CHAPTER-V

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At a time when *Vedic* religion was giving importance to the external meticulous observances of rituals emptied of spiritual content there arose a need for the observance of religion in its true sense of spirituality as inward and personal experience. This is so also because of the existence of innumerable sects practicing rituals in their own peculiar manner. In these circumstances of meaningless practice of religion there arose Basava born in Ingaleshwar Bagewadi (Bijapur district, Karnataka). In the absence of accurate records, we find uncertainty about the various events of Basava’s life. His parents’ names are Madarasa and Madalambike. Poets like Harihara, Palkurke Somanatha have mentioned those names. The family of Basava had great reputation and prestige in all respects. His father was chief of Bagewadi, mother a religious devotee, brother Devraj a saintly person and sister Nagalambe, thirsting for a new religion. Prof. S. S. Basavanal, an authority on Basava says that it is difficult to give an account of Basava’s life agreeable to one and all. The generally accepted date for Basava’s birth is 1105 A.D. and even here differences exist. Even as a child Basava was curious to know the meaningfulness of the rituals then in vogue in his family. Accordingly, it is natural that an inquisitive mind like that of Basava hungered for the true meaning of religious practices. His mother and her brother seem to have been brought up in an atmosphere of *Sivabhakti*. “Thus the child Basaveshvara might have grown and been nurtured in the atmosphere of real *bhakti* at his mother’s place right from his birth.”1 Since it was a Brahmin family the thread ceremony of Basava was to be performed when he was eight years old. But Basava protested. When he was coerced he left home for Kudalasangama severing all relations. For our purpose it is not
necessary to go into a discussion of divergent accounts of such events. “The first soul that gave him the courage of conviction and moral support was his sister Nagalambe...the child Basaveshvara and his sister, very likely, might have found some such saints (munis like Jatveda) to lead them to Kudalasangama.” Biographers believe that Sangameshwara, Nandishwara, Jatveda muni gave linga initiation to Basava.

The natural and spiritual surroundings -- confluence of Krishna and Malaprabha rivers, the beauty of surrounding nature, and the spiritual environment of great saints breathed in him the vital breath of devotion transforming the whole being of Basava. He performed the worship of Sangmeshwara with all the sincerity, devotion and commitment that he was capable of. It is believed that Basava studied the ancient scriptures here initiated by Ishanya Guru the chancellor of the center of learning - Kudalasangama. It must be credited to the genius of Basava that he never totally accepted or rejected the scriptural teachings. Here, he gained vast experience of the world, God and men. In his craving for the perfection of inward life into rapturous union of finite soul and infinite God his spiritual instinct goaded him on. He could accept only those elements, which could stand such a test. It was with great intimacy of devotion overflowing in worship of Sangameshwara that Basava never wished to be away from the sight of his God even for a moment. It was here that Basava attained great heights in his spiritual progress. He spent years in studying and meditation. In our view miracles do not constitute the criterion of greatness. Intrinsic worth personally realized in the life of man is true greatness. “ It was in Kudalasangama that Basava’s inner life reached realization fully.”

But suddenly there was a divine call heard when he was asleep to leave Kudalasangama and go to Mangalawade where king Bijjala of Kalachuri dynasty was ruling. He gave his unwilling consent on the
condition of Sangameshwara’s assurance to accompany him wherever he went. Here in Mangalawade his maternal uncle, Baladeva was a minister. Seeing Basava’s spiritual awakening and flowering into great personality Baladeva gave his daughter Gangambika in marriage to Basava. Basava had another wife by name Mayidevi or Nilambika as to which biographers differ. This is how the great poet Harihara describes. Basava’s sharp intellect, devoted hard work done with great sincerity and commitment raised him step by step to the highest position of becoming Dandadhipa, prime minister in the reign of usurper king Bijjala.

This rise of Basava in the highest position of authority embittered the feelings of king Bijjala’s other officers who had nurtured hatred and jealousy towards Basava. Basava’s character, piety and humanitarian activities made him popular among the masses. Even in the midst of his secular duties Basava never slackened his religious pursuits. From his personal resources he served jangamas and the devotees of Siva. This side of Basava attracted devotees from all over the country irrespective of their cast, creed, sex, profession, and so on. All this made the counselors of the king carry tales and allegations against Basava to king Bijjala. King Bijjala visited the treasury and got checked the accounts. Everything was in order. Basava’s character was vindicated. Basava made no distinction of low and high among the Saranas. This infuriated the orthodox people and condemned it as a sacrilege and reported it to the king. King Bijjala reprimanded Basava for his reckless behaviour. But, Basava justified himself by pointing out the dignity and sanctity of the souls of the untouchable and the Brahmana. This movement of Basava continued to grow among the masses.

