Chapter : V

MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF SRI VEMANA
India that is Bharat is not a mere geographical entity. India is an immortal Idea. India is a comprehensive, harmonizing state of mind in sun, unity of spirit.

Referring to India, the ancient Romans used to say:

- *Ex oriente lux;*
- *Ex occidenta lex;*
- *Out of the east, light*
- *Out of the west, laws*

From time immemorial, the wisest of men from all parts of the world have turned to India in quest of truth, insearch of answers to such questions as to the nature of the man, the why, the what, whence and the where of problems phychological, epistemological, ontological, ethical and axiological, the enquiry into the nature of Being itself, the question of purpose and values of life. Above all the pathway to reality which is existence, consciousness and Bliss-sat-chit-Ananda.

The values of India's ageless culture traveled far and wide in the past, from Rome and Alexandria in the west to China and Japan in the east. India in turn gained in many ways from its far-fling contacts. Then followed a long night. India to day is striving again to revivify those spiritual and cultural exchanges- to give and take that which is best in every great culture to build up a common wealth of Faith, values and cultures.¹

"Aa no Bhadra Kratavo yantu veratah"² This Vedic prayer means" Let noble thoughts be come to us from every side".

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This prayer welled up from the innermost recesses of our seers more than 3000 years ago and runs like a golden thread through all our history to his day.

Swami Vivekananda has averred that “the whole world can be virified, made strong and energized through the Vedas. They well call the trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable and the down trodden of all creeds, all sets to stand on their feet and to be free.”

Of all things desired by man, peace of mind is the most important. Neither health not wealth, neither fame nor status can be a substitute for this most valuable asset.

President Roosvelt promised his people the famous four freedoms during the second world war. These are freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom for want and freedom from fear. Americans have secured first three freedoms but the lost one- freedom from fear is still a distant goal.

Peace of mind broadly has too aspects the negative and the positive. On the negative side it involves the elimination of fear, worry, anger and such other emotions which sap vitality, and disturb inner harmony. On the positive side it means the deliberate and consistent practice of tranquility, serenity, patience and equanimity. It is, of course, not easy to eliminate the negative factors.

Religion has always played an important role in helping mankind to achieve mental peace. Religion has been a tremendous force for promoting peace and goodwill in the world. As Horace Bushnd has said, “the noblest charities, the best fruits of learning, the richest
discoveries, the best institutions of law and justice every greatest thing the world has seen represents more or less directly, the fruitfulness and creativeness of Religion.” To what extent religion will help man to find mental peace will, of course, depend on whether he adopts the right attitude do it. As Benjamin Desrach has observed, religion should be the rule of life, not a casual incident in it.”

“A mass movement is required to inculcate such virtues as self restraint, altruism, reverence for life, truth and justic, so that the gifts of science are used only for beneficial purposes. It is the special responsibility of Indian saints and sarvants; for in recent years there has been a sharp decline in moral values in our country and because India with her rich heritage of spiritual treasure is best fitted to play the role of world Teacher.”

There was an upsurge of new creeds like Bhakthi movement of the 15th to 17th centuries against the caste system. It was a protestant movement which had enlightened many talented artisans and intellectuals and peasants. Ramananda, Vallabhacharya, Chitanya, Nanak, Kabir das, Eknath, Tukaram, Tulasidas, Dadu, Lallu, Vemana were the prominent leaders of the Bhakthi movement. They belonged to different professions. Kabit was a wearer, Ravidas was a cobbler, sena a barber Rishi swapacha a tanner, Tukarama trader, Nandan and Nanak a Calico printer and trader, Dadu a cobbler. Thus there were a galaxy of religious leaders who enlightened and roused of the people to an awareness of social morality, human brotherhood and devotion to God.
Like the protestant movement in Europe in the 16th century, there was a religious, social and literary revival and reformation in India but notably in the Deccan in the 15th and 16th centuries. This revival was not Brahmanical in its orthodoxy; it was heterodox in its spirit of protest against forms and ceremonies, and class distinction based on birth and ethical in its preference of pure heart and of the law of love, to all other required merits and good works. The religious revival was the work also of the people, of the masses and not of the classes. At its heads were saints and prophets, poets and philosophers, who chiefly came from the lower orders of society, tailors, carpenters, potters, gardeners, shop keepers, barbers and even Mahars (scavengers) more than from Brahmins” (Jadunath sarkar), “Sivaji and his times” (1919 calcutta) p 13.14]

