

Akkamahadevi: A Mystic Poetess

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Abstract: Akkamahadevi stands to this day not only as a sublime personality, a soul force conjoining devotion, wisdom, non-attachment but also as a pioneer of the Movement of Women's Emancipation. She is the first poetess of Kannada Language. She is a reputed pinnacle of the glory of Vachana literature and also as an ever shining example of a transcendental world –view a supreme mystical vision.

Key Words: Vachana, Devotion, Wisdom, Emancipation.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Akkamahadevi is unique in her spiritual attainment and expression of mystic experience in poetry. She has blended the mundane experience and ecstasy of supra mundane sensuousness in her Vachanas. Her quest and craving for the Divine Love is the core and theme in her mystical songs. She attributed her deepest love to her Divine Lover Chennamallikarjuna without the pomp of the world. In the life of common women there comes a time when fantasy begins to picture the lineaments of the man.

“She dreams of her marriage with the Lord the Creator. This dream signifies Akka's spiritual yearning and it reflects the subconscious mind of a mystic who craves for a spiritual union. Akka as a mystic poet reads and interprets the feminine urge to seek a bridegroom. She has the desire to be wedded to the Lord. and this instinct she expresses in her Vachanas”¹. Akkamahadevi's Devine Lover Chennamallikarjuna fills her being, every pore of her flesh and bone mind and heart. Her love and affection overlook the worldly husbands and pursued the spiritual path of becoming the wife of God. She says in the following words.

I have loved the youth
Formless, beyond dissolution or death:
Peerless and infinite, entire,
Unmanifested is the youth I loved.
O sister! beyond birth or fear,

A fearless youth.

I loved the limitless, past bound;
Passionately, O my sisters, did I love
My husband, Cenna Mallikarjuna.²

Further, she expresses her quest for the Divine Love

Hara, for endless time have I
Made penance, so you might
Become my wedded lord.³

Despite her age and her form of servitude, her willingness to serve was a source of adversity, despite many attractions. She was praying to be free from all these worldly attractions.

She utters

Lord, break my Maya's pride
Dispel my body's darkness, put to rout
The encumbrances of my soul
O Cennamallikarjuna Lord,
Deliver me from worldly circumstance
That wraps me round and round, I pray!⁴

Akkamahadevi's mystical experience is concerned in her Vachanas, and it is dipped in all the sweetness of the heart's sacred affection. Her heart and intuitive knowledge of the life Divine seized upon as truth. Harihar an ancient Kannada scholar says “She lived in bliss, being the support of the proliferating congregation, having planted the songs of the patriarchs in the soil of her mind and watering them with her tears of joy manuring them with the thrills of devotional fervor... bathing in the water of devotion and emerging into the knowledge of the absolute, renouncing everything, chasing away all attachments and allures”. Akkamahadevi grows rich with mystic experience. She utters

Almighty expects full surrender emphasizing her determination to pass through the painful spiritual testing. She is always ready to examine herself for seeking God's grace.

She says in a string of comparisons,

You cut and saw and rub the sandal wood;
Does it, being hurt, refuse its scent?
You cut and rub a piece of gold;
Does it, being heated, take in dross?
You cut a sugarcane joint by joint
Put it and squeeze it in a press.
When heated it gives sugar and jaggery;
Does it, being hurt, refuse its sweet?...
O Father Cenna Mallikarjuna Lord
Though you may slay me,
I'll never cease To love the hand that slays.⁵

Akkamahadevi is a woman of mystic vision who takes life as it comes to her. She has no complaints and regrets about it and she rejoices the company of the Lord Cennamallikarjuna with great passion. She who strongly determined to face all hardships, that may come in the way of the pursuit of the Divine Being, whom she has accepted as her husband

She emphasizes,

Should I feel hungry, there be alms;
Should I feel thirsty, well, there be
Tanks, streams and wells. Ruins of temples for my sleep;
And if I want companionship, why,
Thou art thee, O Cennamallikarjuna.⁶

As long as she is in the company of God nothing perturbs her as she experiences the Divine bliss. "It is her conviction that good and evil are evenly balanced in this world. Even evil force is also the creation of God. Therefore, it cannot be avoided, as it is a categorical imperative. Mystics all over the world believe that they have to undergo purgation. Which cleanse their mind, body and soul. So Akkamahadevi accepts the hardships of life. without grumbling.⁷ In fact she invites hardships. She says,

Lord, make me beg from door to door,
Not missing one, with hand out stretched.
Lord, make that, when I beg
No alms is given; and if it should
Let it drop to the ground,
And ere I pick up what has dropped
Let a dog pick it up
O Cennamallikarjuna Lord.⁸

Mysticism is the instant merging of the self with God. It is nothing therefore, but the fundamental feeling of religion, religious life at its very heart and centre. Akkamahadevi firmly believes in God, she is spiritual more than anything else. She does not bother about materialistic pleasure and physical body, purity of inner was her primary concern.

