ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research Paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11, Iss 1, 2022

# YOGI VEMANA'S PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION OF THE GURU-DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP IN SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

## A.MEENAKSHI

Asst.Prof. of English Govt.Degree College for Women, Karimnagar.

## **ABSTRACT**

Yogi Vemana is a Telugu poet, saint, and socio-religious reformer of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Vemana's exploration of the Guru-disciple relationship in Indian spirituality is a profound testament to the transformative power of an authentic Guru. His poetic verses and philosophical insights shed light on the pivotal role of the Guru as a guiding force in spiritual evolution. Highlighting God's supremacy as the ultimate teacher, Vemana condemns false Gurus while exalting genuine spiritual mentors' rare and transformative qualities. Vemana categorizes Gurus across various religious sects, emphasizing their indispensable role in spiritual practices such as Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Advaita, Mantra, Kundalini Yoga, and Raja Yoga. Through poignant metaphors and vivid imagery, Vemana elevates the Guru's stature akin to divinity, stressing their rarity and transformative influence. Critiquing false Gurus, Vemana underscores the importance of ethical integrity in guiding others. He challenges individuals to discern the essence of the Guru-disciple relationship, emphasizing the shared commitment to wisdom and understanding. Vemana's teachings offer timeless insights into the profound nature of the Guru-disciple relationship and its significance in the spiritual quest for truth and liberation.

Key Words: Guru, disciple, spiritual evolution, philosophical perspective, Yogi Vemana

The Guru-Disciple relationship, entrenched in the ancient spiritual traditions of India, serves as the cornerstone for human transformation and enlightenment. Yogi Vemana is a Telugu poet, saint, and socio-religious reformer of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In Vemana's contemplations, the Guru emerges as the beacon guiding seekers toward spiritual fulfillment. Drawing from revered sages like Patanjali, Vemana echoes the sentiment that recognizing God's supremacy as the ultimate teacher leads to liberation, contrasting starkly with the plight of those unaware of this greatness, who may remain ensnared in ignorance. Through poignant verses and profound insights, Vemana delves into the rarity of authentic Gurus and the transformative power they wield. His reflections underscore the pivotal role of a true Guru in spiritual awakening and critique the detrimental influence of false teachers who lack divine knowledge. This article explores Vemana's multifaceted perspectives on the Guru, the attributes, significance, and the profound impact of the Guru-disciple relationship in the quest for spiritual evolution.

In Indian spiritual traditions, the Guru holds a divine stature as the catalyst for transforming human existence into purposeful lives. Serving as guides, Gurus illuminate the path for disciples. Revered sages such as Patanjali stated that God "was the teacher even to the earliest teachers since he is not limited by time." (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 2018, p. 31). Vemana echoes this sentiment, asserting that those recognizing God's supremacy as the



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research Paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11, Iss 1, 2022

creator and ultimate teacher attain liberation, contrasting starkly with those unaware of God's greatness, who may suffer in ignorance.

Knowing Him Supreme, Lord of all creation,

And Perfect Teacher, men attain salvation.

Those who failed to know Him, faltered and fell.

Condemned to the dreadful limbo of hell. (Ali Khan, 1966, v. 7)

Vemana further asserts that God is the ultimate teacher (parama guru) because of His comprehensive understanding of birth and death. Similarly, genuine Gurus should possess awareness regarding the inevitability of death, not just for themselves but also for their disciples. Vemana vividly illustrates the significance of acknowledging the primal Guru, likening a Guru who lacks awareness of God to a blind person. Vemana emphasizes that the Guru who enlightens other Gurus embodies the essence of life's supreme authority. "If the teacher knows not in his character, the prime teacher, he is himself as blind. The teacher who teaches the teacher is the lord of life". (Brown, 1993, v. 68).

