**Social Reformer Shishunala Sharif Religious Movement**

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| **Absract**  Shishunala Sharif (Kannada: ಸಂತ ಶಿಶುನಾಳ ಶರೀಫ) was a saint poet, philosopher and social reformer from the state of Karnataka in India. His compositions of tatvapada(moral poems) are in Kannada language. Sharif is recognized as the first ever Muslim poet in Kannada literature. Shishunala Sharif was born on 7 March 1819 in Shishuvinahala, a village in shiggaon taluk at Haveri district, Karnataka. He was the only son and a late born to his parents. Legend has it that Shishunala Sharif was conceived with the blessings of Gods. As a child, Shishunala  Sharif was very charming and intelligent. After completing his studies, he worked as a school teacher for a while, before taking up the spiritual search. He found a Guru in Shri Kalasada Guru Govinda Bhatta. They both shared a very cordial relationship and often engaged in intriguing spiritual discussions. Though a Muslim by birth, Shishunala Sharif believed in Hinduism also, bringing in communal harmony. In his birth place Shishuvinahala, even today, both Hindus and Muslims can be seen worshipping him at the same temple. Shishunala Sharif was known to compose poems as per the situation and sing them to spread the message. Though he never wrote down his compositions, by word of mouth many of them have been passed down to future generations. Furthermore it is believed that Sri Govinda Bhatta, a Brahmin (priestly class in Hindu religion), did not hesitate to make him a Brahmin. Shishunala Sharif's preaching’s can be compared with those of Kabir Das's(in northern India).  **Key Note:** Anubhava Gitegalu, Candadi Kelidara Vistara, Enidu Pelu Atmage Paramatmage, Gudiya Nodiranna Dehada, Mohada Hendati Satta Balika, Nanna Hente Nanna Hente Govinda Bhatta Spiritual context Govinda Bhatta, a Brahmin, was famous in the region as an unconventional Master. He cared little for caste or religion, and spent more time with anyone who invited him, and ate anywhere he felt like eating. Other Brahmins could not stomach his way of life. One day, Govinda Bhatta came to Shishuvinahala, and Sharifa's father found Him seated under a tree. He asked Him to accept His son as disciple. In front of the father, Govinda Bhatta called the young boy and said, “Hey Sharifa, who is your father?” The villagers laughed, but were shocked when the boy brashly said, “What kind of question are you asking? Your father and mine are the same!”. Govinda Bhatta laughed, patted the boy on the back and said, “Excellent, Sharifa! The land is fertile, the seed will sprout well. O Imam, leave Him to my care! From today, He is my son!” Sharifa followed Govinda Bhatta back to His village. The boy was found to be curious about matters beyond logic and the world, and about the secrets of creation. These qualities were nurtured by Govinda Bhatta. Society was surprised by their closeness. In the eyes of Muslims, the Master was a Kaafir (infidel) and for Brahmins, the boy was a Mleccha(outsider) |

**Teaching and Anubhava Gitegalu**

Sharifa was known to compose poems as per the situation and sing them to spread the message. Though he never wrote down his compositions, by word of mouth many of them have been passed down to future generations. The composition "Sorutihudu Maneya Maligi" can be traced to Great Famine 1876-1888 that plagued southern and western India. People dying in millions resorted to blind beliefs and faiths some even asking him to control the famine. Though the source cannot be cited, given his composition and the dire situation the people were

in, this particular composition must have come during the famine years.

1. When the mind gets very involved in the world and becomes agitated, hit it with the hatchet and stop it. The Word of knowledge given by the Master annihilates the mind and makes all difficulties vanish.
2. As one would take good care of a horse, take care of the mind by feeding it with spiritual food. At times, whip it like a horse, so that it behaves in a manner pleasing to the Master.
3. This house (the body) moves around so much, yet through proper discipline, in this very house, one can experience Shiva.
4. Jiva, like a bird in a cage, has freedom only within the cage of body and mind. But, by the Grace of the Master, the bird is able to spread its wings to fly through the entire universe.
5. The Holy Feet of his Master may look small and ordinary; however, they swallow up the huge ego when the head is placed at them.
6. I am not the human birth, but verily the Narayana Parabramha Sadashiva. (Na Na Embudu Nanalla)\ Shishunal Sharif's "Kodagana Koli Nungitta" Shishunala Sharif was a saint-poet of Karnataka. His songs are both melodious and philosophical. "Kodagana Koli Nungitta" is especially a lot of fun. It is really hard to translate the song, because the poet plays with the rhymes and reasons in a clever way, but I thought that as someone who has enjoyed the song tremendously,

**Translation of Shishunala Sharif's Kodagana Koli Nungitta**

Look sister!

The chicken has swallowed the ape!

And Amazing things are happening

The goat has swallowed the elephant

The wall has drunk up the whitewash

The Amazing thing has eaten up the tabor of the actress who came out to play!

The sesame seeds have eaten up the pounding stick

The rock has swallowed the peg

The Amazing thing has swallowed the old lady who came to relish the seeds!

The thread has eaten the loom

The loom has swallowed the reel

The Amazing thing has swallowed the owner of the loom!

What Amazing thing has happened sister!

The mountain has engulfed the cave

Like the cave has engulfed an ant!

My teacher Govinda's feet have completely engulfed my ego, sister

Amazing thing has happened

**Shishunala Sharif's Compositions Views**

A Muslim devotee for a conservative Brahmin Guru! Similar thing had happened in Varanasi, 400 years ago, when Kabir had pleaded with Ramanand to be his Guru. Both Kabir and Sharif were born poets, and their quest for self-realisation under able preceptors, made their perception clearer. They wrote hundreds of verses, trying to reform society. They condemned superstitions, advocated castelessness and laughed at hypocrisy. They regaled the audience by bringing in familiar anecdotes. Sharif was an avowed folk-poet. Local legends, deities, phrases, idiom and anecdotes abound in his compositions. Along with musical flavor, one is able to visualise social milieu of his times. Most of his verses have double meaning. His very popular songs like 'Let us go for a picnic' (allikerige hogona) 'Let us see God's chariot' (teraneleyutara tangi) "join for swing game" (jokali jeekona) have all legends and similes of everyday life but they ultimately convey eternal or otherworldly message. The homely similes are endearing and the lyrical quality is catching. The local flavor is lost in translation and few have tried to translate Sharif's compositions into English. Like the Vachanas of Virasaiva saints or Sarvajna, Sharif's compositions are very popular for their universal appeal as well. During his life time he was surrounded all the time by followers and admirers, some of whom took down verses which poured out extempore. His criticism of blind beliefs both in Muslim and Hindu communities were never taken amiss, and have survived today because of the sting clothed in pleasant and appealing language. He profusely used local slang. Profoundly knowledgeable and well-traveled, Sharif lived at Shishunal village most of the time, teaching monism, composing poems or spreading universal traits like love, charity, unstinted devotion to Guru and God. He was beloved of both Hindus and Muslims. He died on the very date of his birth viz- 7th of March 1889. A simple tomb (gadduge or sacred seat in Kannada) exists in Shishunal village under plenty of shade of huge tree amidst flowering creepers. On the left side, Muslim devotees perform namaz and offer sugar. Hindus offer comphor, fruit and arati, coconut, and pray. 'Sharifajja' is grandfather of all. It is the highest tribute paid by Kannada people to a unique saint who enriched their spiritual and social life in no small measure at the same time, with a very simple existence.

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