

## Basaveswara and Thoreau: A Comparative Study of Their Religious Thought

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That great men think alike is borne out by a comparative study of the religious thought and philosophy of Basaveswara, a twelfth century mystic and social reformer of Karnataka, India and Thoreau, a nineteenth century American Transcendentalist. Although there is a time gap of seven centuries and a spatial gap of about three thousand miles between them countries and background the ideas propounded by them are so similar that one feels that either of them must have copied from the other. But they did not know each other by any chance whatever. But they were placed in similar circumstances though not the same ones. Some of the similarities in their views may be studied at some length in the following paragraphs. Inner Purity

The concept of inner purity is common to both Basaveswara and Thoreau. They insist upon the subjective improvement which automatically paves the way for objective or social betterment. Both of them attach an extraordinary importance to inner purity as they associate it with the principle of divinity in man. Inner purity should be simultaneous with the external purity. As Basaveswara says in one of his *vacanas* or mystic utterances:

You shall not steal,

Lie you shall not,

You shall not be angry

Or be jealous of others,  
You shall not praise yourself  
Or carp on others.  
This is the inner purity  
And this is the outer purity, too.  
This is the only way  
To please our Lord  
Of Kudala-Sangama.

One may easily see in this *vacana* how inner purity is possible only through total sublimation of feelings and how it helps man to enjoy God-intoxication. Similar ideas have been expressed by Thoreau also in the American context, "...the spirit can for the time pervade and control every member and function of the body, and transmute what in form is the grossest sensuality into purity and devotion. The generative energy, which, when we are loose, dissipates and makes us unclean, but when we are continent, invigorates and inspires us. Chastity is the flowering of man; and what are called Genius, Heroism, Holiness and the like, are but various fruits which succeed it. Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open" (*Walden* p.197). Although the manner in which the two writers express their ideas, i.e. Basaveswara expresses it in the form of his poetic utterance called *vacana*, Thoreau does so through his explicatory prose, none can fail to notice the striking similarity between the two. Both of them believe in the common idea that inner purity is synonymous with godliness.

### Vegetarianism

Vegetarianism is common to the philosophies of both Basaveswara and Thoreau, although their contexts were quite different from each other. Basaveswara did not make direct references to vegetarianism or non-vegetarianism. But he dealt with the larger issues of life like

violence which included hunting and non-vegetarian food. Basaveswara happened to be a staunch oppose of the *karma kanda* of the Vedas, which supported blood sacrifice including human sacrifice. He vehemently fought against all such violence and bloodshed and galvanized a new protestant faith called Virasaivism (Heroic Faith in Siva). His plea for non-violence may be seen in the following *vacana*:

Shall I consider the spiritual science as great?

No, I cannot; because it prays for *karma*.

Shall I consider the *Veda* as great?

No, I cannot; because it pleads for animal-sacrifice.

...

Thoreau also pleads for vegetarianism and strongly opposes the non-vegetarianism. He says, "The practical objection to animal food in my case was its uncleanness, and besides, when I had caught and cleaned and cooked and eaten my fish, they seemed not to have fed me essentially. It was insignificant and unnecessary and cost more than it came to" (*Walden*, p. 193). Thoreau is as opposed to non-vegetarianism as to hunting. Although hunting was considered to be one of the 'best' occupations in the history of mankind and especially in America, Thoreau does not recommend it for the young men. The reasons offered by him are evidence of his opposition to violence and plea for compassion, "No human being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature which holds its life by the same tenure that he does. The hare in its extremity cries like a child" (Thoreau: 191). The similarity between Basaveswara's attitude and Thoreau's, in spite of the difference between their cultural contexts, is very striking.

