

# Siddharameshwara - Saint of Virasaivism

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**Introduction:** Among the immortals of Virasaivism, Siddharameshwara finds a distinguished place along with Basavanna, Chennbasavanna, Prabhudeva and others. Siddharama was one of the well known personalities of the twelfth century. He was a devotee of god and belonged probably to the Lakulisa-Pasupatha Shaiva sect. He was a social worker with the zeal of a missionary. He was certainly an historical person. Since references to him are found as Siddharama of Sonnalige, the present Sholapur, Maharashtra. Here can be seen to this day the Lingas he installed. The temples and tanks he built and other relics of his activity.

**Sources :** There are many sources which under the authentic sources Palkurike Somanatha's Someshwara Purana, Virakta Tontadarya's work Siddheshwara Purana, Shantalingeshwara Bhairaveshwara Kavyakatha Sutra Ratnakara, Lakkanna Dandesa's Sivatatva-Chintamani, Raghavanka's

Siddharama Charitra, Harihara's Prabhudevara Ragale, Bhimakaviya Basavapurana, Jayadevi Lingade, Siddharameshwara Purana etc. In all these Virasaiva prose, Kavya and Puranas we find the mentioned the name of Siddharameshwara. In the Sunyasampadane the third and the tenth chapter are devoted to him.

Vachana Shastra is another important and relatively modern source of Virasaiva literature and Vachanakaras. Vachana literature contains the compositions of Devar Dasimayya, Allama Prabhu. Basaveshwara, Channabasaveshwara, Siddharameshwara, Akka Mahadevi, etc. Vachana literature is also called Vachanadeva. Vachanas are Agama-oriented. Therefore, it is also called Vachanagama. Both the term - Vachana and Vachanagama, are used for Vachana literature. Vachanas are also authoritative and authentic sources of Virasaiva religion from the point of view of history and literature. These Vachanas also focuses on

Siddharameshwara thoughts and religion. Not only Literary but some of 22 inscriptions give us information about the Siddharama of Sholapur under the inscription Budasingi, Ghadalsnur etc. In these inscriptions 1190 along with Kapilsiddhamallikarjuna mentioned. It shows that he was the contemporary of Basavanna.

**Brief life of Siddharameshwara:** He was one of the outstanding Vachanakara. There are many Vachanas , inscriptions , legends and narratives about his life. He was born in Sonnalige (Sholapur in present day Maharashtra). Muddagowda was his father and Suggle his mother. Dhooli Maakala was the deity of his family. Parents named him Dhuli Maakala as he was born with the blessings of Revannasiddha and later on he became well-known as Siddharama when he followed Nathasiddha tradition. In his beyond days he was cowherd and a naïve devotee. When he reached adulthood, he began to show the traditional qualities of the Peasant stock manliness, truthfulness and bluntness.

While he was tending the cattle in the forest as a boy, he brooded over Shiva. He spent his time otherwise in worshipping Shiva. He worshipped Lord Shiva and one day without telling his parents and leaving the cattle in his care to fend for themselves, Siddharama joined a band of pilgrims

bound for Srisaila.

After his return from Srisaila Siddharama left the family of his birth for good. He took to the life of renunciation, and established a Matha, along with his brother. Once he underwent spiritual transformation, he gave up his allegiance to the traditional Desi deity of Makala.

In his place, he enshrined Lord Kapila Siddhamallikarjuna in his heart, as his personal deity. Siddharama was a great social worker in his time. Siddharama had a desire to convert Sholapur into another Srisaila. It was in the realization of this aspiration that he set about the establishment of Linga , the building of a temple for it, surrounded by a tank. He was the head of a monastery and had a large following. His place Sonnalige (Sholapur of Maharastra) was a small village; he built it into a big town. He constructed numerous temples in other places also. He constructed a huge reservoir -which is still in tact in Sholapur, for 'the benefit of men, feasts, insects and all'. He was a kind man who rescued many poor people from their debts. He arranged mass marriage in his temple and helped poor people perform their marriages with minimum expenditure. His contemporaries looked upon him as God Himself.