Now, Basava enlarged the scope of his spiritual devotion and faith by shifting the centre of his spiritual pursuits to Kalyan. He preached his doctrines to all those interested in it. In course of time, he founded and
organized an academy of Mysticism called *Aubhava Mantapa* at Kalyan. Spiritual discourses held in the company of great devotees had aided and equipped him. They are called *Sivanubhava gosthis*, which shaped the activities of the *Sivanubhava Mantapa* in his *Mahamane* at Kalyan. 'Hence there is no doubt as to the historicity of "Anubhava Mantapa" being founded by Basava. Its purpose is to regenerate religion as a matter of living experience rescuing it from the degenerate mechanical rituals emptied of spiritual content.'

It was in this *Anubhava Mantapa* that the Saranas exchanged their mystical experiences and turned it into a repository of greatness of experience articulated in the form of sayings or *vacanas*. The glory and reputation of this institution was the center of attraction for spiritual aspirants from all over the country. People from all walks of life desirous of spiritual pursuits flocked to this center of spirituality. A large number of men and women—kings, queens, soldiers, barbers, cobblers and so on from different strata of society irrespective of caste, colour, creed, sex, age, rank, position and profession—came to *Anubhava Mantapa* from various parts of the country to share and enrich spiritual wisdom. In this *Anubhava Mantapa* theoretical and practical aspects of *Virasaiva* religion were being discussed. *Sunyasampadane*, a 16th century work, is a compilation of the various contributions made by great spiritual aspirants in the form of a dialogue. "It gave full liberty of thought and action and a discussion in religious matters. As a result of this every man and woman brought his or her share of experience and laid it at the foot of "*SunyaSimhasana*" which Prabhudeva, the prince of the saints adorned at times by his presence. The share of experience thus brought forth by any member in great humility was called "*Sampadane".*

...It taught the dignity and love of labour by giving it a religious significance. Every kind of manual work...was looked upon as blessed and holy, as it was done in the spirit of service both to men and God.'

It must be obvious that spiritual perfection of inner life can be possible in and through
the profession useful to society that one may practice. This is the principle of kayaka. There is no question of high and low, inferiority or superiority among the kayakas. The doors of God-union were open to all. One need not necessarily become sanyasin to attain God-realization. Thus life here can lead to life in God. They expressed in their mother tongue Kannada. “In consequence we find every one of them, an author of vacanas in which he skillfully allegorizes his profession illustrating the spiritual truths he has found.”7

The ideal aims that Basava visualized when he was in Kudalasangama were being realized gradually here in Kalyan. It was his intention that the true religion of inwardness and personal realization should be extended to all. He was of the opinion that the lives of people being in this world are elevated to the heights of intense spiritual realization. He was the author of Bhakti movement, which in a unique way brought about a new awakening that opened the eyes of the public in a short time. He is called Bhaktibhandari (the treasure house of devotion). Like his political eminence Basava’s spiritual glory reached the high watermark. Allama Prabhu, Cenna Basavanna, Siddharama, Akkamahadevi were among many other great Saranas following their respective path to attain Lingangasamarasya (God-union). Caste discrimination was done away with. Accordingly, the daughter of Madhuvarasa (formerly a Brahmin) was married to the son of Haralayya (formerly an untouchable). But they were both Sivasaranas. This inter-caste marriage infuriated the orthodox Brahmins who pressurized king Bijjala to punish both Haralayya and Madhuvarasa. It created turmoil in the orthodox community of Brahmins. In order to maintain peace king Bijjala had to yield to the pressure and punish them. King Bijjala punished them by putting them to death after extracting their eyes. “This atrocity stunned the devotees with horror and convulsed the entire community of Jangama fraternity. All were annoyed and every one denounced the heinous act...It was a formidable
challenge and how best they could meet it was the problem.” The extremist followers were for revenge and retaliation. Basava’s counsel was of no avail. The volatile situation was overtaken by violence. In the chaotic circumstances that prevailed in Kalyan the extremists murdered king Bijjala.

