

SIDDHARAMESHWAR: AN INFLUENTIAL SHIVASHARANA IN THE VEERASHAIVA MOVEMENT

Abdul Shekh Nasir

Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering, Amity School of Engineering & Tech, AMITY University, Raipur, 492001, Chhattisgarh, India

Received: 10 September 2020

Revised: 05 October 2020

Accepted: 13 November 2020

ABSTRACT

South India had significant social and religious transformations in the 12th century. Only the Veerashaiva sect, led by Saint Basavesvara, was responsible for its growth. Together with Allama Prabhu and other Shivsharanas, Basavesvara helped the reformist movement gain traction in South Maharashtra, which was united by shared political affiliations as well as proximity in geography and culture. Many Shiva devotees from Maharashtra, such as Siddharameshwar of Sonnalige (modern-day Sholapur in Maharashtra), contributed significantly to the spread of the Veerashaiva egalitarian movement.

SIDDHARAMESHWAR: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Siddharameshwar was a Veerashaiva Shivasharana¹ who was contemporary of Saint Basavesvara. He attained the title of Karmayogi on the strength of selfless so characteristics of his historical figure, the study of his life and work is important in the cultural history of medieval Maharashtra as well as South India.

The sole modern account of Siddharameshwar's life is found in the Siddharama Charite or Siddharama Purana, a Kannada treatise authored by Raghavanka, a pupil of Harihar, a Kannada poet from the 12th century AD who lived in Hampi.² The work of Siddharameshwar was recorded by the Vachanas, or poetry, of the districts of Mandya and Chitradurga in Karnataka, as well as Solapur and Osmanabad in Maharashtra.

Historians disagree on Siddharameshwar's life, despite the fact that he was a contemporary of famous Shivsharanas such as Basavesvara and Allama Prabhu, as well as other religious and political figures of the Middle Ages. According to Dr. Bhandarkar, who based his opinions on the Ingaldi inscription (Gulbarga District), Siddharameshwar must have been buried before 1209, but Dr. Nandimath believes that the reign of Siddharameshwar was approximately 1160 A.D.³ According to Marathi and English literature produced in Solapur based on Ragavanka's work, Siddharameshwara lived from 1088 to 1189 A.D. Prominent Maharashtra academics such as Dr. Ramachandra Dhere and Gonvid Pai agreed with the same time frame provided by Dr. Kottrashetty. Siddharameshwara is generally thought to have lived from 1130 to 1180.

Siddharameshwar was born at Sonnalige, (Modern Solapur, Maharashtra) in the Kudavakkalinga Kunbi family. Mordi Mudaagowda was the chief or gauda of the Nadu (A administrative unit) his father and Suggaladevi was his mother.⁴ According to tradition new born child as Dhuli Mahankala after the name of his family deity.⁵ later on he became well known as Siddharama when he followed Nathasiddha tradition. However, from the inscriptions, his names are found as Ramayya, Ramnatha, Ramnathdev, Siddhanath, Siddharamnath, Siddharam, Siddharameshwar, Shivayogi Siddharam etc. even today the name Siddharameshwar is prevalent among the locals.

At Srisaila, Siddharameshwar was Mallikarjuna's most devoted follower. He was a native devotee and cowherd in his early years. He saw Mallikarjuna after traveling to Srisaila. He built the Srisaila Mallikarjuna temple at Sonnalige so that he would always be close to Mallikarjuna. For this reason, the inscriptions name Sonnalige, or modern-day Solapur, as the site of a visit by Allama Prabhu, a patron of Shivsharana of the Veerashaiva sect,

and his disciples who were involved in social service as new Srisaila or Siddharameshwara. Allama Prabhu encouraged Siddharameshwar to visit Kaylan and undergo Ishtlinga initiation during this visit.⁹ Similarly, Siddharameshwar received Istlinga initiation from Channabasveshwar in Kaylan (now Basvakalyan, the capital of the Chalukays).¹⁰ The arrival of Siddharameshwara at Kalyana was a significant event, but Chennabasveshvara's initiation of Istlinga was a more significant event in the history of the Virasaiva faith, according to Dr. R.C. Hiremath, a Veerashaiva scholar. King-like power was wielded by Siddharameshwara himself over the masses. ¹¹ Siddharameshwar thereafter served as the Acharya of Anubhav Mantapa ¹², which Saint Basaveshwar had founded in Kalyan. The Kalyana Kranti, sometimes called the Kalyan Revolution, was a religious and political upheaval that Kalyan had to endure in 1167. Following that, Siddharameshwara went back to Sonnalige and either entombed himself alive while doing yoga or took Yoga Samadhi. A large fair is held annually in honor of Siddharameshwar, who is now revered as the village deity of Solapur.

