

# VĒMANA ŚATAKAMU

(With transliteration and English translation)

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Vēmana Śatakamu

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## Preface

School going Telugu children of the 1940s and 50s invariably used to memorize verses from *Vēmana Śatakamu*. And today, wherever they are, these verses do revisit them in one context or the other, for *Vēmana*'s verses once memorized, stay installed in the mind as *aide-memoire* for living like a good human being.

*Vēmana*'s poetry is unlike anything written before him or after him. His epigram is too short. Its soul is aphoristic. *Vēmana* responded to the happenings around him through his spontaneous recitation—all in an evaluative tone—by going beneath the skin of the people's behavior that became poetry for his readers. This could have been one of the reasons why his verses often sound didactic—like a father chiding his kid to behave.

His poetry sprang out of *bhāvāvēśam*—the verses are spontaneous outpourings of his noble ideas—outpourings of his quivering heart at mankind's irrationality in its disposition towards the society. That's why, though many of his verses are of great force and beauty, of noble sentiment and of pastoral sweetness, some have a touch of indecorum. Yet, they are well-rooted in the native soil emitting an all-too-familiar flavor.

All in all, they are eternal truths said in easily understandable Telugu. For instance, his verses—*appulēnivādē adhika baluḍu* ; *anuvugāni cōṭa adhikulamanarādu*—need no explanation. They are simply dictums every man/woman of every age will certainly benefit from.

His verses have a punch: verses such as “*yōgi kāḍu lōna bāgu kākunḍenē!*”—one cannot become a pious man without cleansing his inner-self; *Talalu bōḍulina talapulu bōḍulā?*—mere adorning of a monk's attire doesn't mean detachment from the longings; *madamu nilcu varaku manasevvariki nilcu?* How can mind be calm unless lustful arrogance calms down first?—hit the reader in the face. He so patiently and fervently mused on society, its morals, and the need for man to behave; all in his anxiety to make men/women sensitive to moral and spiritual dictums.

It is this rustic wisdom of *Vēmana* that we—C.P. Brown Academy of Alpha Foundation—want to make available for today's youth in Roman script, so that even those who cannot read Telugu, can now read and relish his visionary fervour laced with noble ideas. Feedback is solicited.

GRK Murty

# Transliteration Scheme of Telugu Alphabet

Vowels (అచ్చులు: Acculu)

అ	ఆ	ఇ	ఈ	ఉ	ఊ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū
ఋ	ౠ	ఌ	ౡ	ఎ	ఏ
ṛu	ṛū	.lu	.lū	e	ē
ఐ	ఒ	ఓ	ఔ	అం	అః
ai	o	ō	au	aṁ	aḥ

Consonants (హల్లులు: Hallulu)

క	ఖ	గ	ఘ	ఙ	
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ	
చ	ఛ	జ	ఝ	ఞ	
c	ch	j	jh	ñ	
ట	ఠ	డ	ఢ	ణ	
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ	
త	థ	ద	ధ	న	
t	th	d	dh	n	
ప	ఫ	బ	భ	మ	
p	ph	b	bh	m	
య	ర	ల	ళ	వ	
y	r	l	ḷ	v	
శ	ష	స	హ	క్ష	ౠ
ś	ṣ	s	h	ksh	ṛ

## Introduction

Vēmana is one of the most popular and beloved poets in Telugu language. His intellect, simplicity and naturalness of expression, and originality render him special to all the Telugus, rich or poor, literate or illiterate. There is controversy over when and where Vēmana lived. After a lot of research and debate, scholars established that he was born in a farmer's family and lived in the 17th century—probably born in 1652—and passed away in the early decades of the 18th century, as suggested by the British civil servant and Telugu literary savant, C.P. Brown. He did not disclose his family name. Worshipper of Śiva, he must be a jangam (a member of the sudra sect, usually Śaivaite, but also largely dissenter of the traditional religion). Many of the poems were supposed to be composed in the latter half of the 17th century. Based on the dialect and idiom used in the verses, it is suggested that Vēmana belonged to Gaṇḍikōṭa in Kandavōlu (present Kurnool) district or Koṇḍavēḍu in Cuddapah (Kadapa) district in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh.

Not much is known about his life. As the writings of a poet are largely autobiographical and reflections of his life, some extrapolations were made regarding Vēmana's life story from his poetry. One such compilation is that of Dr. N. Gōpi, which says that Vēmana must have led a care-free life, become a leader among his friends and educated himself through interactions with temple priests and village heads and understood the good and bad of the society from experience but got immersed more in worldly vices, including getting infatuated with prostitutes. But subsequently, he realized his immorality, got fed up with his base pursuits and when he wanted to correct himself, the society despised him. So he renounced the world and became a sanyāsi (ascetic) and poured out his experiences in the poems spontaneously. His original name could not be established, as he dropped his family name calling himself simply Vēma or Vēmana, which signifies a loom in Sanskrit. In course of time he came to be widely known as yōgi Vēmana.

A good and pious person is generally ignored by the society. Yōgi Vēmana is no exception! Among the scholars who brought Vēmana to light is C.P. Brown, who approached Telugu language through Vēmana. He collected manuscripts of Vēmana (tālapatrās: palm-leaves) from Machilipatnam, Vizag, Nellore, Guntur, Cuddapah, Madras, etc., got them compiled and printed Verses of Vēmana for the first time in 1824. Subsequently many versions of Vēmana's poems were printed; some written by others were also assigned to him. Today there is

a book, *Vēmana Padyamulu* (Vēmana's Poems), compiled by Sri B.V.N. Śāstry, published by Gollapūḍi Vīrāswāmy and Sons, Rajahmundry, consisting of 3253 poems. Whether all of them are by Vēmana or not is controversial. While dealing with this, eminent scholars like Komarrāju Lakshmaṇa Rāo, C.R. Redḍy, Vangūru Subbārāo, Vēṭuri Prabhākara Śāstry, Bandāru Tammayya, Rāḷḷapalli Ananta Kṛiṣṇa Śarma, Nārīa Venkatēśwara Rāo, and Ārudra projected Vēmana in a new perspective. Brown himself translated Vēmana into English in prose form. Vēmana has been translated into other Indian languages.

Self-confidence is a notable feature in the psychological makeup of Vēmana. He believes that he is a poet with a mission to expose the social evils rampant in his time and seeks to use his poetry as an instrument of social awareness and possibly, social change. As C.R. Redḍy wrote to R.A.K. Śarma, "Vēmana is an original genius... His very simplicity and naturalness hide a most perfect art." The thought and connections between lines are at times abstruse, while the language used is quite familiar. Vēmana made extensive use of day-to-day experiences (events, and animate and inanimate objects around him) to illustrate his thoughts and feelings. His is a powerful mind searching for the light of truth.

Vēmana is a vēdāntin (philosopher). There are both mystic insights and moral tenets in his poems. The poems are chiefly of three classes: satirical, moral-religious, and mystical. The satire is not personal or aimed at any one individually. It is about the contemporary state of affairs and the evil customs prevalent in the society. Its varied expressions are in the form of exhortations. Whatever Vēmana conveyed about personal life, society or philosophy are applicable or valid even today, which speaks for his in-depth understanding of basic human instincts and tendencies, his clarity of thought and expression. Most of his verses are composed extempore (āśuvuga) in āṭaveladi metre, consisting of four lines, the fourth one being a refrain (makutaṁ) in a majority of the poems. The meaning and purpose of the refrain are also controversial, but it is the 'signature' of Vēmana. The meaning the poet wants to convey is complete in the first three lines, but the poem is and reads incomplete without the refrain.

Vēmana is part of the folklore throughout the Telugu country. Hence the saying, 'There is no one who does not get wet in rain, and no one who does not know Vēmana's poems'. His feelings and thoughts excel language. He does not fit into the frame of his time. Vēmana is a people's poet, a universal poet. He is for change: he rebels against the evil forces and practices in the society. His weapon in the fight is reason. Humanity is his religion and man is his God.

Translation from one language-context into another is not easy, especially when the culture-context is also different. Our aim has been to keep the translation as close to the original as possible without distorting the meaning of the original. As Brown said in his preface to the 1824 edition of Verses of Vēmana, “The terse closeness of expression sometimes renders them difficult to translate with elegance, but such passages exemplify the manly force of a language that in the common dialect is often weak and verbose.” This challenge we encountered at many places in our translation. Brown’s Telugu-English dictionary was of immense help to us.

The poetry of Vēmana, which is closed to generations of children, should be made available to them. This can be only through translation as the probability of their learning Telugu and reading and understanding Vēmana in the original is almost nil. Not long ago, in a joint family system, grandmothers and mothers used to quote from ancient texts including, or rather even more so, Vēmana, which at a later stage in life was helpful for them to tread the right path in social interaction, serving as a guide to moral conduct and helping them keep proper balance in life. But today families are becoming nuclear and even atomic and more and more children are forced to learn the ‘art of living’ by themselves. We hope that this translation will be of help to them in learning this art.

The *makuṭam* (refrain) has been subject to varied and occasionally subjective interpretations. Some have even suggested alternatives to the popular, widely known refrain, *Viśhvadābhirāma vinuravēmā*. There have been several apocryphal stories about a person called Abhirama himself, but they do not stand critical scrutiny. The possible meaning of the refrain could be: Beloved of the All Giver, Vēma, listen.

As a keen and critical observer of men and matters around, Vēmana was concerned with the evil practices, the meaningless religious rituals, the eroding moral values and the hold of selfishness and hypocrisy in all activities during his time. A few examples of the timeless truths embodied in his verses are:

Recognition of good and bad: The milk of a cow even in a small quantity is sufficient; why plenty of donkey’s milk? Food served with love, in a morsel, is enough. Love is what makes giving good.

Noble people: The noble one speaks softly, like gold, unlike the mean who makes much noise, like brass.

If there is one virtuous person in a family, the whole family will be respected. It is like having a sandalwood tree in a big forest whereby the entire forest smells like sandalwood.

Vicious persons: Even if we feed the neem sapling with milk, it won't lose its bitterness; so also a vicious person will ever remain spiteful.

Anger: Through anger, one's goodness gets reduced; and if anger is kept under control, all wishes will be fulfilled.

Ways of the world: The village officer knows who the liar is; the Lord knows who the Truth teller is; and the wife knows her gluttonous husband. This reveals the keen observation of the poet.

Treatment of the enemy: If even an enemy, fit to be killed, is caught, he should not be harmed; it is enough to do him good and set him free.

Need for charity: Amassing wealth, without giving; saving money, without eating properly; are like the bee, collecting the honey, to be claimed by a stranger.

Domestic disharmony: The strife within the family, a grit in the shoe, and a humming bee around the ear, a speck in the eye and a thorn in the leg are sources of immeasurable annoyance.

Caste chastised: The undue importance given to one's caste is severely criticized by the poet in several of his verses. Why blame māla again and again? Isn't the blood in his body the same? Is there a caste without inherent light?

The poet, like Charles Dickens, made ample use of satire touched with humor, which is directed towards instruction. For example, he talks about a miser, who is like a barren cow. If one goes to milk it, it will kick one's teeth off, but does not yield milk. In his satire, he does not spare Lord Viṣṇu Himself, when he wonders, why should the Lord lying on the celestial ocean of milk desire the milk in the village of cowherds (Rēpalle) and concludes that the property of others is ever sweet (tasty).

The poetry of Vēmana is full of such priceless gems of worldly wisdom, which continue to serve readers as signposts in the journey towards social harmony and even spiritual realization.





Rāmuḍokaḍu puṭṭi ravikulamiḍērcē  
 kurupati janiyinci kulamu jerice  
 ilanu buṇyapāpa miḷāgu kādokō  
 viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

**Word Division (pada vibhāgam) \***

Rāmuḍu–okaḍu–puṭṭi–ravikulamu–iḍērcē / kurupati–janiyinci–kulamu–cerice /  
 ilanu–puṇya pāpam–iḷāgu–kādokō / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

**Glossary :**

Ravikulamu=the dynasty of Ravi, to which Lord Śrīrāma belonged; iḍērcē=made it illustrious;  
 Kurupati=lord of Kauravas, Duryodhana; Puṇyapāpamulu=Virtuous deeds and sins.

