

Potuluri Veera Brahmendra Swami's Devotional and Social Concepts

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ABSTRACT: Potuluri Veera Brahmendra Swami, a revered saint and philosopher of the 17th century from the region of Andhra Pradesh, India, is a figure whose contributions to spiritual thought and social reform remain influential today. His teachings reflect a synthesis of devotional and social concepts that advocate for spiritual awakening while addressing social injustices. Through his life, were evident aspects of Bhakti (devotion) and social responsibility, which resonate with contemporary issues. This paper aims to explore the devotional and social concepts of Potuluri Veera Brahmendra Swami, examining how his philosophies integrate devotion with social reform and promote a vision of inclusivity and equality.

INTRODUCTION

Potuluri Veera Brahmendra Swami is best known for his deep spiritual insights and prophetic visions, which are captured in his verses known as "Brahmandam," alongside a myriad of teachings that advocate for the common good. His works are steeped in the Bhakti tradition, emphasizing devotion to God as a means of achieving liberation. However, unlike the traditional ascetic approach, his teachings also encompass a dedication to social issues, reflecting his concern for the welfare of society as a whole. This paper seeks to analyze the dual dimensions of Veera Brahmendra Swami's teachings, focusing on his devotional practices and social concepts that seek to inspire transformative changes within individuals and the larger community.

The Medieval period is considered as an age of great cultural synthesis in India. During this period a new phase of cultural development was initiated. The Turks and Mughals introduced fresh ideas and helped in giving rise to new features in the areas of religion. Philosophy and ideas, language and literature, styles of architecture and use of building material, painting and fine arts, music and performing arts. India already had a very rich cultural tradition in all spheres.¹ The synthesis between different cultures gave birth to new philosophical and religious traditions, ideas, forms and styles in almost all spheres of culture.

THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

The Bhakti Movement in Indian history represents a movement that popularized devotional surrender to a personally conceived supreme God. Its origins are traced to the Brahmanical and Buddhist traditions of ancient India. It was in south India that it grew from a religious tradition into a popular movement based on religious equality and broad based social participation. The movement led by popular saints reached its climax in the 10th century A.D. In its attempt to embrace the concept of bhakti, the movement in different regions drew from diverse traditions and assumed different forms in different parts of the sub continent. The Bhakti Movement attempted to break away from orthodox *Brahmanism*. The movement gathered momentum in the early medieval period. Historians have attempted to associate the origins of the Bhakti Movement in India with the advent of Islam and spread of Sufism. They argue that the Turkish conquest paved the way for a reaction against the conformist Rajput-Brahman domination. The rise of Bhakti Movement is considered by some scholars as a reaction against feudal oppression.²

The anti-feudal tone in the poetry of Bhakti saints like Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and Tulsidas is seen as illustration of this point. There is no single opinion about the origin of the bhakti movement that can be sustained. It is clear from the poetry and the philosophy of the bhakti saints that they broke away from orthodox Brahmanism. They believed in religious equality and identified themselves with the sufferings of the common people. Some scholars feel that the socio-economic changes in the early medieval period provide the necessary backdrop to understand the emergence of the Bhakti Movement. During the 13th and 14th centuries the demand for manufactured goods, luxuries and other artisanal goods increased leading to a movement of artisans into the cities. The artisans were attracted to bhakti because of its ideas of equality. These groups were dissatisfied with the low status accorded to them by Brahmanical system. The movement gained support from these classes of

society. There were also a few variations in places like Punjab where not only Khatri but Jat peasants also were attracted to this movement. The Bhakti Movement in the early medieval period represents an important movement of reform and change. After the rise of heterodox movements of the 6th century BC, the Bhakti Movement represents another phase of Indian history in which new ideas and practices emerged influencing the country as a whole initiating reform movements.³

DEVOTIONAL POETS OF ANDHRADESA:

Bharatamuni has enumerated nine *rasas* or sentiments in his *Natya Sastra*. Though he had Sanskrit literature in view while fixing the number of *rasas* even the Telugu poets have followed the same pattern. Neither Bharata nor his followers have ever mentioned *bhakti* or devotion as one of the sentiments and no poet dared to implement *bhakti* as a *rasa* in his work.

In fact, sentiments of *Sringara* and *Santha* are generally enjoyed by learned poets and the kings while *Bhakti*, though considered as *bhava*, is available to and experienced by the common folk. Whenever a difficult situation arises the common man looks to the Almighty with devotion and prays to Him for deliverance. Bhakti is supposed to be the easiest way to reach God. Saint Ramanuja of the 11th century A.D has given impetus to *bhakti* through his philosophy of Visishtadvaita.