In so far as his sensitive mind could not bear the occurrence of violence Basava thinks that his mission was complete and that he should return to Lord Sangmeshwara for asylum. “Basaveshvara, who had left Kalyan three months before the tragic incident, attained union with Kudala Sangmeshwara in 1167 A.D.” Other Saranas were scattered in different directions and different places. Basava’s religious mission was continued for centuries - even to this day.

Rabindranath Tagore was born on 6th May 1861 and died on 7th August 1941. The circumstances of his family were not orthodox. It was ostracized for its so-called heterodox views at the time literary revolution was taking place in Bengal. His family environment was conducive to true spirituality. Rabindranath’s father Debendranath was known as the Maharshi, usually understood in the sense of both saint and sage, who attained true knowledge of living in the presence of God. This was a great influence on the intellectual and spiritual development of Rabindranath. He was brought up in the contact of great artists - men of literature, musicians, and painters - scholars, patriots, men of high social standing. His father encouraged him to write poems. Even as a child the beauty of nature and the grandeur of Himalayas fascinated him. This made him recognize the presence of God and the love for a life of meditation in solitariness. Recitation of Vedopanishads and stories from itihasas and puranas at that time had a subconscious influence on him. Thus, we find spiritual temper in the very lifeblood of his existence. Tagore feels free and thinks that he was fortunate in not having the so-called school and college education. His home
environment was permeated with the spirit of creativity. This inspiration 
craves for expression in his own way. But, it never claimed full acceptance 
from his own people.

Tagore never accepted any religious teaching because others believed 
it. He had the freedom enough to keep an open mind. He says, “My religion 
essentially is a poet’s religion. Its touch comes to me through the same 
unseen and trackless channels, as does the inspiration of my music. My 
religious life has followed the same mysterious line of growth, as has my 
poetical life. Somehow, they are wedded to each other and though their 
betrothal had a long period of ceremony, it was kept secret from me. Then 
suddenly came a day when their union was revealed to me.”

Tagore had 
the luck of genius to see detached facts to have great unity of meaning. 
“From that time I have been able to maintain the faith that, in all my 
experience of nature or man, there is the fundamental truth of spiritual 
reality.” Freed as he was, from the tyranny of the formal education and 
unconcerned care of maidservants “into the treasure-houses of mystery 
which is in the heart of existence.”

It is his soul’s craving for the great 
beyond. As Tagore recalls: ‘I strayed at will, filling my valet with whatever 
gleanings of knowledge I chanced upon.’ It was his brother Jyotindranath 
and his wife that disciplined and directed Rabindranath’s nebulous and 
unformed talent. As an apprentice under this brother, Rabindranath could 
shake off the diffidence induced by the repressive years of infancy. Tagore 
recalls: “My brother, Jyotindra unreservedly let me go my own to self-
knowledge and only since then could my nature prepare to put forth its 
thorns, it may be but likewise its flowers.” He studied and wrote on Indian 
and European literatures. From now on, his versatile genius as a poet, 
painter, philosopher, musician, composer, dramatist, novelist, short-story
writer, essayist, educationist and so on began to mature and reached its pinnacle of glory in the famous Nobel prize winning mystical poem Gitanjali in 1913. Tagore has a many-sided personality. He was a man of action and practical, down to earth. He was deeply involved in the national movement and was the office-bearer of Indian National Congress. He delivered many political addresses electrifying the pent-up patriotism of Indian people. But when the movement turned to violence as a disillusioned man he retired from the political field. The good of mankind as such, as in Basava, is his heart and soul. He says, “I have embraced Humanity, I can never let patriotism gain the upper hand in my life... Elsewhere he says: I have come to the earth’s great pilgrimage here at the heart of all countries, all races all histories dwells the God of Humanity.”