Vemana underscores the significance of parents as the primary gurus while elevating Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiva to the highest level of reverence among gurus. "Considerthat thy mother and father are thy first instructors; Parvati and Siva are the greatest of teachers.". (Brown, 1993, v. 700). Likewise, Vemana emphasizes the inscrutability of a Guru's power, contending that only the primal Guru, God, comprehends the depth of a Guru's influence and teachings beyond the judgment of anyone else. "The power of the teacher is known to the primal teacher". (Brown, 1993, v. 50)

Vemana offers Guru a higher state in his poems. Aprofound transformation unfolded in Vemana's life upon encountering a genuine spiritual Guru. This association shifted him from pursuing worldly pleasures to a quest for spiritual fulfillment, evolving him from a hedonist to a seeker of spiritual enlightenment. This revered Guru likely embodied an expansive, non-dualistic philosophy, teaching Vemana that diverse religious paths converge towards the same divine essence, known by myriad names. He expressed his reverence for the Guru through numerous compositions, emphasizing the Guru's pivotal role in dispelling ignorance and equating the Guru's stature with divinity. Many Indian scriptures consider the Guru as God. Adi Shankaracharya, in his Gurustotram, equates Guru to Brahma, Vishnu Maheshwara, and also to the formless Parabrahman (Guru Stotram - Akhanda Mandalakaram Jaya Vidyasagar (youtube.com)). Vemana also describes the teacher as an embodiment of God. He asks us to "teach men that the excellent teacher is himself a part of the Divinity". (Brown, 1993, v. 38). Vemana furtherstates that even esteemed deities like Brahma and Vishnu could not grasp the ultimate truth without the guidance of a Guru. Vemana regarded the Guru as the indispensable key to unlocking the gates of the spiritual realm, analogizing that just as a door cannot be opened without a key, the spiritual experience remains inaccessible without the Guru's guidance. He eloquently conveyed this sentiment in his verse:

Without the instruction of the Guru, it is impossible to know

whether it is for Brahma or his father Vishnu

Is it possible to open the door without the key?

Viswadabhirama Vinura Vema.



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research Paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11, Iss 1, 2022

Guruni shiksha leka guruthetlu kalguno

Ajunikaina vaani abbakaina

Thaalapu chevi leka thalupettulooduno

Viswadabhirama Vinura Vema. (my trans; Subrahmanyam, 2013, v. 312)

Again, Vemana underscores the importance of having a guru, or teacher, in pursuing wisdom and spiritual growth. He draws a poignant analogy between planting a tree without providing support and seeking wisdom without the guidance of a teacher. Just as a tree needs a trellis to flourish and thrive, an individual seeking enlightenment requires the guidance and support of a knowledgeable mentor. Vemana suggests that without the proper guidance of a guru, one's quest for wisdom will likely falter and perish. Through this analogy, Vemana emphasizes the Guru's indispensable role in nurturing the seeker's spiritual development, highlighting the crucial need for guidance and mentorship on the path to enlightenment. "If though plant a tree carefully but give it no trellis, it will not grow but perish in this world. Thus is with him who desireth wisdom but can obtain no teacher". (Brown, 1993, v. 1110). According to Vemana, surrendering to the Guru prevents the grasp of passions, while distancing oneself from the Guru invites their overwhelming influence. "If thou fall at the feet of the teacher will the dog of passion seize ye thee? If you leave the teacher's feet, those dogs will seize thee". (Brown, 1993, v. 20)

Vemana asserts that the real Guru, having achieved enlightenment through dedicated worship, attains the realization of truth. He regards the exceptional Guru as omnipresent through his teachings, serving as the pillar of "support for all." (Brown,1993, v. 34). He draws an analogy between the Guru and the musk deer. Despite the deer's dark appearance, it emits a fragrance that travels far and wide. Similarly, the Guru might appear unassuming, yet their wisdom and virtue resonate extensively.