POTULURI VEERA BRAHMENDRA SWAMIS DEVOTIONAL SOCIAL IDEAS:

“*Bhavishyat Purana*” a prognostication of mankind’s future ‘*Kala Jnana Tatwa*’ of Sri Pottuluri Veera Brahmendra Swami offers a glimpse of events and trends destined to take place in the coming decades centuries.

His philosophic talks made him understand the illusory nature of attachments and the continuum of consciousness in life and death. Realising that her son is an enlightened soul, his mother Papamba gave him permission to leave home and go on a pilgrimage to holy places. While Veeram Bhotlayya was visiting *Harihara Kshetra*, he came across a *yogi* named Ananda Bhairava. Anandabhairava confessed to Veeram Bhotlayya that he took to *Sanyasa* as a mark of repentance on his inadvertent killing of a cow. To liberate him from the sin of killing a cow Veeram Bhotlayya initiated him into *Dwadasakharimantra*

and gave him the boon that in his next birth he will be born in a family of cotton growers and when he comes of age he would become his (Veeram Bhotlayya’s) chief disciple.⁵ His philosophic talks next to “*Bhavishyat Purana*” a prognostication of mankind’s future *Kala Jnana Tatwa* of Sri Pottuluri Veera Brahmendra Swami offers a glimpse of events and trends destined to take place in the coming decades.

Veeram Bhotlayya accorded to a few seekers of that village knowledge of his *Kala Jnana* chants pertaining to events that would take place in the first five thousand years of *Kali Yuga*. Sivakotayya was one of those seekers and reverentially offered his daughter Govindamma as bride to Veeram Bhotlayya. Hearing that Govindamma had chosen to remain unmarried all these years, as it was her wish to marry a man who is an embodiment of Divinity, Veeram Bhotlayya smilingly gave his consent. After the marriage the couple returned to Kandimallya Palli and from there left on a pilgrimage to holy places. After a short visit to Banaganapalli they returned to Kandimallya Palli. Devotees built an *Ashram* for them and Veeram-Bhotlayya began to be worshipped by devotees as Veeram-Brahmam. The couple was blessed with four sons and a daughter.

All the children were devout like their parents and took active part in the spiritual programme conducted in the *Ashram*. One day a fifteen-year-old Muslim boy, Shiek Saheb came to the *Ashram* to become a disciple of Sri Brahmam. Brahmendra Swami’s sons refused to allow him in because he was a Muslim. Brahmendra Swami rebuked them for their intolerance and allowed the boy to enter. He renamed the boy Siddhayya who turned out to be the most loyal and devoted of his disciples. Siddhayya is none other than Ananda Bhairava in his previous birth and in accepting him as disciple Sri Brahmendra swami was fulfilling a boon he granted earlier. Brahmendra Swami gave Siddhayya initiation into many spiritual practices including *Taraka Yoga*.⁶

After predicting the future of the Hyderabad regime he started home. On the way back, to teach a lesson to some of the disciples who resented what they thought was Brahmendra swami favouritism to Siddhayya, he pointed to the carcass of a dog and ordered his disciples to eat it. The carcass was decomposed, worm ridden and emitting an unbearably foul smell.

No one wanted to go near it. Siddhayya sat by its side and began eating it with relish as if it was a succulent

sweet dish. This demonstration of Siddhayya's implicit obedience to the words of the *Guru* shamed the disciples into repentance. One more instance of Sri Veera Brahmendra swami miraculous powers was revealed to the disciples when a *Brahmin* couple fell on the feet of Swamiji and begged him to cure the *Brahmin* of the dreadful disease of leprosy. Brahmendra Swami not only cured him but gave the couple initiation, blessed them and sent them home in a happy frame of mind.

By the privilege of association with God men, disciples also acquire spiritual stature. This is proved in the life of Siddhayya who was fortunate to learn from Brahmendra Swami the significance of reincarnation and the way to achieve liberation from the cycle of births.

Once a group of thieves who entered the Ashram at dead of night to look it, lost their eyesight. Next day taking pity on the blind robbers Swamiji taught to them about the need for honesty and right living and restored vision to them. At another time when, without telling him his wife Govindamma cooked payasam to be offered to Goddess Poleramma made the diety come in person to partake of the offering. On the last day of his earthly existence he gave trustee ship of the Ashram to his son Govindachari and then told his wife that all their sons will meet with an early death, that there would be no progeny to supervise the *Ashram* and that their daughter's descendants would take charge of the math.