Tagore’s study of science and modern knowledge convinces him that the concrete experience of nature and life cannot be reduced to merely scientific and mathematical formulae. It cannot be reduced to merely molecules and their structure. Tagore’s intuitive experience gives him intimations about something, which is more than what scientific intuitions can deal with. His experience assures him that complete existence is an interweaving of quantitative (science); and qualitative (values, purpose, God) factors. His understanding of this reality is facilitated by the intuitions derived from his study of ancient scriptures from the Vedopanishads down to the itihasas and puranas. As he says: “And yet I am sure that there have come moments when my soul has touched the infinite and has become intensely conscious of it through the illumination of joy. It has been said in our Upanishads that our mind and our words come away baffled from the supreme Truth, but he who knows That, through the immediate joy of his own soul, is saved from all doubts and fears.” This is the mystical element
of "our spiritual relationship to reality which waits for its perfection in the response of our love."\textsuperscript{17}

The simplicity, humility and straightforwardness of life is expressed by Tagore in the following words:

\begin{quote}
My poet's vanity dies in shame before thy sight.
O Master poet, I have sat down at thy feet,
Only let me make my life simple and straight'
Like a flute of reed for thee to fill with music.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

In the meanwhile Tagore could endure the sorrows and suffering in his personal life—the death of preceptor, his father, his beloved wife, his second daughter and one of his sons in a very short period of one and half years. Tagore's son points out, "Vicissitudes of life, pain or affliction never upset the equanimity of father's mind. His inward peace was not disturbed by any calamity, however painful. Some superhuman \textit{shakti} (spiritual energy) gave him the power.... to rise above his misfortunes."\textsuperscript{19} In his prayer to God Tagore seeks the power to endure suffering:

\begin{quote}
This is my prayer to thee, my lord-- strike strike at the root of penury in my heart.
Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows.
Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service.
Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees before insolent might.
Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles.
And give me the strength to surrender my strength to thy will with love.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

It is impossible to deal here with the inexhaustible many-sidedness of life and work of both Basava and Tagore. Here, an account of only what is necessary to the topic of our thesis is given as biographical background. In view of this, the grandeur and splendour of the life and work of Basava and
Tagore has been to vividly portray the ups and downs in the mystic quest of the finite self-advancing towards the infinitude of perfection along the path of inner mountainous, misty and unmapped voyage towards the spiritual Mount Everest. Semitic religions are founded on special revelatory voices supposed to have been received by men of doubtful sanity. But it is a disease of these monotheistic Semitic religions of the temperamental presuppositions of exceptional personalities. These organized religions are religions of regimentation leaving no room for genuine freedom to individual self-realization. These so called religions believe that the scriptural authority and their founders are infallible and in no sense open to revision or modifications as demanded by the advance of knowledge. These Semitic religions are exclusivist and intolerant in their attitude to non-Semitic religions and faiths. These "closed creeds are a threat both to deeper spirituality and to deeper humanity, and they badly need some sort of glasnost, openness and freedom...Such a conclusion may disappoint many Hindu wise men who fondly cling to the belief that all religions are the same and all prophets preach and say the same things. But they must learn not to evade issues and even while seeking unities, they must yet learn to recognize differences where they exist."21 Those who are apologetic about the Indian inheritance of Basava and Tagore and play vote bank politics of appeasement somehow want to camouflage the distinction between dogma and truth. This is the ostrich mentality to evade facing truth about the narrow creeds of Semitic religions. They draw their inspiration from their own dogmas laying little or no emphasis on the perfection of inner life the mark of a truly advanced universal religion. It is important to remember that truth can be known only through experience and not from dogma. This great truth, paradoxical as it may seem, is expressed in the words of a great religious thinker thus: "...in individualizing religion we are at the same time universalizing it. For by individualizing is here meant construing religion as something inward and
personally realized; and as men have the same spiritual nature they can partake of the same religious experience. ...Hence Universal Religion in appealing to the spirit appeals to men without distinction of class or race. The salvation or redemption which it offers is open to all; ...But it is just on the inward and spiritual side, so important in a religion which aspires to be universal,” ...that Semitic religions are weak. The perfection of inner life is an individual undertaking. It cannot be the monopoly of any prophet or book or caste or any people or their religious institutions. The life and work of both Basava and Tagore has been to keep in the forefront of the mind of humanity this personal relationship between man and God as the core of mystic element while relegating rituals, institutions, books, and prophets as mere aids. In this respect, they have transcended cultural limitations and conditioning and pioneering a new age of consciousness implying global relevance. This ushers in the dawn of spiritual epiphany, completely freed from dry rituals. They could always look over the walls that confine us. Standing on the verandah of his house Tagore sees the rising sun through the leafy tops of the trees. He describes the experience of nature as a revelation of the divine: “As I continue to gaze,...I found the world bathed in a wonderful radiance, with waves of beauty and joy swelling on every side. This radiance ...flooded it (my heart) with this universal light.”

