Ragas* and *Talas*, and revealing unquestioned mastery of the technicalities of music. These appear to be a type of composition which is untouched by anyone, except the Haridasas. In these compositions, the theme is the same as in the *Keertana* but there are seven or eight distinct divisions with elaborate *Sabityas* each of which is set to one of the *Sapta Talas*

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unearthly and sublime ideas and sentiments to the common man through the medium of *Ugabhogas* which again, was the distinct creation of Purandara Dasa. It is pre-eminently *Ragalapana* in strict conformity to tala. *Ragalapana* is *Talavisista*.

Like the *Suladi*, the *Ugabhoga* has remained undefined. It is a very simple piece set to *Sarvalagbutala*, more elementary than the *Gita*. It is an integrated musical piece of *Raga*, *Bhava*, *Tala Samanvaya*. As far as the *Bhava* aspect of *Ugabhoga* is concerned, "it is the direct translation of the thoughts of the composer in the ecstasy of inspiration." Tulajaji of Tanjore cites in his *Sangita Saramrita* that the *Suladis* of Purandara were the foundation on which various *Raga Lakshanas* were created or improvised. A number of *prayogas* from the *Suladis* of Purandara turned out in latter days as a classic authority for *Raga Lakshana*.

The Age of Purandara was the Age of creation, renaissance and reformation of society. Music and poetry attuned to the Eternal, were united in a holy wedlock. Not only new forms of literary creation were attempted, they were attuned to a variety of *chandas* and *Talas*. Several forms of them like *Pada*, *Suladi*, *Ugabhoga*, *Swali*, *Sloka*, *Dvipadi*, *Tripadī*, *Chaupadi*, *Shatpadi*, *Astapadi*, *Ragale*, *Yalapada*, were employed to convey great truths to the masses. Purandara is the founder of *Suladis*, *Ugabhogas* of *Pillari Geeta*, and of *Vrittinama* wherein the *Padya* or the verse and the *Keertana* or the song occur alternatively in compositions.

Purandara is the prophet of *Nadopasana* as the *Sadhana* of *Mukti* or salvation and music and poetry were of no use, unless they were used as a vehicle for the outpourings of *Bhakti*, and for the attainment of *Brahmagnana*. The



*Keertana "Talano Hari Kelano"* illustrates this point. He employed simple conversational language in his compositions. The word, sound and meaning were harmonised to make a direct appeal to the heart, likewise, figures of speech and parables to illustrate the true motif of compositions were employed so that they might persuade the listener to psychical relation of their import. His compositions are finest music, poetry, religion, ethics and philosophy, revealing inimitable charm of poetic diction, intense religious fervour, beauty of music, tender pathos, divine love, nobility of sentiment and of ideals, and varieties of religious and common experiences.

Ramamatya wrote, perhaps in the closing years of the sixteenth century, a work by name *Suaramela Kalanidhi* on the Karnataka system of Indian music, giving a detailed exposition of the system and describing the *Ragas* belonging to it. Then, appeared the work *Ragavibheda* which was written by Somanatha in 1609 A.D. It is an important work on Indian music and classifies the *Ragas* into primary, Janaka and derivatives *Janya Ragas*. Somanatha has mentioned the names of the twenty two *Srutis* and has given explanations of the *srutis*. One of the epoch making works on the Karnataka system of Indian music that was written about at the same time was *Venkatamukhi's Chaaturdandi Prakashika*.

Venkatamukhi came of a family of famous scholars and musicians belonging to the Hoysala Karnataka sect and rendered yeoman service to the cause of Karnataka system of Indian music. He was a gifted votary of the Muses and a master of both the theory and the practice of Indian music. He made a deep study of both the Hindusthani and the Karnataka systems of music learning

the former at the feet of Thanappacharya who was a disciple of a Haridasa and who later became Tansen in the Court of Akbar. He was a very good composer and his Ragamalika is beautiful with remarkable originality and admirable insight into the nature of the *srutis* the swaras and the *Ragas*, the *Melas* and the *Alapanas*, the *Tala* and the *Tana*. He was the first musician to formulate the scheme of seventy-two *melakartha Ragas* or *Janaka ragas* grouping the concerned *Janya ragas* (derivatives) under each of them.