Musk to sight is all black and ugly;

But it spreads its scents far and wide quickly;

So will the traits of 'masters' be

Listen to Vema, Spokesmanof 'vox populi'. (Kameshwara Rao, 2004, v. 3)

Vemana illustrates that the one possessing the extraordinary ability to hold the vast expanse of the sky's waters as effortlessly as a bouquet is deemed the Guru of all Gurus. He describes this remarkable feat gracefully as someone holding a bunch of flowers, signifying the unmatched power over water, one of the five elements that signifies one of the eight yogic siddhis". (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 2018, p. 139)"The waters of the firmament doth he hold as a bunch of flowers in his hand in noble beauty. He that hath such surpassing power is the teacher of teachers". (Brown, 1993, v. 576). In addition, Vemana's perspective on a Guru transcends mere instruction in language syllables or recitation of sacred texts. According to him, an authentic Guru is not defined by teaching essential elements or reading scriptures but by guiding towards the path of salvation or liberation.

A Guru is not someone who teaches syllables

Or who read out the lessons of the scriptures



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research Paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11, Iss 1, 2022

A Guru is the one who shows the way to liberation Viswadabhirama Vinura Vema

Kaadu kaadu gurudu 'ka' guninthamu cheppa

Sastra paatamulanu chadivi chappa

Mukthi daari choopu moolambu gurudura

Viswadabhirama Vinura Vema. (my trans.; Rao, 2015, v. 239)

Furthermore, Vemana categorizes Gurus into three types: the false Guru, who instructs in erroneous rituals; the average Guru, who imparts the sacred mantras of God; and the enlightened Guru, who guides disciples toward the realm of spiritual fulfillment through Yogic practices.

The deceitful Guru teaches several false rituals

The mediocre teaches the holy mantra

The perfect Guru shows the way to yogic bliss.

Viswadabhirama Vinura Vema

Kalla gurudu gattu, nella karmambula;

Madhya gurudu gattu, mantra chayamu;

Uttamundu kattu, yoga saamrajyambu

Viswadabhirama Vinura Vema (my trans; Sastry, 2014, v. 1192)

Vemana further emphasizes the essential role of a teacher, particularly within the context of religious faith. He asserts that a teacher is undeniably necessary in both the Siva creed and the Vishnu faith. Vemana's language carries a sense of urgency and conviction as he questions what someone of a degraded nature could learn without a teacher's guidance. This sentiment underscores Vemana's belief in a knowledgeable mentor's indispensable guidance and instruction, especially in spirituality and religious practice. It reflects a broader cultural reverence for the guru-disciple relationship prevalent in many traditional Indian philosophical and spiritual traditions. Vemana profoundly states, "Surely a teacher is requisite in the Siva creed and a teacher is evidently requisite in the Vishnu faith. What can the wretch of a debased nature learn without a teacher?" (Brown,1993, v. 279).

According to Vemana, God is the guiding Guru for humankind. As an adherent of Advaita philosophy, he posits that Lord Vishnu serves as the Guru for the Shaiva sect, while Lord Shiva assumes the role of Guru for the Vaishnava sect. Various Hindu sacred texts reveal this mutual reverence between Vishnu and Shiva. In the Anusasana Parva of the epic Mahabharata, Bhishma preaches Yudhistira,a thousand names of Vishnu, stating that it was Lord Shiva whoexplained the greatness of Lord Vishnu in the form of Vishnu Sahasranama to his consort Parvathiat first. (Vishnu Sahasranamam by MS Subbulakshmi with English Youtube). Later, in this epic, Lord Vasudeva, known as Lord Vishnu's incarnation, teaches Shiva Sahasranama to Yudhishtira at the request of Bhishma. Likewise, Vemana articulates, "To the whole of the Siva sect, Hari is Teacher and Hara is Teacher to the Hari creed." (Brown,1993, v. 1006). He also delves into the sect's symbolism, associating different Gurus with controlling specific desires. He mentions the Guru who "eats dogs (quells his passions)



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research Paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11, Iss 1, 2022

is the (linga) Janga teacher. He that eats hog (quells his body lusts) is the parama yogee." (Brown,1993,v.331)