**English translation :**

Taking birth in the dynasty of Ravi, Rāma made it illustrious. Taking birth in the clan of Kauravas,  
 Duryodhana destroyed the Kuru dynasty. Right deeds and wrongdoings are like this.

**Comment :**

When virtuous children are born, they bring credit to the family. But when children with bad  
 character are born, they bring the entire dynasty into disrepute.

\* Some words combine together and evolve into new forms. In order to identify this, word division  
 (pada vibhāgam) is furnished separately for each verse.

Mrugamadambu cūḍa mīdanallaganunḍu  
bariḍhavillu dāni parimaḷambu  
guruvulaina vāri guṇamulīḷagurā!  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

mrugamadam(b)u-cūḍa-mīda-nallaga-unḍu /pariḍhavillu-dāni-parimaḷambu/  
guruvulu-ayina-vāri-guṇamulu-īḷagurā /viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Mrigamadambu=a reddish-brown substance secreted by a male musk deer used as an ingredient in perfumes; Pariḍhavillu=spread.

Musk looks dark but its fragrance spreads far and wide. The goodness and the qualities of a “guru” also spread like the perfume.

A guru is a teacher who shows and leads a student in the right path. In the world today there are teachers by profession but not ‘gurus’ who inspire the learners.



Vēmu cakkadonna viṣarōgamulupōyi  
dēhakāntikalgu dṛiḍhatakalgu  
tinagatinaga nadiye tīyaga nunḍurā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

vēmu-cakka-tinna-viṣarōgamulu-pōyi /dēhakānti-kalgu-dṛiḍhata-kalgu/  
tinaga-tinaga-adiye-tīyagānu-unḍurā /viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Vēmu=neem; Dēhakānti=body glow; Dṛiḍhatha=strength.

Neem is bitter, but when taken correctly (as a medicine) it cures diseases, gives radiance and strength. Eaten regularly, that bitter neem itself tastes sweet.

One should not avoid doing something good because it is difficult to do. Adaptation to the realities in the world, good or bad, is a habit to be cultivated by all.

Pappulēni kūḍu parulakasahyamau  
nappulēnivāḍe yadhikabaluḍu  
muppulēni vāḍe modaṭi sujñānirā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

pappu-lēni-kūḍu-parulaku-asahyamau / appu-lēni-vāḍe-adhika-baluḍu/  
muppu-lēni-vāḍe-modaṭi-sujñānira / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Muppu=danger; sujñāni=wise man.

Food without enough protein is disliked by all (and it leads to ill health). A person who has no debts is (morally) strong. One who has no fear of any danger is wise (spiritually).

One must have physical, moral and spiritual balance in life.



Hīnuḍenni vidyalila nabhyasincina  
ghanuḍu gāḍu hīna januḍegāni  
parimaḷamulu mōyu gardabhamu gajamaune  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

hīnuḍu-enni-vidyalanu-abhyasincina/ghanuḍu-kāḍu-hīna-januḍe-kāni/  
parimaḷamulu-mōyu-gardabhamu-gajamu-avune / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā

Hīnuḍu=mean person; Gārdabhamu=donkey.

Just as a donkey by carrying loads of perfumes cannot become an elephant, however much a mean person may educate himself, he remains mean but does not become great. (Education without wisdom is of no use.)

Yōgi Vēmāna is emphasizing the need for developing good qualities and values from the beginning rather than imitating others to look good.

Talliyunnappuḍe tanadugārābamu  
āmeḥpōva tananu arayarevaru  
mancikālamapuḍe mariyāda nārjimpu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

talli-unnappuḍe-tanadu-gārābamu / āme-pōva-tananu-arayaru-evaru/  
mancikālam-apuḍe-mariyādanu-ārjimpu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Gārābamu=pampering; Ārjimpu=earn.

A child gets pampered when the mother is alive. No one cares for the child when the mother is gone. When the time is in one's favor, one earns respect.

Vēmāna's saying here is similar to "make hay while the sun shines". In the contemporary society, many of the problems children face are due to mothers neglecting them. This poem also indicates the place given to mother in a child's life.



Anna maruga natani kannambu peṭṭina  
pāravēyu dāni phalitamēmi  
dhanikunaku nosangu dānamulaṭuvale  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

annam-arugani-ataniki-annam(b)u-peṭṭina / pāravēyu-dāni-phalitam-ēmi /  
dhanikunakunu-osangu-dānamulu-aṭuvale / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā

Arugu=digest; Phalitamu=result; Dānamu=what is given in charity.

What is the use of giving food to a person who throws it away as he cannot digest it? It is like donating money to a rich man who does not realize the value of the donation.

We should know whom we should help; otherwise, it will be futile.

Guṇayutunaku mēlu gōranta cēsina  
konḍayagunu vāni guṇamu cēta  
konḍayanta mēlu guṇahīnuḍerugunā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

guṇayutunaku-mēlu-gōru-anta-cēsina / konḍa-agunu-vāni-guṇamu-cēta /  
konḍa-anta-mēlu-guṇa-hīnuḍu-erugunā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Guṇayutuḍu= a righteous person; Gōranta= small quantity; Guṇahīnuḍu= one without virtues

If we help the virtuous person even a little, it appears as large as a mountain, on account of his righteousness. But does the person without virtue realize the help as large as a mountain?

To appreciate the greatness in the actions of others, the receiver of the benefits of those actions should possess a little of that greatness. The poet advises us to be noble even in receiving help from the noble persons.



Prāpti galugu cōṭa phalamiccu daivambu  
prāpti lēni cōṭa phalamu lēdu  
prāpti lēka pasiḍi paramātmuḍiccunā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

prāpti-kalugu-cōṭa-phalamu-iccu-daivambu / prāpti-lēni-cōṭa-phalamu-lēdu /  
prāpti-lēka-pasiḍi-paramātmuḍu-iccunā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Prāpti= being fortunate to receive; Pasiḍi= gold; Paramātmuḍu= God

If one is fortunate enough to receive, God will bestow the blessings. When one is not fortunate enough, there will be no Divine blessing. If one is not destined, will God bless one with gold?

It is necessary for us to feel contented with what God has blessed us. We get what we deserve. Aspiring for what we cannot acquire, will only lead to a sense of failure. Contentment is a continuous feast!

Ninḍu nadulu pāru nilci gambhīramai  
verrivāgu pāru vēgaborli  
alpuḍāḍu rīti nadhikunḍu nāḍunā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

ninḍu-nadulu-pāru-nilci-gambhīramai / verri-vāgu-pāru-vēga-porli /  
alpuḍu-ḍu-rīti-adhikunḍu-ḍunā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Ninḍu nadi= river full of water; Gambhīramai= (Here) with dignity;  
Verri vāgu= turbulent, meandering stream; Vega borli= flowing fast, turning up  
and down; Alpuḍu= mean person; Adhikuḍu= noble person

A river, full of water, flows majestically. A little, directionless stream flows fast up  
and down. Does a noble person behave like a mean person?

Recalling the sound made by gold and bronze, here too the poet differentiates  
between the conduct of the noble and ignoble persons in the world. Quiet and  
dignified conduct shows the essential nobility of an individual. Mere noise does not  
indicate the greatness of an individual. Let us therefore be calm and dignified.



Cippabaḍḍa swāticinuku mutyambayē  
nīṭabaḍḍa cinuku nīṭagalise  
brāpti galgucōṭa phalamēla tappurā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

cippa-paḍḍa-swāti-cinuku-mutyambu-ayē / nīṭa-paḍḍa-cinuku-nīṭa-kalise /  
prāpti-kalgu-cōṭa-phalam-ēla-tappurā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Cippa=oyster shell; Swāti cinuku=rain drop in Swāti Kārti; Prāpti=destined to get  
(be lucky); Phalamu=(good) result.

A raindrop falling in a pearl oyster during a particular season (Swāti kārti) turns into  
a pearl. A raindrop falling in a body of water becomes part of that water body.  
When one is ordained to receive what is due to oneself, one will not miss it.

Importance of place and time for any action or doing in life is emphasized in this  
verse. If only one is watchful and attends to one's duty promptly, one gets the due  
reward or respect. Proper place and time are crucial for success in any attempt.



Mēḍipandū cūḍa mēlimaiyundunu  
 poṭṭavicci jūḍa purugulunḍu  
 biriki vāni madini binkamīlāgurā  
 viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

mēḍipandū-cūḍa-mēlimai-unḍunu / poṭṭa-vicci-cūḍa-purugulu-unḍu /  
 piriki-vāni-madini-binkamu-īlāgurā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā

Mēḍipandū=fig fruit; Pirikivāḍu=coward, Binkamu=arrogance.

Surface of the fig fruit is shiny and smooth. However on cutting it open, one finds worms in it. Such is the arrogance in the mind of a coward.

In the present society more importance is given to appearances than to the qualities of a person. It is essential to cultivate good moral qualities rather than putting on external attractive attributes.

Alanu bugga puṭṭi nappuḍe kshayamaunu  
kalanu gāncu lakshmi ganuṭalēdu  
ilanu bhōgabhāgya mīṭīru kādokō  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

alanu-bugga-puṭṭina-appuḍe-kshayamu-avunu / kalanu-kāncu-lakshmi-kanuṭa-lēdu /  
ilanu-bhōga-bhāgyam-īṭīru-kādokō / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Bugga=bubble.

Bubbles that form in the wave break as they form. It is a transitory event. Also the wealth seen in the dream is not real or actual wealth. Alas! The riches and comforts in this world are also like bubbles and wealth in the dream.

The transitory nature of material comforts is well emphasized in this verse by Vemana. It is wise not to rely excessively on one's material possessions.



Palu toḍavulu vēru bangāra mokkaṭi  
baraga ghaṭamulu vēru prāṇa mokaṭi  
araya tinḍlu vēru yākali okkaṭi  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

palu-toḍavulu-vēru-bangāram-okkaṭi / paraga-ghaṭamulu-vēru-prāṇam-okkaṭi /  
araya-tinḍlu-vēru-ākali-okkaṭi / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā

Toḍavulu=ornaments; Ghaṭamu=pot (physical body).

One makes a variety of ornaments with the same gold. There are numerous forms of life on earth, but the life force in them is the same. There are many varieties of food just to satisfy the hunger in all living beings.

This verse brings out the point that the life force (prāṇa) in all living beings is the same and advises us to look for the internal harmony in humans rather than external differences.

Anuvugānicōṭa nadhikulamanarādu  
koncemaina nadiyu goduvagādu  
konḍa yaddamandu goncamai yunḍadā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

anuvu-kāni-cōṭa-adhikulam-anarādu / koncem-aina-adiyu-koduva-kādu/  
konḍa-addamu-andu-koncamai-unḍadā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Anuvugāni=not suitable, unfriendly; Koduva=less, small quantity.

One should not claim superiority in a hostile place. A precious thing even if it is small is not insufficient like the reflection of a hill that appears small in a mirror.

It is unwise to insist on one's superiority in a place where one has no strength. One must use one's discretion to assert oneself.



Vēru purugu cēri vṛukshambu ceracunu  
cīḍa purugu cēri ceṭṭu ceracu  
kutsituṇḍu cēri guṇavantu ceracurā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

vēru-purugu-cēri-vṛuksham(b)u-ceracunu/cīḍa-purugu-cēri-ceṭṭu-ceracu/  
kutsituṇḍu-cēri-guṇavantu-ceracurā/viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Vēru purugu=root worm; Cīḍa purugu=termite; Kutsituṇḍu=evil person.

A root-worm infects the roots and destroys the entire tree. Termite infects and destroys the whole tree. Similarly a vile one spoils a virtuous person.

Good company and association with wise people are essential for one to remain virtuous and to do good.