Equality of Man

Both Basaveswara and Thoreau were bold enough to plead for democratic set up of society, when they lived in the feudal or hierarchized kinds of societies. In twelfth century Karnataka, as also of India, the society was rigidly feudal with the hierarchical division into Brahmins, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras with specific professions attached to them. Consequently the Brahmins enjoyed the highest position and engaged themselves in intellectual pursuits including the study of the Vedas. The Ksatriyas devoted themselves to military activities whereas the Vaisyas pursued business and commerce. The Sudras were considered to be the last rung of the social system and required to do only menial jobs. Untouchability was the worst part of the hierarchical social system. The whole system was so rigid that there was no free mixing of the *varnas* at all. People were either eternally lucky or eternally unlucky and could not make any changes by dint of personal hard work or enlightenment. Thus their lives were condemned by the deterministic principles and conditions. The most admirable achievement of Basaveswara as a social reformer lay in his abolition of caste-system and the attendant psychology of inferiority or superiority and the advocacy of *sarana*-hood thereby giving a new confidence and joy to the people of all castes on the basic of spiritual democracy. Basaveswara took such a bold step when there was strong opposition to it, coming from the orthodox Brahmins. Though born as a Saiva Brahmin, Basaveswara being a free thinker and an iconoclast, he opposed all the inequality and exploitation in the society. He had the extraordinary courage of conviction, moral dynamism and personal charisma. It was precisely because of these rare qualities that people from all parts of India gravitated towards him. Likewise people of various professions from fiddling to fishing; from washing to acting and from tailoring to butchery flocked to him and assumed the new spiritual identity of *saranas*. Even while they continued to do their old professions as part of their *kayaka*, they participated in the spiritual discourses and dialogues in the Mystic Academy known as *Anubhava Mantapa*. After becoming *saranas*, the people forgot their old identities, overcame their inferiority-

complex and grew free from the curse of untouchability. They were all able to share the joys of philosophical knowledge and God-intoxication. Thus they became liberated souls. They were liberated not only from the trammels of feudal system, but from the entanglement of the worldly life itself. The new type of spiritual democratization called *saranahood* was possible only because of Basaveswara's magnetic personality. The greatness of Basaveswara lies in not merely teaching such ideas but in actually putting them into practice thereby causing an unprecedented social revolution in the history of twelfth century India.

Like Basaveswara, Thoreau also believed in the equality of man and hence in a caste-less society. He did not approve of the racial discrimination against the Negroes by the White Americans. Just as Basaveswara wanted the untouchables to be treated on par with the other Hindus, Thoreau also fought against the inequality between the Whites and the Negroes. "I sometimes wonder," exclaims Thoreau, "that we can be so frivolous. I may almost say, as to attend to the gross but somewhat foreign form of servitude called Negro slavery, there are so many keen and subtle masters to enslave both North and South. It is hard to have a Southern overseer, it is worse to have a Northern one, but worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself" (*Walden*, p.7).

## Labor

Both Basaveswara and Thoreau recognized the dignity of labor and pleaded for it in their own language. Basaveswara, the super-*Sarana* of twelfth century Karnataka, reacted very strongly against the then brahminical, especially the priestly community which upheld the intellectual work by looking down upon physical work meant only for the people of the lower rungs of society. Consequently, all the intellectual work was reserved for the high-caste Brahmins, whereas all other menial work was reserved for the low-caste people. Thus there happened to be an artificial water-tight compartmentalization within the hierarchical set-up of

the society, making all the sections interdependent and parasitical and widening the gap between the genetically privileged and the condemned. There was an element of unchangeable fatalism attached to the people's castes. People seemed to be imprisoned in their own castes and could not engage themselves in the activities of their choice or aptitude freely. Basaveswara, who was deeply hurt by the stifling caste-system of India, fought against it by preaching the holiness of labor, which he termed as *kayaka*. The concept of *kayaka* approximates to that of Marxian 'labor' but connotes more than that. Whereas Marxian labor has a secular significance, Basaveswara's concept of labor has a religious flavor about it. In his view any work, physical or mental, done in the name of and as a service to god, is *kayaka* or consecrated work. One may easily see in this concept a combination of the religious enlightenment and social progress. The countless *saranas*, who thronged to the City of Kalyana (in North Karnataka) the capital of King Bijjala of Kalachurya dynasty, came under the charismatic influence of Basaveswara and followed the ideal of *kayaka* almost literally. Even though many followers of Basaveswara became *saranas* by following the new spiritual path of Virasaivism, they continued to do some manual work or the other for their livelihood through self-reliance and hard labor thereby making it part of their spiritual enlightenment and bliss. The great achievement of Basaveswara's concept of *kayaka* was to have taken away the deep sense of inferiority from the minds of the *saranas* and to have bridged the yawning gap between the varied castes of the hierarchized society through the democratic principles of equality. He said that *kayaka* itself is Heaven. All those who do their respective jobs belong to the Heaven of Equality.