Vemana emphasizes the necessity of a Guru not solely for dualistic religious sects like Vaishnavism and Shaivism but also for those pursuing the path of Advaita. Adi Shankaracharya, the chief advocate of Advaita philosophy, states that the Advaita aspirants must acquaint themselves with the sadhanachatushtaya,(the four-fold qualifications) comprising viveka (intellectual discrimination), vairagya (dispassion), shat sampatti (six treasures), and mumukshatva (intense longing for liberation) Adi Shankaracharya declares. "this yearning for freedom, through the grace of the Guru, may bear fruit (being developed) through Vairagya (renunciation), Sama (calmness), and so on." (Madhavananda, 1921, p. 11). Vemana asserts that these fourfold qualifications fortify the mind and instill an unwavering dedication to the Guru. Once the seeker's devotion to the Guru solidifies, they remain resolute on the spiritual journey. Vemana eloquently expresses this sentiment in his verse:

When one understands the four-fold qualifications and leaves the strange things of the mind, the devotion to the Guru becomes powerful and will never move towards the wrong path.

Sadhana chathushtayambula saamyamerigi

Vinthalanniyu madilona vidichinapude

Manthanambagu guru bhakthi mahima yagunu

Sunthayainanu pedadaari choradu Vema. (my trans.; Sastry, 2014, v. 4805)

Vemana also highlights Guru's importance in dispelling the darkness and attachment that causes the perpetual cycle of birth and death. When an individual seeks the Guru's guidance and fervently prays to dispel this ignorance, the Guru's grace facilitates the realization that the world is merely an illusion. According to Advaita philosophy, ajnana (ignorance) is the fundamental cause of bondage and suffering, necessitating the acquisition of knowledge from the Guru to perceive this world and its attachments as illusions. Vemana poetically conveys this concept:

The man who dies in ignorance is born again and again.

Through attachment only to die again.

If you pray to a guru who will remove your weariness,

You will see the world is rooted in illusion. (Moorty and Roberts, 1995, p. 20)

Similarly, Vemana discusses the attributes of a Guru, portraying the spiritual mentor's transformative role in purging the disciple's negative traits and nurturing them towards perfection through disciplined guidance. Ultimately, as the disciple becomes qualified for the



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research Paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11, Iss 1, 2022

highest spiritual state, the Guru directs them towards salvation. Vemana urges seekers to seek out such a Guru and promptly encounter the truth:

He will seize all your base qualities and discipline them.

He will show you the Supreme State when you are ready.

Ask of such a guru and receive the immediate experience. (Moorty and Roberts, 1995, v. 20)

Vemana further strongly emphasizes the necessity of a Guru for various sects and philosophies and Yoga practice. He states that learning postures and spiritual insights from the Guru is essential to focus and stabilize one's mind. According to Vemana, actual dwija (twice-born) status is not attained merely through birth or wearing a sacred thread but by concentrating the mind through understanding and practice guided by the Guru. He eloquently expresses this idea: "If ignorant of the postures thou learned not of thy teacher, their secret force (murma & curma) and fix not thy heart how shalt thou become of the second birth?" (Brown, 1993, v. 130)

Vemana likewise emphasizes the significance of understanding the essence of the sacred mantra from the Guru. Chanting the mantra without comprehending its meaning is futile, as it blinds one spiritually. Vemana stresses the importance of seeking guidance from the teacher to attain rebirth and greatness through understanding the mantra's significance. He articulates this notion: "They muse on the mantras but know not their meaning, ignorant of that signification they become blind. To become reborn and great let him learn it from the Teacher". (Brown, 1993, v. 1017). Furthermore, Vemana regards wisdom as the paramount Guru of the world, highlighting 'Om' (Pranava mantra) as the supreme Guru while attributing the Gayatri Mantra as the instructor guiding one's actions. He expresses this sentiment: "Wisdom is the prime teacher to this whole world. The one Pranava mantra is the original teacher. The Gayatri mantra is the teacher of our actions" (Brown, 1993, v. 229).