Aṇuvulōna nunḍu nakhila jagambulu  
aṇuvu tanadu lōna aḍagi yunḍu  
manasu nilpu naruḍu mari mukti cēsurā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

aṇuvu-lōna-unḍu-akhila-jagambulu / aṇuvu-tanadu-lōna-aḍagi-unḍu/  
manasu-nilpu-naruḍu-mari-mukti-cēsurā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā

Aṇuvu=atom; Akhila=all; Nilpu=fix.

In atom are all the worlds. Within itself is atom hidden. Man stilling (fixing) his mind attains liberation.

For attaining nobler goals one needs focus and unwavering pursuit. Even at a lower level, to achieve success in education/profession, focus is essential.



Nandanuḍu perigi peddala  
kandaraku vidhēyuḍaina nānandamagun  
pondika ceḍi satpuruṣula  
nindanu baḍa jintakalugu nikkamu Vēmā !

nandanuḍu-perigi-peddalaku / andaraku-vidhēyuḍu-aina-ānandamu-agun/  
pondika-ceḍi-satpuruṣula / nindanu-paḍa-cinta-kalugu-nikkamu-vēmā !

Nandanuḍu=son; Vidhēyuḍu=obedient; Pondika=proper behavior.

It is a joy when the offspring grow up and are obedient and respectful to the elders. If they lose propriety, and are found blameworthy by good people, it is certainly a matter of worry and concern (for the parents).

This verse indirectly exhorts the youngsters to make their parents and elders happy with their good deeds. They should learn to conduct themselves properly.

Kallalāḍu vāni grāmakarta yerungu  
satyamāḍuvāni swāmi yerugu  
bekkutindibōtu benḍlā merungurā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

kallalu-āḍu-vāni-grāmakarta-erungu / satyam-āḍu-vāni-swāmi-erugu/  
pekku-tindipōtu-penḍlām-erugurā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Kalla=lie; Tindipōtu=glutton.

The head of a village knows who the liars are in the village. Similarly God knows who the truthful ones are, and wife knows the gluttonous husband. Even if one fools oneself ignoring one's conscience and thinks good of oneself, from the near and the dear to God, someone knows the truth. Hence one should be honest to oneself.



Erukalēni doralā nennāḷḷu golicina  
bratukulēdu vaṭṭi bhrāntikāni  
goḍḍuṭāvu pālu gōritē cēpunā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

eruka-lēni-doralanu-ennāḷḷu-kolicina / bratuku-lēdu-vaṭṭi-bhrānti-kāni/  
goḍḍuṭāvu- pālu-kōritē-cēpunā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Bhrānti= delusion. Goḍḍuṭāvu=barren cow.

However long one serves masters who do not realize the needs (worth) of their employees, there is no value or reward for the work. It is only a delusion to hope that the work will be recognized. Would a barren cow yield milk by our wishing for it?

The emphasis in this verse is on living with awareness of men and matters in society and shape one's conduct accordingly.

Pālunīru galipi pasiḍi kammunarūḍu  
vāni vēru jēyu pakshiyokaṭi  
araya narulakanna nāhamsayēminna  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

pālu-nīru-kalipi-pasiḍiki-ammu-naruḍu / vāni-vēru-cēyu-pakshi-okāṭi/  
araya-narula-kanna-ā-hamsayē-minna / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Pasiḍi=gold; Hamsa=swan; Minna=better.

Adulterating milk with water, man sells it for gold (at a high price). But there is a bird, which can separate the milk from water (which reveals the extent of adulteration). Compared with man the swan is nobler.

People with a sense of dharma, though rare in the society, are superior to the greedy.



Vēmu pālu vōsi prēmatō bencina  
cēdu virigi tīpi cendabōdu  
ōgu nōgegāka yucitajñuḍeṭṭulaunu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

vēmu-pālu-pōsi-prēmatō-pencina / cēdu-virigi-tīpi-cendabōdu /  
ōgunu-ōge-kāka-ucitajñuḍu-eṭṭa-avunu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Cēdu virigi=bitterness lessened (removed); Ōgu=evil person; Ucitajñuḍu=one who knows what is proper, a wise person.

Neem plant even if nourished well with milk instead of water, will not turn sweet, changing its bitter taste. Similarly, an evil person will remain evil and will not turn into a man of discretion and wisdom.

It is not possible to change the core of a being, however hard one tries. But today people believe that nurture (training) can change/improve the nature of an individual.



Niḷḷalōna mīnu nigīḍi dūramu pāru  
 baiṭa mūreḍaina bāralēdu  
 sthānabalmigāni tanabalmi kādayā  
 viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

niḷḷalōna–mīnu–nigīḍi–dūramu–pāru / baiṭa–mūreḍu–aina–pāra–lēdu/  
 sthāna–balmi–kāni–tana–balmi–kādayā / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Mīnu (mīnamu)=fish; Mūreḍu=length of fore arm (short distance)

Fish swims fast a long way with a twitch when it is in water. But it cannot go forward even for a few inches on land. It is because of the strength of the place (surroundings) it lives not because of its own strength.

Man is a social being. Hence he has to fit in the society he is in before he can achieve something valuable. This is reflected in the hardships that people in general face when they migrate from village to town, from town to city, from state to state or from country to country.

Annidānamulanu annadāname goppa  
kannatallikaṇṭe ghanamu lēdu  
ennaguruni kannā nekkuḍu lēdayā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

anni-dānamulanu-annadāname-goppa / kannatalli-kaṇṭe-ghanamu-lēdu /  
enna-guruni-kannā-ekkuḍu-lēdayā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā

Dānamu=charity; Enna=on considering.

Giving food to eat is the best of all charities; no one is superior to one's own mother and no one is better than the guru.

The two unqualified well-wishers and the best donation that gives satisfaction to the giver and the taker are highlighted in this verse.



Dhanamu kūḍabeṭṭi dānambu cēyaka  
tānu tinaka lessa dācukonaga  
tēneṭṭiga cērci teruvari kiyaḍā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

dhanamu-kūḍa-peṭṭi-dānambu-cēyaka / tānu-tinaka-lessa-dācukonaga/  
tēneṭṭiga-cērci-teruvariki-īyaḍā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Kūḍabeṭṭu= save; Dācukonu= keep (money) safe; Tēneṭṭiga= honeybee;  
Teruvari= passerby

If one saves money without giving it in charity, without eating well and keeping it safe, it is like the honeybee collecting honey only to be taken away by a passerby.

One should be frugal of one's money, and save it for future exigencies, but must not allow it to be claimed by the undeserving. It is necessary to utilize the financial resources in a way beneficial to the deserving.

Miremu ginja cūḍa mīda nallaganunḍu  
koriki cūḍa lōna juruku manunu  
sajjanulagu vāri sāramiṭlundurā!  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

miremu-ginja-cūḍa-mīda-nallaga-nunḍu / koriki-cūḍa-lōna-curuku-manunu/  
sajjanulagu-vāri-sāram-iṭlu-unḍurā! / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Miremu=pepper corn; Curukumanu=tastes sharp (burning).

Pepper corn appears black. Once you bite it, it tingles (burns) your tongue. The essence of a noble man will be like this.

Appearances are deceptive; one needs to put in an effort to understand the world in its true colors.



Kaniyu gānalēḍu kadalimpa ḍānōru  
viniyu vinangalēḍu vismayamuna  
sampadagalavāni sannipātambidi  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

kaniyu-kānalēḍu-kadalimpaḍu-ā-nōru / viniyu-vinanga-lēḍu-vismayamuna /  
sampada-kala-vāni-sannipātambu-idi / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Vismayamu=astonishment; Sannipātamu=delirious state of mind.

Though things are visible, he does not recognize them. He does not speak to the other or deal with him in any way. Being in a delirious state, he does not listen, though he can certainly hear; such is the state of the mind of the rich person.

When wealth goes to one's head and holds him in daze, it makes one blind, deaf and dumb. It is necessary to be poised and stable, when one turns rich.

Ākumīdi rāta andariki teliyunu  
cētilōni rāta ceppavaccu  
tōlukindi rāta doḍḍavāḍerugunā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

ākumīdi-rāta-andariki-teliyunu / cētilōni-rāta-ceppa-vaccu/  
tōlu-kindi-rāta-doḍḍavāḍu-erugunā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Andariki teliyunu= will be known to all; Ceppavaccu= can be deciphered/told;

Tōlukindi= under the skin; Doḍḍavāḍu= great/noble person

The writing on the leaf will be known to all. The writing in the hand can be read and explained to all. Can the writing under the skin, the real nature of a person, be known well even to a noble person?

It is easy to know the external features of a person/the world but it is impossible to get at the real nature of a person or even of this world.



Bahuḷa kāvyamulanu barikimpagā vaccu  
bahuḷa śabda cayamu balukavaccu  
sahanamokkaṭabba cāla kaṣṭamburā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

bahuḷa-kāvyamulanu-parikimpagā-vaccu / bahuḷa-śabda-cayamu-paluka-vaccu /  
sahanamu-okkaṭi-abba-cāla-kaṣṭamburā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Bahuḷa= many, various; Parikincu= observe; Śabdacayamu= groups of words;  
Sahanamu= patience

It is possible to examine various classics. It is easy to utter a number of words. But to acquire patience and mental equanimity is indeed difficult.

It is not sufficient for us to go through several books or acquire the skill of speech, but it is the acquisition of patience and poise that will help us in leading noble lives.

Ganga pārucunḍu kadalani gatitōḍa  
muriki kālva pārū mrōtatōḍa  
dātayōrci naṭladhamuḍōrvalēḍayā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

ganga-pārucunḍu-kadalani-gati-tōḍa / muriki-kālva-pārū-mrōta-tōḍa /  
dāta-ōrcinaṭlu-adhamuḍu-ōrvalēḍayā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Pārū=flow; Murugu kālva=drainage canal; Mrōta=sound; Dāta=noble person.

The big river (Ganga) flows quietly. The dirty water in the gutter flows with loud noise. A mean man cannot be as patient as a noble man.

A characteristic of a noble person is to be quiet and dignified, and not make loud noise, whereas uncultured people rave and shout and usually make a scene.



Vaccunadi bōvunadi mari  
jaccunadiyu ganagalēka sahajamulanucun  
viccalaviḍigā diruguṭa  
ciccunabaḍunaṭṭi miḍuta celuvame Vēmā !

vaccunadi-pōvunadi-mari / jaccunadiyu-kanaga-lēka-sahajamulu-anucun /  
viccalaviḍigā-tiruguṭa / ciccuna-paḍunaṭṭi-miḍuta-celuvame-vēmā !

Vaccunadi=what comes; Pōvunadi=what goes; Sahajamu=natural;  
Viccavaiḍigā tirugu=roam recklessly; Ciccun=fire; Miḍuta=locust.

To be unable to realize what is coming, what is going and what is dying and to assume that these are all part of the natural process and roam around as one wishes is like a locust jumping and falling in the fire.

Here Vēmā underlines the difference between irresponsibility and being philosophical. One has to have discrimination and make proper judgments in life, instead of being reckless in one's conduct.

Hīnaguṇamuvāni nilucēraniccina  
entavānikaina niḍumugalugu!  
īga kaḍupujocci yiṭṭaṭṭu cēyadā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

hīna-guṇamu-vāni-illu-cēraniccina / enta-vāniki-aina-iḍumu-kalugu/  
īga-kaḍupu-cocci-iṭṭaṭṭu-cēyadā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Hīnaguṇamuvāḍu=mean person; Cēraniccina=allow to enter; Iḍumu=harm;  
Coccu=enter.

When a mean person gets shelter in the house, the householders will get into trouble. It is like a fly entering your stomach and stirring the guts causing discomfort.

We should be very cautious in offering hospitality/shelter to strangers. We should study their character and their intentions before offering them shelter.



Ceppulōni rāyi cevilōni jōrīga  
kanṭilōni nalusu kālimullu  
inṭilōni pōru intintakādayā !  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

ceppulōni-rāyi-cevilōni-jōrīga / kanṭilōni-nalusu-kāli-mullu /  
inṭilōni-pōru-intinta-kādayā ! / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Jōrīga=buzzing fly; Nalusu=speck; Kāli mullu=thorn in the foot; Pōru=fight, unrest,  
disquiet.