Thoreau also believes in the dignity of labor although he does not explicitly give it a religion connotation (unlike Basaveswara) or communist connotation (unlike Karl Marx). He expresses his opinion in a simple and straightforward manner, without trying to theorize it in a pedantic fashion. Thoreau resembles Basaveswara in his strong reaction against the so-called superiority of intellectual pursuits and the concurrent inferiority of physical labor. He rightly

says that “Men have a respect for scholarship and learning greatly out of proportion to the use they commonly serve... Can there be any greater reproach than an idle learning? Learn to split wood at least. The necessity of labor and conversation with many men and things, to the scholar is rarely well remembered; steady labor with the hands, which engrosses the attention also, is unquestionably the best method of removing palaver and sentimentality out of one’s style, both of speaking and writing. If he has worked hard morning till night, though he may have grieved that he could not be watching the train of his thoughts during that time, yet the few hasty lines which at evening record his day’s experience will be more musical and true than his freest but idle fancy could have furnished” (*A Week*, p.7). These lines are evidence of Thoreau’s recognition of the extraordinary importance of physical labor over and against idle fancy or exclusive intellectuality. Physical labor not only offers men actual experience but also disciplines his body and soul. That is why he respects all activities like agriculture, fishing and hunting etc involving physical labor. His frank opinion testifies to it: “...modern ingenious sciences and arts do not affect me as those more venerable arts of hunting and fishing, and even of husbandry in its primitive and simple form; as ancient and honorable trades as the sun and moon and winds pursue, coeval with the faculties of man and invented when these were invented” (*A Week*, p. 57).

Thoreau’s description of the arts of hunting, fishing and agriculture as ‘venerable’ ones indicates how he considers them as part of physical labor. Though, there is thus a striking resemblance between the ideas of Basaveswara and Thoreau, the cultural differences between the two should be noted. In spite of his great respect for physical labor Basaveswara would not have approved of hunting and fishing as ‘venerable’ arts because of his Hindu background forbidding any violence to any living creature or being of the universe. But Thoreau’s sincerity and seriousness cannot be doubted within the American cultural context.

Woman

Both Basaveswara and Thoreau had very noble ideas about woman and disagreed with the traditional view about women as mere property of man. Basaveswara opposed the traditional, brahmanical and Vedic view of woman as an impure being because of her monthly periods or pollution. The Vedic tradition did not allow freedom of religious worship to women on this count. Similarly it did not allow equality to woman with man as it always considered her as inferior. Manu had declared that “No woman deserves freedom.” Being an iconoclast and a free thinker, Basaveswara rebelled against all such irrational views of women and gave them both religious and social freedom. It is because of his authoritative encouragement that many *saranes* (female devotees) composed *vacanas* (devotional or metaphysical lyrics) and participated in the *kayaka* (physical work) as well as in the spiritual discourses in the Mystic Academy (*Anubhava Mantapa*). Nilavva, Lingamma, Akkanagamma, Remmavve and Akkamahadevi and so many other *saranes* used to participate in the religious debates and exchange of ideas with other male devotees. Because of Basaveswara’s encouragement these female devotees demonstrated to the world that they, in addition to their normal domestic duties, could also participate in the spiritual matters on par with the male fold and compose countless spiritual lyrics. They easily invite comparison with other female saints of the world like Maitreyi, Gargi and St. Teresa etc. Basaveswara may, therefore, be said to be the earlier emancipator of women. He never considered women as an embodiment of illusion or a temptress or a stumbling block in the male progress. On the contrary he considered her a true spiritual companion in the progress of pilgrim’s life. Basaveswara had two wives namely Gangambika and Nilambika and yet could reach the spiritual height of a super *sarana*.

Like Basaveswara, Thoreau pleaded for the equality of woman. Although there is a striking difference between Basaveswara and Thoreau in their relation with women, there is a remarkable similarity between the two as far as their views about woman are concerned. Though Thoreau was frustrated in his love, as his proposal was rejected by Miss Ellen Sewall,

daughter of a Unitarian clergyman and decided to remain a bachelor all through his life, he never allowed his personal frustration to colour his general view about women. On the contrary he viewed women with elevated respect. He had a romantic faith in the hidden goodness of all young women.