Siddharama regarded this activity as pure and holy activity, and he

dreamed of merging into Shiva through such activity. He saw before him only one path to his goal, the path of work and worship. Thus Siddharamas work is to uplift the people, help the needy and worship the God Kappilsiddhamallikarjuna. It was Allama Prabhu who first diverted Siddharama from his path of work and turned him towards a life of renunciation. Allama transform him from a yogi into a Shivayogi. Hence he proposed that Siddharama should accompany him to Kalyana, which was then the home of Basavanna and Istalinga worship.

But there was no entrance into Basavanna's Anubhava Mantapa for one who had no Istalinga. Siddharamayya had accordingly to learn it secret. So he was invested with Istalinga, and it seems that the ceremony was performed by Chennabsavanna as his Guru and then dedicated of the Lingayat religion and society. Eventually, his life's efforts were crowned with the signal honour of being made the president of the hall of Shiva experience.

**Siddharameshwara's Vachanas:** In the early age he was involve in the social work to get the salvation. Later on turned as spiritualist. More than 1378 Vachanas written on Kappilsiddhamallikarjuna. They show his belief that the world is God's worship and equanimity of mind is the supreme achievement.

He has prepared what other Vachana-writers have done. His Vachanas are generally short, limpid, well-cadenced and expressive of a simple idea. It would not be an exaggeration if it is said that Siddharama excels many Vachana-writers in the art of expressing difficult subjects in a most perspicuous way. His Vachanas do not abound in technical terms common to the Virasaiva philosophy. So we find simplicity, not symbolism, in his Vachanas. In his Vachanas we find the Trividi style mostly. In his teachings he mentioned the Ishwara ( God) , Jiva ( life) , Prakruti ( nature) along with his devoted God Kapilsiddhamallikarjuna. This Kapilasiddhamallikarjuna was also a Ankitanama of Siddharama.

### **Siddharameshwara's Thoughts relevance to Modern Times:**

Devoting himself mostly to the work of the all, he realized his own path of monism and the body -linga identity. This was his contribution to the movement initiate by Basavanna in medieval Karnataka. At the same time, another well-known Vacanakara of the 12th century, Sonnalige Siddharama, upheld the superiority of womanhood, he also opposed the inferior views of men toward the women community. He agreed that, woman in no way inferior to man. He upheld the nobility and greatness of womanhood. He expressed his views by this following Vachana:

*"Women is not just a female sex  
Women is not a demoners even  
Women is the very embodiment of God  
Kapila Siddha Mallikarjuna"*

The "free atmosphere" created by Basaveshwara and other Vachanakaras enabled many a woman folk to possess "self-knowledge" and to give expressions to their experiences in the form of Vacanas. The Vacanas of Akkamahadevi, of Muktayakka, of Neelalocane, of Molige Mahadeviyamma, of Amugi Rayamma and the like stand testimony to the fact. The Sunyasampadane give us the information of these five women will make apparent their three basically distinct responses-militant rejection, reluctant independence, and accommodation-to the tension between social expectation and the call to spiritual perfection.

Siddharama, a contemporary of Basaveshwara, has extolled the greatness of the Vachanas in his Vachana thus; 'The precursor' Vachana opened up the inner eye and ensured mental equilibrium by freeing the mind from the six internal enemies viz, lust, anger, greed, desire, arrogance and jealousy, the seven kinds of grief, Carnal pleasures and the ten evil elements.'

*Being alive in the root cause of anger,  
Being in the body is the root cause of desire,  
Moving in the world is the root cause*

*of greed,  
Wiping out such desire,  
Show me the good of siva-yoga,  
O father, Kapilsiddhamallikarjuna.*

The symbolic Linga, an oval round object, duly consecrated has assumed the highest importance in the Virasaiva religion and philosophy. It symbolises the God Shiva himself. Shiva is to be worshipped in the form of Linga secured only through the Guru, the spiritual preceptor and guide, at the time of Diksha or initiation. This is called Istalinga. This is to be worn on one's body at all times and never to be separated. On account of this symbolic emphasis, which is its outstanding characteristic, the followers of this system are aptly called Lingayats. Worship of Linga consecrated in a temple or shrine is not favoured in virasaivism. Strictly speaking, it is even prohibited. This Linga is called Sthavara or immovable Linga. This Linga is worn both by males and females irrespective of caste, class, colour, age and nationality. Virasaivism keeps the path of realization open to all the persons. Siddharama mentioned importance of Linga in one of his Vachana:

*Once the Linga is as the anga,  
And the anga is as the linga,  
Oneness with linga is as with anga,  
Oneness with anga is as with linga!  
Since all our words ring hollow,  
When mind is as the linga,  
And linga is as the mind,*

*When the word is one with linga,  
And linga-oneness is as the sound,  
Where is the room for clash of words?  
O Kapilasiddha Mallinatha,  
Do you , O Lord , make clear  
Whether or no, henceforth,  
You I should seek as God.*

Siddharama said that the idea -that does not make a man great, mere reading does not make a man great, offering of flowers and leaves does not make a man great, and any amount of preaching does not make a man great unless he realizes the light within. Siddharama said in his Vachana:

*When the world is within the self,  
Why have any truck with world, O  
Lord ?  
After the self becomes the touchstone,  
Why the pride of gold, O father ?  
After becoming kamadenu,  
Why the pride of other cattle,  
O Lord Kapilsiddhamallikarjuna.*

Siddharama mentioned good qualities of a Scholar in one of his Vachana :

*One who utters the Vachana  
And does not experience it  
Is a demon.*

*One who utters the Vachana  
And experience it  
Is a scholar*

*Learning belongs to one who works  
for it,  
Ignorance is possessed by everyone.  
One who knows the difference*

*Between learning and ignorance ,  
And is known to the world  
Is a supreme scholar,  
Kapillasiddha Mallikarjuna.*

Basava's influence on him mentioned in his Vachana:

*Basava's image is motivating force for  
meditation,  
Basava's fame is source of knowledge,  
Uttering Basava, Basava itself con-  
notes  
devotion Kapila siddha  
Mallinathayya,*

**Tribute:** Many Sharanas, both men and women have paid tributes to Siddharamesvara. The following may be quoted among others.

"I gained through Siddharamayya one-pointed faith----- **Allama Prabhu**

"Siddharameshwara is the Sivayogi who can be Linga himself and himself be Linga"--**Chennabasavanna.**

"Following Basavanna , the Jangamalinga Siddharamayya became as Basavanna"---Nilambike

He went to serve the human and behave the all others with as a human being, treaty equally along with animals and get the salvation. He was totally against those people who are after wearing Istalinga they praised other Gods. It means he was totally involved his Anga to Paralinga. So many of his Vachanas influence the common people and they attracted the Virasaivism. Thus he was considered

one of the greatest Sivayogi of the 12th century of Karnataka. For literary point his Vachana are precious one. A common person easily understands that and he also made Kannada literature rich through his Vachanas. In the Siddharama's Vachanas he also criticizes the existing blind beliefs, social evils, superstitions where the common people follow those things. Siddharama stated the man's mind is the main thing to decide the right and wrong path on this earth. He criticize when the happiness comes they praise the God when sadness comes they God's angry. So he says that it is the inner heart which give the correct direction to man.

**Conclusion:** -- Siddharama, a native of Sonnalige, modern Sholapur, was another great writer of Vachanas. He was a Karma-yogi. His compositions proclaim the great ideal of wiping every year from every eye. In Siddharama's Vachanas he mentioned the souls salvation, Basavanna's influence on him, Allama converted him to Virasaivism and how the Chenabasavanna as his Guru. So Siddharama was one of the greatest popular Sivayogi of Sholapur. Till today also his sayings influence on his devotees. And the tank, temples, Mathas were existing along with that his Vachanas which are great medicine to solve our internal and outer problems.

So he was a great Shivayogi of the 12th century. Siddharama was a spiritual force that played an important

role in the Virasaiva movement. Prabhudeva and Akkamahadevi belong to one type; Basavanna and Siddharama belong to another type. They are Bhakti Oriented. With the wisdom of life. So the sayings of Siddharama are free from any poetic embroidery. . Thus the meaning and content of Vachanas are broad, effective and sublime. It has the great quality of elevating man to godhood. The liberty, equality, fraternity, social dignity, social justice and humanity the message Vachanakaras are not confined to any particular region or person but all men and women of nations of the world. Because the importance of Vachanas Siddharama and other Vachanakaras Vachanas translated into many (23) languages like English, Hind Telugu, Marathi Tamil etc by Basava Samithi Bangalore.

Siddharama's thoughts still follower the many Virasaivas as well as other lover of literature went through his Vachanas and find their own path to get the salvation.

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