Both Basava and Tagore find their justification for mystic insight as derived from common experience and reason.

"Serve me true wisdom for my drink!
Look after me, O Lord |
Kudala Sangama!" (VB 51)

As a Belgian scholar has well said, 'In what Christian theologians disparagingly describe as “nature worship,” the starting-point of religion is the human experience of reality. The divine must not be sought in the
uncontrollable messages of "voices" heard by people of doubtful sanity, but in our common experience of reality.Both Basava and Tagore draw their sustenance of creative inspiration in the light of testable truth of experience of their ancients. They never believed the authority of ancients' intuitive insights blindly. They have rebelled against Vedic sayings and meaningless performance of rituals whenever they go against reason and experience. They have used what is of eternal truth-value in the tradition as helpful springboards for self-realization. Real knowledge has a tradition and authority as a matter of direct experience – the ultimate basis for acceptance. Emphasizing the lasting value of good tradition David Frawley says, "All tradition is not bad. Otherwise we should leave our infants in woods and let them raise themselves without authority, tradition or interference... We as individuals don't invent our own language, much less our own spiritual teachings. We have to take the good that the collective culture gives us and carry it further along." Basava broke the monopoly of knowledge enshrined in Sanskrit and carried the stream of his thoughts to the doors of the ordinary men and women by speaking to them in their language. Basava helped to remove the overgrowth of superstitions and ignorance...dogmatism, caste, class and social inequality." Tagore would wholeheartedly agree with this way of looking at truth and validity of our ancients. He is never tired of acknowledging the value and effectiveness of the legacy of ancient heritage. What characterizes both Basava and Tagore is the self-identity of Indian sensibility in their approach to life and its ultimate problems. What we have tried here is this commonness of Indian sensibility in comparing mystical element of their experience. Both of them accept life, death and what it offers giving due importance to everything in the scheme of life without disparaging their role in contributing to ever-widening and ever-deepening perfections. Tagore says, "This world is sweet, -- I do not want to die, I wish to dwell in the ever-living life of man." Basava is
equally emphatic in accepting life in this temporal world as most valuable in achieving values which would be equally a fulfillment in the world of God. "Those who earn merit here earn also there." Both Basava and Tagore, in their equanimity of mind take death as maranave mahanavami. Tagore also says: "The all-pervading pressure of worldly existence compensates itself by balancing life against death, and thus it does not crush us...Death had given me the correct perspective from which to perceive the world on the fullness of beauty..."28 This is how both Basava and Tagore have seen life and death in their true perspective of deeper meaning. Tagore further says: " We have come to this world to accept it, not merely to know it. We may become powerful by knowledge, but we attain fullness by sympathy."29

Basava is acutely aware of the limitations of his own effort in carving out his path to mystical union of the finite soul and the infinite God. He says:

The words of the pioneers, lo!
Is the philosopher's stone!
You must have faith in Linga,
Sadasiva by name.
As soon as you believe, behold,
There's victory!
To the lips bitter, to the belly sweet—
Kudala Sangama's words
Are like eating neem. (VB 171)

When the words of the Pioneers
Are like a stream of milk,
With jaggery for its ooze
And sugar for its silt,
My reason is as one
That digs a well apart,
To drink a brackish water, Lord
Kudala Sangama! (VB 290)
It follows from these *vacanas* that it is impossible to be completely original in so far as no novelty can be wholly novel. We cannot get rid of the past so easily. The present is only the renovation of the past with added creativity or the touch of the genius of Basava and Tagore made relevant to their times and people with a message to the eternal humanity. Basava even goes to the extent of requesting God to thrust on him forcibly what is good for him. He says:

*A cup of milk in the left hand.*
*A cane in the right, --*
*When will he come, my Lord,*
*My father, who will beat me*
*Until I drink the milk?*
*‘In the two hands, the cane and milk;*
*Jangama is devotion’s shrine:*
*Much piety is Linga’s joy;*
*Derision is the rod of Death!’*
*Therefore, Lord Kudala Sangama Himself*
*Is the father shows me the way*
*Of piety ! (VB 388)*

