CHAPTER VII

CONCEPT OF SELF AND GOD IN BASAVA AND TAGORE - PHILOSOPHICAL CONTOURS
Any investigation can only be about the contents of experience by being within experience. This is so because apart from experience there is nothing, nothing and the rest is non-existence of anything whatever. It is impossible to talk about anything not given in experience. Accordingly, what is — the entire universe including ourselves — must be there in its proper relationship with our experience. Otherwise there is no way of dealing with anything not given in experience. As Basava says:

Devotion severed from Experience
Is purposeless: Linga unrealized
In Experiences misses the joy
Of Consubstantial union;
Prasada without experience confers
No peace: ay, nothing can be known
Without Experience. So, could you say,
‘What need has one of siva-saranas
If it has lodgment in oneself?
O Kudala Sangama Lord, could it be said
That your Experience is no more
Than word clashing with word,
O Prabhu? ¹

Thus, it is clear that if anything is out of relationship with experience we must be completely and absolutely ignorant about it. Accordingly, we do not and cannot know how to deal with it in theory or in practice or in any other way. We cannot even know whether such a thing exists at all. Tagore also says that it is impossible to go beyond man’s experience and knowledge: “We
can never go beyond Man in all that we know and feel, and a mendicant
singer of Bengal has said: 'Our world is as it is in our comprehension; the
thought and existence are commingled. Everything would be lost in
unconsciousness if man were nought; and when response comes to your own
call you know the meaning of reality'. Furthermore, "His (man's) arts and
literature are constantly giving expression to this intimate communion of
man with his world." 2

The problems of reality, experience, knowledge and its expression in
terms of language and testing the truth of such statements are intimately and
intricately interrelated. No matter where one begins, one tends to be drawn
into dealing with the others before one can find fully satisfactory answers to
any one of them. This is so because we live in a relational world of things,
which affect and are affected by each other. Our knowledge, which is a
conscious discrimination of things experienced, must exhibit this complexity
in the nature of interlocking existences. But knowledge is not something that
comes in neat packages, which can be easily traced to separate sources. A
variety of claims to know are made: science, aesthetics, morality, religion,
philosophy and literature. These knowledge-claims are diversifications of the
one and the same general enterprise of understanding, namely, the craving of
reason that things discriminated in experience be understood.

In his book Science and Religion, H. K. Schilling, a physicist, says: "There
is only one continuum of experience, ...extending unbroken throughout the
entire length of the spectrum – the entire realm of knowledge. No one can say
where physics ends and chemistry begins. Nor is there a dividing line
between biology and psychology and this continuity extends into the realm
of religion as well." 3 Now, our study of human knowledge can only start
with a survey of vague variety, discernible in the transitions of human
experience. Man becomes aware of various things, events, relations, values,
language, meaning, purpose, soul, God, world and so on. But, perceptual flux as such means nothing, and is but what it immediately is. It is a mass of mute experience. No matter how small a tract of it be taken, it is always a much-at-once experience. The distinctions that we make leave its unity unbroken. The cuts we make are purely ideal. If we can lapse back into that experience at this very moment we will find it to be “a big, blooming, buzzing confusion.” Immediate experience contains not only sense data but also value-data. It is the presence of value data that is the basis of our aesthetic, literary, moral, religious and mystical experience. These fundamental types of experiences apprehending sense data and value-data do not have different logical status, being as they are, on par with each other. As Schilling says: “So rich in content is human experience that no one discipline or intellectual endeavor is able to comprehend it in its entirety. Each one is forced to deal with it only partially in only a restricted number of its many facets...All of these are equally genuine and valid even though they are in many respects different. Experience is therefore another word whose full meaning cannot be stated by intensive definition, but can be communicated only ostensively or contextually.”

Out of this immediate experience conscious attention carves out scientific, aesthetic, moral, religious and mystical objects, which conception then names and identifies forever and expresses them in terms of statements.