The concept of the *Melakarta Ragas* was in vogue even before the advent of Venkatmukhi, but the credit belongs to him of formulating a scheme of arrangements for the *ragas*, including in it, all the *Sampurna Ragas* current in his days as well as the possible number of *Mela Karta ragas* that could be evolved on the basis of the twelve notes in the gamut.

Venkatamukhi was a genius of scintillating intellect and of analytical mind and his classification of ragas is the best and the most scientific one, while his scheme is complete by itself, placing the Karnataka music on a firm theoretical basis. In the words of a distinguished savant "each resultant *Melakartha* (Scale) with its derivatives in limited form or melody mould has been experimented with, classified, and named in a way that would excite the admiration of even super scientific German."

Such monumental works on Karnataka Music like Venkatamukhi's paved the way for the magnificent achievement of great composers like Sri Kshetrajna, Thyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshitar and Shama Sastri. Sri Kshetrajna who lived in the 17th Century excelled himself in composing *Padams* and he is reputed to have

composed about four thousand *Padams*. The three master composers Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Shama Sastri were contemporaries of each other and lived in the 18th Century, and it fell to their lot to raise the magnificent mansion of Karnataka music on the firm foundation laid by Purandara Dasa, and their work has been monumental and the whole of South India is deeply indebted to them for the wonderful contribution they have made to Karnataka music. They were great erudite scholars, celebrated musicians, and gifted composers of *Keertanas* revealing their marvellous skill, imagination and originality, and transcendental devotion and religious fervour. They were all great *Upasakas* and most of their compositions are sparkling gems of matchless beauty, being the outcome of fertile imagination and unsurpassed devotion. The huge and magnificent mansion of charming splendour and beauty, raised by them was later on decorated and embellished by a vast number of great composers in South India, inclusive of Svati Tirunal of Kerala and Vainika Shikhamani Sheshanna of Mysore and a host of other lesser dignitaries, too numerous to mention. Karnataka made great strides even in instrumental music, but for the advent of Purandara Dasa it would not have been possible for us to possess this invaluable heritage. It may be reasonably presumed that Purandara Dasa was the Father of Karnataka system of Music, his was the richest contribution to the storehouse of the Indian aesthetic wealth, and of the world.

Of the two great musicians of Karnataka, Pundarika Vittala and Gopala Naik reputed to have made a valuable contribution to Hindustani music, Pundarika was of Kannada country and had mastered both the Hindustani

and Karnataka system of Indian Music Pundarika was invited to Delhi in the year 1609 by the Emperor Akbar and was asked to clarify the various vague and doubtful issues that has arisen in music at the time, and to systematise the Hindustani system of music, as there was growing confusion in the theory and practice of the same Pundarika who had been considerably influenced by the way of life and musical techniques of Purandara Vittala, rose to the occasion and gave complete satisfaction to the Emperor in the work entrusted to him He wrote four masterly treatises viz *Shadraga Chandrodaya*, *Tagamala*, *Ragamanjari* and *Nartananirnaya* adopting the *Suddha* scale of South Indian music in describing many *Ragas* of the Hindustani and North Indian music

Gopala Naik likewise made valuable contribution to Hindustani music, like Pundarika Vittala He was also a great composer of the Kannada country, though little is known of his life and times, for paucity of evidence Because of the services of these eminent composers to both Karnataka and Hindustani systems of music, we have to day votaries of both the systems all over Karnataka

“Purandara’s *Keertanas* reveal a machinery of versification, the knack of an ingenuous and pleasing arrangement of melodic syllables, a vast repertory of poetical effects, choice words, happy epithets, graceful images, metaphors and similes from every realm of nature and human life His *Keertanas* are noblest poetry, whose conception as a whole is magnificent, and is worked out in easy free flowing outlines, grand in its simplicity, in its sincerity, in its epic melody and repose of reconciliation ”

Purandara *Kirtanas* are the cherished possession of

Karnataka culture and of Indian culture. Time has not antiquated them, nor the progress of knowledge rendered the thoughts obsolete. His ideas have been assimilated by the minds and absorbed into the language and literature of succeeding centuries, and his mode of singing the *Kirtanas* and the technique of rendering them to music, likewise, in their original form and shape remain the subjects of study and admiration. Our best intellects teach and comment on Purandara's *Kirtanas*, and our most skilled critics spend their times in eliciting and setting in fresh light, its beauty of thought and exquisite perfection of form, and interpenetration of thought, language idea and form and music."