The discomfort of having a grit in the shoe, a fly buzzing in the ear, a mote in the eye, a thorn in the foot, or unrest in the family is beyond estimation.

Constant distraction even by a small thing will not permit one to concentrate and do one's best in life. It is necessary to try to avoid them.



Alpuḍepuḍu palkunāḍambaramugānu  
 sajjanunḍu balku callagānu  
 kancumrōginaḷlu kanakambu mrōgunā  
 viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

alpuḍu–epuḍu–palkunu–āḍambaramugānu / sajjanunḍu–palku–callagānu /  
 kancu–mrōginaḷlu–kanakam(b)u–mrōgunā / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Sajjanu(n)ḍu=noble person; Callagānu=(cool) softly.

A mean person brags. A good man speaks with composure. Does gold sound the way bronze sounds?

Here the sound made by gold is equivalent to the words of a good man, and the ringing of bronze is equivalent to the talk of a mean, arrogant person. Mere sound does not make one's speech noble or acceptable.

Dēvuḍanaga vēre dēsāmandunnāḍe  
dēhi tōḍa nepuḍu dēhamande  
vāhanamulanekki vaḍidōlucunnāḍe  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

dēvuḍu–anaga–vēre–dēsāmandu–unnāḍē / dēhi–tōḍa(n)–epuḍu–dēhamande/  
vāhanamulanu–ekki–vaḍi–tōlucunnāḍe / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Epuḍu=always; Vāhanamu=vehicle; Vaḍi tōlu=drive fast.

Is there God in any another place (country) separately? He is always living within the body, mounting and controlling horses (of desire, anger, greed, lust, arrogance and hatred) and driving them fast.

Humans are led by the horses of destruction, which lie within them. One should realize that God is always within controlling these horses of destruction. So one should strive for liberation of the soul but should not get destroyed by them.



Eddukaina gāni yēḍādi telpina  
māṭa delisi naḍacu marmamerigi  
moppe teliyalēḍu muppadēṅḍlakunaina  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

edduku–aina–gāni–yēḍādi–telpina / māṭa–telisi–naḍacu–marmamu–erigi /  
moppe–teliyalēḍu–muppadi–ēṅḍlakunu–aina / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Eddukaina=even to an ox; Telpina=after teaching; Naḍacu=behave;  
Marmamu=hidden truth (secret); Moppe=adamant person.

When you teach/train even to an ox for a year, it walks (behaves) following the wish of its master. But an adamant person will not learn or obey even if you teach/train him/her for thirty years (long time).

Even in an animal, instinct dominates; but an adamant person ignores the instinct while conducting himself. It is impossible to teach a person, who refuses to be taught. A learner is really the one who wants to learn.

Tanuvulasthiramani dhanamulasthiramani  
telupagalaḍu tānu teliyalēḍu  
ceppavaccu panulu cēyūṭe kaṣṭamau  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

tanuvulu–asthiram–ani–dhanamulu–asthiram–ani / telupa–kalaḍu–tānu–teliya–lēḍu /  
ceppavaccu–panulu–cēyūṭe–kaṣṭamau / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Tanuvu=physical body; Asthiramu=impermanent; Teliyalēḍu=cannot know;  
Ceppavaccu=can tell; Cēyūṭa=doing; Kaṣṭamu=difficult.

One can easily say that these bodies are not permanent, and the money is transient.  
But one cannot realize it. It is easy to tell others, but it is difficult for one to put that  
realization into practice.

Vēmāna points out the double standards that are so rampant in society through  
this exhortation. There are many people, who give advice liberally to others, but  
very few practise it. It is therefore necessary that we should first put it into practice  
before we teach others.



Peṭṭi pōyalēni vaṭṭinarulu bhūmi  
buṭṭanēmi vāru giṭṭanēmi  
puṭṭalōna jedalu puṭṭavā giṭṭavā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

peṭṭi–pōyalēni–vaṭṭi–narulu–bhūmi / puṭṭanēmi–vāru–giṭṭanēmi /  
puṭṭalōna–cedalu–puṭṭavā–giṭṭavā / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Peṭṭi pōyu=giving out of generosity; Puṭṭu=take birth.

What difference does it make whether worthless people with no feeling of generosity  
are born or dead? Don't the termites take birth in the termite-hill and die?

People with no generosity are compared to termites that are born and die soon.  
The poet advises us to be generous and make our lives worth living and purposeful.

Niḷlamunaga nēla nidhula beṭṭaga nēla  
monasi vēlpulakunu mokkanēla  
kapaṭa kalmaṣamulu kaḍupulō nunḍagā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

niḷla–munaga–ēla–nidhula–peṭṭaga–ēla / monasi–vēlpulakunu–mokkanu–ēla /  
kapaṭa–kalmaṣamulu–kaḍupulō–nunḍagā / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Nidhulu= treasures; Monasi = after trying; Vēlpulu= gods; Mokku=pay obeisance;  
Kapaṭi= dishonest, full of hypocrisy; Kalmaṣamu= impurity

What good is it to bathe in water, to offer treasures and to pay obeisance to gods,  
when the mind is filled with impurity of hypocrisy?

To achieve noble goals in life, we should be pure. Purity of thought and purity of  
action, coupled with purity of speech, ensure success in our endeavors.



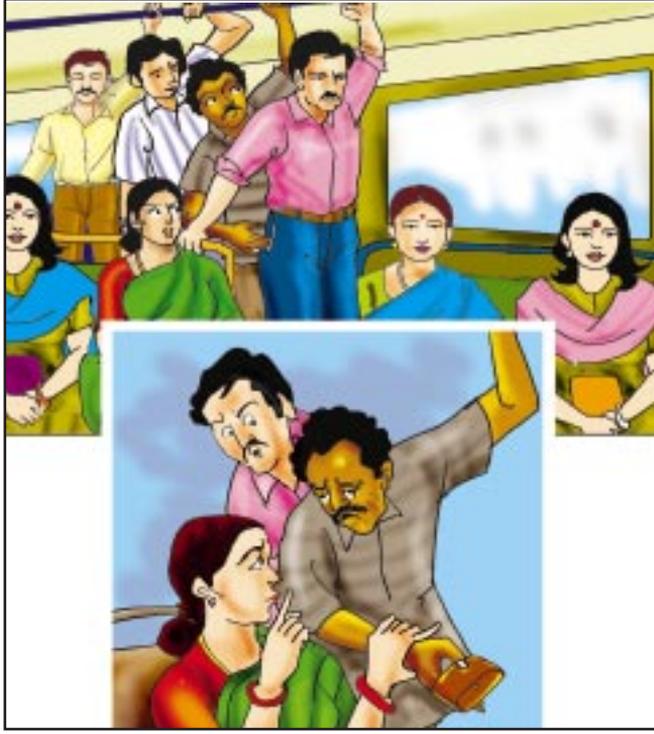
Vāna kuriyakunna vaccunu kshāmambu  
vānagurisenēni varada pārū  
varada karavu renḍu varusatō neruguḍī  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

vāna–kuriyakunna–vaccunu–kshāmam(b)u / vāna–kurisenēni–varada–pārū /  
varada–karavu–renḍu–varusatōnu–eruguḍī / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Vāna kuriyakunna=if it does not rain; Kshāmamu=famine; Varada=flood.

When there is no rain, there will be famine. When there is excess rain there will be  
floods. One should be aware that flood and famine follow one after the other.

Life is not always a bed of roses; it has its thorns. In life there are both happiness  
and unhappiness, and we should accept both and pull on.



Uppukappurambu nokka pōlika nunḍu  
 cūḍacūḍa rucula jāḍavēru  
 puruṣulandu puṇyapuruṣuluvērayā !  
 viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

uppu-kappuram(b)u-okka-pōlika-unḍu / cūḍa-cūḍa-rucula-jāḍa-vēru /  
 puruṣulandu-puṇya-puruṣulu-vērayā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Kappuramu=camphor; Puṇyapuruṣulu=virtuous people.

Salt and camphor look alike. But they are very different in taste. All men appear similar but the pious ones are different among them.

One must not judge a person by outward appearance alone but must carefully study the conduct of the person and judge his true nature. Wrong judgment of character leads to several difficulties.

Nīca guṇamulella nirmūlamai pōvu  
koduva lēdu sujana gōṣṭi valana  
gandhamalada mēni kampaḍangina yaṭlu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

nīca-guṇamulu-ella-nirmūlamu-aipōvu / koduva-lēdu-sujana-gōṣṭi-valana /  
gandhamu-alada-mēni-kampu-aḍangina-aṭlu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Nirmūlamai pōvu= will be destroyed; Koduva lēdu= there will be no short supply;  
Sujana gōṣṭi= conversation with (company of) virtuous people;  
Gandhamalada= applying scent (aroma) or sandal paste

Through conversation with (and company of) the virtuous, the base qualities in an individual will be destroyed, just as nasty smell will die down when scent is applied.

Good company and conversation with righteous people is real education. By moving in their noble company even a mean person can slowly be transformed into a noble soul.



Enta caduvu cadivi enniyō vinnanu  
hīnuḍavaguṇambu mānalēḍu  
boggu pālagadaḡa bōvuna nailyambu?  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

enta-caduvu-cadivi-enniyō-vinnanu / hīnuḍu-avaguṇam(b)u-mānalēḍu /  
boggu-pāla-kaḍaga-pōvuna-nailyam(b)u / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Avaguṇam(b)u=wicked (bad) quality; Boggu=coal; Nailyam=blue (black) color.

However much one is educated or however much one listens to others, a mean man cannot stop being mean. Can we wash off the blackness of the coal by washing it with milk?

Just as the blackness of the coal cannot be washed off with milk, no amount of education or lecturing can remove the meanness in a bad person. Perhaps, it is possible to change inborn characteristics through proper training, although it is difficult.

Nēranannavāḍu nēpari mahilōna  
nērtunannavāḍu ninda jendu  
ūrakunnavāḍe uttamōttamuḍayā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

nēranu-anna-vāḍu-nēpari-mahilōna / nērtunu-anna-vāḍu-ninda-jendu /  
ūraka-unna-vāḍu-uttamōttamuḍayā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Nēranannavāḍu= One who admits his ignorance; Nerpari= skillful person;  
Ninda jendu= will be blamed; Ūrakunnavāḍu= One who keeps quiet;  
Uttamōttamuḍu= The best person of all

In this world, the one who admits his ignorance is ever skillful (successful). The one who shows his readiness to learn also will be blamed. The one who keeps quiet will be considered the best person of all.

The world is full of people, who are ever eager to find fault with others when they attempt to perform some tasks, though the former perform no tasks at all. In such a situation, it is better to remain quiet instead of becoming targets of criticism, motivated by ill will.



Kānivānitōḍa galasi melagucunna  
kānivānigāne kānturavani  
tāṭi krinda pālu trāgina candamau  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

kāni-vāni-tōḍa-kalasi-melagucunna / kāni-vāni-gāne-kānturu-avani /  
tāṭi-krinda-pālu-trāgina-candamau / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Kānivāḍu=undesirable (bad) person; Melagu=associate (oneself); Tāṭi (cettu)=palm tree; Candamu=like.

When one moves in a bad company, one is also considered bad in this world. It is like drinking milk under a palm tree.

Even if one drinks milk under a palm tree, people assume that the person is drinking toddy. It is necessary to keep good company. There is a saying in English: Tell me your friends, and I will tell what you are.

kōtibatti tecci krotta puttamu gatti  
konḍa mrucculella golicinaṭḷu  
nītihīnunodda nirbhāgyulunduru  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

kōti-patti-tecci-krotta-puttamu-gatti / konḍamrucculu-ella-kolicina-aṭḷu /  
nīti-hīnuni-odda-nirbhāgyulu-unduru / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Puttamu= clothes; Konḍamrucculu= large black-faced monkeys;  
Kolucu= worship (honor);

Nītihīnuḍu= a person without morals; Nirbhāgyulu=luckless fellows

Just as large monkeys catch hold of a monkey, dress it up in new clothes, and pay respects to it, worthless people flock round immoral people.