That day he deliberately sent Siddhayya on an errand to collect flowers for the worship of God because he knew that Siddhayya couldn't bear the sight of his beloved *Guru* dying. When Siddhayya came to know of Brahmendra Swami's death he was overcome by grief and tired to commit suicide. Taking pity on him Brahmendra Swamiji came out of the grave to present him with his scepter, sandals, ring and cane. He blessed him with clairvoyance and commanded him to go to the village Mudumala get married and spend his life in the *Rajayoga* path. Siddhayya obeyed every one of these commands.

At the time of Brahmendra swami's advent, India was plunged into religious feuds between Hindus and Muslims. Humanism was crushed in the name of the illusory supremacy of caste and religion. Brahmendra Swami preached the religion of love, which cuts across all man made barriers of creed, sect, and caste, His disciples included Brahmins like Annajayya, Muslims

like Siddhayya and 'untouchables' like Kakkayya. His progressive outlook is reflected in managing a mature maiden like Govindamma at a time when child marriages were the accepted social convention. Most Nawabs of the time were his ardent devotees and this helped in promoting communal harmony. After he left the physical body, hundreds of Brahmendra Swami's disciples propagated his teachings and travelled from one place to another chanting the predictions written by him.

Like Vemana's teachings, the chants of Brahmendra Swami also are simple and evoke immediate emotional response from listeners. Some of Brahmendra Swami's predictions are in prose form. Some are written as moral maxims. Some offer exposition on philosophy, Spiritualism and *yoga* practice. Some are written as couplets. Brahmendra Swami has written many poems in practice. Some are written as couplets. Brahmendra Swami has written many poems in praise of Kalikamba. Some of these contain cryptic esoteric truths. These will be intelligible only to initiates in *yoga*. His songs are most popular among religious mendicants. As in scriptures like Bhavishyapurana, Bhagavatham and Harivamsam, his predictions are mostly about the historical, geographical and social changes that will take place towards the end of *Kali Yuga*. As is supposed to be the case with the western prophet Nostradamus, Brahmendra Swami's predictions also have proved to be true. His chants make anticipatory references to British rule in India, the disintegration of the caste system, rapid strides in science and technology, invention of trains and automobiles, growing dependence on electricity and electronic gadgets, the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, widow remarriages and social acceptance of divorces, the fall of aristocracy and the mounting prominence of weaker sections of society; Brahmendra Swami's chants also mention that power in the millennium will be in the hands of women, and actors and that society will witness a proliferation of fakes and quacks and that there will be a general dwindling of moral values and that honest people would be at the mercy of criminals and rowdies. One positive feature about the chants of Brahmendra Swami is their envisaging of an egalitarian society where all class distinctions and caste division would be eroded and the gates of opportunity world is thrown open to all the rich and the poor, men and women.⁷

As in Nostradamus in the Kala Jnana chants of Brahmendra Swami also freaks and deformities and

monstrosities in nature, irrespective of their pertaining to the plant, animal or human kingdoms, are always mentioned as bad omens betokening disasters about to take place. Similarly comets and meteorites are used as indices of imminent social and historical upheavals. Laxity in pointless orthodoxy is condoned but dire warning is consistently used against straying from the path of Dharma. Both wars that are the out come of human greed and hatred and calamities of nature like floods and earthquakes are traced to the root cause for disharmonious life styles.

HIS WORK “KAALAJNAANAM” (PREDICTION OF FUTURE):

Peethams like *Kanchi, Sringeri, Pushpagiri*, etc., would face difficulties and the Headship will be given to other sects; some miraculous incidents take place in *Kanchi, Sringeri* and *Pushpagiri*.

“*Prabhava Paarthiva mathye bahu pralaya nischayam. Ananthare Ananda (2034) madhye.. raktapathau ranaranga bhoome bheebhitsau prapancha sitith*”. The world war-II ended in last Parthiva (1945) and monarchy replaced by democracy. From 1987-2005, intensity of calamities will be raising and, the final world war, natural and manmade calamities world make life miserable. In the esoteric part of Kalagnam, it is clearly said the Tsunami of 26/12/2004 is only a sample of its kind. The forth coming Earth Quake with Tsunami would change the Indian East costal geological position i.e. from Dakshineswar to Sri Lanka the sea water go back about eighty miles thus making the South India a rectangular shape and many temples that were submerged earlier like Anoor's temple (Chariot Driver of Lord Sun) at Konark, Visaakheswara at Vizag. Veera Bhadra and Bhadra Kaali temples at Motupalli (near Ongole), Lord Siva and Parvathi (both in Idol form on one base) near Srihari Kota, etc, would be visible.