In the circumstances of the simplicity of life not caring for what others think of him, or the fashions and customs of the day may be, Tagore discovers Life as the schoolmaster with his cane to be a myth, so that he may attain freedom of higher consciousness.30

Both Basava and Tagore have law of *dharma* at the base of their understanding of life and its problems. *Dharma* is the great essential natural law of being to be in harmony with all that is life supporting and enhancing. The culture of dharma is shaped by our spiritual nature transcending all cultures. As David Frawley says: “It is the civilization of the cosmic mind
which transcends all the limitations of mere human social structures. It includes systems of physical, mental and spiritual culture... It provides a rich field in which all parts of our being can grow toward the light.” 31 As distinguished from intellectual rationality dharma is cosmic rationality. Spiritualism and Spiritual Quotient best indicate the development of treasure within the self as distinguished from Intelligence Quotient and Emotional quotient.

Both ask each aspirant to explore his own self in the first instance and see for himself the truths revealed in the intuitive insights embodied in their sayings and the ancient scriptures. They believe that priest, prophets, churches, temples, maths and scriptures can never be substitutes for self-exploration, self-purification and self-transcendence. At the most they can only be aids. In their intensely purified consciousness, metaphors that sprang matchless in their aptness, spontaneously illumined in a few words the knotted problems. Any lengthy elaboration comprising volumes would have failed to solve such problems.

The mystical element in both Basava and Tagore is completely free from fake spirituality of escapism in so far as it is fused with sincerity, penetrating sincerity and constant self-criticism. Likewise the humanism of Basava and Tagore transcend the narrow bonds of community groups and nationalism. This chapter is not giving an account of the personal life of Basava and Tagore. But it is about how the human psyche can be transformed from the present darker side of man in respect of the dross of worldly pleasures into the inner transformation of higher ranges of spiritual consciousness. Basava says:
I am not a wastrel priest 
Who, caught in Karma’s mesh 
Woven of women, gold and land, 
Will go in vain—a dried-up stream! 
Hoisting a flag, I await, 
Hoisting a flag: 
Since Lord Kudala Sangama 
Has made me leave the sacrificer’s life, 
And from uncleanness made me clean (VB 715)

Renunciation is to say 
‘I do not want’; to say ‘I want’ 
Is body’s foible. 
What matters where a thing may be? 
To offer Linga what comes wherever you are 
And to enjoy it, that is discipline. 
The consecrated body, come 
To gratify Lord Kudala Sangama, 
Must not suffer (VB 774)

Tagore also echoes the same:

Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight. 
Thou ever pourest for me the fresh draught of thy wine of various colours and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the brim. 
My world will light its hundred different lamps with thy flame and place them before the altar of thy temple. 
No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight. 
Yes, all my illusions will burn into illumination of joy, and all my desires ripen into fruits of love. 
Further he says: I know the joy that is hidden in the heart of Light Touches me, is one with my soul. 
I have been anointed in the holy waters of Consciousness, That flow from the front of Light, And have my share of immortality. 
In this multitudinous earth 
I can be united with the supreme Me 
And enter the path of Bliss.
In Basava and Tagore there is no question of devaluing the deliverances of man’s bodily functions including the sense organs. We can see the sublimation of senses as gateway to self-realization. Body is taken as a sacred means to the higher realization of mystical bliss. In these days of snobbish life and sophistications of urban life we Indians feel embarrassed to talk about our bodily functions. But, it is necessary to understand what is important in life of man who is both body and soul. Men should participate on a mental trip where they visualize their own death, and then decide how they would like to live through life’s journey. It is here that we are more than we think we are. So let us stop discounting our own value. To be worthy of human life, both Basava and Tagore in the above sayings have visualized the human task of rising to realize the full potentialities of which man is capable. In this respect both are unanimous in making the energies of bodily organs disciplined to a certain highest pitch thereby pitch forking into higher orders of experience. Most of us, the so called western educated intellectuals have developed arrogance of aggressive self-righteousness of our thinking and arguing with no consideration for the ultimate destiny without even asking the question to ourselves what is it all about. As a Sarana has well put it:

_Those puffed with pride because they know the alphabet_,
_Cannot render their account! Learning a verbal_
_Advaita from instructions given by the guru and_
_Elders, they argue; but know not of what is going on;_
_Know nothing of devotion; nothing of deliverance, nor of_
_Union; and yet they go on arguing all the same!_
_They have made, O Guheswara, a poor bargain in_
_The end._34

Basava and Tagore have experienced God as being both transcendent and immanent. It is only the transcendent God who can be immanent in the inward life of the soul. This God functions differently as _antaryamin_ in each
soul. This may be called particular providence for particular individual soul’s life’s activities. Basava calls this aspect of God as many by the name Isthalinga and Tagore Jivandevata—’the Lord of his life.’ This allows untrammeled spiritual freedom in various ways and not in any one formal, external or artificial manner. Thus, the aspirant is saved from ecclesiastical tyranny or a denial of freedom to the human spirit. Basava says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Thy wideness is the wideness of the world,} \\
\text{The wideness of the firmament,} \\
\text{Ay, wider still;} \\
\text{Thy feet go deeper than the underworld,} \\
\text{Ay, deeper still.} \\
\text{Thy crown is higher than Brahma’s egg,} \\
\text{Ay, higher still.} \\
\text{Thou Linga, who art imperceptible,} \\
\text{Past understanding and beyond compare.} \\
\text{Did’st shrink to the dimensions of a speck} \\
\text{When coming to my palm,} \\
\text{O Kudala Sangama Lord! (VB 743)}
\end{align*}
\]

Similarly, Tagore says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Thou art the innermost spirit of my being,} \\
\text{Art thou pleased, Lord of my Life?} \\
\text{For I gave thee my cup} \\
\text{filled with all the pain and delight} \\
\text{that the crushed grapes of my heart had surrendered;} \\
\text{I know not why thou chosest me for thy partner} \\
\text{Lord of my Life!} \\
\text{Didst thou store my days and nights} \\
\text{my deeds and my dreams for the alchemy of thy art,} \\
\text{a string in the chain of thy music} \\
\text{(my songs of autumn and spring)}
\end{align*}
\]
and gather the flowers from my mature moments
for thy crown?
I wonder if my failures and wrongs are forgiven.
For many were my days without service
and nights of forgetfulness;
 futile were the flowers that faded in the shade not offered to thee.\(^{35}\)

Both Basava and Tagore hold that the rapturous union of man and
God in mystical experience can be attained through any *kayak* or profession
helpful to maintenance of the well being of the individual and the society.
Basava and Tagore hold that everyone must have to live by doing work
involving the physical body. Such work done for the good of the individuals
and the society is called *kayak*. It is work beneficial to the well-being of
society. It is done not to satisfy one’s greed but done as a duty to oneself and
the society at large. Physical work has two aspects: 1) To sustain life of
oneself and others in this world. 2) Significance of spiritual value
transcending the mortal world. Those who earn merit here also earn there.
Accordingly various *Saranas* like Ayadakki Marayya, Moligeya Marayya,
Nooliya Chandayya, Madivalayya and many others could achieve rapturous
union of soul and God through their different vocations. Basava recognized
the sanctity and dignity of all work conducive to value realization as a means
to life’s highest fulfillment of *Lingangasamarasya*. Basava says:

*Show me the feet, O Lord,*
*Of devotees supremely good*
*Who do thy service when they bring*
*The harvest of their minds, and body’s toil:*
*But husbandry? That is,*
*The highest Guru is one*
*who gives initiation to the man*
*Whose body is pure, whose mind is pure,*
Whose actions pure, holy whose words!
The world-holy Jangama is one
Who goes into such real’s bhaktas’ house
As though it were Kailasa, and does
The worship of Linga there...
Believing firmly in such, I say
Hail, O hail! Lord
Kudala Sangama! (VB, 283, p.435)

All productive work and service is given the status of a dignified means to self-transcendence. Persons doing all such works constitute the community of Saranas exchanging and supporting spiritual life. No such bodily work is low or inferior. It is a way of purifying such work so as to rise to the higher order of experience. Merely to earn money or enjoy the pleasures of other senses is the way of worldly people who have lost their self. Such people are their own enemies. Basava says:

Hearken to me, you men who doubt,
Who say:
That I have eaten is all my gain.
Look, find out for yourselves
What had become of the stuff you ate:
Already it was eaten once!
O Kudala Sangama Lord,
It pains my heart to see
The piggish life of those
Who haste to eat
What was already eaten. (VB 200)

Everyone should live by one’s own labour of love and satisfaction. To live on the labours of others without one’s own effort is metaphorically expressed as pig’s life. No such work should be done with the anxiety of
"is it over?" It should not be done with any selfish motive of shortsightedness. It should be something worthwhile and of abiding importance. It is a way of solving unemployment problem in society based as it is on the co-operative principle oriented towards the spiritual upliftment. There is no question of each flying at the throat of others through competition. There is a harmonious development of man’s intellectual, physical and the spiritual life with no break or opposition between them.

Much in the same way Tagore is “content with merely being truthful” in whatever work he undertakes to do namely, the founding of a school, or creating opportunities of employment in different areas of life. He emphasizes simplicity in living. Tagore believes in this world with its innermost spiritual truth. Tagore says: “with the breath we draw we must always feel this truth, that we are living in God.” If this can be so what all man does must emancipate him “from the bondage of the dust and gives us the wealth, not of things but of inner life, not of power but of love.

Tagore is also convinced that spiritual life’s fulfillment must be sought and won in this very temporal world and not after death. Tagore says:

*If I leave my home I shall not reach thy Home; if I cease my work I can never join thee in thy work... Therefore in the midst of our home and our work the prayer rises, Lead me across; for here rolls the sea, and even here lies the Other shore waiting to be reached—yes, here is this everlasting present, not distant not anywhere else.*

As a spiritual realist Tagore is convinced that it is through our work and prayer that one can reach and realize the ultimate goal of man’s life viz., God-union. A mere chanting singing and telling of beads is not enough. He asks even the priest to do some bodily work dedicated to the service of man and God. It is here in and through this dusty world of space and time that one must reach spiritual life’s ultimate satisfaction — mystic union.
Tagore says:

*Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?*

*Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!*

*He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where*

*The path-maker is breaking the stones. He is with them in sun*

*And in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off the*

*Holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!*

*Deliverance? Where is this deliverance to be found?*

*Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation;*

*He is bound with us all forever.*

*Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense!*

*What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained?*

*Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.*

As in Basava, Tagore does not advocate ascetic denial of what this world offers. Both Basava and Tagore affirm life and accept life and death, perfection and imperfection, beauty and ugliness as part of the rhythm of life. One should joyfully and dedicatedly perform the daily activities of life as essential for God-realization. Tagore regrets that he was not able to come closer to his people in so far as “the human mind, elusive as the wind, wears a mask not easy to uplift.” In our opinion the difficulty is not on the part of Tagore but with the ordinary people who have to do their own spiritual journey. There can be no proxy or substitute effort in spiritual matters.

Tagore feels sorry that he could not reach the ploughman, the fisherman, the weaver and so on. Though they all toil their realization of value intensity is that of an arid zone. The idealism of Tagore makes him say what should have been a higher value has not been so. Both Basava and Tagore have protested against the evils of caste system and have emphasized
each man's personal achievement. No people should exploit their fellowmen. Injustices cannot be condoned. Dignity and sanctity of the individual must be upheld and not undermined. In this respect no one is superior or inferior.

Furthermore, Tagore visualized the task of Santiniketan university must be enlarged to cover research activities to help uplift the life of people in the villages. For this purpose, he established Sriniketan as a branch of Vishwabharati. There activities of horticulture, health, vocational training, cattle rearing, agriculture research, adult education etc. were being conducted. It is a constructive and extensive programme as vast as life depicted in his literary works. Tagore was a man of action practical down to earth. He wanted his people to be self-reliant and not beg the government for any help. He talked of rotation of crops and village co-operatives.

Thus, both Basava and Tagore have emphasized that mystic union can be attained through bodily work as an embodiment of God.
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1. Sri Basaveshwara 8th Centenary Commemoration Volume, Directorate of Kannada and Culture Bangalore, 2003, p. 13

2. Ibid, p.16

3. Ibid, p.19


5. Ibid, p.25-26

6. Ibid, p.26

7. Ibid, p.30


17. Ibid.


32. *Gitanjali*, Poem No. 73.


37. Ibid, p. 129.


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