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SIDDHARMESHWAR'S HISTORICAL PERSONALITY

The sources like inscriptions and Vachanas or Veerashaiva literature reflects the various aspects of his historical figure. Siddharameshwar was a saint poet of the Veerashaiva sect, he was also a great yogi who attained Ashtamasiddhi (eight types of siddhis or eight types of super human or super natural powers). He was a popular and active social worker. He was a humanitarian preacher as well as an influential Shivsharana which had an impact on his contemporaries. He was also the creator of the highest quality literature which has an invaluable place in the medieval Kannada literature's.

YOGI KULA CHAKRAVARTI

It appears that Siddharmeshwar was recognized with Yogikulachakravarti, Yogiraj, and Yoginatha because of his extraordinary power in yoga. "Yogi should be like me," Siddharameshwar himself stated in one of his Vachana. His superiority in yoga was openly praised by his peers. The Mahavalinga Kalleshwar sect refers to Siddharameshwar as the Yogi of the Yogis. According to M. Chidananda Murthy and Dr. Nandimath, Siddharameshwar was a disciple of Pashupata Lakulisha Sampradaya during his formative years. Dr. P.B. Desai claims that as Srisaila was a well-known location in Kalamukha Pashupata, Siddharameshwar may have been drawn to the area and finished his yoga practice there. Siddharmeshwar's yoga skills have been referenced even in primary texts like inscriptions. Inscribed at Phadakanuru (Padiyakanur) in the Bijapur area in 1256 AD, under the reign of Krishnadeva Yadav, Siddharameshwar is known as "Siddhendra Chakravarti," or the supreme sovereign among the leading Siddhas.¹⁴ In the Budarsingi inscription of 1257, Sonnalige means modern Solapur is mentioned as a 'Yogramniya Kshetra' or the land of Yoga. ¹⁵ Due to Siddharmeshwar's authority in yoga, Sonnalige must have become famous in the field of yoga. From this discussion, it can be seen that Siddharameshwar was a great yogi who attained Ashtamasiddhi in the practice of Yoga.

SIDDHARAMESHWARA: A CREATOR OF LITERATURE

The period of Siddharameshwar is considered to be the golden age of Kannada literature. Along with Basaveshvara's, his prominent associates like Jedara Dasimayya, Allama prabhu, Chennabasveshvara, Akkamahadevi etc. and number of common Shivsharanas laid also became an integral part of the social revolution by his literary

Vachanas Mishrastotra Tripadi, Basavastotra Tripadi, Ashtavarana Stotra Tripadi, Kaldnyana, and Mantragopya, among others, were written by the Veerashaiva poet Siddharameshwar. ¹⁶ When performing Veerashaiva, he uses Kapilsiddha Mallikarjuna as his signature or Mudrita in Vachana. In his writings, Siddharameshwar honors Saint Basaveshwar and his teacher Chennabasveshvara, as well as his beloved deity Kapilsiddha Mallikarjuna of Srisaila (one of the 16 Jyotirlingas).

Vachana literature holds a significant position among Siddharameshwar's literary creations. The five lines that make up this Vachana literature. Each poem ends with the name of the poet's beloved deity, known as Mudrita

or Signature, or the Guru. Among the Veerashaiva saints of his time, Siddharmeshwar was one of the most generous. In Karnataka and Maharashtra, his Vachanas are also inscribed in every inscription that is currently accessible. Even though Siddharmeshwar is credited with writing 68,000 verses, only 1400 of them are currently accessible.¹⁸ His experiences of seeing his beloved deity Kapilsiddha Mallikarjuna are revealed in the Vachanas of Siddharmeshwara. They demonstrate ethics, karma, religion, and spirituality. His character was also evident at the Vachanas, where he served as a devoted organizer, a proactive public figure, a humanitarian philosopher, and a morally promoting guide.

ACTIVE SOCIAL WORKER

Due to Siddharmeshwar's active social work, he has to be given a unique place in the contemporary Veerashaiva Shivsharanas. The social activities like creation of huge reservoirs, tanks, provision of food and education facilities, innovative experiments this inscription, it seems that the importance of Sonnalige was not reduced even after the life period of Siddharmeshwara. Siddharmeshwara is considered as pioneer of the mass weeding tradition, Raghavanka, his biographer also confirmed this event.¹⁹ He also established a monastery and an Ashrama for the religious and educational purpose. Dr. sect, Basaveshwar is considered to be a symbol of devotion. Chennabasveshvara is considered to be the symbol of knowledge, Allama Prabhu is considered to be the symbol of asceticism, Akkamahadevi is considered to be the actual idol or symbol of Sharana Sati and Lingapati, while Siddharmeshwar is considered to be the doer of karma. Siddharmeshwar himself, however, was never proud of his social work. On the contrary, mentioning that this act was done in obedience to Kapilsiddha Mallikarjuna, Siddharmeshwar in his one Vachana said, "People call me Dani by constructing lakes, wells, gardens, shelters, food pantries, but I am not a Dani, I have done this as you (Kapilsiddha Mallikarjuna) have said."²¹