Those, who have no worth of their own and possess no moral values, make friendship with equally worthless and immoral people. It is desirable that we keep good company, so that we may imbibe slowly some noble qualities



Alpa buddhivāni kadhikāramiccina  
doḍḍavāri nella tolagagoṭṭu  
ceppudineḍi kukka ceraku tīperugunā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

alpabuddhi-vāniki-adhikāram-iccina / doḍḍa-vāri-ella-tolaga-goṭṭu /  
ceppu-tineḍi-kukka-ceraku-tīpi-erugunā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Alpabuddhi=mean mentality; Adhikāramu=authority; power; Doḍḍavāru=virtuous people; Ceraku= sugarcane.

When a mean man is entrusted with power, he will fire all the efficient/good people from power. Does the shoe-chewing dog know the sweetness of sugarcane?

Many of the ills of the present society are because of choosing wrong persons to positions of authority. The inefficient/undeserving person, given authority, will not realize the worth of the right people and by sacking them will destroy the organization itself.

Paikamunna vāni pruṣṭambu punḍaina  
vasudhalōna cālavārtakekku  
pēdavāni inṭi penḍlaina nerugarē!  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

paikam–unna–vāni–pruṣṭam(b)u–punḍu–aina / vasudha–lōna–cāla–vārtaku–ekku/  
pēdavāni–inṭi–penḍli–aina(n)–erugarē / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Paikamu=money; Pruṣṭamu=bottom; Vārtakekku=become news.

When a wealthy man's bottom gets sore/hurt, it becomes the news of the world.  
But no one notices even when there is a wedding in the poor man's family.

The importance given to wealth is explained well in this verse. The society at present is ruled by money. No one notices a single good quality of a poor man or a happy event in his family.



Āśacēta manujulāyuvu galanāllu  
tirugu cunduru bhrama drippalēka  
muriki bhāṇḍamandu musuru nīgala bhangi  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

āśa–cēta–manujulu–āyuvu–kala–nāllu / tirugu–cunduru–bhrama–trippa–lēka /  
muriki–bhāṇḍam–andu–musuru(n)–īgala–bhangi / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā

Āyuvu=life–span; Bhrama=false hope; Muriki bhāṇḍamu=dirty pot;  
Musuru= swarm; gather

Like flies swarming around a dirty pot all their life, humans wander around with hope unable to control their desires.

Most people are attracted by false hopes in life and chase illusions. It is desirable to pursue nobler goals.

Priyamulēni vindu pinḍivaṅṭala cēṭu  
bhaktilēni pūja patricēṭu  
pātramerugani īvi bangārucēṭurā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

priyamu-lēni-vindu-pinḍivaṅṭala-cēṭu / bhakti-lēni-pūja-patri-cēṭu /  
pātramu-erugani-īvi-bangāru-cēṭurā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Vindu=feast; Pinḍivaṅṭa=Special dish prepared for festivals; Patri=leaves used for worship; Pātramerugani=ignorant of the worth of the receiver; Īvi=act of charity.

A feast served without love is a waste of special preparations. Worshipping God without devotion is a waste of sacred leaves. Gifting without knowing propriety (the worth) of the receiver is a waste of gold.

In the contemporary society, with increasing competition in all walks of life, people have become mechanical in their behavior. This verse stresses the need for true sympathy and affection for others in whatever we do, and we should do it wholeheartedly.



Tappulennuvāru tanḍōpa tanḍambu  
lurvi janulakella nunḍu dappu  
tappulennuvāru tama tappulerugaru  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

tappulu-ennuvāru-tanḍōpa-tanḍambu / urvi-janulaku-ella-unḍu-tappu /  
tappulu-ennu-vāru-tama-tappulu-erugaru / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Tappulennuvāru= Those who find fault (with others)/look for defects

Tanḍōpatanḍambu= Numerous, many; Urvi= world; Tama= their (own)

In this world there are numerous people who search for defects in other people. Each person will have some defect or the other. And those who look for defects in others do not know their own defects.

Instead of developing a negative attitude, advises the poet, it is better to develop positive attitude. It is better to look for the good traits in others than trying to pick holes. An awareness of the noble qualities in others will provide an opportunity for us to acquire some of those noble qualities.



Vidyalēnivāḍu vidyādhikulacenta  
nunḍinanta baṇḍitunḍu kāḍu  
kolani hamsalakaḍa gokkerayunnaṭḷu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

vidya-lēni-vāḍu-vidyādhikula-centa(n) / unḍinanta-paṇḍitunḍu-kāḍu /  
kolani-hamsala-kaḍa-kokkera-unnaṭḷu / viśvada-abhīrama-vinura-vēmā

Panḍituḍu=scholar; Kolanu=pond; Hamsa=swan; Kokkera=heron.

An illiterate, by associating himself with scholars, cannot become a scholar. It will be like a heron among the swans in a lake.

Mere physical association with a scholar does not make an illiterate person educated. He should put in the necessary effort to pick up knowledge from the scholarly environment around.

Cikkiyunnavēḷa simhambunainanu  
bakkakukka karaci bādha cēyu  
balimilēnivēḷa pantambu celladu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

cikki-unna-vēḷa-simham(b)u(n)-ainanu / bakka-kukka-karaci-bādha-cēyu/  
balimi-lēni-vēḷa-pantam(b)u-celladu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Cikkiyunna=become weak; Bakkakukka=emaciated (weak) dog; Pantamu=stubborn resolve.

When the lion is weak, even an emaciated dog bites and troubles it. Hence when one is not strong, one must not be stubborn.

When one is not in full possession of power, one must not be adamant and stick to his guns. One must conduct oneself as per the prevailing circumstances and note that discretion is the better part of valor.



Modala tana matamu vadalaka  
tuda nevvāri matamu naina dūṣimpakayun  
badiluḍayi kōrki gōraka  
mudamuna jariyincuvāḍe mukhyuḍu Vēmā !

modala-tana-matamu-vadalaka / tuda(n)-evvāri-matamu(n)-aina-dūṣimpakayu /  
padiluḍu-ayi-kōrki-kōraka / mudamuna-cariyincu-vāḍe-mukhyuḍu-vēmā !

Modala=at the beginning; Matamu=religion (principles, beliefs); Tuda=at the end; Dūṣimpaka=not criticising; Padiluḍu=a poised person; Mudamu=happiness; Mukhyuḍu=leader among people.

A poised person, who lives in joy without compromising his/ her principles in the first place, without criticising others' principles and values at the end, and does not desire material things alone, is a leader among people.

For a leader both conviction and accommodation are necessary. We should stick to our religious practices and our convictions; simultaneously, we should respect those of others, too, and should not ridicule them. Such attitude of mutual respect leads to social and religious harmony, which is being increasingly threatened these days.

Pūja kannā nēca buddhi nidānambu  
māṭa kannā nēca manasū druḍhamu  
kulamu kannā nēca guṇamu pradhānambu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

pūja-kanna(n)-enca-buddhi-nidānam(b)u / māṭa-kanna(n)-enca-manasū-druḍhamu /  
kulamu-kanna(n)-enca-guṇamu-pradhānam(b)u / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Pūja=(ritual) worship; Nidānamu=steady, poised state of mind; Druḍhamu=strong;  
Pradhānamu=important.

Pondering over steadiness or calm of mind is better than worship. Mind is stronger  
than word, virtuous quality is better than the caste one belongs to.

Mere superficial religious rites, insincere words and the caste into which people  
are born – all these are not important. We should possess a poised mind, honest  
speech and noble character.



Dānamāḍuguvāḍu dharalōna adhamuḍu  
dānamāḍugaḍēni daivasamuḍu  
dānamīnivāḍu dhanyuḍu gādayā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

dānam-aḍugu-vāḍu-dharalōna-adhamuḍu / dānam-aḍugaḍēni-daiva-samuḍu /  
dānam-īni-vāḍu-dhanyuḍu-kādayā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā

Aḍugu vāḍu=One who asks (here, a beggar); Adhamuḍu=mean person;  
Daivasamuḍu=equal to God; Dhanyuḍu=accomplished (good) person.

Beggar is considered the meanest in the world. One who does not beg is equivalent  
to God. One who does not donate even a little is not a good person.

Nobility lies not in taking but in giving. The easiest way to happiness and even  
spiritual fulfilment is to give.

Janana maraṇamulaku sarisvatantruḍuḡāḍu  
modalu kartagāḍu tudanugāḍu  
naḍumakartananuṭa nagubāṭu kāḍokō  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

janana-maraṇamulaku-sari-svatantruḍu-kāḍu / modalu-karta-kāḍu-tudanu-kāḍu /  
naḍuma-kartanu-anuṭa-nagubāṭu-kāḍokō / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Jananamaraṇamulu=birth and death; Svatantruḍu=a free person; Karta=agent of action; Nagubāṭu= laughable action.

Man is not free from birth and death. He is neither a doer in the beginning nor a doer in the end. Isn't it laughable to think that he is the doer and the controller of things in between?

Proud man, who thinks that he is the master/architect of his fate, should realize that he is a mere instrument in the hands of Divinity. He can determine neither his birth nor death and he can hardly determine the course of his life. The poet impresses on us the need for humility and performing our duties and leaving the result to Almighty.



Sādhanambu lēka samakūḍa dēdiyu  
bōdhalēni vidya pondadepuḍu  
pādukolpi madini bhāvinci cūḍarā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

sāḍhanam(b)u-lēka-samakūḍadu-ēdiyu / bōdha-lēni-vidya-ponḍadu-epuḍu /  
pāḍu-kolpi-madini-bhāvinci-cūḍarā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Sādhanamu=practice; Samakūḍadēdiyu=nothing will be achieved; Pondu=attain; Pādukolpi=rooting (fixing) in the mind; Bhāvincu=think.

Fix your mind firmly and realize for yourself that nothing can be achieved without practice in this world, and no one can acquire knowledge without proper teaching.

Vēmā stresses the need for continuous practice to become perfect in any activity and for a proper teacher to facilitate learning.



Talli tanḍri mīda daya lēni putruṇḍu  
 puṭṭanēmi vāḍu giṭṭanēmi?  
 puṭṭalōni cedalu puṭṭavā giṭṭavā  
 viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

talli-tanḍri-mīda-daya-lēni-putruṇḍu / puṭṭanēmi-vāḍu-giṭṭanēmi /  
 puṭṭalōni-cedalu-puṭṭavā-giṭṭavā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Daya=kindness, affection; Giṭṭu=die; Ceda puṭṭa=termite hill.

It makes no difference whether the children who have no feeling or consideration for their parents are born or dead. They are like termites which are being born and are dying in the termite-hill itself.

Feelingless offspring are like termites in the termite-hill. The hallmark of a child is love for the parents, who shower boundless affection on him selflessly.

Paranāri sōdaruḍai  
para dhanamula kāśapaḍaka parahitaratuḍai  
parulaligina tānalugaka  
parulennaga bratuku vāḍu prājñuḍu Vēmā !

para-nāri-sōdaruḍu-ai / para-dhanamulaku-āśa-paḍaka-para-hita-ratuḍai /  
parulu-aligina-tānu-alugaka / parulu-ennaga-bratuku-vāḍu-prājñuḍu-vēmā !

Paranāri=other (other's) lady; Parahitaratuḍu=well-wisher of other people;  
Aligina=get angry; Ennaga=respected; Prājñuḍu=noble person.

A noble person is one who lives as a brother to all other women, one who does not aspire for others' wealth, one who always has others' good at heart, one who does not get angry even when others are angry, and one who is respected by others.

A noble person must possess the virtues of treating all other women as sisters, not desiring to get the money of others, wishing the welfare of others and not losing temper even when others do. These virtues are ever relevant.