The very possibility and meaningfulness of experience in general and that of mystical experience in particular peremptorily requires the reality of experiencing subject (self, mind, soul, I) and the object experienced (God) and the relation between the subject and the object. Therefore, it must now be our task to consider the nature and status of man, God and the world in the thought of Basava and Tagore. Whitehead says, “What metaphysics requires is a solution exhibiting the plurality of individuals as consistent with the unity of the universe and a solution which exhibits the World as requiring its
union with God, and God as requiring its union with the World. ...metaphysics requires that the relationship of God to the World should lie beyond the accidents of will, and that they be founded upon the necessities of the nature of God and the nature of the World. In the first place, it must be pointed out that Basava and Tagore are not systematic philosophers in the modern sense of that term. Nevertheless, the intuitive utterances of Basava and Tagore have in them an implicit framework of philosophical principles in so far as the role of metaphors "as indicators of comprehension, as frames of reference for producing text coherence, and as tools for creative problem solving," is acknowledged. Accordingly, in both Basava and Tagore the mystic quest can start with reality of man as the subject who is body and soul. No inquiry, no effort to sound the depths in the nature of things can be possible without, in some sense or other, involving the fundamental notion of subject, self, soul, mind, personality. We know the kind of thing the self is, the nature of the existence, which it enjoys, and the kind of unity and continuity that it actually possesses. It is a fact of which we have each of us, direct experience in every day of our lives. No fact can be better attested than the actuality of such selves. The universal conscious fact is 'I think' and 'I feel'. It is a supreme expression of individuality. It is the essence of the conscious spirit to be for self, to refer to self, and to distinguish itself from all other things. Because he knows himself, man can say "I Am." And because he knows other things besides himself, he can say of these things: "They are." Now to be not determined by things but regulated by one's own knowledge of things is precisely what we call "to be free." It is an original center of spontaneous reactions and of free decisions. We call such a being man's self. We say that, since man directs his acts according to his knowledge, he has a will. As a cause, a human will is most unlike any other known sort of cause. For, it is the only known one to be confronted by possible choices and to be an original power of self-determination. As Basava says:
Mark you, virtue and sin
Are your own choice;
To say ‘Sir’ is heaven;
To say ‘you there!’ is Hell.

O Kudala Sangama Lord,
In saying ‘God’ and ‘Saint’
And ‘bless you, Master’ --- here
Is Kailasa ! (VB 240)

Man is somebody, and not merely something. Therefore, the ultimate explanation for what happens to him should rest with somebody, and not merely with something. Man’s life is self-moving, and is quickened from within by a spontaneous power of the psychic Eros in him. Were it not for human souls how is it possible to account for the spontaneous motion of human bodies? It is the total conscious life of the self, as a central point of reference for giving meaning to our basic concepts of life as studied by the rational man. The only being to which we have direct access from within is the self. It is that which we live existentially and subjectively from within, and not merely know by extrinsic reference from without. It is the conscious human self, as it actually exists in the concrete, in constant inter-subjective openness to other selves in the human community. As Basava says:

O Father Linga, let me live
Exempt from falsehood, and exempt
From all allurements of this world,
Exempt from every harlotry!
Even for an instant let me be
In Thy Saranas’ fellowship!
Let me not see aught else; for, Lord
Kudala Sangama, I have lost
My way! (VB 61)
It is here in the inter-subjective relation that the aspirant soul wishes to be touched to the quick and gets the existential feel of what it means positively to exist within and to be active. This is how the souls can be actively present to each other leading to enrichment of their mutual experience. Active self thus affects and is affected by other Saranas' selves. In this way the self is prevented from becoming an unrelated absolute entity. It is clear that the souls bear relations in the concrete with the changing aspects within the individual and with the entire evolving world system in which it is immersed. The self is a constant inner activity of active-receptive integrative assimilation of the world around. The human self remains self-identical only by constantly integrating into itself the multifarious other that surrounds it. The self maintains itself in its dynamic interaction with the environment. This self-identity is variously figured by the kind of influences exercised by other Saranas. It is not at all static or inert, or describable as unchanging save in a heavily qualified sense. In other words, the words "self-identical" and "unchanging" are not replaceable equivalents.

Undoubtedly, the self remains for each of us, throughout life the center from which we speak and act and look out upon the universe. Also, commonsense experience is inflexibly objectivistic. We perceive others in the same sense as we are. We direct our emotions of love, hate, anger to these other people thus perceived by the general commonsense of the civilized mankind. Even the most ingenious thinkers cannot escape this predicament. The crux of the whole problem is to retain the balance between the individuality of existence and the relativity of existence in accounting for the unity and identity of the self. It is this self which maintains itself amidst the welter of circumstances from birth to death. In some sense, there is a unity in the life of each man from birth to death, which we call that man's self. Any investigation must be in search of an account of such facts in terms, which stand nearest to our ultimate intuitive experiences of them. We have no right
to deface our integral experience, which is untouched by the sophistications of theory.