### Solitude

Both Basaveswara and Thoreau believed in the importance of solitude, though their contexts were quite different from each other. Basaveswara's contingency of life never allowed him the solitude of a saint, although he had a saintly heart and enjoyed the inner paradise within himself. Being a minister in the court of King Bijjala, he had to be busy attending to several political problems of the kingdom. Being a socio-religious reformer, outside the court, he had to supervise the procedures of the Mystic Academy and monitor the discussions taking place among the many devotees there. Thus, though kept busy with all the worldly and public responsibilities, Basaveswara never neglected his personal holy service to his, *istalinga*, the symbol of God. As per the injunctions of the protestant and militant Virasaiva religion given currency by himself, Basaveswara used to devotee some time regularly for the worship of the symbol, *istalinga*, which was a new brand of transcendental meditation and which could be practiced only in solitude. True communication between man and God can take place only in absolute privacy in the manner in which sexual union between man and woman can happen only in passionate privacy. Basaveswara used to be immersed so deeply in this transcendental meditation after his bath that he used to be oblivious of the arrival of guests like the other fellow-*saranas*. As depicted in Bhimakavi's *Basava Purana (The Legend of Basava)*, Basaveswara was once immersed in his transcendental meditation so deeply that he did not take cognizance of the arrival of a few *saranas* at his house. Insulted by his negligence the *saranas* went back in anger. Basaveswara came to know it only after his worship was over and

made amends for it. Basaveswara thus made the best use of his spiritual solitude and lived intensely to have regular communication with the Absolute Linga.

But Thoreau, who had no official social or political responsibilities to discharge, could afford to spend his time in wilderness near the *Walden* Pond or on the river of Concord and Merrimack for his exclusive spiritual experiments. His stay in the woods gave him a great deal of solitude thereby enabling him to meditate upon the mysteries of man, God and Nature. “I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time. To be in the company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipate. I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude” (*Walden*, p.122). In Thoreau’s view solitude appears to be synonymous with loneliness. He opines that solitude becomes a mark of greatness and offers many examples: “What company has that lonely lake, I pray? And yet it has not the blue devils, but the blue angels in it, in the azure tint of its waters. The Sun is alone, except in thick weather, when there sometimes appears to be two, but one is mock sun. God is alone, but the devil, he is far from being alone; he sees a great deal of company; he is legion. I am no more lonely than a single mullein or dandelion in a pasture, or a bean leaf, or sorrel or a horse-fly, or a bumblebee. I am no more lonely than the Mill Brook or a weather-cock or the north star, or the south wind or an April shower, or a January thaw, or the first spider in a new house” (*Walden*, p.124).

Though solitude was, thus, common to the lives of Basaveswara and Thoreau, it was sought after by them in their own distinctive manner. Whereas Basaveswara sought resort to solitude only for his transcendental meditation and spiritual discipline at regular chunks of time every day amidst the busy schedule of his political, social and religious work, Thoreau sought solitude deliberately and exclusively as part of his spiritual experimentation in the wilderness of Walden.

Poverty

Both Basaveswara and Thoreau preached the ideal of poverty as a means of spiritual enrichment. By poverty Basaveswara mean non-possession which should be symptomatic of detachment from the worldly life. Although he was himself the Finance Minister in the court of King Bijjala and lacked nothing in terms of material wealth inwardly he was never entangled with it, as he was a *super-sarana* by vocation. Being a mystic of the highest order he led the life of a minister just for the fulfillment of the requirements of court life. He decried the having mode and preferred the being mode of life. As he says in one of his *vacanas*:

I have no greed even for a gram of gold,

A strand of the sari or a grain of rice Required for today or tomorrow.

I swear by You and Your ancestors.

I am aware of nothing else But the welfare of Your *saranas*, O Lord of Kudala-Sangama.