In addition, Vemana strongly advocates the necessity of a Guru in pursuing Kundalini Yoga, likening the Guru's significance to that of Lord Shiva. He delves into the intricacies of Kundalini Yoga, where the three psychic knots and the six chakras are analogized to the three and six worlds, respectively. These psychic knots act as barriers, impeding the flow of Kundalini energy from one spinal chakra to the next. According to Vemana, the Guru plays a pivotal role in clearing these obstructions, harmonizing the three psychic knots—Brahma granthi, Vishnu granthi, and Rudra granthi—and aligning the six chakras: Mooladhara, Swadhishtana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha, and Ajna chakras. Through the Guru's guidance, the disciple achieves enlightenment as the Kundalini Shakti unites with Shiva in the Sahasrara chakra, located at the crown of the head. ("Kundalini Yoga -- As Envisioned by the Ancient Yogis"). Vemana too beautifully expresses this concept: "The teacher, the image of Siva, compounded the three worlds into one, and combined the six worlds; thus he remains firm". (Brown, 1993, v. 129)

Vemana further passionately proclaims the profound realization achieved through Raja Yoga—a realization that unveils the truth of one's existence beyond the confines of the body's nine apertures, recognizing instead the eternal essence of Brahman, omnipresent and boundless. This realization leads one to perceive themselves as intricately connected to the entire world, an experience facilitated by the benevolent grace of the Guru. Vemana



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research Paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11, Iss 1, 2022

emphasizes the pivotal role of the Guru's grace in guiding the disciple towards a non-dualistic yogic experience.

When the grace of the Guru falls upon one with pleasure

One transcends identifying oneself with the body of nine holes,

Emerging as the embodiment of all living beings and the vast universe.

Viswadabhirama Vinura Vema

Modamunanu guruni mukya karuna chetha

Thommidi sthalamula doddu vaaya

Sarva jeevudaaye sarvambu thaanaaye

Viswadabhirama Vinura Vema. (my trans.; Sastry, 2014, v. 3975)

Furthermore, Vemana stresses the significance of a Guru's grace even in the pursuit of meditating on and attaining God. He suggests that one can perceive the divine essence within oneself and others by purifying one's thoughts and achieving mental clarity. He states that proper alignment of mental symbols, and gazing upon the deity's form will reveal and bestow understanding. Vemana questions whether this understanding could be achieved without the guidance of a Guru: "By the mudricas in the mind being rightly ordered, as thou gazest on the linga of a soul (the deity), it shall be manifested to thee and shall it be bestowed on the devoid of teacher? That thou shouds't understand it? ". (Brown,1993, v. 243)

However, Vemana unveils the presence of the teacher within one's own mind. Vemana prompts reflection on the interconnectedness of the universe and the human body, urging readers to recognize the divine within themselves. By invoking the elements of fire, air, and the cosmos as intrinsic components of the body, he suggests a profound unity between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Vemana invites individuals to perceive their inner essence as a reflection of the vastness of creation, emphasizing the inherent sacredness within them. He advocates for self-awareness and introspection to discover wisdom and guidance, highlighting the intrinsic connection between the individual and the universal order. Thus, Vemana's views in this poem underscore the importance of inner reflection and recognition of the divine essence within oneself as the ultimate source of enlightenment and guidance: "Consider that fire, and air, and all worlds exist in the body at their proper places. Then touch and behold the teacher in thy mind." (Brown, 1993, v. 142).

Vemana eloquently reflects on the profound relationship between the Guru and the disciple. He asserts that for each individual, even before their physical birth, their destined Guru is already present. He poetically expresses this notion: "When we are born, before they seize and cut the navel, god, the teacher was born in this world.". (Brown, 1993, v. 936). Highlighting the significance of the teacher, Vemana alsoemphasizes the importance of forming a deep connection with the enlightened guide who embodies the essence of knowledge and wisdom: "Teacher signifies light. To such a teacher let us remain attached". (Brown, 1993, v. 526).