"We must know and experience for ourselves, all the flow and rhythm of its verse, all the delicate points and precision of its expression, all the majestic swing of the tender music of its language. It is said that there are wines *Asavas* which can only be drunk in the country where the wine grows. So too, the flavour and the aroma of the best creations of the *Vachanakaras* and *Dasas* are too delicate to bear importation into the speech of other lands and times however crude and imperfect they may be. To appreciate them truly, we must breathe the very air and steep ourselves in the spirit of their own Age and country, and receive them in the very form in which they were produced, fresh and fragrant on the soil to which they are indigenous. Purandara will always be remembered as one of the wisest teachers of mankind"\*

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\* M V Krishna Rao. A brief history of Mystic Tradition in Religion and Art in Karnataka

## CHAPTER XII

### PURANDARA'S CONTRIBUTION TO CULTURE

The Thirteenth Century witnessed a great revival of learning and minute examination of the prevailing dogmas and theology. As the challenge came from iconoclastic and monotheistic religions like Islam from the North, threatening the very foundations of Hindu beliefs, a restatement of the fundamental tenets of religion and its popularisation among the diversified fragments of Hindu society in order to protect it against disruption, was a vital aspect of the thought of the Age. Strife for power, narrow engrossment on insensate ambition for usurpation and self aggrandisement, conflicting loyalties, dissident groups promoting fissiparous tendencies, appeared like disintegrating the Cultural solidarity of the country.

These conditions called for a constructive philosophy of action determined by a united people with an unqualified devotion to God. The philosophy of love and action was the need of the hour to unite peoples for a defensive solidarity against crisis and impending dangers from the North. A *vaidika dharma* with due regard to the Vedic injunctions of *Varnasrama Vibhaga* based on the bed rock of personal rectitude and purity of conduct was the only antidote to divisions and threat from outside.

A couple of centuries before Purandara the *Vachana karas* had the great responsibility of saving the souls of the masses from attrition and utter extinction which was

due to neglect of religion and lack of love of God Madhvacharya preached *Bhakti* among the masses and tried to unite them all by the common bond of *Bhakti* and by the use of the regional languages as the vehicle of communication of sublime philosophic ideas to the people.

Regulations and restrictions and other forms of disciplines were necessary to compel conformity to established religion of the land based on the infallible authority of the *Vedas*. The Philosophy of the *Vedas* had to be revived, recreated and revitalised, inspired with the inner power of fresh and living thought and of ideas made alive by passing through an absorbing human intelligence, and thereby addressed to both the scholar, the theologian and the layman. It was the conviction of the hour that the philosophy of *Vedanta* alone was the basis of true religion and when practised, according to *Vedic* injunctions would eliminate chaos and bring peace and happiness to society.

It was the message of the Haridasas and Purandara that thought and religion and faith in and devotion to God Sri Hari should be reconciled into a new synthesis which should represent the consummation of human evolution with implications far deeper and claims greater than any, which the saints of old were allowed to advance. Its message was applicable not only to the individuals, it was concerned primarily with the nature of those essential relationships that must bind all groups and communities as members of one human family. It was not merely a symbol of the enunciation of an ideal, but stood inseparably associated with an institution, adequate to embody its truth and demonstrate its validity and perpetuate its influence.

The message of the Haridasas constituted a challenge, at once bold and universal to outworn shibboleths of ritualistic religions which were in a state of attrition inviting the advent of a new Gospel fundamentally, in practice, different from and perhaps superior to what had been practised as religion which kept large masses of the people in complete ignorance of true religion. The message of the Dasas implied an organic change in the outlook on religion and called for a reconstruction of the social order, based on the reform of the spiritual outlook of man, a definite formula of action and on a defeat of the theory of fatalism which had bleached the masses to the marrow of their bones, and had rendered them unfit for the defence of religion and for the dignity and superiority of their ancient culture. Purandara's voice "*Yeesabeksi Iddu Jaysabeksi*" was that of a clarion call of a Prophet to awaken the people of inaction and the dogmatic slumber of ages.

Sloth and fatalism without strenuosity and soulful effort were bound to lead to disastrous consequences, for strenuosity in the right direction is the path of immortality and sloth the path of death. Effort without the anchorage of the Grace of God would be futile like carving statues with hatchets, a monument for ever of the dogged perseverance of the artist, a perpetual waste of toil and no final result in the end. What astonished one during the period is not so much the ethics or philosophy of the movement as much as the extraordinary response its ideal had awakened in the mind of a large number of people, and the powerful influence its standard had actually exerted on human conduct. The movement stood for the heroic element in man, by calling him to sacrifice, to



bear torture, to endure, to suffer martyrdom, to invite death for the sake of God and His creatures.