Tatvavādi galaḍu dharaṇipai nendaina  
tatvavēdi lēḍu dharaṇilōna  
kaligenēni vānigānanga rādayā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

tatva-vādi-kalaḍu-dharaṇipai(n)-endaina / tatva-vēdi-lēḍu-dharaṇi-lōna /  
kaligenēni-vāni-kānanga-rādayā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Tatvavādi=one who debates truth (philosophy); Endaina=anywhere; Tatvavēdi=one who knows truth; Kaligenēni=even if (he is) there.

There are many who can debate Truth anywhere in this world. But the one who knows Truth is not there on this earth. Even if one who knows the Truth exists, he cannot be found.

It is easy to debate and pick holes in the arguments of others about Truth, but it is difficult to realize (know) Truth. Instead of quarreling over trivial details of Truth, it is better to seek and find Truth.

Kuṇḍa pagilenēni krottadi konavaccu  
bhūtalambu nandu pondugānu  
kūlabaḍina naruḍu kuduruṭa yarudayā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

kunḍa-pagilenēni-krottadi-konavaccu / bhūtalambu(n)-andu-pondugānu /  
kūlabaḍina-naruḍu-kuduruṭa-arudayā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Krottadi=new one; Bhūtalambu=world; Kūlabaḍina naruḍu=fallen man.

When the pot breaks, one can promptly buy a new one in this world. But it is very difficult for a fallen man to recover.

As in the above verse, here too Vemana says that if material things are defective, they can be repaired or replaced, but if the moral character of a person degenerates, there can be no hope of salvaging it.



Anaga nanaga rāgamatiśayillucununḍu  
tinagatinaga vēmu tiyyanunḍu  
sādhakamuna banulu samakūru dhara lōna  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

anaga(n)-anaga-rāgam-atiśayillucu(n)-unḍu / tinaga-tinaga-vēmu-tiyyaga-unḍu /  
sādhakamuna-panulu-samakūru-dhara-lōna / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Atiśayillu=improve, become better; Vēmu=neem; Sādhakamu=practice;  
Samakūru=become possible.

When a tune or a song is hummed or practiced again and again, its melody increases. Bitter neem, eaten again and again, tastes sweet. Similarly, when practiced well, all things become possible in this world.

Any skill in life can be acquired and even improved through practice. Practice makes things perfect. Without hard work and practice, nobody can achieve anything in life.

Dīpambulēni yinṭānu  
rūpambunu teliyālēru rūḍhiga damalō  
dīpamagu telivi kaligiṃu  
pāpambula marugu drōva paḍuduru Vēmā !

dīpam(b)u-lēni-inṭānu / rūpambunu-teliya-lēru-rūḍhiga-tamalō /  
dīpam-āgu-telivi-kaligiṃu / pāpambula-marugu-trōva-paḍuduru-vēmā !

Dīpamu=lamp; Rūḍhiga=clearly; Telivi=intelligence; wisdom; Pāpamu=sin (vice);  
Trōva=way.

When there is no lamp in the house, people cannot clearly see their image. Even while possessing the lamp of intelligence within, people still take to crooked and sinful ways.

The poet advises us to make use of our native, internal intelligence and avoid sinful ways.



Paraga rātigunḍu pagulagoṭṭavaccu  
gonḍalanni pinḍigoṭṭavaccu  
kaṭhinacittu manasu karigimpagārādu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

paraga-rāti-gunḍu-pagula-koṭṭa-vaccu / gonḍalu-anni-pinḍi-koṭṭa-vaccu /  
kaṭhina-cittu-manasu-karigimpagā-rādu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Paraga=pondering over; Rātigunḍu=boulder; Pagulagoṭṭu=break;  
Pinḍigoṭṭu=pulverize; Kaṭhinacittu=hard-cruel-hearted person.

One can certainly break a huge boulder, one can pulverize all hills, but it is impossible to melt a cruel man's heart.

No amount of appeals for mercy will change a cruel heart. It is therefore wise to avoid dealings with wicked people.

Pagalu rēyi maraci bhāvambu maraciyu  
tānu nē naniyeḍi talapu maraci  
yunḍu vāni nenca nuttamayōgirā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

pagalu-rēyi-maraci-bhāvam(b)u-maraciyu / tānu-nēnu-aneḍi-talapu-maraci /  
unḍu-vāni(n)-enca(n)-uttama-yōgirā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Pagalu rēyi=day and night; Maraci=forget; Talapu=thought; Uttama yōgi=great saint.

A person who is oblivious of day or night, immune to his own feelings, and who forgets the thought of you and me, is considered the best yogi.

If one is caught in the bonds of self, family and relationships, one cannot reach higher goals. To live a spiritually purposeful life, one must free oneself from all these shackles.



Okani jericedamani yullamandenturu  
tamadu cēterugaru dharanu narulu  
tammu jerucuvāḍu daivambu gādokō  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

okani-cericedamu-ani-ullamandu-enturu / tamadu-cēṭu-erugaru-dharanu-narulu /  
tammu-cerucu-vāḍu-daivam(b)u-kādokō / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Encu=plan, Tamadu=their; Cerucuvāḍu=one who spoils.

Those who keep thinking of ruining others do not know their own ruin. Isn't God there to oversee all these and harm those who harm others?

Don't try to harm others. God above will punish you with greater harm. Think well of all and you will do well, too.

Cittaśuddhi galgi cēsina puṇyambu  
koncemayina nadiyu goratagādu  
vittanambu maṛṛi vṛukshānikentarā ?  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

citta-śuddhi-galgi-cēsina-puṇyam(b)u / koncem-ainanu-adiyu-korata-kādu /  
vittanam(b)u-maṛṛi-vṛukshāniki-entarā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Cittaśuddhi=purity of mind; Puṇyambu=virtuous act; Korata=being insufficient  
Vittanamu=seed.

One small virtuous deed (puṇya) done with purity of heart is enough. Where does the tiny banyan seed stand when compared with the tree?

The seed of a banyan tree represents a fraction of the whole tree but a big tree emerges from it. So also the virtuous deed, however small it is, is sufficient to make a person noble.



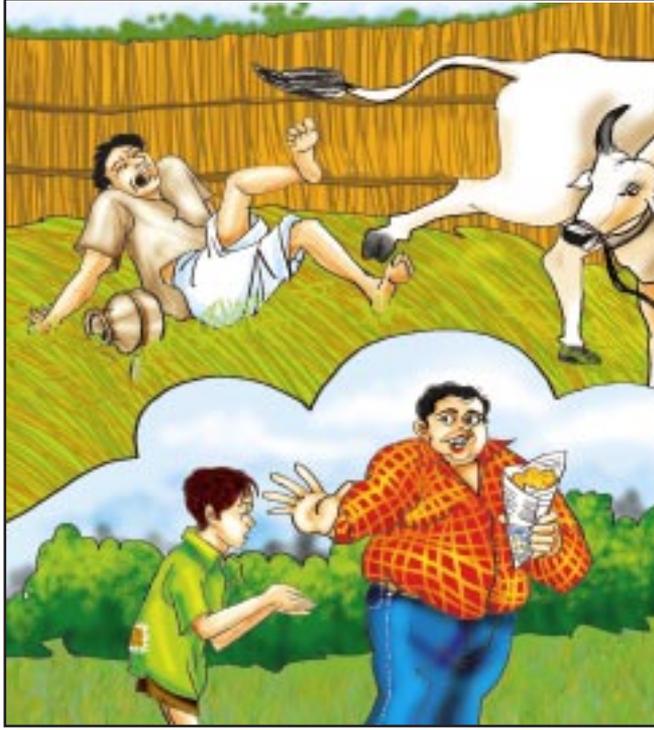
Marmaviduḍu gāni marmambu ganalēḍu  
karmajīvi gāni kānalēḍu  
nīrucorakalōtu nijamulu teliyunā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

marma-viduḍu-gāni-marmam(b)u-kāna-leḍu / karma-jīvi-kāni-kāna-lēḍu /  
nīrucoraka-lōtu-nijamuluteliyunā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Marmaviduḍu= One who knows the secret (of life/a task); Karmajīvi= One who performs a task (a man of action); Nīrucoraka= Without entering (jumping into) the water; Lōtu nijamu= the truth about the depth

Only the person who knows the secret of an activity will be able to know the truth of an activity. Only the man of action will know how to act. Unless one enters the water, one will not know the depth of it.

Mere theoretical discussion will not lead one to any practical/successful activity; one should get into action for achieving results. Mere listening to numerous lectures on swimming will not make one a swimmer; one has to jump into a stream and actually move hands and legs to learn the skill of swimming.



Goḍḍuṭāvu bituka kuṇḍagompōyina  
 paṇḍlunūḍa tannu pālanīdu  
 lōbhivāninaḍuga lābhambulēdayā  
 viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

goḍḍuṭāvu-pituka-kuṇḍa-kompōyina / paṇḍlu(n)-ūḍa-tannu-pālanu-īdu /  
 lōbhi-vāni-naḍuga-lābhambu-lēdayā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Goḍḍuṭāvu=barren cow; Ūḍa=fall off; Tannu=kick; Lōbhi=miser; Lābhamu=profit  
 (here, 'use')

When one takes a pot to milk a barren cow, it kicks one's teeth off, but will not yield milk. Similarly there is no use asking a miser for help. The miser will only humiliate the person but will not help.

Observation and proper judgment of people around one are essential for one's well-being, especially in the contemporary society, as there are more people who pull one down rather than give encouragement. We must approach the right people for getting things done. Otherwise, we receive more harm than help.

Rānidi kōrina rādadi  
Rānunnadi kōrakunna rānēvaccun  
Tānenta cinta jēsina  
Kānunnadi kākapōdu gadarā Vēmā !

rānidi-kōrina-rādadi / rānunnadi-kōrakunna-rānē-vaccunu /  
tānu-enta-cinta-cēsina / kānunnadi-kāka-pōdu-gadarā-vēmā !

Rānidi=what does not come; Kōrina=if one desires; Cinta jēsina=think; plan;  
Kākapōdu=won't stop taking place

What is not destined will not be received even if we desire it. What is due to us will certainly come even if we do not aspire for it. However much one worries, what has to happen will certainly happen.

One should be contented with what one has and not aspire for too much. Contentment, they say, is a continuous feast as mentioned earlier.



Mēgha maḍḍamaina mihiruni jeraḥunu  
citta maḍḍamaina sthiramu jeraḥunu  
marapu laḍḍamaina marimukti jeraḥunu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

mēgham-aḍḍam-aina-mihiruni-ceraḥunu / cittam-aḍḍam-aina-sthiramu-ceraḥunu /  
marapulu-aḍḍam-aina-mari-mukti-ceraḥunu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Aḍḍamaina=come in the way; obstruct the view; Mihiruḍu=sun; Sthiramu=balance;  
stability; Mukti=salvation (freedom from earthly bonds)

When clouds come in the way, they mask the sun. When the mind interferes in a wrong way, one loses stability. Hindrance caused by loss of memory of the purpose of life, spoils the process of liberation/salvation from earthly obligations.

Paṭṭu paṭṭarādu paṭṭi viḍuvarādu  
paṭṭenēni bigiya baṭṭavalayu  
baṭṭi viḍuṭa kannā baraga jaccuṭa mēlu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

paṭṭu-paṭṭa-rādu-paṭṭi-viḍuva-rādu / paṭṭenēni-bigiya-paṭṭa-valayu /  
paṭṭi-viḍuṭa-kannā-paraga-caccuṭa-mēlu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Paṭṭu=hold; Viḍucu=leave, loosen; Bigiya paṭṭu=hold tight.

One should not take a stand on any issue. Once a stand is taken, stick to it and not leave it. It is better to die than to depart from the stand taken.

This verse advises us to stand by a resolution made, after considering the pros and cons of an issue. We should not change our mind to suit our convenience.



Antaranga mandu napaṛādhamulu cēsi  
manci vāri valene manujulundru  
itarulerugakunna īśvaruḍeruḡaḡā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

antarangam-andu-apaṛādhamulu-cēsi / manci-vāri-valene-manujulu-undru /  
itarulu-eruga-kunna-īśvaruḡu-erugaḡā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Antarangamu=conscience; Apaṛādhamu=blunder (sin); Itarulu=others;  
Erugu=know.