Modern philosophers like Hume, William, James and Bertrand Russell consistently reject the notion of a self-identical soul-substance. But the problem remains for them as well as for Basava and Tagore to give an adequate account of this undoubted self-identity of man maintaining itself amidst varying circumstances of life. The common obviousness of man's self arises when its explicit apprehension carries immediate importance for purposes of survival, or of enjoyment—for purposes of 'being' and of 'well being'. Such a self-singled out in human experience in this way, is a fact concerning which language is copious. All language, literature, aesthetic experiences involve it. The notions of civil law are based upon it. For example, the same man who committed the robbery is sent to prison. We cannot dismiss the notion of self without dismissing the whole of human thought as expressed in every language. Aesthetic experience vivifies the reality of the individual self in the enjoyment of delight in the experience of eating food, or blissful union of husband and wife each absorbed in the other. As Basava says:

To sate your hunger or to sate your lust
Is never done by deputy!
One ought to do it, do it with heart,
One ought to do it, do it oneself.
If body acts, without the heart,
It does not please at all
Lord Kudala Sangama. (VB 182)

Indulging in love, eating one's food—
Is that ever done by deputy!
O yourself one ought to do
All Linga's rites and ceremonies:
It's never done by deputy...
O Kudala Sangama,
How can they know Thee, Lord,
Doing it for mere formality? (VB 183)
Every experience has an inner aspect and an outer aspect – a private and a public side involving the real agency of self -- having the object-to-subject structure. Such intimate firsthand concrete experience of eating food or having sex with wife is bound up with the reality of the plurality of selves and objects. According to both Basava and Tagore the existence of such selves cannot be extinguished at any level of experience. In the mystic quest, from the start to its culmination in the blissful union of soul and God the reality and existence of soul cannot be abolished. As Basava says:

I was greater than the greatest that there is
In the grand Absolute, sublimely great.
How can I tell the way the word
That I'm within the lofty light
Of Lord Kudala Sangama
Was turned to silentness? (VB 956)

What boots in your Linga worshipping
Unless you have a common love,
A common art, a common joy?
What boots your Linga-worshiping
Unless, by worship of Lord Kudala Sangama.
You merge in Him as stream in stream? (VB 929)

It is obvious from the above that the reality of the soul and God as on par with each other is beyond a shadow of doubt. This is so because both soul and God are referred to as rivers. The realization of full potentialities of the soul is more difficult than anything else. As Basava says:

Whatever you will you can attain;
But you, Sir, must attain
Another thing likewise:
You cannot get that which you are
Unless you have
Lord Kudala Sangama's grace! (VB 925)
It may be possible for man to achieve anything else but the perfection of inner life of the soul is most difficult and can only be possible by the endowment of God’s grace depending upon the self’s fitness earned through hard spiritual discipline. Basava recognizes the reality of soul, God and the world on the basis of religious experience.

Now, Tagore is no less emphatic in recognizing the ultimate reality of soul, God and the world on par with each other on the basis and teachings of aesthetic and religious experience. Tagore says, “I am absolutely unique, I am I, I am incomparable. The whole weight of the universe cannot crush out this individuality of mine. I maintain it in spite of the tremendous gravitation of all things. It is small in appearance but great in reality for it holds its own against the forces that would rob it of its distinction and make it one with the dust...has no duplicate in the whole universe...we are absolutely bankrupt if we are deprived of this speciality, this individuality, which is the only thing we can call our own; and which if lost is also a loss to the whole world...And therefore only through it can we gain the universe more truly than if we were lying within its breast unconscious of our distinctiveness. The universal is ever seeking its consummation in the unique and the desire we have to keep our uniqueness intact is really the desire of the universe acting in us. It is our joy of the infinite in us that gives us our joy in ourselves.”