Vemana further implies that the true essence of the relationship between a guru (teacher) and a disciple transcends mere explanation or demonstration; it lies in the sincere



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research Paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11, Iss 1, 2022

yearning for spiritual fulfillment and the unwavering faith of the disciple. He emphasizes that one can attain spiritual realization only through a deep longing for enlightenment and complete trust. Vemana's words underscore the importance of inner sincerity and faith in the journey towards enlightenment, implying that the genuine connection between Guru and disciple is rooted in the shared pursuit of transcendence beyond superficial appearances or demonstrations: "The attainment between the teacher and the learner is very deceitful. Why should we explain or show it. With subdued longing after beatitude if ye have full faith, thou shall attain it and not otherwise". (Brown, 1993, v. 637)

Vemana emphasizes that understanding the magnificence of God is achievable only by those who honor their Guru. He suggests that even if someone prays fervently for wealth but lacks reverence for their teacher, the wealth acquired through those prayers will not lead to honor." By honoring a teacher, he shall comprehend the greatness of the divine glory, and shine forever." (Brown,1193, v. 765). Moreover, Vemana boldly asserts that individuals who have extensively studied the scriptures but lack personal spiritual experiences imparted by their Guru are similar to those who have not studied. "Are not all they who read the whole shastras on a level with those who do not read them, if from the mouth of the teacher they learn not true application?" (Brown, 1993, v. 909)

In contrast, Vemana challenges readers to view teachers and pupils as educators, blurring the distinction between them. Vemana suggests that in this dynamic knowledge exchange, both roles hold significance and contribute to the learning process. He emphasizes equality and mutual respect between teachers and pupils, advocating for a symbiotic relationship where each learns from the other. Thus, Vemana's perspective underscores the fluidity and interconnectedness of teaching and learning, transcending the notions of superiority or inferiority between the two roles. When the disciple attains perfection as the Guru equally, then both the Guru and the disciple are Gurus, and no one is greater or lesser: "Of those we name teacher and pupil, which is last and which is first? If you desire to know and estimate them which is the greater, which is the less? Consider the teacher and pupil each as a teacher." (Brown, 1993, v. 397)

However, Vemana sharply critiques the false teacher, who arrogantly claims authority over all castes but lacks the essential wisdom to transcend mortality. Vemana denounces such a pseudo-teacher as spiritually bankrupt, likening their eventual fate to that of a directionless crow devoid of purpose or guidance. Through his words, Vemana highlights the inherent deceitfulness of those who profess knowledge but fail to grasp the fundamental truths of existence, ultimately revealing the emptiness of their claims in the face of mortality's inevitable reality. "He proclaims himself the teacher of every caste, yet remains ignorant of the means to conquer death. This pseudo-teacher, upon his demise, becomes as insignificant as an unguided crow." (Brown, 1993, v. 1157).

Likewise, Vemana vehemently condemns false teachers as deceitful impostors who lack genuine wisdom and self-awareness. Vemana exposes the hollowness of those who exploit their position for personal gain without possessing the true insight or knowledge necessary to guide others on a meaningful path. He vehemently condemns the deceitful teachers who lack divine knowledge, deceive people, and unlawfully claim the title of Gurus:



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research Paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -1) Journal Volume 11, Iss 1, 2022

"See these robbers call themselves teachers-void of knowledge, ignorant of themselves these unprofitable sons of slave." (Brown, 1993, v. 1163).

Furthermore, Vemana questions the eligibility of individuals, particularly those driven by base desires, who engage in deceitful practices, peddle false teachings, and manipulate for financial gain to assume the role of a Guru. He implicitly emphasizes the ethical and moral integrity required in those who aspire to guide others. as teachers who have deteriorated and lost touch with truth and salvation. Vemana opines that a teacher who fails to impart salvation is unworthy of the title of Guru. "the teacher that bestows no beatitude is a son of apes!" (Brown, 1993, v. 795).