It is because of the influence of Basaveswara's philosophy of non-Possession or poverty that his followers *saranas* of devotees of Lord Siva engaged themselves in *kayaka* every day and earned only as much as was required for that day. They never believed in the idea of storing or hoarding for the next day, which would breed the disease of greed in their mind and entangle them in the worldly life thereby preventing them from the attainment of spiritual liberation and ecstasy.

That is why when his wife complained of a theft of gold ornaments from the house, he, instead of pacifying her, grew angry with her. He replied that only the have-nots come to the haves for thieving; that if there are thefts in the society, it means there is a lot of economic imbalance and psychological frustration. Basaveswara goes even beyond the economic sphere by believing that the whole world is energized with the spirit of divinity. He considers the thief as none else but his own God in disguise.

Thoreau's philosophy of poverty is similar to Basaveswara's, though their circumstances are slightly different from each other. Like Basaveswara, Thoreau pleaded for voluntary poverty in order to liberate man from enslavement to material wealth and industrial monster. He says that "Most of the luxuries and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind. With respect to luxuries and comforts, the wisest have ever lived a more simple and meager life than the poor. The ancient philosophers, Chinese, Hindoo, Persian and Greek were a class than which none has been poorer in outward riches, none so rich in inward" (*Walden*, p.13). The spiritual significance of Thoreau's philosophy of voluntary poverty is very clear and similar to Basaveswara's philosophy of nonpossession and the Biblical lesson of the curative significance of poverty. Simplicity both Basaveswara and Thoreau preached and practiced the principle of simplicity in their lives, though their circumstances were quite different from each other. Basaveswara for example, decried the complicated ritualism of the Vedas, especially the *karma kanda* portion and the exclusive and convoluted intellectualism of the priestly class. Happiness in life could be achieved by the sincere practice of simple ethical principle. Since his aim was to bring religion and philosophy from ivory tower to the daily life of the common man he opposed the dominance of the Sanskrit medium (though he was himself a great scholar in Sanskrit lore) which happened to be a hard nut for the common man to crack. It is common knowledge that Sanskrit was a means of hoarding of knowledge and a special privilege and weapon given only to caste-Hindus (especially Brahmins) and denied to the common man. Basaveswara struggled hard not only to simplify the ethical principles but even to communicate them as Wordsworth did, in the language which is understood by the common man. He, therefore, abandoned Sanskrit and communicated all his liberal ideas in Kannada, the regional language. His message to the world is very simple but yet very profound: You shall not steal,

Nor shall you kill or lie,

Don't praise yourself

Or comment on others.

This is the way to purify yourself Internally and externally.

This is the way to earn the love of The Lord of Kudala-Sangama.

One may easily see in Basaveswara's *vacana* the profound simplicity of the Biblical language. It easily shows how Basaveswara led a simple life and preached the same in a simple Kannada language to be understood by the King and the cowboy alike.

Like Basaveswara Thoreau also believed in and preached the principle of simplicity. If Basaveswara fought against the rigid and complicated ritualism and sophisticated system of exploitation in twelfth century Karnataka, Thoreau had to fight against the hard materialism and de-humanism of nineteenth century America. Like Basaveswara, Thoreau believes that the ethical principles required for human happiness are very few and simple. That is why he says, "An honest man has hardly need to count more on his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail... Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one, instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion" (*Walden*, p.82).

Thoreau's doctrine of simplicity is communicated in an equally and disarmingly simple style, but it becomes profound on account of the deep conviction and total sincerity supporting it. Whereas Basaveswara simplified the ethical principles and concretized them in his personal example, Thoreau theorized his idea of simplicity and illustrated it personally. Liberty of Spirit

The idea of spiritual liberty is common to both Basaveswara and Thoreau. Both of them believe that man can achieve true liberty of spirit only by the cultivation of a sense of

detachment and non-possession. But the contexts and the manner in which they expressed their ideas differed from each other. Basaveswara preached to the community of *saranas* the lesson of nonpossession by prohibiting hoarding for future. According to his injunctions, the *saranas* earned their daily bread only to last for that single day and never for the next day. This kind of nonpossession and non-hoarding was necessary for the attainment of true liberty of the soul. Basaveswara not only preached this lesson to the fraternity of *saranas*, but practiced it literally even when he was surrounded by the royal abundance of wealth by virtue of his employment as the Finance Minister in the court of King Bijjala:

I do not long for even an iota of gold,

Or for a strand in a sari,

Either for today or for tomorrow.