Any view taken on anything can only be from the standpoint of the individual’s perspective. Both Basava and Tagore have recognized and respected this standpoint of the individual perspective. Each one can only survey the world from his own unique perspective. It cannot be another man’s perspective. Thus, both Basava and Tagore in their experiential philosophy have provided among other elements for the reality of soul, world and God. This is one important element from where alone the aspirant can start his mystical journey. On the other hand, another equally important
factor required for the meaningfulness and validity of the contours of mystical experience is God, or the infinite. Since, the aspirant can only start the spiritual journey from where he is and what he is the other element required is knowledge of the bodily circumstances environing his soul. Therefore, it must now be our task to consider the nature and relation of these peremptory factors in the process of mystic quest viz., self, world and God and their relation in Basava and Tagore. Such a consideration depends upon our conception of reality. Some Indian thinkers like Sankara and Madhwa, and Descartes of the West have interpreted reality in terms of logical independence as a fundamental description of reality. It is an ontology of absolutely sufficient, self-contained readymade substance. This reality is independent exclusive and non-relational substance. It exists in itself, by itself, for itself without requiring anything else for its existence. But this way of understanding reality fails to do justice to the various ineradicable, insistent elements of experience like relations, freedom, knowledge, morality, aesthetics, religion and so on. These factors of experience stare us in the face even when they are expelled with a pitchfork to dismiss them as unreal, illusory, or maya. It would be like throwing away the baby with the bath water. This is so because knowledge involves relations between the knower and the known. Morality involves the relation between the individuals. Religion and mysticism involve the relation between God, Man and the World. These are all factors ineradically alive and kicking in our experience. We need thinkers and philosophers to account for and not explain away the genuine elements of experience. Accordingly, we find the necessity for thinkers who can account for the relational nature of our experience, knowledge and reality.

All genuine existence has through and through a relational structure. We live in an inter-dependent world. Interconnectedness is the very stuff of the reality of genuine things. No genuine understanding can put aside such a
large element of experience as misconstruction without being loss to experience and without appealing to extra theoretical considerations. If we do not make any room for such genuine elements of experience in our theory we will be compelled to take note of relations by the backdoor methods. Such a procedure is bound to engender hypocrisy in the theory and practice of our life. The world we live in is such that things affect and are affected by each other. Therefore it must be accepted that unless we assign a theoretically genuine role to a functioning of real relations in the scheme of reality we cannot account for meaningfulness of mystical experience. Now, to render intelligible the meaningfulness and genuine role of relations in the scheme of things we must trace the logic of relations. Relations require plurality of things or terms to be related or *relata*. Secondly the terms or the things to be related must be 'in the making.' Thirdly relations must make difference to the things related. In other words, relations modify and bring about change in the nature of terms. If a bride and the bridegroom continue to remain the same that they were in spite of the relation of marriage it is nonsense to say that they have married. Logically the relation of marrying, to be true to its function, must make a difference to bride to become a wife and the bridegroom to become a husband. Therefore, relatedness to be meaningful must make a difference to the nature of terms. Also, relations require that there be a plurality of genuinely real terms as *relata* without which no relation can function as relation. As Basava says:

*The wife unloving of her mate,*  
*The bhakta who has no faith*  
*In Linga — O great God!*  
*It is the same*  
*Whether they are or no!*  
*O Kudala Sangama, it's like*  
*Loosening a calf that will not suck*  
*To a cow that will not yield her milk!*
In this *vacana* the relation of love between the soul and God is metaphorically expressed in the manner of a love between husband and wife. If there is no such relation of love affecting each other at both ends it would be like the cow which does not want to suckle and the calf, which does not want to suck. In other words, there is no relation. Each is irrelevant to the other. They become unrelated absolute entities. Thus, if “making difference to terms” is to make sense, terms and relations must be conceived in such a way as to stand in need of each other. It stands to reason to think that terms and relations must be conceived in and through each other so that terms as the things related must be of the nature of composite entities and cannot have simple, partless and readymade independent nature. Therefore, any study of relations must enable us to know about the nature of terms or things and any study of the nature of things or terms should enable us to know the nature of relations. This is so because “every relation must, at both ends, affect, and pass into, the being of its terms and that every relation.... essentially penetrates the being of its terms.”

We have shown that Basava and Tagore hold that the self (soul, subject, I) is real with an inviolable dignity and sanctity and is the center of all that we think, feel, will and do. The existential situation of man is that I am one among the many others together constituting the universe. Thus, man’s situation as conceived by Basava and Tagore may be put in the words of Whitehead: “Here we are with our finite beings and physical senses in the presence of the universe whose possibilities are infinite, even though we may not apprehend them, those infinite possibilities are actualities.... And yet, as a matter of fact, the only human beings who do not assume the existence of that outer world as a reality are in the lunatic asylums. But all the while, our knowledge of it is brought to us up our spinal columns through our bodily experience and the pleasurable functioning of our organs. For our bodies are a part of that external world.”
The problem of mystical experience is to link the finitude of self through the realization of the infiniteness of ideals in the nature of God as nirakara. This is the most momentous of all questions for man. Namely, the aspirant's finite soul realizes the infinite within itself in the form of ever-widening and ever-deepening perfections in its rapturous union. This realization means the growing fullness of self. It means the actualization of ideals envisaged by God. These ideals constituting the infinite nirakara aspect of God, are potentials held before the self to be realized through the exercise of self's freedom. It is the lure of these ideals that the growing self is inspired to exercise its freedom to become what it ought to become. Accordingly, Basava says:

_Destruction's weed is born_
_In a field of growing corn:_
_It clouds my understanding,_
_It lulls my brain asleep;_  
_O Father Linga, pluck_  
_This weed, my vice,_  
_That my shoot burst again_  
_And I may grow, O Lord_  
_Kudala Sangama! (VB 50)_

If the self were readymade, self-sufficient and self-complete being, the whole of the process of realization or the mystic way of preparation to realize the infinite would be rendered meaningless. The mystic quest necessitates that the self to achieve abundance of perfection can only do so if the mystic experience were a process of becoming or self-formation. Accordingly, the self has to be conceived in such a way as to stand in need of ideals persuasively luring the self to achieve horizons of perfections beyond perfections. The intuitive utterances of Basava and Tagore in conformity with the demands of their experiential philosophy have emphasized the nature of self as a growing fullness swelling into abundance of perfection beyond
perfections. Such perfections are cumulative and creative embodying the past ones to be fused into creative novelty of haunting higher ideals. In the case of Basava the Satsthala marga constitutes the life of the growing self. In this vacana the nascent self is consciously aware of the bad qualities hindering the progressive dynamic perfection of self. It stands in need of God’s grace to weed out the bad qualities and help to grow virtuous qualities conducive to the realization of higher orders of perfection. Furthermore, the self stands in need of other selves like teachers, (Saranas) who have traversed the mystic path facing the odds, overcoming and moving upward so that it may benefit from their guidance and thereby facilitate its own progress. This is so because all experience and existence is first for its own sake and then for other beings around and then for the whole existence. In this way, the realization of the infinite in the finite soul is a converse movement from polar ends. This is how in the Satsthala marga the bhakta through the exercise of the freedom of choice moves towards higher orders of experience. God from his side moves to endow his grace to incarnate ideals in the nascent soul’s experience. Basava, being self-critical, inspects the inner process of self-realization becomes aware of his shortcomings. Also, he regrets the praises showered on him as a realized perfect soul, which in all his humility he feels he is not. Basava says:

There’s not in me
As much devotion as the sixth
Of a mustard seed:
And yet they call me pious man,
A pillar of the Faith!
What sin have I committed now,
Pray tell me, Lord,
That they should pluck me ere I grow?
I am a hero without fight!
And yet, all masters extol
The beauty that is not in me!
O Kudala Sangama Lord,
Is this my fate? (VB 385)
In this *vacana* Basava, throughout, is aware that he is in the process of development even in the highest stage of *lingangasamarasya* when he says that it is stream running into stream. (Cf. VB 929) *Moksa* here is not a programme for the annihilation of soul's existence. *Moksa* here means the nascent self's harmonious growth swelling into abundance of rich experience of the infinity of God and the world. It is an experience of peace where there is no unrest, no travel and shipwreck. It is the harmonious flowing together of soul, God and the world. Both Basava and Tagore are emphatic in recognizing and respecting the reality, dignity and sanctity of the soul to render intelligible their rapturous union.

In the chapter on 'The Problem of Self' in his book *Sadhana*, Tagore after having established the reality of the self proceeds to understand and describe the nature of self. The self involves the character of "passing on", transformation, finite physical aspect and an infinite ideal aspect realizable in the process of growing. Tagore says, "At one pole of my being I am one with stocks and stones. There I have to acknowledge the rule of universal law. That is where the foundation of my existence lies deep down below."9 "...Our self has no means of holding us, for its own nature is to pass on; and by clinging to this thread of self which is passing on through the loom of life we cannot make it serve the purpose of the cloth in which it is being woven."10 "...we gain our freedom when we attain our truest nature. The man who is an artist finds his artistic freedom when he finds his ideal of art...it is the function of religion not to destroy our nature but to fulfill it."11 Tagore holds that everything in the universe has a law of its own being which is its *dharma*. *Dharma* is the inmost nature of everything. It is the essence of their being. It has a deeper meaning than the English word religion. Tagore gives the metaphor of a seed growing up into the air and light and branching out in all directions through its inner transformation to become a tree is its *dharma*. This *dharma* is its ultimate purpose. In like manner the *dharma* or the
essence of the soul is to realize the infinite side of the ideal by casting off its bondage to the physical side of its nature and thus win freedom. The real meaning of self is the ideal of freedom to become what he ought to become. Both Basava and Tagore thus agree in holding that the self involves growing together and of integrating many factors into a composite whole of man's fullness. At the start, both Basava and Tagore recognize that man's nature is ignorant of his own nature and destiny. As Basava says:

Because of my dual-witted mind
I failed to see my way;
Lord, make me walk.
As one who, blind from birth,
Is made by placing a staff
Into his hand.
Make me indeed to love
The remnants of the offerings
Of your most favoured Saranas. (VB 265)

Tagore's words are: "But this dharma, which is the truth in us is not apparent, because it is inherent so much so, that it has been held sinfulness is the nature of man, and only by the special grace of God can a particular person be saved." Unless avidya or ignorance is got rid of there can be no fulfillment of man's destiny. It is only by sacrificing the life of excesses of sensual life that man can attain to higher orders of experience. Such sacrifice should not be under any sort of compulsions from outside. It must be out of love and yearning for higher values of life that should be the motivating force. As Tagore says, "but when a man loves, giving becomes a matter of joy to him, like the tree's surrender of the ripe fruit... They (selfish desires) seem to belong to our nature, to stick to us as a second skin, and we bleed as we detach them" though it is not easy to detach selfishness. Tagore holds that man should cultivate, in the spirit of Bhagavadgita not the freedom from action
but freedom in action. Thus, true freedom means perfect realization of the infinite, in the finitude of man. As Tagore says, "Our freedom cannot go against its own principle of freedom and yet be free; it cannot commit suicide and yet live. We cannot say that we should have infinite freedom to fetter ourselves, for the fettering ends the freedom."¹⁴

Thus, both Basava and Tagore hold freedom as an essence of the soul in determining through freedom of choice of their own spiritual growth into perfections beyond perfections. In this sense the self can be said to be part creator in its self-formation. The experience of the various splendors, beauties and grandeur of nature make Tagore receive intimations of intuitive insights into a unity of vision melting the fragments into wholeness. As Tagore writes: "I felt sure that some Being who comprehended me and my world was seeking his best expression in all my experiences, uniting them into an ever-widening individuality which is a spiritual work of art. To this Being I was responsible; for the creation in me is His as well as mine."¹⁴ In Sadhana, the chapters Realization in Love, Realization in Action, The Realization of Beauty, The Realization of the Infinite clearly emphasize that the self involves a process of growth through the exercise of freedom of choice. Realization means actualization. Tagore says, "By beginning to try to realize all, one has to end by realizing nothing."¹⁵ It follows that the self must select some and reject other elements in the formation of itself. A life of the soul consists in the exercise of freedom of decision at every moment of experience. As each experience completes itself, its birth is its end. Thus, both in Basava and Tagore the soul passes through birth and death of each moment of experience threaded together into the unity of a composite whole exhibiting the cumulative and creative character. The freedom of self and God are conditioned and cannot be exercised anyhow as they like just as the chess player cannot move his men in any way he likes. In truth, our freedom can find its real course in the direction of goodness and love. As Tagore says,"
For goodness and love are infinite, and only in the infinite is the perfect realization of freedom possible."

In the foregoing we have seen that both Basava and Tagore have taken relation as the pivot of their account of experience in general and mystic experience in particular. Therefore, soul and God must be conceived in such a way as to stand in need of each other. Accordingly, Basava says:

\[ \textbf{When you entered into us,} \\
\textbf{Making no difference of class,} \\
\textbf{Of insolence of rank or high estate,} \\
\textbf{Should you yet look, down here,} \\
\textbf{For virtues and defects?} \\
\textbf{When you ran forward to a Jangama} \\
\textbf{And gave the initiation of your grace,} \\
\textbf{You should accept,} \\
\textbf{Whatever comes even as it comes} \\
\textbf{Nor say it should not come} \\
\textbf{This way or that.} \\
\textbf{Since you assumed} \\
\textbf{Both persons - form and formlessness,} \\
\textbf{If now you spurn the one and hold the other,} \\
\textbf{That is itself a lack in you;} \\
\textbf{Mark that, Prabhu; Kudala Sangama! (VB 26 P 434)} \]