It offered a certain liberty of thought, making the atmosphere, one of trust and of hope and not of dogmatic chill. It was a religion in harmony with all other accepted creeds and dogmas, making an eclectic of the ethical and social content of all great religions of the world. It was a religion of love, in spite of poverty and incredible suffering and cynicism of the vulgar. The history of Haridasa saints shows that there is not a trace of resentment or bitterness in their lives or teaching while gave love for Sri Hari, for their brethren, their love for the neighbours, love for the alien and love for all humanity and for all life. Divine guidance would make work sacred, and success is due less to ability than to zeal, for the winner is he who gives himself to his work body and soul, in order to achieve nobility of character and not only outward prosperity; victory over evil at its source and not in its consequences, reform of the individual and society which shall ensure the welfare of future generations.

The Haridasa had to take his full part in preparing for the amelioration of men, no less than for his own transformation for effort based upon resolute thought inspired by divinity belongs to the completeness of the religious life. *It was fatal to remain passive at the time* when there was corruption of body and soul and to leave the sick to perish and the foolish to stray, while one would spend himself in frantic exertions to raise the dead and reform the dust. Man's unpitied misery physical or spiritual would be Satan's opportunity and therefore, it was a matter of sanctification and consecration of oneself for the sake of humanity.

The Haridasas were unique like the *Vachanakaras*, in the nature and process of self consecration, involving principle that is highest and purest in the influence of one's life and their effect upon the lives it touched. One cannot anticipate or analyse the power of a pure and holy life, but there can be no doubt about its reality and there seems to be no limit to its range. One can only know in part, the laws and forces of the spiritual world and it may be that every soul that is purified and given up to Sri Hari and to His work, releases or awakens energies, viewless as the wind but sometimes, there is the glimpse of the process. There is no power in the world so unerring or so irresistible as the power of personal holiness.

The Haridasas not only influenced their fellow human beings by personal example, but visualised Sri Hari in His varied manifestations, relieving human suffering, comforting man in his hour of sorrow, by giving occasional glimpses of His Infinitude and making man constantly contemplate Him. The Omnipresent and Omniscient Hari was the symbol of optimism and confidence in a future life, because as Purandara says "*Sakalavellavu Hari Seve anni*" "Regard every thing you do as service to Sri Hari, for there is no place where He is not. Purandara was for *Vibhita Prayatna* regulated effort, for the cause of God and humanity. Human misery and ignorance involving man like a spider in an interminable web of *Samsara* which in turn was the product of a limited and imperfect human intellect and power, could be abrogated only by conformity to the functions and Agency of Hari and by spreading the philosophy of love and compassion to all mankind. According to Purandara, there are

certain principles and assurances which one could question only at the peril of his humanity, certainties and intuitions by denying which he would deny his fundamental nature. These are the great principles of Truth, Goodness, Love and harmony based on the knowledge of limitations of human power and of the benevolence and infinite compassion of Sri Hari.

The daily and incessant remembrance of the holy name of Sri Hari was the certain guarantee of immortality for says a Haridasa "I will worship my Lord's image in my heart, with all my heart with unfailing remembrance. My Body is His temple and my heart is the central shrine. My eyes are the lamps lit for Him. My Hands are the sacred fans to wave in worship. My every movement is a sacred round and my lying asleep is a long *Namaskara*."

Purandara asks why seek then, other ways that lead to Him. Why other idols, why again other spells and rituals? I shall worship my Lord in me well and truly, for, all the tools of worship are in me.

How should we live here on earth? Purandara answers Lucky! Lucky! am I, for I have found my happiness in my adoration of the Lord's Lotus feet.

Be like the restful pebble in the rapid stream of life,  
 Be sharp as an arrow when you listen to those who know  
 Allure thy mind onward to the Lord by slow and sure degree,  
 Be sweet like sugar amidst those who are thy kin  
 Rectify thy body and mind by wisdom  
 Be thou endeared to those who love thy Lord  
 Swim like a fish in the ocean of Madhva's religion  
 Keep thy senses pure and act like fire to burn the straw of the  
 luts of the flesh,  
 Remember thy Lord by day and by night  
 Serve the tru servants of Purandara Vaitala "

Purandara whose life was an organised protest against the discrepancies of the social system, its religious institutions, and its superstitions, was for an ethical system, a system of social morality, a reconstitution of the family, to elevate man and in elevating man, exalt women up to his level.