Humans appear as if they are good, though they commit sins mentally. Even if others do not know this, wouldn't God know that they are sinners?

Even if we cheat our conscience while committing sins, all-knowing Almighty will truly know our lapses. Hence the need to avoid committing sins.

Nikkamaina manci nīla mōkkati cālu  
taḷkubelkurāḷḷu taṭṭedēla?  
caduva padyamaraya jāladā yokaṭaina  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

nikkamu-aina-manci-nīlam-okkaṭi-cālu / taḷuku-beḷuku-rāḷḷu-taṭṭeḍu-ēla /  
caduva-padyam-araya-cāladā-okṭaina / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Nikkamaina=genuine; original; Nīlamu=sapphire; Taṭṭeḍu=basketful; Cāladā=Isn't it enough?

It is enough if there is one good quality sapphire instead of having a basketful of glittering stones. Think over, one good poem is enough for reading.

For true enjoyment and instruction, it is not the quantity but quality that matters. One great poem, imparting timeless morals, is better than a whole library of cheap books.



Nijamulāḍuvāni nindincu jagamella  
nijamu balkarādu nīculakaḍa  
nijamahātmugūḍi nijamāḍavalayurā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

nijamulu-āḍu-vāni-nindincu-jagamu-ella / nijamu-palka-rādu-nīcula-kaḍa /  
nijamahātmu-kūḍi-nijam-āḍavalayu-rā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Nijamu=truth; Nindincu=blame; Palkarādu=should not be spoken; Nijamahātmuḍu=a truly great-souled person.

The whole world blames the one who speaks the truth. One should not speak truth in the company of the mean; instead, one should speak the truth in the company of noble souls.

It is occasionally necessary to be discreet and tactful in life. Telling truth is generally an acceptable moral. But in the company of evil people, telling truth helps their evil plans. So, it is better to hide the truth in the presence of such people and save oneself and others, too.

Aikamatya mokkaṭāvaśyakambepḍu  
dānibalimi nentayaina gūḍu  
gaḍḍivenṭa beṭṭi kaṭṭarā yēnugu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

aikamatyam-okkaṭi-āvasyakam(b)u-epḍu / dāni-balimi-enta-aina-kūḍu /  
gaḍḍi-venṭa-peṭṭi-kaṭṭarā-yēnugu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Aikamatyamu=unity; Āvaśyakamu=necessary; Balimi=strength.

Unity is always essential. One can achieve a lot by the strength of unity, just as one can bind an elephant with the rope of straw.

Unity is strength both for a group of individuals or even for a federation of states in a nation. When the states are divided over petty issues, it leads to the invasion by foreign powers and enslavement.



Niḷḷubōsi kaḍigi nityamu śōdhinci  
kūḍupeṭṭi mīda kōkagaṭṭi  
yenni pāṭḷu paḍuduri dehamunakayi  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

nīḷḷu-pōsi-kaḍigi-nityamu-śōdhinci / kūḍu-peṭṭi-mīda-kōka-kaṭṭi /  
yenni-pāṭḷu-paḍuduru-ī-dēhamunaku-ayi / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Kaḍugu=wash; Nityamu=every day; Śōdhincu=carefully examine; Kōkagaṭṭi=draped  
in saree; Pāṭḷu= troubles; Dēhamu=body

We bathe this body, examine it everyday, feed it, and also dress it in saree. We do all these things for the sake of this body (which perishes).

One should not be unduly attached to this body and pay too much attention to it; instead, one should pursue higher (spiritual) goals.

Dhanamē mūlamu jagatiki  
dhanamē mūlambu sakala dharmambulakun  
guṇamē mūlamu sirulaku  
manamē mūlambu muktimahimaku Vēmā!

dhanamē–mūlamu–jagatiki / dhanamē–mūlam(b)u–sakala–dharmambulakun /  
guṇamē–mūlamu–sirulaku / manamē–mūlam(b)u–mukti–mahimaku–vēmā !

Mūlamu=foundation; Sakala=all; Guṇamu=virtue; Manamu=mind (thought).

Wealth alone is the basis of this world. Wealth alone is the basis for (performing) all deeds of virtue. Virtue alone is the basis of riches. Similarly, mind (thought) alone is the basis of mystical experiences and liberation.

The poet stresses the need for more and more human activities, including performance of noble deeds, and also points out that virtue and proper thinking are required for leading a noble life.



Inumu virigenēni yirumāru mummāru  
kāci yatukavaccu kramamugānu  
manasu virigenēni mari cērcarādayā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

inumu–virege(n)–ēni–yirumāru–mummāru / kāci–atuka–vaccu–kramamu–gānu /  
manasu–virige(n)–ēni–mari–cērcā–rādayā / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Virugu=break; Irumāru, Mummāru=twice, thrice; Kramamugānu=gradually.

When the iron breaks, one can weld it by heating it many a time. But when the heart breaks, one cannot heal it at all.

It is always possible to mend physical/material things, when a defect is found, but in the matters of heart, affection, we should be extremely careful in handling them, because once the bond is snapped, it is not possible to join it again.



Kulamu lōna nokaḍu guṇavantuḍuḍina  
 kulamu velayu vāni guṇamucēta  
 velayu vanamulōna malayajambunnaṭlu  
 viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

kulamu-lōna-okāḍu-guṇavantuḍu-unḍina / kulamu-velayu-vāni-guṇamu-cēta /  
 velayu-vanamu-lōna-malayajam(b)u-unnaṭlu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Kulamu=clan (here, family); Guṇamu=virtue; good quality.

Presence of a virtuous person in the family makes it famous and great. It is like having a sandalwood tree in a big forest whereby the entire forest smells like sandalwood.

The presence of one virtuous person in a family, or community makes it famous and distinguished. A noble son makes the family noble.

Dhanameccina madameccunu  
madameccina durguṇambu mānaka vaccun  
dhanamuḍigina madamuḍugunu  
madamuḍigina durguṇambu mānunu Vēmā !

dhanam-eccina-madam-eccunu / madam-eccina-durguṇam(b)u-mānaka-vaccun /  
dhanam-uḍigina-madam-uḍugunu / madam-uḍigina-durguṇam(b)u-mānunu-vēmā !

Madamu=pride; Durguṇamu=vice, bad quality; Uḍugu=quit, leave.

When wealth becomes more, pride increases. When pride increases, one certainly gets into vices. When wealth decreases, pride also decreases. When pride decreases, one comes out of vices.

Excess of money will have undesirable effects on people. It results in arrogance and consequent addiction to bad habits. There should be reasonable limits to one's wealth.



Kalla nijamulella karakanṭhuḍerugunu  
nīru pallamerugu nijamugānu  
talli tānerugunu danayuni janmambu  
viśvadhābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

kalla-nijamulu-ella-karakanṭhuḍu-erugunu / nīru-pallam-erugu-nijamu-gānu /  
talli-tānu-erugunu-tanayuni-janmam(b)u / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Ḳallanijamu=falsehood and truth; Karakanṭhuḍu=God with a spot in the throat, Śiva; Pallamu=lower level; Tanayuḍu=son; Janmamu=birth.

Lord Śiva knows the falsehood and truth in the world below. Truly, water knows the lower level (to which it flows). Mother knows the birth of the son.

We may make all efforts to hide truth – perhaps, from ourselves, but we cannot hide it from the all-knowing God. Water is a judge of the levels in the earth and no son can hide the truth of his birth from his mother. It is better to accept truth about ourselves.

Aiduvrēḷḷa balimi hastambu panicēyu  
nandokaṭiyu vīḍa pondikaceḍu  
svīyudokaḍu vīḍina ceḍukadā panibalmi  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

aidu-vrēḷḷa-balimi-hastambu-pani-cēyu(n) / andu-okāṭiyu-vīḍa-pondika-ceḍu /  
svīyudu-okāḍu-vīḍina-ceḍu-kadā-pani-balmi / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Aiduvrēḷḷa=five fingers; Svīyudu=our man; Vīḍina=leave, desert.

The hand functions well with the strength of all five fingers. Even if one finger is lost, man loses its fitness. Similarly even if a single person leaves one's group, the efficiency of the group suffers.

Here again, the poet emphasizes the need for people to work together. Any division among people will result in non-performance.



Māṭala māṭalu vaccunu  
māṭalanē kalugucunḍu maṇimantrambul  
māṭala pondika telisina  
māṭalanē mukti kalugu mahilō Vēmā !

māṭala-māṭalu-vaccunu / māṭalanē-kalugucu(n)-unḍu-maṇi-mantrambul /  
māṭala-pondika-telisina / māṭalanē-mukti-kalugu-mahilō-vēmā !

Māṭa=talk (here, words); Pondika=putting (words) together.

Words lead to dialogue and discussion. All the sacred mantras are compositions of precious (jewels of) words. When one is aware of the harmony of words, through these words alone, one can get liberated in this world.

Words are most powerful/useful instruments available to humans. By making proper use of words (language), we can achieve what we set out for. Misuse leads to personal and professional disasters.

Kōpamunnanu ghanata koncemaipōvunu  
Kōpamunnanu guṇamu koratapaḍunu  
Kōpamunnanu bratuku koncemaipōvunu  
Viśvadabhirāma vinura Vēmā!

kōpamu–unnanu–ghanata–koncemu–ai–pōvunu / kōpamu–unnanu–guṇamu–korata–paḍunu/  
kōpamu–unnanu–bratuku–koncemu–ipōvunu / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Kōpamu= anger; Ghanata= nobility (greatness); Koncemaipōvunu=become less;  
Guṇamu= virtue; Koratapaḍu= to be lacking in full measure; Bratuku= life

If one is angry, one's greatness (nobility) will become less. If one is angry, one's  
virtue will diminish. If one is angry, one's life itself will become less.

The poet lists the undesirable effects of anger: reduction in nobility, in virtue and in  
life itself. It is therefore necessary to conquer anger and lead a peaceful life, in  
harmony with all.



Champadagina yaṭṭi śatruvu tana cēta  
jikkenēni kiḍu sēyarādu  
posaga mēlu cēsi pommanuṭē cālu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

campa–tagina–aṭṭi–śatruvu–tana–cēta / cikkenēni–kiḍu–sēya–rādu /  
posaga–mēlu–cēsi–pommanuṭē–cālu / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Campadagina=deserving to be killed; Śatruvu=enemy; Kiḍu=harm;  
Posaga= appropriately.

When a foe, who deserves to be killed, is caught, one should not harm him/her. It  
is enough/appropriate if you offer proper help to him/her and let go.

The best treatment to be meted out to one's enemies is not to show ill-will towards  
them, but to try to make friends with them. Forget and forgive is the best means  
to establish social harmony. Life will be sweet if we follow the ethics stated in  
these verses keeping them always in mind.



Elugutōlu decci yennāḷḷu vutikinā  
 nalupunalupē gāni telupugādu  
 koyyabomma deccikoṭṭinā balkunā?  
 viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

elugu-tōlu-tecci-ennāḷḷu-vutikinā / nalupu-nalupē-kāni-telupu-kādu /  
 koyya-bomma-tecci-koṭṭinā-palkunā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Elugu=bear; Utuku=wash; Koyyabomma=wooden toy.

Even after washing the bear hide for several days, the blackness remains black, never turns white. If you beat up the wooden doll, does it speak?

Vemana states that it is impossible to change the original human nature. But it is difficult to agree with him, nowadays. We are a medley of good, bad, and indifferent. There is no person who is 100% good or 100% bad. There is scope for improvement and amelioration for every person.

Tāmasinci cēyadagadeṭṭi kāryambu  
vēgirimpa nadiyu viṣamamagunu  
paccikāya decci paḍavēya phalamaune  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

tāmasinci-cēya-tagadu-eṭṭi-kāryam(b)u / vēgirimpa(n)-adiyu-viṣamamu-agunu /  
pacci-kāya-tecci-paḍavēya-phalamaune / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Tāmasincu=to delay (to be slow); Vēgirimpa=to act quickly, to hurry up;  
Viṣamamagunu= become complex/complicated; Paccikāya=raw nut.