Vemana who imbibed the radical veera Saivite creed denounced those mendicants imposters and hypocrites. Disillusioned with similar sects masquerading as religious and spiritual orders he passed through a whole gamut of religious experiences participated in numerous debates with scholars and finally arrived at his own independent conclusions which were different from all other existing sects. His war an endless quest for truth. In his own life time his verses were translated into all the South Indian languages. His deep spiritual convictions, upright saintly life, and amazing poetical genius gathered around him sensitive intellectuals as well as common people, who preserved his verses and worshipped him after his death.

What is morality? Morality is rightousness, good behaviour, good qualities and good ideology combined with love, compassion, peace and honesty.
“Annie Besant said “That India as a nation is not dependent on an outer structure, economical or social; religious knowledge and awareness is the rock upon which India’s nationality is founded. This knowledge, since it concerns relationship and the ultimate destiny of all human beings, is linked with conduct knowledge in the true sense cannot be obtained without self purification. In every one of the great religions of world, this fact is stressed wisdom and right conduct are inseperable. Without ‘seela’ there can be neither prajna nor Samadhi”5

Religious must moralise the mankind. Without morality there is no religion. All religious essence is only one truth that is righteousness, beautitude and goodness.

Sri Vemana hated the weaknesses of all religions. He observed what happening before his eyes. His sharpened mind can distinguish between good and bad. He was all knower. Sri Vemana is independent saint poet. His is one man army. He decided to face the wretched society with his emotional powerful talent of poetry. He told his verses freely fearlessly and openly. He directly attacked upper classes exploitation, injustice, hypocrisy and violence.

There are sufeism, Sikkism, Din-il-ilahi and other several cults belongs to Bhakthi movement also preaching their ideologies to reform the society in north India. Kabirdas, Ravidas, Gurunanak, Tulasids and other great saints were in that movements. Their Hindi songs were schoing in northern part of India. In that period only the voice of Vemana raised and echoyed in the South India. Sri Vemana’s chief aim is to serve the poor the depressed and suppressed. He used his verses as
arrows like Savyasaachi (Arjuna) who can discharge with both hands the arrows from his quiter on enemies. His more poems shines like gims with sense of humour, wit and wisdom. His sympathies were always on the side of the poor.

His imperishable verses filled with love, compassion, honesty, charity, peace and univerel brother hood. He secured his seat as a moral poet in the galaxy of world poets. His disciples and lovers worship his holy sciptures keeping in a sacred place.

Vemana is more popular as a moral poet, saint and philosopher. He preached in simple local language for the public. The preaching of morals will create in common man good behaviour and good character. In those days the rich, feudal and priests changed the morals in their own accord. Vemana says the universal truths never be changed. He gave top most priority to the moral in his poetry. The morals are out come of his personal experiences. He was always in search of truth.

"The seer is better than listener who experienced the truth really greater than above"

"Vinnavaarikanna kannavadadhikundu kanna varikanna kaiyu vaadu Unnatonnatudayi urvilopal a Nandu"

The mean person always boosts about his greatness, status and power. A gentle man will talk always tenderly. Vemana compares the sound of the bronze to the gold which is more precious. Vemana says in this verse the stupid cannot hear good advice. More over he turns against his well wishers and abuses. It is like the farmer put the grass
before the brutal bull it turns to fight the grass giver.

Vemana said it is their nature we cannot mend them easily.

