PREFACE

Spiritual capital of India has been enriched by the long line of sages, saints, from ancient times to the present day. Of these I have taken for my research work two great spiritual masters – Basava of 12th century and Rabindranath Tagore of 20th century, belonging to different places. Dr. B.S. Naikar, with his keen interest in cross-cultural approach to literature, suggested this challenging topic—Mystic Element in Basava and Tagore: A Comparative Study. Here, direct confrontation with the utterances of Basava and Tagore has always been my burden and goal. References to other writers dealing with either Basava or Tagore are very few, since I did not want to get bogged down in other commentators and secondary material. I owe a great debt to many thinkers whose works have helped to shape my outlook.

Though many different approaches to the literatures of Basava and Tagore are possible I have restricted my research to the mystic element as a core of importance leaving out technicalities and doctrinaire details. Here, our commitment is to the truth of experience and whatever fosters our understanding of it in the utterances of Basava and Tagore. It is our goal here to explore coherent meanings and render them intelligible by avoiding the vagaries of interpretative disputes. Such a study has the advantage of evading futile hair-splitting doctrinal squabbles with a view to emphasize fundamentals.

Their message is shown to be of universal significance open to the self-fulfillment of the entire humanity. This thesis has kept in mind the present relevance and future expansion of its value in contributing to the individual and the societal integrity of character. One of the deepest-
rooted maladies of our time is that even those who matter in the evolving and shaping of our individual and collective ways of living seem often to think that spiritual values and truly religious modes of loving and thinking are avoidable excesses, errors, mere private superfluities and some times even obstacles to our notions of a 'happy life'. It must be remembered that when the hope to win some real spiritual insight and its hand in organizing society dies, Charles Hartshorne says, "men are likely to grow bitter, or depressed and fearful, or genially cynical and selfish or mad with megalomaniac ambition or slavishly worshipful of power or wealth - or just dull and apathetic and unimaginative," (Beyond Humanism, Willett Clark & Co., 1975, p. 106) as can be seen plentifully evidenced in the safety and security crisis we have brought upon ourselves by the successive failures of government policies. As opposed to such maladies the only solution is to ally ourselves with the indomitable and immortal human spirit, the deeper culture of the human soul. Soul’s every experience has an inner or intrinsic or private aspect as well as an extrinsic or external public aspect. The main thrust of the thesis is the fullest spiritual development of the inner life of man into flowing perfections beyond perfections in the manner of river flowing into river. Dr. Naikar’s words “The static perishes, the dynamic perishes not” in his translated work The Fall of Kalyana (p.13) are a leitmotif in emphasizing the dynamic nature of the preparation involved in reaching the goal of mystic experience.

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