Moreover, Vemana contends that although various religious sects have their appointed teachers, they need to be improved. He emphasizes the challenge of finding an authentic teacher capable of revealing God to others. Additionally, Vemana compares such false Gurus to crows, implying their lack of guidance and spiritual significance. He admonishes those who claim to be teachers in every sect, suggesting that their ignorance prevents them from understanding the deeper truths. According to him, such a self-proclaimed Guru, devoid of genuine knowledge, would reincarnate as a crow without the guidance of a teacher. "They talk and say there is a teacher in each sect-O ye pariars! Ignorant of hidden truth. He that calls himself, dies a crow devoid of instructor. (Brown, 1993, v. 1167).

Similarly, Vemana eloquently acknowledges the rarity of an authentic teacher capable of revealing truth and a discerning, wise disciple. He opines that finding such a teacher-disciple pair is exceedingly rare, likening it to discovering a hare with horns, which is deemed impossible. Vemana's sentiment extends beyond mere skepticism; he implicitly calls for a collective enhancement in the quality of both gurus and disciples. This appeal suggests that the pursuit of truth demands exceptional individuals and a shared commitment to wisdom and understanding. "There is not a single teacher who can show us the truth, not one excellent scholar is there who discerneth the truth. A teacher and a wise pupil are rare as a hare's horns. (Brown, 1993, v. 1164).

Vemana's profound reflections on the Guru-disciple relationship encapsulate the essence of ancient Indian spirituality. His poetic verses and philosophical insights illuminate the significance of an authentic Guru as the guiding force in spiritual evolution. Emphasizing God's supremacy as the ultimate teacher, Vemana highlights the Guru's pivotal role in liberation and condemns false teachers lacking divine knowledge. He elevates the Guru's stature akin to divinity, emphasizing their transformative power and rarity. He categorizes Gurus across religious sects, stressing their importance in Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Advaita, Mantra, Kundalini Yoga, and Raja Yoga, accentuating the Guru's indispensable role in these practices. His verses vividly illustrate the Guru's significance through metaphors of musk, holder of waters, and the key to spiritual experience. Critiquing false Gurus, Vemana emphasizes ethical integrity in guiding others. Ultimately, Vemana's reflections encapsulate timeless wisdom, guiding seekers towards enlightenment and self-realization through the profound Guru-disciple relationship, echoing the essence of ancient Indian spirituality.



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research Paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -1) Journal Volume 11, Iss 1, 2022

## **REFERENCES**

- 1. Ali Khan, Mir Mahmood. The Musings of a Mystic. Shivaji Press, Secunderabad, 1966.
- 2. Brown, C.P. Verses of Vemana. Fourth A.E.S. Reprint, Asian Educational Services, 1993.
- 3. Jayavidyasagar (2018 July 28) "Gurustotram Akhanda Mandalakaram" (Video) https://youtu.be/7IcTvswcTFs?si=yUMIIhx-Quj6yQip
- 4. Kameshwara Rao, P. Timeless Poems of Vemana. Peacock Classics, Hyderabad, 2004.
- 5. "Kundalini Yoga -- As Envisioned by the Ancient Yogis." YouTube, uploaded by Arsha Bodha Swami Tadatmananda, June 6, 2018, youtube/3ODfwJBDgBs.
- 6. Rao, T.V.L.N. Vemana Padya Ratnavali. Seventh edition, J.P. Publications, 2015.
- 7. Madhavananda, Swami. Viveka Chudamani of Sri Sankaracharya, Prabuddha Bharata Press, Mayavati, Himalayas, 1921.
- 8. Moorty, J.S.R.L.N., and Elliot Roberts. Selected Verses of Vemana. Sahitya Akademi, 1995.
- 9. Prabhavananda, Swami and Christopher Isherwood. Patanjali Yoga Sutras, Twenty-Fifth Print, Sri Ramakrishna Math Printing Press, Chennai, 2018.
- 10. Sastry, Chilukuri.S.S. 5000 Vemana padyalu. Rohini Publications, Vijayawada, 2014.
- 11. Youtube Jayasindoor Divine Music (2017 January 3) "Vishnu Sahasranamam by MS Subbulakshmi with English" (Video) https://youtu.be/qiU0GDrRA6s