*Tanadu Melugori dharmambu cheppina
Tittuchundu morakuletta yeduta
Gaddiveya potla Goddu Kommadinchu
Vishwadabhirama*

"By birth babul tree has thorns from the seed it comes out thus wicked has the possessed all the bad qualities in his mind. We cannot change at any cost."

*Tummachettu mulu thodane puttunu
Vittulona nundi Vedalunatlu
Moorkhunakunu Buddhi munduga puttunu*

Vemana comments the richness and relationships in the following manner. What is the use of great wealth of a rich person who does not help the needy. What is the use of relationship, which does not help in calamity what is the use of a doctor that does not diagnose the disease.

*Badugu nerugaleni prabhavambadiyela
prodi idami bandhu bhuthi yela
Vyadhi Teliyanatti Vaidyudu mariyela"
VishwadabhiramaVinuraVema*

He condemned and abused the rich feudal and local rulers who are exploiting the poorer sections and the community with their power violently. They cannot escape from the clutches of the fate. He continued to give more moral poems as follows:
Giving of food to the hungry is the greatest deed of all. No body is greater than mother. The Guru who gives knowledge is ever honorable. In the view of Vemana food is God. Without food man cannot live in this world. Charity is great virtue. It gives him peace and happiness.

Mother gives body, shows affection and love till the end of her life. The Guru giving the knowledge shows the way for our lively hood. He moulds our character to live peacefully. We are always grateful to them.

Only that man is living man who feels the sufferings of his fellow men as his own. And when such a living man meditates upon the meaning of the life, and here after he becomes a supreme being. As a humanist Vemana emphasized the brother hood of mankind.
The washer man beats the cloth and wrings it to make it clean. What does it matter if the teacher chastises us to remove our ignorance? We should welcome such chastisement as it is intended to benefit us. Vemana intended to wash the wickedness in the humanity.

*Suguna Vanturalu Sudatiai yundina
Buddhi mantulayina putruloppa
Swargametikagya samsari kinkanu
Vishwadabhirama Vinura Vema*¹⁴

If wife is obedient and chaste woman, the sons are clever and disciplined what for the heaven to a house holder. Vemana says Sansara yoga is greater than all yogas.

*Aalimatlu Viri Annadammula rosi
Verupadedu vaadu verrivaadu
Kukka Toka patti godavarraduna
Vishwadabhirama Vinura Vema*¹⁵

One who believes the sweet words of his wife the backbiter and hates his brothers to separate from the joint family is a fool and henpecked. Vemana compares him one who wants to cross Godavary with the help of a dog’s tail. Vemana likes Joint families. There is development and achievement in co-operative effort.

*Talli biddalakunu Tagavulu buttinehu
Dhanamu sukhamu kurchadani vachintru
Kani gadanaleka gadachuta Etlura
Vishwadabhirama Vinura Vema*¹⁶

Money creates enmity between mother and sons. Somebody says money cannot give happiness and peace. Vemana asks how to get food without earning money?
Some says, with folded hands

(Matatasu virodhay Hiranyaksh namo namah)
Salutations to thee oh. Wealth who creates
Enmity between mother and sons.)

Vemana says if your mind is in your control, money cannot do any harm. Every body should work hard to earn money for his lively hood and to help others. It is human labour that can produce every thing.

Money is the source of courage without courage man cannot achieve anything.

"Dhanamulamidam Jagath
Dhryam sarvatra Sadhakam"
Kanutu poyina vaadu kaltu poyina vaadu
Ubbhayularaya Gudi yundinatu
Peda pedagudi pena goni undunu
Viswadabhirama Vema¹⁷

Naturally the poor mingles with poor. There is no scope to go nearer to others. The blind and the lame will be united because of their disabilities. Vemana appeals the poor to be united. Then only they will become strong.