In this *vacana* God’s function of endowing loving grace, ideals will have no meaning if the worldly creatures and God did not stand in need of each other. If God and worldly creatures were independent of each other they would not be related at all. As Basava says the relation of endowing loving grace and ideals is the function of God’s infinite *nirakara* aspect. In this aspect God has no preconceived love or hatred for anything whatever. He is impartial in his relation to the world and its creatures. It is because the
worldly creatures require ideals as regulative aims that God has in his nature, the necessity to perform this function. Such ideals come from above and not from below. God does not thrust his decisions on the creatures. He merely envisages these ideal aims as lure for feeling on the part of worldly creatures to choose to become what they want to become. God does not overrule the freedom of creatures. It is the responsibility of the creatures for good and bad values realized as a result of their choices. Though God’s loving grace impartially rains on all worldly creatures why is it that all creatures do not attain to the same height of realization? Their realization depends upon cultivated fitness to make the right choices, just as the hard brackish soil does not absorb rain if it is not cultivated. Further, there is certain inevitability in God’s envisagement of ideals relevant to each creature’s actions prepared for in the inevitable ordering of things. The soul realizes value, good or bad, in accordance with the choice of ideals rooted in the nature of God. Values thus realized in this world God grabs them to constitute his sakara nature. “Those who earn merit here, earn also there.” (VB, 155). This sakara nature receives from the world what all is contributed. In this way God’s nature is both nirakara and sakara and an integral whole (being). This nirakara aspect of God is impersonal, infinite, eternal, transcendent realm of blueprints to be envisaged relevant to each activity of the world. It is only potentiality with a desire for realization of ideals to be incarnated in the world. Only in this God can be said to be a creator. This is how God is immanent in the world. As Basava says:

    Do not defile the undefiled,
    Chasing me with this dog, the world.
    My mind is all one thought of Thee;
    Nothing I know save Thee;
    I wed Thee in my maidenhood,
    And was conjoined with Thee.

182
Pray heed me, O great Linga:
Thy wife am I, and Thou my Lord.
Even as the master guards his house,
Thou art the guardian of my heart!
Should my heart that has known Thy love
Stray otherwise,
It is Thy honour that is lost,
O Kudala Sangama Lord. (VB 504)

In this *vacana* the aspirant is fully occupied in meditating with his whole mind, taking oath not to think of anything else other than God. He identifies himself as wife wedded in her maidenhood thinks God to be her husband. Just as the owner guards his house God as *antaryamin* supervises the activities of head and heart of the aspirant. Any straying away the aspirant thinks that it is an insult to God and honour being lost. It is his accessibility or *saulabhya* character. God gives himself to those who believe in Him and have utter devotion to him. But if you slave for Him | Unflinchingly, | Lord Kudala Sangama | Offers Himself to you! (VB 148) Who will believe in Him. | (VB 149). The ideals thus actualized in the life of the world become completed and left to be received into the *sakara* aspect of God. Thus the *sakara* aspect of God is ever being enriched by the reception of world’s contributions. Obviously, God is both *nirakara* and *sakara* in his full nature as concrete. God is thus the beginning and end and the binding element in the universe. To emphasize one and leave out the other aspect of his nature is an abstraction partial, incomplete and deficient in describing the nature of God. In line with Indian tradition of Vedic culture both Basava and Tagore hold that the supreme God is one and that God is called by different names. Basava says:
God is but one, many His names;
The faithful wife knows but one lord;
Should she fall for another man,
He chops her nose and ears!
Should I, O Kudala Sangama Lord,
Regard them as the sort that eat
The crumbs of several gods? (VB 613)

Look you; the pot is god, the winnowing-fan
Is god, the stone upon the roadside too!
The comb is god, the bowstring too, The jar a
God, the pippet too!
So many gods! There is no space
To put your foot! The only God
Is Lord Kudala Sangama! (VB 561)

Here, Basava is aware of popular conception of God which rustic people worship in the form of objects like stones, bowstring, and so on. Seeing with the eye of spirituality as the inner perfection of the soul, Basava finds the popular worship of different gods inadequate. It must be noted that no rustic people worship stone or tree or any kind of instrument per se as God. They are symbolic of some mysterious power. Basava holds that a genuinely deeper spirituality advances to the one God as the source and end of everything. He quotes the authority of Vedic intuition:

Do not say, swollen with pride,
The gods are two or three:
   Mark you, he is but one;
   That there be two is just a lie!
The Veda says: There is none but
Lord Kudala Sangama (VB 545)
Tagore was immersed in the Upanishadic lore even from childhood. In the *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* God as *Brahman* is one with two aspects of actual (*murta*) and non-actual or formless (*amurta*). The Upanishad says, "There are, assuredly, two forms of Brahma: the formal (*murta*) and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the stationery and the moving, the actual (*sat*) and the yon (*tya*)...Now the designation for him 'is the Real of the real'. Verily, breathing creatures are the real. He is their Real."\(^{17}\)

In poem no.56 of *Gitanjali* Tagore describes nature, necessity and relation of man and God. Tagore says:

\[
\text{THUS it is that thy joy in me is so} \\
\text{Full. Thus it is that thou hast come} \\
\text{Down to me. O thou lord of all} \\
\text{Heavens, where would be thy love if I} \\
\text{Were not?} \\
\text{Thou hast taken me as thy partner} \\
\text{Of all this wealth. In my heart is the} \\
\text{Endless play of thy delight. In my life} \\
\text{thy will is ever taking shape.} \\
\text{And for this, thou who art the King} \\
\text{Of Kings hast decked thyself in beauty} \\
\text{to captivate my heart. And for this} \\
\text{thy love loses itself in the love of thy} \\
\text{lover, and there art thou seen in the} \\
\text{perfect union of two.}^{18}
\]

God is both transcendent and immanent since only the transcendent can be immanent. God is of the nature of love. This relation of love can only be meaningful if there are at least two real entities in need of each other. The soul is taken as the partner in sharing the wealth of values such as joy. God fulfills himself endlessly in and through the growing life of the soul. The soul
freely shapes itself in accordance with God's will and purpose. God's envisagement of ideals such as beauty, delight, and joy serve as a lure to captivate the heart of man's soul. The soul and God are absorbed in the rapturous union, each affecting and enriching the other. The mystic language often describes this perfect union in the metaphors of a lover and the beloved, husband and wife, master and the servant and so on.

This account of the contours of mystical experience is universally the same in the west also. For example in an article on 'Mysticism and Divine Mutability', in the journal *Process Studies*, Daniel A. Dombrowski quotes from Pike the following: “ God is also the receiver of a definite benefit. He, too, is embraced and loved by his submissive and adoring Bride (the soul). God benefits too! Of course... God too is “wounded” and “captivated” – that is, made “prisoner” - by the love received from the Soul. Appropriately enough, God also gives thanks to the soul for the gift he receives ... the mutual embrace of union is, indeed the mutual embrace and ... the bridal metaphor carries the pictorial implication of equal partners sharing equally the benefits of the love embrace ... Not surprisingly, John covers the seemingly inappropriate overtones of this analysis by insisting that it is God who is ultimately responsible for the fact that the soul is his equal ... a symmetrical exchange of delights.”

As Basava says:

*Whichever way I look,*
*Thou only art, O Lord!*

*The form of all the circumbient space*
*Thou only art, O Lord!*

*Thou art the universal eye,*
*O Lord, and Thou the universal face!*

*Thou art the arms of All, O Lord,*

*And Thou the feet O Kudala Sangama Lord! (VB 532)*
Tagore also writes

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 stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down the dusty soil!

Deliverance? Where is this Deliverance found? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all for ever.

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. 

From what has been shown above it follows that the contours of mystical experience are the same universally irrespective of considerations of space and time. They are the peak experiences where the mystics feel and enjoy God everywhere and in everything. The mystic begins to see God in smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest things. (Anoraniyan Mahato Mahiyen).

Both Basava and Tagore hold that, everyone whatever one’s profession may be, can reach the highest stage of mystical union. Dry performances of rituals and mere mechanical recitation of the name of God will not lead to such peaks of mystical experiences. In the previous chapters, we have given an account of the mystic path leading to the ultimate goal of man’s existence namely, the union of soul and God. Both Basava and Tagore agree in holding that the requisites of mystic experience, namely, the finite soul and God stand in need of each other and that they are real.
REFERENCES:


10. Ibid, p.73.


12. Ibid.


15. Ibid, p.25.
16. Ibid, p.84.


20. Gitanjali poem no.11.