INFLUENTIAL SHIVSHARANA

Siddharmeshwara was one of the most significant Shivsharanas of his time, as evidenced by his social and spiritual contributions. In the 12th century A.D., the Karnataka-based Veerashaiva Shivsharanas undoubtedly contributed significantly to the spread of new religious and reformist ideas. But Sonnalige, or a contemporary Solapur, was Siddharmeshwar's focus. As a result, Siddharmeshwar is unquestionably responsible for the Veerashaiva sect's expansion throughout the Solapur, Sangali, Kolhapur, and South Maharashtra areas as well as the Marathwada frontier region, which includes Osmanabad, Latur, and Nanded. It is confirmed by the inscriptions found in this region at Nilegaon, Toramba, and Itakala. The Siddharmeshwara inscriptions. He was also hailed as "such true Shiva-yogi" by Chennabasveshvara, Siddharmeshwara's sectarian instructor. "Siddharama's Samadhi (mausoleum) became my Samadhi, because I am his lovely daughter and he gave me blessings or Kripa Prasad out of compassion," Akkamahadevi stated, highlighting her unbreakable bond with Siddharmeshwar. Siddharmeshwara was therefore important to Maharashtra's religious and cultural history in the twelfth century. Generations of people in South Maharashtra and a portion of northern Karnataka have been profoundly impacted by his ideas, teachings, and social actions.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A devotee of Lord Shiva or Shivabhakta is called Shivasharana in Veerashaiva sect.
2. Rice Edward Peter, A History of Kanarese Literature, 2 nd edition Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1921, pp 60-61
3. Kumbhar Anand, Sanshodhan Taranga (Marathi), Navabharata Prakashana Sanstha, Mumbai, 1988 p.155

4. Quarterly journal of the Mythic society vol.14, Bangalore, Oct. 1923., p. 291
5. Kalyanshetti S.M, Shivayogi Siddharam (Marathi), Sudarshana Press, Solapur, 1935 p.5
6. Rice B. Lewis, (Ed.), Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. VIII- Inscriptions in the Shimoga District, Part II- Mysore Archaeological Series, Mysore Government Central Press (Bangalore), 1904, p..90
7. Pasarkar S.D, (Ed.), Shri Shiddharameshwaranchi Vachane, (Marathi) Vol. 1, Shri Shiddheshwara Devasthan Panch Committee, Solapur, 1998, p. 204
8. Rice B. Lewis, (Ed.), op.cit. pp.90-91
9. Istlinga is an ideal of infinity which the Veerashaiva followers always wears upon his breast.
10. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay, Asiatic Society, Vol. 8. Bombay 1872, pp. 210
11. Wodeyar S. S., (Ed.) Sri Basavesvara, Eight Centenary Commemoration Volume, Govt.of Mysore, Bangalore, 1967, p.481
12. Anubhav Mantapa was a spiritual organization or spiritual parliament established by Saint Basavesvara at Kalyana, (Present Basvakalyan in Bidar District) Where the meetings and discussions on the spiritual and philosophical themes were held. For details see Desai P.B., Basavesvara and His Times, Kannada Research Institute, Karnataka University, Dharwad, 1968, pp.185-86
13. Dr. M.M. Kalburgi, & Nagbhushana Swamy (Ed.), Vachana, Basava Samithi, Bangalore, 2012, p.683
14. Sircar D.C., (Ed.) South Indian Inscriptions Vol. XV (Bombay-Karnataka Inscriptions Vol. II), Archaeological Survey of India, Delhi,1964, p.233
15. Sircar D.C., (Ed.) Epigraphia Indica, Vol. 36, Archaeological Survey of India, Delhi,1970, pp.164-65
16. Nandimath S.C, A Handbook of Virasaivism, Basel Mission Press, Mangalore, 1941, pp 33-34
17. Kumara Swamiji, The Veerashaiva philosophy and mysticism, Published by V. R. Koppal, Dharwar, 1949., pp.2-4
18. Pasarkar S.D, (Ed.), op.cit. p.40
19. Menase Krushna, Shri Basavesvara te Shri Dnyaneshwara: Ek Chintan (Marathi), Lokvagmaya Gruha, Mumbai, 1996, p.20
20. Dhere R.C., Shikhar Shiganapurcha Shri Sambhu Mahadev, Shri Vidya Prakashana, Pune,2001, pp 243-44