Puli adettidanna Bhuloka Mrigaraju
Kali adetti danna Kaanradu
Puliyu kaliyu kanna bhuvi naakaliye Hechehu
Vishwadabhirama Vinura Vema¹⁸

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The Tiger is the king of the forest. It is cruel. It rules all beings in the forest. Kali is the name of present era. It means time. Time is invisible. It is endless and beginningless. On this earth aakali(hunger) greater than puli(Tiger) and kali(Time). Tiger is a cruel beast. All the animals in the forest are frightened by the tiger. It kills and eats the animals in the forest cruelly to satisfy its hunger. Kali is invisible. Vemana the prophet of humanity says the hunger is more terrible than any thing on the earth. Hunger is a fire. It destroys and kills the human beings.

Poverty is the root cause of hunger. We must satisfy hungry by giving of food. It is our duty to help the disabled poor. Helping nature leads a man to supreme goal. Vemana said many verses with painful and merciful voice about the hunger and poverty.

\textit{Kaligina manujundu Kamundu somundu}

\textit{Migula tejamunanu Melagu chundu}

\textit{Vitta heenadayina rittayai povura}

\textit{Vishwadabhirama Vinura Vema}^{19}

A rich man seems like Manmatha (The most handsome) and Soma (the most beautiful) to the people. His status in the society is very high. Richness brings all pleasures and authorities and covers his inabilities and weaknesses.

The same man when loses his wealth becomes pauper and useless. So the money is only the criteria which show man's position in the society.
If there is a small ulcer on the back side of a rich man the news is propagated all over the area with in short time. If a marriage takes place in a poor man’s house cannot be recognized however auspicious it may be even by the neighbor also.

People gather around the rich man like frogs that appear in the tanks in the rainy season and like the flies moves around the Jaggery. If a rich man falls ill many of the people attend him to show their sympathy.

No body will care a poor man’s death.
“Money makes many things” (proverb)

There are three types of workers in the society. First type of people will escape without implementing legitimate work. He is cunning by nature. The second type of people always chattering and boastings. They act as capable but they are useless. The third type people who are energetic and efficient will keep quite and can achieve whatever it may be.
Vemana admires the third type of people who are always active.

*Annamadhikamaina Nadiyu ta champunu*
*Annamantakunna Aatma nochehu*
*Champanompa Buvva chalada Veyyela*\(^{22}\)

A glutton will die with more food. A poor man will die with hunger without no food. Food is the only cause for life and death. A man should know the discrimination of good and bad. Man must control his mind and go in a proper way.

*Marma merugaleka Matamulu kalpinchi*
*Urvi dukkulagudu rokari kokaru*
*Gajutinti kukka kalavala padu reethi*
*Vishwadabhirama Vinura Vema*\(^{23}\)

All the religious tell the same truth. The followers with narrow mindedness create quarrels as if their religion is superior to the other. Vemana used the grandest simile. The dog in a room fitted with mirrors all round astonish and afraid seeing so many dogs in the mirrors barks and barks and struggle with them because of maya and hits its head and dies. The man in the delusion cannot understand reality of the universe. He himself became a victim in this circuit by him.

*Bratuku Teruvulen Badugulandaru pedda*
*Yogi varula Manchu sagiraga*
*Bandavadu mundu Dandmbuliduduru*
*Vishwadabhirama....Vinura Vema*\(^{24}\)

Those who do not work and became lazy in guise of Swamijees, pathadhipathis, Mathadipathis and religious priests for their
lively hood deceiving the common people. The peasant masses became victims of not only secular authorities but also religious charlatans and hypocrites. Virasaivites, Vaishnavites and other sects degenerated to such an extent that, religion became the opium of people. Discovering observers like Vemana could see how the society reeled under the exploitation of parasitic poligars, Zamindars and renters. Vemana denounced the entire garment of traditional theology based on ancient scriptures and put forward an anti-feudal ideology and pleaded for economic amelioration of the poverty stricken people. In his quest for truth he discovered the inextricable link between wealth and caste poverty and economic exploitation, labour and life, theology and upper caste ideology Vemana was our foremost Anabaptist, the pioneer of social Protestantism and the morning star of our reformation.