She sings

What if the body darkens black as black?
What if the body flashes light as light?
When ones your heart is purified,
What does it signify what body it is?
That Cennamallikarjuna Linga Loves.⁹

Akkamahadevi does not shirk from the mundane existence. She offers a practical and existential view of life. Human life is full of misery and one should not retreat from it. On the contrary the challenges of life should be taken with heroic mind. This particular idea has been depicted in one of her Vachanas.

If, having build your house upon a height
You live in dread of savage beasts,
How will it be?...

Cennamallikarjuna Lord ,
If, being born upon this earth,
Or praise or scorn should be our lot
We should be calm, nor let a thought
Of anger penetrate our heart.¹⁰

Akkamahadevi asserts that spiritual life is not about over exertion when it comes to happiness, but in an equal state of mind without losing confidence when it comes to grief.

Pringle partison says “Mysticism appears in connection with the endeavor of human mind to grasp the divine essence of the ultimate reality of things and to enjoy blessedness. Of actual communion with the highest the first is the philosophic side of mysticism the second its religious. God ceases to be an objects and becomes an experience” Akkamahadevi grasped the Divine essence and presence of the ultimate reality of things and she used to enjoy bliss of her Divine Lover Cennamallikarjuna.

She explains joyously;

The entire wood art thou!
The sacred trees within the wood art Thou!
.....
O Cennamallikarjuna,
When Thou pervades everything.¹¹

Now, that is the mark of a true mystic who is also a saint; to accept the symbol and render it transparent; not to defy or ignore orthodoxy, but to transcend it; give it air and truly interpret it; not breaking the law as Christ said, but fulfilling it. Akkamahadevi has in her Vachanas, unconsciously paraphrases the biblical saying; “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no god”. She compares such a one to an owl who denies the sun, to a blind man blaming his glass.

Further, Akkamahadevi criticizes the material world. Those who have materialistic they cannot feel the Divine existence, which she asserts:

Four quarters of the day they toil for food;
Four watches of the night, her joys of sense;
Like washerman, who stands
In water and yet dies with parched mouth
They know not the supreme
That is within themselves O Cennamallikarjuna.¹²

There is a close similarity between the thoughts of Akkamahadevi and William Wordsworth about materialistic living. “The world is too much with us” in this poem William Wordsworth condemns materialistic living. Both the mystics condemn the materialistic state of mind.

Spiritual journey of Akkamahadevi was to reach the Ultimate Reality, to be one with Absolute. She met birds and beasts and mysterious forests. She was thrilled to see the bountiful plantain grove, which she came across on her way. The every sight of her divine lovers abode brings her great bliss and beatitude. She sings whole heartedly in praise of plantation grove, which is a symbol of body and mind. The beauty of nature enralls her and possesses her. That was a suitable place for this young mystic to be one with God.

She sings

What is called plantain-grove
is body as well as mind;
it, the dread forests of life
This plantain grove have I subdued
And here have I come sage and sound...¹³

“Akka as a born mystical genius comes into the world of trials and tribulation. No force and obstacle could hamper her mystic path. The world must have considered her a lunatic. She is mad of Divine Love. She suffers the pangs of separation because her Divine Husband is a truant. She is in pursuit of perfection which she finds in the plantain grove of the mountains of Srisaila. There, her individual soul merged with the universal, the creator. As a mystic her utterances are rare gems of mystical thoughts and poetic sensibility”¹⁴

2. FINDINGS:

The article is written on the basis of theory of analysis meaning and logical adequacy, usefulness, generality steps are to be used . There are plenty of resources available to analyse the them of mysticism yn the poetry of Akkamahadevi. Many poetry are witnessed that she was a gem of a mystic poetess. Mystic vision Akkamahadevi was

supernatural. She is particularly a noble and perfect exemplar of devotion a passionate and preserving yearning for union with divine and ultimate consummation in the complete oneness of love.

3. CONCLUSION:

Akkamahadevi stands as the greatest miracle ever witnessed of woman kind. She had cast off the conception of bodily shame, the shameful infatuation of the being with life. She, who had burnt down the very remembrance of shame felt in the conscious. Her literary contributions are characterized by the sublimation of elegance, the apotheosis of merit and transfiguration of grace. Poetry of Akkamahadevi contains true sublimity, exquisite beauty, pure morality, fine strains and mystical elements.

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