



# The Concept of Kayaka and Dasoha in the Teachings of Lord Basaveshwar and Guru Nanak Devji

**Dr Gurunath K Badiger**

Associate Professor of English  
Government First Grade College and PG Centre  
Dharwad- Karnataka State 580008

## **Abstract:**

India is known for its great spiritual movements. World's major religions were born here. Great prophets like Buddha, Mahaveer, Basaveshwar and Gurunanak Devji, who left behind great religious thoughts, were born here. The present paper deals with the teachings of Lord Basaveshwar and Gurunanak Devaji and their similarities in thought and practice. A comparative analysis is made here.

## **Key words:**

Religion, spirituality, *kayaka*, *sharana* movement, *Bhakti*, work is worship, salvation, devotion, mystics.

Spirituality is root of Indian culture. Our country gave birth to many religions and saints of high order. Among the great such saints Lord Basaveshwara and Guru Nanak Devji are important. Basaveshwar started a great socio-religious movement in the 12<sup>th</sup> century South India whereas Gurunanak Devji transformed the north with very radical religious thoughts in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century by establishing Sikhism. The Medieval India witnessed the upsurge of the *Bhakti* Movement. A number of saints, poets, musicians, mystics, religious reformers and social thinkers debated and discussed the solutions to the socio-religious problems of the people. The communal conflicts in the north India and caste conflicts in the south are the major reasons for such rise of the *Bhakti* Movement. The Nayanars, Basaveshwar, Guru Nanak Devji, Tulsidas, Kabir Das, Ramananda, Kanaka Das, Namdev, Tukaram, Mouneshwar, Mirabai, Chaitanya and many others who tried to revive interest in spiritual life in the medieval society. Lord Basaveshwar and Guru Nanak Devji stand tall for their unique thoughts and practices. Particularly, the concepts of 'Kayaka' and 'Dasoha' are greatly stressed by these two great saints.

Both Lord Basaveshwara and Shri Gurunanak Devji practiced what they believed and what they preached. There is a fine harmony between word, deed and creed in these saints. They share commonalities in their lives and principles. The concepts of soul (Athman), God (Paramathma), Cosmos (Jagat), illusion (Maya), salvation (Moksha) and devotion (Bhakti) are discussed in relation to both Basaveshwar and Guru Nanak.

Both Basaveshwara and Gurunanak Devji were born to bring changes in the stagnant social system. As M.M. Kalaburgi pointed out that Basaveshwara made two changes- equality between the ruler and the ruled (Raja-Praja) and the high castes and low castes (Kulaja-Antyaja). For Basaveshwara, *Sharana* and Paramathman (God) are not different. In a way *Sharana* is the reflection of God, his true representative. A *Sharana* is reflection (Pratirupa) of God himself. He is devoted and committed individual. He should have conquered all the temptations.

*‘Chalabeku Sharanange paradhanavanollenemba*

*Chalabeku Sharanange parasatiyanollenemba*

*Chalabeku Sharanange paradaivanollenemba’*

*Chalabeku Sharanange linga jagama ondemba*

*Chalabeku Sharanange prasada ditavenba*

*Chalavilladavara mechch namma kudalasangamedev*

These lines from Vachanas show that a true *Sharana* must be away from others’ wealth, women and beliefs. He must believe in unity of ‘linga and jangama’ and concept of ‘prasada’ as true(*dita*).

*Maduva bhaktana kaya baleya dindigenyantirabeku*

*Mellmellane horeyetti nodidare, olage kechchilladantirabeku*

Like ‘*Sharana*’, the Sikhs also believe in such committed devotee. ‘Sikh’ means ‘Shishya’ a disciple. He must be a committed follower of his Guru. A true Sikh must show love for all animals, shun violence, and conquer ego and pride. As Gurunanak Devji pronounced in ‘*Japaji*’, a true Sikh lives among the people and emerges as ‘Sadhak’ or spiritual achiever by facing all the challenges of the material world with humility. Like ‘*Sharana*’, a ‘Sikh’ is also known for ‘pure’ and ‘selfless’ life. In Sikh world view, the everyday world is a part of the ‘Infinite reality’, increased spiritual awareness leads to increased and vibrant participation in the everyday world. Gurunanak Devji described living as an active, creative and practical life of truthfulness, fidelity, self-control and purity.

Guru Devji’s teaching is understood to be practiced in three ways which are also propagated by Lord basaveshwara in 12<sup>th</sup> century.

- Vand Chakko:
- Kirat karo:
- Naam japna:

are the hallmarks of Sikhism. Basaveshwara spoke about ‘Kayaka’(work is worship) and ‘dasoha’(sharing the earning).

A glance into the teachings of both the spiritual leaders shows similarities in many other beliefs of ‘aatman’, ‘paramatman’, cosmos (brahmand), moksha (salvation) and bhakti (devotion). Both Basaveshwara and Guru Ganak Devji deeply meditated on these elements of spiritual life.

*Ullavaru shivalaya madidaru*

*Nanenu madalayya, badavanu*

*Yenna kale Kamba, dehave degul*

*Shirave honna kalashavayya*

*Kudalasangamadev kelayaa*

*Sthavarakkalivuntu, jangamakkilla*

Basaveshwara does not find the difference between ‘jeevathma’ and ‘paramathma’. They are one, not separated. You cannot separate the gold from golden ornaments. They are interconnected. The jeevathma in Sikh are of two types ‘gurumukh’ and ‘manmukh’, the former is united with God while the latter is drowned in the problems of material world.

