

# ಬಸವ ಜರ್ನಲ್

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**Others offer Kailasa - but Basava  
offers Kayaka**

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The growing realisation of the rapid depletion in global resources of food, energy etc., has led some thinkers to the advocacy of "Small is Beautiful". The changing concept of development is no-longer satisfied with a mere increase in GNP or even percapita national income. It accepts as its goal the abolition of absolute poverty, with employment at reasonable levels of remuneration to all able-bodied men and women to ensure enough of increase in productivity to guarantee minimum levels of income and fair standard of living to all who are self-employed.

If these two points of view are put in juxtaposition, the conclusion that emerges is as follows :-

1) There is much truth in the World Bank's statement that perhaps the most important method of benefiting the mass of job-seekers outside agriculture in the developing countries—estimated to be about two out of every three persons over the next twenty five years—is to encourage the growth of small enterprises as investment per job in small enterprises is only 6% in India compared to investment in large enterprises.

2) Jobs generated in large and small enterprises will not be sufficient to give employment to all men and women who seek it unless the vast potential of the self-employment sector is also fully exploited.

It is to be added here that this self-employment sector also will deliver the goods only when service-oriented jobs are generated on a massive scale in addition to the generation of production-oriented jobs.

Bapuji sought to achieve this dual objective of employment for all and abolition of poverty by the revival of 'Gramodyoga' and Basava sought to achieve the same by the establishment of 'Kayaka-Samaj', making 'Kayaka' the cardinal principle of his socio-economic revolution. There is a striking similarity between Bapuji's approach and Basava's approach to these twin problems of poverty and unemployment and under-employment in this country. But there are significant dissimilarities also which call for objective scrutiny and unbiased analysis. It is outside the scope of this article to attempt an exhaustive exposition of the similarities and dissimilarities between the two approaches and assess their respective merits and demerits. However, by way of illustration, it may be pointed out that whereas Bapuji sought a solution to the problem of surpluses by the virtual elimination of surpluses, Basava strove for finding a solution to the same by surrendering the surpluses to the local unit of the Samaj, not to the State as advocated by Carl Marx, for being utilized for purposes of common weal. Here is a goldmine for all those thinkers and theorists. Who are engaged in evolving a new economic ideology which can bridge the gulf between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', between large enterprises and small enterprises, between the opulent society and impoverished society and between the demands of technology and economics of scale and the demands of empty bellies.

It redounds to the credit of Basava that he alone among the socio-religious leaders of the past recognised the fundamental fact that no social order, however idealistically evolved, would sustain itself or survive for long if its economic foundations are not strong and solid. Says he in his 438th Vachana, "what-ever the orders, new or old, can it succeed without gold?"

Wealth in itself is not an evil. How can it be an evil since it preserves the health of society by circulating like blood in its veins? The health of society is preserved as long as wealth circulates in the entire nervous system of society as a whole. The moment it stops circulating in some sinews of society, paralysis overtakes that portion of its body which is deprived of



this blood circulation and causes the gradual weakening of the entire social structure.

Without stretching further this oft-repeated analogy, it can be stated without fear of contradiction that any social order or system of production and distribution of wealth which leads to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and to the deprivation and destitution of the many has no right to continue if the establishment of an egalitarian society is not to remain a dream or idle talk. Wealth becomes an evil only when it becomes the instrument of exploitation. It must remain an instrument of amelioration, not exploitation.

Realising this, Basava proclaimed: "A sinner's wealth is fit for penalty only—not for proper utilization! wealth which does not serve the righteous people is a waste!" (Vachana-223) It is we who harness wealth for noble or ignoble objectives and it is we who reap according to our own sowing. How can we reap the harvest of 'Sarvodaya' unless we sow the seeds of equitable, if not equal, distribution of wealth? And how can there be enough wealth for equitable distribution to one and all unless all are engaged in its production according to their skills and capacity?

Anyone who does not physically participate in the production of wealth has no place in the 'Kayaka-Samaj' of Basava. Similarly, one who does not surrender his surpluses for the social advancement of the weaker sections in that Samaj has also no place therein. One who lives on the labour of others is also an outlaw in this Samaj. The 'Kayaka-Samaj' of Basava thus wages a war against unproductivity, hoarding of wealth and using it as an instrument of exploitation, and parasitism. It goes further: it ensures a sacred 'Kayaka' to everyone; it cuts at the very roots of poverty and it salvages wealth wrecked on the rock of greed in order to make it available to all who need it. As Gandhiji has rightly observed, there is enough in this world for everybody's need, not for his greed!

Ill-conceived welfare measures based on mistaken notions of generosity like 'Dana' 'doles' etc. have proved counter-productive and have done more harm than good to the recipients themselves. They sap self-reliance and breed a sense of dependance and defeatism in them. They create a new class of unproductive individuals who share society's resources without contributing anything in return. What is worse, they gradually develop into second grade citizens if they remain at the receiving end for ever!

Hence Kayaka is the only panacea for all the ills and evils that besiege society, according to Basava. Even a guru must pursue some Kayaka or the other—ignoring his puja, if necessary. Since work is worship, formal worship of Linga should not come in the way of work. The only qualifying clauses in the 'Kayaka-Sutra' of Basava is that it must entail his own labour, physical or intellectual; it must be pure and free from the taint of violence, greed, exploitation, possessive impulse, acquisitive instinct and insolence; and if it generates surpluses, after satisfying the legitimate and reasonable needs of his family, these surpluses should be surrendered to the local social unit for 'Dasoha'—social service.

Needless to say, in a society insisting of such votaries of Kayaka there cannot be starvation, there cannot be exploitation and there cannot be discrimination. Since all Kayakas are considered equally sacred, all considerations of high and low based on the avocation one pursues vanish into the thin air. Along with his onslaught on the caste-system, Basava's 'Kayaka Kranti' also helped in demolishing the citadels of inequalities and disparities based on birth and avocation. Hence Basava offers Kayaka and Kayaka alone to his followers—not Kailasa. According to Harihar, the great poet, Basava asks Sangamanath, when the latter invites him to Kailas, what better things could Kailas offer to him than 'Kayaka' and the 'Prasada' of Bhaktas? If Kayaka is pursued with single-minded devotion, it bestows Kailas on its performer in this world itself, in this life itself!



Far too long we have been fooled by 'Babas' and 'Buvas' who promise Kailas at the end of life's journey without offering anything worth, while we are still alive. Here is Basava who offers Kayaka-the quintessence of Kailasa-in this very life for individual salvation and for the evolution of a just and egalitarian social order which guarantees employment and opportunities for self-actualization to all alike. Let us accept this offer.

I have confined myself to an examination of the material implications of the concept of Kayaka in this article, reserving its moral and spiritual implications for another article.

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Vyasa is a fisherman's son,  
 Markandeya, of an outcast born,  
 Mandodari, the daughter of a frog !  
 O, look not for caste ; in caste,  
 What were you in the past ?  
 Indeed, Agastya was a fowler,  
 Durvasa, a maker of shoes,  
 Kasyapa, a blacksmith ;  
 The sage, Kaundanya by name,  
 Was, as the three worlds know,  
 A barber. Mark ye all, the words  
 Of our Kudala Sanga run :  
 "What matters one is lowly-born ?  
 Only a Sivabhakta is well born !"

—BASAVANNA