I swear by you and by your predecessors.

I do not long for anything Other than for Your *saranas*, O Lord of Kudala-Sangama.

Like Basaveswara, Thoreau also preaches the lesson of spiritual liberty in an American context. Instead of preaching, or generalizing, he conveys the same idea through his own personal instantiation. "I was more independent than any farmer in Concord, for I was not anchored to a house or farm, but could follow the bent of my genius which is very crooked one, every moment" (*Walden*, p. 50). Although Thoreau has not used the words like spiritual liberty, his meaning is quite obvious in the context. He expresses his ideas more clearly when he compared the possessions to burdens: "I never got my fingers buried by actual possession" (*Walden*, p.74). He advises his fellowmen, "As long as possible live free and uncommitted" (*Walden*, p.75). He says that "Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul" (*Walden*, p.293). Humility

Both Basaveswara and Thoreau have preached and practiced the value of humility which happens to be a common feature of the religions of the world. Humility is synonymous with egoless-ness and therefore required to the spiritual uplift of man. That is why Basaveswara said that none was smaller than he and none greater than the *saranas*:

None is smaller than I, and none,

Greater than the devotees of Lord Siva.

Your feet as well as my conscience Are witnesses to this. O Lord of Kudala -

Sangama, This is itself a proof to me.

One may easily see the height of Basaveswara's humility here. Similar ideas have been expressed by Thoreau also who says that "I never knew, and never shall know, a worse man than myself" (*Walden*, p.70). The cultivation of humility is a secular parallel to the conquest of one's egoism. Humility helps man to understand the higher truth of his own divinity. Thoreau, therefore, says, "Humility like darkness reveals the heavenly lights" (*Walden*, Pp. 292-3). The ideological parallels between the two are as striking as impressive.

### Kindness

The concept of kindness is common to both Basaveswara and Thoreau, though they express it in different ways. For Basaveswara, kindness or compassion is the very foundation of religion. By kindness or compassion he, like the Buddha, means love of all living creatures of the world. He expresses it in one of his *vacanas*:

Is there any religion

Without compassion? One should be compassionate To all the living creatures.

Otherwise our Lord of Kudala-Sangama Will not approve of it at all.

A similar idea is expressed by Thoreau when he preaches philanthropy. He says, “Philanthropy is almost the only virtue which is sufficiently appreciated by mankind. Nay, it is greatly overrated; and it is our selfishness which overrates it” (*Walden*, P.68). Mystic Experience

Mystic experience is common to both Basaveswara and Thoreau, although both of them hail from two different cultural backgrounds. Both of them had the mystic leanings in them from the beginning, but they manifested at a relatively later age. Basaveswara, for example, was not only a poet but a mystic par excellence. That is why he founded a great institution called the Mystic Seminary (Anubhava Mantapa) at the city of Kalyana in northern part of Karnataka during the regime of King Bijjala in twelfth century. Basaveswara, who had experienced the mystic union with God had overcome the taint of worldliness. The following *vacana*, one of his innumerable mystic utterances, articulates his mystic experience excellently:

Does the camphor burning in fire Have the black soot in it? Does the mirage in the open air Have any slushy dust in it?

Does the fragrance mingled with the air Have any blemish about it?

Do I have any worldliness,

When I have earned Your grace

O Lord of Kudala-Sangama?

Kindly give me shelter

At the lotus of Your feet.

Basaveswara’s mystic utterance is a spontaneous outburst of his experience of God-intoxication. Thoreau also had a similar mystic experience at the Walden Pond which is evident in his words: “If the day and the night are such that you greet them with joy and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet-scented herbs, is more elastic, more starry, more immortal – that is your success...The true harvest of my daily life is somewhat as intangible and

indescribable as the tints of morning or evening. It is a little star-dust caught, a segment of the rainbow which I have clutched. One may easily perceive the qualitative similarity between the mystic/transcendental experiences of both the writers, although they employ the imagery indigenous to their culture. But comparatively speaking, especially in terms of poetic intensity and wealth of experience Basaveswara happens to be far greater than Thoreau.

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