120 temples situated all over India will be dismantled by Anti-Hindu elements; and Kasi Visweswara temple would be closed for forty days, Sri Kalahasti and Sri Sailam, Kumara Swamy temple and Tirumala temple for a week (The sound 'Om' will be heard from Kapi Dhawaja when Tirumala was assaulted and Garuda Dhawaja will be demolished. Ultimately the idols of Lord Venkateswara, Lord Kalahastheeswara, Goddess Kanaka Durga be shifted to Brahmamgari Mutham and Tirumala will become shelter to wild animals

later); temples in Karnataka will be harmed by Muslim ladies.⁸

Blood bath between Krishna and Godavari regions (either for water or for partition of A.P. for Telangana. Blood bath on the banks of Kauveri River taking thousands of lives. An entire city in America will be destroyed in an Earth Quake and only five families survive. Indo-Maya civilization will be revived. Super typhoon and floods will hit Bangladesh and Bengal and crores of people world die.

In Nandana (2012) there is a severe earthquake Lakhs of people will be drowned and washed away by flash floods at the time of festival on a Sunday at Tirunelveli. Upper Krishna projects will be washed away by flash floods and water world touch the *Mukku Pudaka* (ornament attached to Nose) of Goddess Durga” And later, the idol of Goddess Durga be shifted to Brahmamgari Matham. 14 cities will be washed away by floods, in particular, Nellore region in another incident. The capital of India will be changed from Delhi to Anegondi(Karnataka). The re-incarnation of the Almighty will wear bow and will be given Pasupatha *Asthra* by Lord Siva when Jupiter enters *Dhanus Rasi*.

When Saturn enters *Kanya Rasi*, the Lord will start punishing the culprits, in *Meena Rasi*-harm to Mlechehas is indicated, in *Vrishabha*-poisonous gas from North-East takes lives, in *Mithuna* most of evil persons are punished. The idol of Kanchi Kamakshi will revolve for a while; idol of Bangalore Kamakshi will vomit blood, Idols in different holy places talk to people. Sri Sailam Bhramaramba tears and the Nandeewara makes a clarion call and moves his leg. Lord Vinayaka chants *Veda Mantras* in every village. At Gandaki River, *Salagrama* stones dance and talk to people. In another incident, idols of Lord Vinayaka cry shed and tears.

A cow gives birth to man.

Clashes between Saivites and Vaishnavites after that 1,11,000 men cut off their heads in Bhramamgari Matham and later Sri Veera Brahmendra Swamy come out from the *Jeeva Samaadhi*. The *gopuram* (tower) at Kumbhakonam will collapse and the idol be damaged. In *Ananda* year (2034), crores of people die; in *Rakshasa* year, (2035) there will be destruction in Western countries. In *Pingala* year, (2037), *Kalayukthi* year (2038) and *Roudri* year (2040) with severe internal clashes between two religions crores of people die throughout world. A devastating earthquake

in Addanki (AP) and peripherals in 2039. There will be no water for forty days in river Ganga by 2040 in Kasi. For Twelve days there will be no water in Godavari and on 13th it will be with heavy flash floods.

A comet or meteor will appear in daylight and goes on expanding from north to south resulting in change of earth's axis and motion, thereby people may feel the Sun is shivering ; a male shadow form (may be of lord Surya Narayana) is visible in sun, probably in *Subhakrit* year, (2022) or when another meteor appearance when Saturn in *Mesha* year (around 2028), or in *Bhadrapada* of *Kalayukti*-2038.⁹

The Almighty gives darshan at midnight on an *Amavasya* day atop Udayagiri Hill (Andhra Pradesh), having seen *Sudarshana Chakra* some people may feel it as a lunar eclipse. Sri Veera Brahmendra Swamy is in *Jeeva Samaadhi* for more than four centuries and devotees believe he would rescue them whenever they plead him; and he will come out from the *Jeeva Samaadhi* when the calamities reach peak stage. By reading and listening this '*Kalagnana* people may not try to do mischiefs and they are very much ardent to devotion' (Bhakti) to almighty.

CONCLUSION

Potuluri Veera Brahmendra Swami's teachings represent a rich tapestry of devotional fervor interwoven with strong social convictions. By advocating for equality, education, and service to humanity, he laid the groundwork for a modern understanding of spirituality that transcends personal gain and nurtures a collective consciousness. His insights remain relevant today, offering guidance on how devotion can lead to meaningful social change, promoting a vision of a compassionate, inclusive, and equitable society. Through his life and teachings, he inspires individuals to not only seek personal enlightenment but also foster a spirit of community and justice, which is essential in navigating the complexities of contemporary society.

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