*Ralla namniyunna Rajaadhirajulu*
*Kuti kedali Bhuvini Kuli chaniri*
*Rallu pagulagotti Rakshasa putrulu*
*Mallu nullu galigi maniri Vema.*

The kings and princes who trusted the stone gods have left their food, fallen and perished in the earth. The sons of demons who destroy these stones retain their villages and estates and live there (This is evidently aired at the Mohammadian government (estate is here Mahal, the Persian word)

*Kaniyuganaledu Kadalapadanoru*
*Viniyu Vinagaledu Vismayamuna*
*Sampada galavani sanhipatambidi*
*Vishwadabhirma Vinura Vema.*

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A rich man does not care for the poor because he is proud of his wealth. Though he pretends to see you he does not notice. He would not open his mouth and talk to you. He dislikes to hear the words of the people. This is the economic melody of the rich people. He feels that the wealth is permanent. He is in the illusion that he and his wealth are permanent.

*Kaaniivani toda kalisi melagu chunna*
*Kaaniivani valene kaanturavani*
*Taadi krinda paalu Taagina chandara*²⁷

Naturally a man is suspicious. If his friend and well wisher moving with his enemy he suspects his friend as enemy. A friend of an enemy is also enemy to him. If one who is taking mild under the Valmira the people suspect him that he is drinking Tadi.

*Emi gonchu Vachehe Emida gomipovu*
*Puttu vela narudu Gittal Vela*
*Dhanamadechati kegu Danegunechatiki*
*Vishwadabhirama Vinura Vema*²⁸

This is a philosophical verse of Vemana. Human life is temporary. Every thing on the earth is temporary. Everything passes away. Man does not know the mystery of his birth and death. He is in strong illusion. He brings nothing from the womb of his mother and takes nothing when he will leave this. All are actors. One may enter and plays his role and exits.
One who distributes his wealth and other’s wealth to needy with good heart he need not fear about his future. Definitely he will attain Salvation. It is hidden secret that if a man gives with heart and soul without expecting any returns. He definitely receives great result.

All religions are created by the narrow minded selfish fellows. For their pleasures and selfish ends these are founded by them. When wisdom has downed the religions wither away. Then only we can find out the real truth.

A guana will live a century, a serpent will creep for ten countries, and the crane will live in a pond for thousand years. He who possesses man’s wisdom is the only excellent one.
Braduku nityamanuchu Vaduruchu Vagameera
Virra veeguvaaru verrivaru
Pranullella yamuni Bari gorrelu suma

Those who boast always about his greatness beat his own trumpet are fools. They do not know that the life is a bubble in the water. All the sheep must go to the slang tow house.

Kukka yemerungu Gurün linga devuni
Nakka yemerungu Nokka proddu
Moorkhudemerungu Mokshampu Drovanu
Vishwadabhirama Vinura Vema

What does the dog know of the linga priests God? What does the fox know one meal a day fasting? What does the obstinate fool know of he path of beatitude?

Kanaka parvatamuna kapura nunnatti
Animishesukayina Aasa bodu
Kavacha kundalamulu Karnuni Adugadr
Vishwadabhirama Vinura Vema

‘Though his dwelling be on Meru the golden hill cupidity will not leave the God Indra himself. Did not he ask Karna for his armour and large earrings?’

Akulannda Fese Ekelandaga Jese
Kokalanda Jese Eekalandagajese
Manarakshanambu Maryada Janulaku
Vishwadabhirama Vinura Vema

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‘God provided leaves to the trees feathers to the birds, tails to the animals and cloths to the human beings to protect their secret parts.’ In the eyes of creator all creatures are equal. Especially he provided knowledge to human beings. So man is called supreme being.