Purandara's teachings was not a collection of abstract rules imposed from without. It was permeated with a *sane and noble mysticism*; and *nothing could be more firmly rooted in the inner life, more benignly spiritual*; nothing could speak more intimately to the soul and from within. Purandara spoke in simple language and sang the language of God, so that the soul of every common man could know its wondrous meaning; every word was a word of soul's language, that speaks of the eternal love of Sri Hari. Renewing and refreshing were his words, that the hard hands of formalism were replaced by the freedom of love which kept the door of God always open for the common man to enter, free from metaphysical subtleties, practical in its outlook, above all sectarianism and based on Hari Sarvothama the substratum of the human soul and the phenomenal world. Purandara and his Movement carried peace and illumination. As this Movement affirmed the unity of all things, it was necessarily a religion of reconciliation, to meet the needs of the day, fitted into the larger outlook of the times, better than the rigid older faiths. A characteristic of this Movement was its *liberality and tolerance*, for it accepted all the great religions as true and their Scriptures as inspired. Purandara says:

Jangamaru Navu Lingangigalu  
Veerabhadra Priya Sishyaru navu.

Consider the flowers of a garden, though differing in kind, colour, form and shape, yet in as much as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, thus diversity increaseth their charm and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye, if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruit, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and colour. Diversity of hues, of form and of shape enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heightens the effect thereof.

In like manner when divers shades of thought, temperament and character are brought together, under the power and influence of one central Agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. It is nothing but the celestial potency of the world of Sri Hari which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things that is capable of harmonising the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas and convictions of humanity. The Haridasa movement does not seek to create a new sect, but to inspire all sects with a deep fundamental Love. It accepts all great religions as true, and their scriptures as inspired, it bids its followers to disentangle from the windings of racial, particularist, and religious prejudices, the vital immortal thread, the pure gospel of eternal worth and to apply those essential elements to life.

It is the absence of all visible moral correlation of causes and effects in the phenomena of daily life, that has gone far to produce the solid fatalism of the masses, the scoffing scepticism of the higher educated classes, and from time to time, the revolt of nobler minds.

Purandara whose life was an organised protest against the discrepancies of the social system, its religious institutions, and its superstitions, was for an ethical system, a system of social morality, a reconstitution of the family, to elevate man and in elevating man, exalt women up to his level.

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Jangamaru Navu Lingangigalu  
Veerabhadra Priya Sishyaru navu.

In another profound utterance, he prophesies the future of humanity:

—  
 Kaliyugake melada Kambaranu  
 Kaliyugada manavarige Kambara  
 Haranu Olidu negali munju moneya madi  
 Salaho bandaiya Deva Kaliavatara nodi  
 Malaharana Padava bidade kondadiraiyaa  
 Srishtiyolage mereva Kshira Sagara Podaya  
 Purandara Vittaladasa helida Srutiya  
 Ghatyagi Kaliyugake Kambara Guruswamy  
 Sittagi bediranna Sivataneballa!!

Purandara in enunciating the worship of Maha Rudra as the supreme symbol of the *Kali* Age, reveals his universality of outlook and nonsectarian perspective and toleration. The Haridasa Movement has in it, the potency to create a new earth and a new Heaven and to quicken human beings with a holy passion of Service. Purandara's personality was characterised by great moral earnestness and profound spirituality, and by the power to appreciate people ideally, to use them at the level of their best and to make even the lowest types to think well of themselves, because, Purandara pointed out potentialities within them, of which they themselves were unaware of. He was a Prophet whose greatest contribution was not any specific doctrine but an informing spiritual power, breathing into the world through the example of his life, and thereby quickening souls into a new spiritual activity.

