



Stavarakkalivuntu Jangamakkalivilla !

World's greatest liberal and the champion of the downtrodden, Basavanna of 12th century A.D from Karnataka, India has written thousands of vachanas. Each and every one vachana is full of wisdom and dripping with humanity.

One of his more famous sayings is, “*inanimate shall perish; animate shall not perish*”. That means mere physical structures – however great they are – will come down one day and cease to exist but the wisdom or knowledge shall never cease to exist. In other words don't worship or glorify the crust but experience and enjoy the pulp, its essence.

If ever there was a priceless pearl of wisdom then this is it. Humanity is forever grateful to Basavanna for giving such a sound and practical guideline.

Basavanna arrived at a time when building temples, monuments and other structures were deemed an ultimate achievement. They built great temples but did not allow the majority to enter inside or to come near it! They put the omniscient God inside the *sanctum sanctorum* and protected the omnipotent God by locking him inside!

How ridiculous! Basavanna saw through this *tamasha* and so said, “God or ultimate truth is everywhere. Don't search for Him

outside, search thyself. Don't confine Him to one place or one caste. Your body itself is the temple, your consciousness is your *Guru*. Because mere mortal buildings or bodies shall definitely perish but the wisdom (*Jangama*) shall not perish”.

So far more people have died in the name of God and religion than for any other reason. All this insanity for the sake of perishable things! Is there any meaning to such atrocities on humanity? It is a shame on the mankind which claims to be the most intelligent and rational of living beings! Ignore the perishables. Preserve the imperishable *gnana* (wisdom) which is truly eternal in nature. That is the essence of Basavanna's saying.

Buddha, Mahavira, Jesus Christ, Basavanna and other great philosophers have all died. But their wisdom lives on. The compassion they showed is still remembered with a lump in the throat.

Mahatma Gandhiji – Abraham Lincoln – Martin Luther king are not here now. But the principles they preached and practiced are still revered everywhere.

Valmiki – Vyasa – Kalidasa – Shakespeare – Dante – Homer – Marx have all expired. But their works have attained immortality.

Leonardo Da Vinci – Picasso – Mozart are not here. But the world still remembers them with reverence.

Darwin has died. But fierce debates are still going on regarding his theory. He is very much here!

One can go on and on. There is no dearth of great souls. However the moral of the story is very simple and crystal clear Viz.,

“Physical structures or individuals are not important. Knowledge or wisdom is important, because it is immortal!”

Institution is always important than the individual. If we lose sight of this golden principle, then we are lost in mediocrity.

Recently Haiti was devastated by an earthquake. Hundreds of thousands of people died including thinkers, artists, sportsmen etc. Our prayers are with the families, we pray god give strength to the families and peace to the departed souls. The wisdom attained by the departed souls is left behind. It never dies. It evolves and goes on evolving. This is how one can defeat and defy death – becoming immortal by one’s achievements and the knowledge one leaves behind.

Finally, what lesson should we - the most rational humankind learn from all this? Simple, start behaving rationally! Don’t think and act like we are inheritors. Remember we are trustees to the FUTURE! If we behave irresponsibly and leave behind us a chaotic world, posterity will curse us.

So let’s bury all the hatchets. Let’s forget our egos, let’s get rid of our pettiness. Instead let’s start showing compassion towards others. Let’s learn to discern between the inanimate and the animate. And so let’s make this world a great place to live in by our wisdom.

Sharanarathi

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