‘Paramathma’ (the concept of super soul or God) is considered as ‘Nirguni’ formless, unborn and self-illuminated. He said ‘there is but one God, true is His name, creative His personality and immortal His form. He is without fear, sans eternity, unborn and self-illuminated. Lord Basaveshwara and his *Sharanas* also believed in the formless existence of God. They call ‘paramathman’ as ‘Nirakara niranjan’. Many vachanas of Basaveshwara and Allama Prabhu describe formless nature of God.

The world view of Basaveshwara and Gurunanak Devji on the existence of material world and its influence on spiritual life are beautifully described.

They never considered material world as ‘unreal’. They accepted the world with all its limitations and faced them happily. They do not run away from family. Basaveshwara called this world as ‘Kartarana Kammata’ (God’s workshop). Those who conquer the temptations of material world will enter the world of god.

The words of Gurunanak Devji firmly assert the existence of material world. It says the creation is the ‘Jagat’. It is the body of ‘paramathman’. Hence it is ‘*sat chit swaroopi*’.

Maya (illusion) is discussed in both the teachings of Basaveshwara and Guru Nanak Devji. A true meditator (devotee) conquers *maya* of woman, money and material. Guru Nanak ji also tells about the control of Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (infatuation) and ahamkara (ego). He compares mind to the black deer in the forest wandering aimlessly. He advised his followers to bridle the infinite desires through meditation and singing of songs of God.

Salvation (moksha) is discussed in both the religious cults. Basaveshwara speaks about ‘Aikya’ union with ‘Lingam’. A *Sharana* through his noble practices reaches the Godly status as water mixes with water and milk mixes with milk. He says ‘moksha’ is not something attained after death but during the life through practice of noble life and friendship with good souls (Sajjanara sangha). Gurunanak Devji also emphasizes ‘satkarma’(good work).

Bhakti(devotion) is a very important concept in both Basaveshwara and Grunanak Devji. Both are known for their practice of Bhakti. The major aspects of their Bhakti is 1)spiritual thinking and 2)social transformation. Both possessed infinite love for God which is transformed into Bhakti. They found God in what they said, what they believed and what they practiced.

‘Prasada’ is another important element widely discussed by both the saints. According to Basaveshwara, ‘prasada’ should be earned through hard work and noble living. Guru Nanak Devji also believed in the ‘prasada’ which is earned through ‘Sathya-shuddha-kayaka’ (kirat karo)(Earned through truthful and fair hard work). Both the saints oppose unnatural and excessive possession of money and material. Nanak said “the food grains are the God, so are water, air, fire and salt, and when one mixes ghee, the fifth God with food, it becomes purer still.”

*Sharanas* consider all the wealth and health is the gift (daana) of God. Nanak ji represent similar thoughts ‘O friend, that food, that pleasure is vain which, if indulged, pains the body, or brings to the mind thoughts of sin’ (Shri Rag – M.I. Guru Nanak page-116). Basaveshwara believed in the earning through fair and rightful means without hurting others.

*Maduvantirabeku, madadantirabeku,*

*Maduva matadolage, tanilladantirabeku*

*Kudalasangamadevara nodutta nodutta nodadantirabeku*

Both Lord Basaveshwara and Guru Nanak Devji asserted the equality for women. There are thirty-three women saints recorded during vachana movement. Akkamahadevi was one of the famous women saints who proved that women are equally intellectual and capable of spiritual heights that men could reach. Guru Nanak Devji had great concerns for the rights of women and considered them equal. Sikhism does not accept gender discrimination. They vehemently opposed *Sati system, purdah/johar*, and female infanticide.

Both Guru Nanak Devji and Lord Basaveshwar tried their best to bring about social change. Basaveshwar teachings led to violent revolution in Kalyan. The inter caste marriage between son of Haralayya the cobbler and the daughter of Madhuvarasa, the Brahmin triggered bloodshed and burning of the vachanas of *Sharanas*.

Looking at the teachings and practices of both Basaveshwara and Guru Nanak Devji, a clear conclusion is visible. Both share a lot of commonalities in their beliefs of God and practices of religion. 1) Submission to the will of God (vahe guru) 2) There is only one God 'nirhankar, nirakara', 3) Speaking the truth (speak truth) 4) Seva and Simran 5) Never forget the poor 6) Women are equal 7) Selflessness and self service 8) Fight against superstition and establishment of Secular or egalitarian society are the hallmarks of both Basaveshwar and Guru Nanak Devji. They brought about great social change through rational thinking. Although lived in different ages and different parts of the same country, they appear to us as one and the same. Both fought for the oppressed and the downtrodden and tried to establish casteless and classless society.

Both are very relevant and important to the present socio-political situation in our country. The World is moving towards a new civilization controlled by machines and artificial intelligence. Materialism spread its wings everywhere. Human values and relationships are hardly given a bothering. The sharing and caring for the fellow human beings is subsided by the self-development and self-appeasement. There is need to look back to the words of Guru Nanak Devji and Lord Basaveshwar whose teachings offer simple solutions to the problems of the Modern man. We must be proud to assert that India has given births great thinkers and prophets like Buddha, Mahaveer, Gurunanak, Basaveshwar, Jnaneshwar, and Kabir. All spoke for practical life. They emphasized importance of hard work and co living through sharing and caring. The practice of 'Kayaka' and 'dasoha' certainly paves way for new society which will be full of happy hearted human beings.