“Thalli yunna yapudi thanadu garabambu
Ame pova thananu araya revaru
Manchi kalamapude maryada narjinchu”

In the lifetime nobody loves you like mother; she is a father, guru, God and well wisher. She sacrifices every thing for her children. She must be satisfied with your good deeds. After her death nobody will take care of you. Mother’s love is boundless and fathomless.

“Mrigamadambu chuda meeda nallaganundu
paridha villu dani parima lambu,
guruvulaina varigunamu lelaguna”

By appearance the mask of the deer is black in colour. But its sweet fragrance spreads to the surroundings and live long. A righteous guru looks like an ordinary man, but he gives imperishable knowledge to the disciple.

“Pappu leni kudu parula kasahyambu
Appulentvade adhikabaludu
Muppleni vade modalu sujnanundu”

With out the dhal curry the food is not be tasteful to any body. If a person is indebted to any body would become coward and weak. A man who is free from debts is called a gentle man. A sage who renounced all worldly pleasures had no danger form any body.
"Heenudenni vidya ila Nabhyasinchina
Ghanudegadu heena Janudegani
Parimalamula gardhabhamu moya ghanamoune"\textsuperscript{39}

A person who is very learned, highly intelligent, if he is wicked he is considered to be a stupid and is hated by the society because of his menial behaviour can we consider a donkey a great? Though it carries sandal woods

"Chittasudhi kaligichesina punyambu
konchamaina nadiyu koduvagadu
vittanambu marri Vrukshambunakunentha"\textsuperscript{40}

A man who does good deeds with pure heart however they may be small carry a great result. Just like a small seed of a banyan tree become great tree

"Geetha says"
"Swalpa mapyasya dharmasya
trayate mahato Bhayath"

A small good deed release you from a great fear.

"Gunayuthunaku melu gorantha jesina
konda yagunu vani gunamu chetha
konda koddimelu gunahennuderuguna?\textsuperscript{41}

If we give a small help to a righteous man it will become a big hill in future. If we give a great help to a wicked person. The result would be nothing before helping one should observe the quality of the receiver.
"Alpabuddhi vanikaddhi karamitchina
Dodda varinella tholaga gottu
Cheppudinedikukka cheraku theeperuguna?"²

A menial person if had a chance to occupy the seat of authority will definitely drive away the genuine people. A dog that bites cold meat tastes no canesweet? A bad person likes the bad people naturally, and hates good people naturally the dog does not like the sweetness of the sugar cane.

"Neellalona mosali Nigidi yenugu battu
Bayata kukkanacha bhangapadunu
Sthana balimikani thana balimikadayam"³

A crocodile can catch the elephant in its pen. Yet, it will fall a prey to a dog out sides its ken. It strength is in the place, but not one's own. Naturally each and every person has his own limits if he crosses the limit he will be useless.

"Nikkamaina manchi neela mokatchalu
Thaluku beluku rallu thattedela,
Chaduva padyamaraya chaladayokkati"⁴

It is enough that a single real sapphire stone which is precious. Why all these useless glittering stones. A single poem is enough which is worthy. Astrologically a sapphire stone is useful to remove the evils in the life. A single good verse lightens the mind.

"Paduguradu mata pattiyai dharajellu
vakkadadu mata Ekkadendu
Voorakunduvani voorellanoppadu"⁵

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Whether good or bad, majority opinion is acceptable. Single man's word is not taken into account. Vain talk will never be heeded.

"Kulamuchethabatti gumpinchanetike
paduvunnachota prabhalu vittu
yetikulambika Ekkadi dwijudaya"\textsuperscript{16}

Why do you distinguish the people on caste. The seeds will germinate in a fertile soil only. No body bothers for the caste system now and won't care for the Brahmin.

The scoeity was divided into chaturvarnas (1) Bhrahmin (2) Kshatriya (3) Vysya and (4) Shudra. One caste is superior to another caste. The Brahmins are placed on the top of the social ladder and enjoyed privileges in the society. Now there is no such situation in the society.
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