We should not be slow in performing any work required. And if we are in a hurry  
in the execution of any work, it will complicate matters. Can we turn a raw nut into  
a ripe fruit by just keeping it aside?

In performing our duties, we should neither delay unduly nor act in great haste.  
Slow and steady certainly wins the race.



Īdi dāṭagalugu nēsāgarambaina  
sādhuvṛutti tōḍa समयामन्दु  
pādukonucu manasu paripūrṇamondunu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

īdi-dāṭa-kalugunu-ē-sāgaram(b)u-aina / sādhu-vrutti-tōḍa-samayamandu /  
pādu-konucu-manasu-paripūrṇam-ondunu / viśvada-abhirama-vinura-vēmā !

Īdu=swim; Dāṭu= cross (a river); Sādhuvṛutti=good conduct; Paripūrṇamaunu=become  
complete (fulfilled).

A person of good conduct can swim across (a river) at the proper time. His mind  
(thoughts) will be steady and he will win his objectives steadily.

For achievement of one's goals one should possess good conduct and character,  
which will help one in a big way in life.

Odigi yodigi guruvu noppugā noppinci  
madini nilpi jāti mamata viḍici,  
kadiyucunḍu nataḍu kalakāla mokaṛīti  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

odigi–odigi–guruvunu–oppugānu–oppinci / madini–nilpi–jāti–mamata–viḍici /  
kadiyu–cunḍu–nataḍu–kalakālam–oka–rīti / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Odigi yodigi = to be obedient and respectful; Oppugā = in the proper manner;  
Oppinci = please; Kadiyu = behave.

The person, who is respectful and obedient to his teacher and pleases him in the proper manner, will remain focused, freeing himself from (excessive) love for his race and religion, and remains so as long as he lives.

To lead a peaceful life one needs to show proper respect to the teacher, leave off fanatical love for one's race and religion and be focused in his pursuits in life.



Talli neruguvāḍu daivambu nerugunu  
mannu neruguvāḍu minnu nerugu  
mannu minnerigina tannu dānerugurā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

tallini–erugu–vāḍu–daivam(b)unu–erugunu / mannu(n)–erugu–vāḍu–minnu(n)–erugu /  
mannu–minnu–erigina–tannu–tānu–erugurā / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā

Eruguvāḍu = one who knows; Mannu = earth; Minnu = sky.

One who knows the mother knows God. One, who knows the earth, knows the sky, too. And the one, who knows the earth and the sky, knows himself as well.

The way to the knowledge of self is a consciousness of the love of one's mother and the forces of nature around. The knowledge of one's ātma is certainly the highest wisdom one can aspire for.

Rāḷḷu decci narulu ramyamau guḍikaṭṭi  
rāti pratima cēsi khyātigānu  
dēvuḍanucu mrokka dīvinci palkunā  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

rāḷḷu-teccī-narulu-ramyamau-guḍi-kaṭṭi / rāti-pratima-cēsi-khyāti-gānu /  
dēvuḍu-anucu-mrokka-dīvinci-palkunā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā

Rāḷḷu=stones; Ramyamu=attractive; Rāti pratima=stone idol; Mrokka=salute, worship.

People bring stones and build attractive temples. They install with great pomp the idols of stone. But when they kneel before the idols, would they bless them or speak to them?

Though Vēmāna was not an atheist, he was certainly against ritualistic worship in temples. He wanted people to be honest and worship god with all their true devotion.



Karma madhikamayina gaḍacipōvagarādu  
dharmarājudecci taganicōṭa  
kankubhaṭṭujēse gaṭakaṭā daivambu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

karmam-adhikam-aina-gaḍaci-pōvaga-rādu / dharmarāju-teccī-tagani-cōṭa /  
kankubhaṭṭu-cēse-kaṭakaṭā-daivambu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Karma =(past) action; Adhikamaina=increase; Gaḍacipōva= cross; go beyond; Kankubhaṭṭu=the assumed name of Dharmarāja in the Mahābhārata, during his unfortunate stay at the court of king Virāṭa; Kaṭakaṭā=alas.

When (the effect) of past actions increases, nobody can escape (go beyond) the effect. Hasn't God taken Dharmarāja to the unworthy place (the court of Virāṭa) and alas made him Kankubhaṭṭu (the lowly courtier)?

In spite of the usual boast of humans that they are masters of their fate, the Will of Almighty cannot be denied in human fortunes and misfortunes. It is wise to remain humble in life and have faith in Divinity that shapes our ends.

Lakshmi yēlinaṭṭi Lankādhīpatipuri  
pillakōtifauzu kollakoṭṭe  
jēṭukāla mayina jerupa nalpuḍe cālu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

lakshmi-ēlinaṭṭi-lankādhīpati-puri / pilla-kōti-fauzu-kolla-koṭṭe /  
cēṭu-kālam-aina-cerupa(n)-alpuḍe-cālu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Lakshmi=goddess of wealth; Lankādhīpatipuri=the city of Rāvaṇa, Lanka; Fauzu=troop; Kollakoṭṭu= destroy; Cēṭukālamu=bad time; Alpuḍecālu=small (weak) person is enough; Cerupa=spoil.

The city of Lanka, the capital of Rāvaṇa, ruled (blessed) by the Goddess of Wealth, is destroyed by the army of little monkeys. During bad times, the weak and small fellows are sufficient to cause destruction.

When times are not auspicious, even a minor enemy can cause immeasurable damage. It is wise during those periods to avoid disputes and quarrels even with a weak enemy.



Paśulavanne vēru palēkavarṇamau  
buṣpajāti vēru pūjayokaṭi  
darśanambu vēru daivambu okkaṭi  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

paśula-vanne-vēru-palu-ēka-varṇamau / puṣpa-jāti-vēru-pūja-okkaṭi /  
darśanam(b)u-vēru-daivam(b)u-okkaṭi / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā !

Ēkavarṇamu=one color; Pūja=worship; Darśanamu=appearance.

Cattle can be of different colours but the milk produced by them is always of the same colour. There can be a variety of flowers, but they are all for the same worship. Similarly, forms (appearances) of God are different but God is only one.

The poet expresses himself against the several meaningless sects in religion and advises us to realize the oneness of divinity. It is foolish to fight over trivial rituals and forget the essential truths of religion.

Paga yuḍugu kōpamuḍigina  
paga yuḍugaga gōrkeluḍugu parajanmampun  
tagavuduḍu bhēdamuḍigina  
triguṇamu luḍuganga mukti sthiramagu Vēmā !

paga-ḍugu-kōpam-ḍigina / paga-ḍugaga-kōrkelu-ḍuga-parajanmampun /  
tagavu-vuḍugu-bhēdam-ḍigina / triguṇamulu-ḍuganag-mukti-sthiramu-āgu-vēmā !

Paga=feeling of vengeance; Parajanmamulu=next births; Tagavu=quarrel;  
Bhēdamu=difference (of opinion).

When there is no anger (vengeful attitude), there is no enmity. When there is no enmity, desires of many previous lives also will cease. When differences are conquered, there are no disputes. When all three qualities - anger, enmity, and dispute - are conquered, liberation is certain.

To lead a happy and peaceful life one should conquer anger and that leads to the conquest over (material) desires, trivial quarrels and finally to salvation.



Bhayamusumī yajñānamu  
bhayamuḍigina niścayambu paramārdhambau  
layamusumī yidēhamu  
jayamusumī jīvuḍanucu cāṭara Vēmā !

bhayamu-sumī-ajñānamu / bhayam-ḍigina-niścayam(b)u-paramārtham(b)u-āu /  
layamu-sumī-ī-dēhamu / jayamu-sumī-jīvuḍu-anucu-cāṭara-vēmā !

Ajñānamu=ignorance; Niścayamu=certain; Layamu=(prone to) destruction;  
perishing.

Ignorance is fear. When fear is overcome, one can certainly attain the ultimate. This body certainly perishes. Declare that victorious indeed is the jīvātma (soul).

It is the bondage of ignorance that makes us run after worldly pleasures. Once we free ourselves from this bondage, we can attain eternal happiness through deliverance.



Gangigōvupālu ganṭeḍainanu jālu!  
gaḍiveḍainanēla kharamu pālu ?  
bhaktigalgu kūḍu paṭṭeḍainanu jālu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

gāngi-gōvu-pālu-garīṭeḍu-ayīnanu-cālu / kaḍiveḍu-ainanu-ēla-kharamu-pālu /  
bhakti-kalgu-kūḍu-paṭṭeḍu-ainanu-cālu / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā

Gangigōvu=cow of the best breed; Ganṭe=ladle (spoon); Kaḍava=pot;  
Kharamu=donkey; kūḍu=food; Paṭṭeḍu=morsel (a little quantity).

A spoonful of milk from a sacred cow is enough. What is the use of a potful of donkey's milk? Similarly a morsel of food served with love is certainly sufficient (to satisfy hunger).

During earlier times and even today, purity of purpose and real desire to help are important to make what is given in charity noble. It must not be mere show but must be an act of sincerity.

Hamsa mānasōda maṇṭaka dirigina  
yaṭṭlu karmacayamu naṇṭakuṇḍa  
yōgi thirugu sakalabhōgāla tōḍanu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

hamsa–mānasa–udakamu–aṇṭaka–tirigina / aṭṭlu–karma–cayamu(n)–aṇṭaka–uṇḍa /  
yōgi–tirugu–sakala–bhōgāla–tōḍanu / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Hamsa= mythical swan, which inhabits the Mānasa sarōvar in the Himalayas;  
Karmacayamu=bunch of actions; Sakala bhōgālu=all pleasures.

Just as the swan swims untouched by water in the Mānasa Sarōvar, a yōgi wanders  
with all the worldly pleasures unaffected by them.

Though one may be in the world, one must try not to be totally part of it. One  
must try to rise above the earthly comforts and pursue higher goals.



Ātmabuddhi valana nakhilambu tānaye  
jīvabuddhi valana jīvuḍaye  
mōhabudhilaḡamu mundara ganugonu  
viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

Ātma–buddhi–valana(n)–akhilambu–tānu–aye / jīva–buddhi–valana–jīvuḍu–aye /  
mōha–buddhi–layamu–mundara–kanugonu / viśvada–abhirāma–vinura–vēmā !

Ātmabuddhi=self-knowledge; Akhilamu=all; Jīvabuddhi=knowledge of living;  
Mōhabuddhi= knowledge of (attachment to) lust; Layamu=destruction.

Find a way first to destroy passion or lust. Then you can gain knowledge of the  
living and become human. You can then acquire self-knowledge and become one  
with the universe.

The poet here refers to the levels of knowledge—of individual self and the Universal  
Self—and makes it clear that the highest attainment in life is to realize the  
inseparableness (advaita) of the individual self (jīvātma) with the Universal Self  
(Paramātma).



Ātmasúddhi lēni ācāramadi ēla ?  
 bhāṇḍasúddhilēni pākamēla  
 chittaśuddhileṇi Śívapūjalēlarā ?  
 viśvadābhirāma vinura Vēmā !

ātma-súddhi-lēni-ācāram-adi-ēla / bhāṇḍa-súddhi-lēni-pākam-ēla /  
 citta-súddhi-lēni-śíva-pūjalu-ēlarā / viśvada-abhirāma-vinura-vēmā!

Ātmasúddhi=purity of soul; Ācāramu=religious ritual; Bhāṇḍasúddhi=cleanliness  
 of the cooking vessel (pot); Pākamu=cooking (dishes).

What is the use of following the rituals and customs without inner purity? What is  
 the use of making special dishes in unclean vessels? What use is the worship of Siva  
 (God) without purity of mind and devotion?

For a proper performance of any task—religious, worldly or social—purity is of utmost  
 importance. Mere outward actions will not yield good results; inner purity is essential .



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