Purandara pleaded for a pure and virtuous living, for detachment from the body and for elevating the soul to the higher regions of existence by stripping off all its own lower nature, and cleansing it from external strains. Plotinus asks "If thou doest not find beauty there, do like the sculptor who chisels planes, polishes,

till he has adorned his statue with all the attributes of beauty So, do thou chisel away from thy soul what is superfluous, straighten that which is crooked, purify and enlighten what is dark, and do not cease working at thy statue, until virtue shines before thine eyes, with its divine splendour”\* Pure life is a matter of constant discipline, especially discipline of the thoughts

True beauty should be sought in beautiful actions and in beautiful thoughts Like Plotinus, Purandara too, though he did not look upon earthly love as a snare of devil, was not persuaded to feel that mutual love of husband and wife, the earthly love in its completest form was a sacrament of heavenly love Natural forces and natural vigour may impede a perfect understanding of spiritual life, and therefore he pleaded for their regulation and control The conflict with evil is a process of emancipation and both evil and good are inseparable elements of human life and neither of them can be absolute and can exist independently to the rigid exclusion of the other In the worst there is something good and in the best there is something of the worst

Purandara in his attitude to society was more liberal than the Advaitins and ascetics who advocated a life of renunciation and abstinence from food and from marriage and worldly enjoyments The end of all philosophy to an ascetic was to teach mankind to despise life and seek perfect inner detachment and all virtue, in a sense, to be a preparation for active and creative contemplation, an intuitive process leading to appropriate action

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\* W R Inge Philosophy of Plotinus P 266



Purandara never despised life and never believed manhood as lower than the things of the world or regarded man as a mean and transitory being. There was no attitude of self contempt or self annihilation, though one finds in his many *Keerthanas* absolute surrender to Hari Sarvothama being enjoined on his fellowmen. The external world was part of the higher self which he was to prepare to take possession of. Philosophy revealed to him this relationship and the need of rising from the lower stages and rungs of the ladder before unification with God could be contemplated. He discovered for himself as Basavesvara did, the great truth that the potential universality of all spiritual formulation, lay in the social intercourse of spirits with each other. He says "*Manava Janma Doddadarya, Isabeku Iddu Jayisabeku*"

Human solidarity is a guarantee of ascent and attainment of unity in the spiritual world. Society is the world of soul making with its give and take, sorrows and joys and burdens and responsibilities. When Buddha said that he would not enter *Nirvana* till he could bring all others with him, he was indicating the sense of organic unity with one's fellow human beings, without which attainment of the Absolute was intolerable. That is the reason why, Love to Purandara becomes more and more important as one ascends higher. Love is a detachment from material things, and identity with the Beloved. It is not a relation between externals but between *Jivatma* and *Paramatma*. It is unity in duality, the reconciliation of the transient and the permanent. There is no moral isolation or a sense of pitilessness for fellow human beings in Purandara, who was lovable and beloved of the Gods and of human beings. Religion to him was consciousness

inherent in the finite infinite being, a vision of God with something in man which could not be shaken or destroyed Purandara emphasized the finite infinite nature of the individual revealed in consciousness with the progress of the individual, intellectually and morally

The nature of everything is the best that it can grow into, and that the best of human nature is divine As individuals whatever be the nature of *Samsara* with its prejudices, sentimentalities, cupidity, ignorance and folly, they are not debarted from the highest life The vital lesson of our lives which Purandara taught, was faith in absolute values, in Hari Sarvothama and in absolute principles which were the source and goal of the whole cosmic process There was no conflict between the rational and the spiritual, for the spiritual was the most rational Another great principle of Purandara's life, was the recognition of action as the ritual of contemplation and the conduct of life resting on an act of faith in a transcendental Deity

One must live one's own life in Truth, and it is as good as living the life of the entire community Individuals must practise virtue which is not a commodity to be ordered but a sentiment which animates humanity There is a rhythm, which can be mapped through the course of the centuries, in human nature as in the vastness of the ocean President Roosevelt once said that "the overwhelming majority of the People recognise that human welfare has not increased and does not increase through mere materialism and luxury, but it does progress through integrity, unselfishness, responsibility and justice"

The history of mankind and the voice of history have sounded across the centuries that many nations have perished after a long decline and that these profound falls were generally due to the enfeeblement of the human will. It was always by enfeeblement of *character*, and not by that of intelligence that the great peoples disappeared from history. This should not be our Epitaph. Oswald Spengler once wrote with profound intuition that 'Culture is ever synonymous with religious creativeness'. The hope of a restoration of human powers lay in the time of Purandara as in our times, primarily in the awakening of our true spiritual dynamics. Humanity needs martyrs, and Purandara by his dedication to Hari, by personal example and great character, rare heroism, by love and suffering, cut the deepest channels in the souls of human beings and revealed the most precious of God's secrets.

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