

M.M. Kalburgi's *Fall Of Kalyana*: A Study of Philosophical Heteroglossia in Historical Teleology

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Abstract

*Analyzing the play in philosophical heteroglossia the paper aims at focusing 'Philosophy', as the 'love of wisdom' and 'history' as a living catalyst. Philosophy may lead a person from the mundane spatiality to metaphysical spirituality. It also embodies man's striving to cognize the infinite through knowledge, love, compassion, humanism, truth and justice. But religion without philosophy is like the contents in the Pandora's box without 'rest' that invites man's worries and miseries. Basava's struggle for establishing rationalism and humanism in religion is the historical context on which the play *Fall of Kalyana* is based. But his utopian empire is infested with so many caste demons that they make the human mind infected with superstitions, irrationality, and orthodoxy. Basava's macro-economic policy is not accepted by these myopic pundits. The individual commitment in politics and economics can help for the visible progress of a nation. But without commitment to philosophy, rationalism, ethic and humanism religion has no meaning, and no visible progress of the nation is possible. Basava's philosophizing of Saiva culture, concept of the nation and reconstructing religion, are analyzed in his contemporary reality. Basava's philosophy is not only metaphysics or reality, epistemology or theory of knowledge, ethics or moral and political but also a study of truthful arguments, rationalism and empiricism. In other words, Basava's religious philosophy in twenty first century praxis adds more to the philosophy of pragmatism, positivism, dialectical materialism, Marxism, Kantianism, phenomenology and existentialism.*

Key-words: Agrahara Tradition, Kudala Sangama, Saivism, Ambedkarization and Mandalization

Indian English drama is imbibed with the two great traditions - the indigenous dramatic tradition of the East established in Sanskrit and the European or Western dramatic tradition established chiefly in English. While in the former it is claimed as the fifth Veda with its divine origin in Bharata's *Natyasastra*, the later has the beginning in nineteenth century with the publication of K.M. Banerjee's play, *The Persecuted* (1831). In form and technique Indian English drama stands as a composite product of homebred tradition and imported spares of modernism from the West. As a whole, it involves the playwright, action and audience in a commonly shared experience. In the pre and post independence eras Indian English dramatists were writing their plays on India's history, myth and contemporary themes. Apart from this they have also made the ugly, unhappy, mean and many invisible issues in our social life

presentational, which evoke public concerns in the recent times. Some plays from 'Bhasa' literatures have been translated into English and in them our day to day, problems have been taken to the global forums. These plays also substantially contribute to the bulk of Indian English drama. But it is observed that while the Bengali playwrights had dominated much in the colonial period and little later, the Kannada playwrights have enough contribution in the art of writing English plays or translating 'Bhasa' plays into English in the post-colonial period.

In the Post-Independence period Indian English playwrights like Asif Currimbhoy, Nissim Ezekiel, Gurucharan Das, Girish Karnad, Mahesh Dattani and Manjula Padmanabhan have become popular at home and abroad. Similarly, the 'Vasa' playwrights like Badal Sircar, Paratap Sharma, Vijaya Tendulkar and M.M. Kalburgi write with new insight, assessment and spatial awareness on the historical and contemporary facts. However, writing plays in English or in 'Bhasa' literatures these dramatists evoke public awareness across the linguistics and cultural barriers and across the nations. The theme of their plays touch the human chord with universal appeal and opens new avenues for public discussion. M.M. Kalburgi, a veteran scholar, ardent Basavalogist and an eminent dramatist Kannada has projected some fresh perspectives on a twelfth century historical and philosophical movement in Karnataka in his play *Kettitu Kalyana*. Delving into the past Kalburgi has made a quintessential socio-spiritual analysis of history and criticizes our caste system in the Vedic and contemporary times. Making his philosophical trajectories into history he attempts to rewrite it with fresh outlook. Through the portrayal of Basava, the great spiritual thinker and reformer like Sankara, Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, Tukaram and a few others he desires to bury the Vedic caste system. Like others in Indian history he does not like to philosophize life through devotional *abhangs*, poetry, music and sacred *dohas*, rather in the image of Lakulisa (the last incarnation of Mahesvara) and in the objective interpretation of *istalinga* (the iconic and phallic figure of Linga) he preaches "The prominent characteristic of Saivism from its very inception (that) was the worship and meditation of the creative cosmic principle" (Kumaraswamiji 98). In the dramatization of Basava's life and career Kalburgi analyses his profound spiritual guidance, cosmic experiences, existential problems, power of self-expression, philosophical concepts of *kayaka* and *dasoha*. Basavaraj Naikar, an eminent professor, creative writer, critic and translator has translated Kalburgi's *Kettitu Kalyana* with the title *Fall of Kalyana*. In Naikar's translatorial skill historical facts, socio-cultural and religious aspects of the play have got a new dimension. Portraying the persons, events and social developments in the parenthesis of history both the dramatist and the translator cast their constructive vision with a purpose to bury the vexed caste and religious traditions in Indian society as well as in the global village where the Hamas, Talibans, Qaidas and Toibas dictate.

If the preconditions of philosophy involve ideological struggle and its rudiments have age-old wisdom then “*the first necessity for philosophical investigation is a bold, free mind*” (Marx: 469). Of course, nurturing “*A new idea is extremely difficult to think of*” (Feynman: 172) but Basava nurtures it the possibilities to remove irrationalism for humanism. Basava's struggle for establishing rationalism and humanism in religion is the historical context on which the play is based. But his utopian empire is infested with so many caste demons that they make the human mind infected with superstitions, irrationality, and orthodoxy. Basava's macro-economic policy is not accepted by these myopic pundits. Basava's religious philosophy in twenty first century praxis adds more to the philosophy of pragmatism, positivism, dialectical materialism, Marxism, Kantianism, phenomenology and existentialism. But delving deep into history Kalburgri realizes:

The beginning of the twelfth century saw the ascendancy of Jainism and Vaisnavism, and the decadence of Saivism. By the middle of the twelfth century there appeared in Karnataka a great hero, named Basava, who arrested this deterioration of Saivism, freed it from the shackles of the Varnasrama, and infused a new life into it (Kumaraswamiji, 98).

Basava's three stages of growth as a philosopher are based on his disobedience to *agrahara*-culture of Bagewadi, denying the temple-culture and monastery education at Kudala-Sangama, and defying the palace-culture of emperor Bijjala. Coming across these three stages of his life he combines the Saiva philosophy with his logical, spiritual, economical, physical, phallic, iconic, mundane and cosmic dialectics.

In his search for truth and humanism Basava faces the challenges of irrationalism. He is wise enough with his '*darshana*', which he popularizes among the slaves, low castes, prostitutes, widows, Brahmins and the Emperor. Leading his life as an ascetic, stoic and pantheist he tries to liberate the human beings from worldly sufferings and attachments. He accepts banishment and makes his journey towards god. He neither cares for physical punishment nor fears death because he knows that birth and death are mere interregnums. Like Buddha's disciple Sariputa he realizes death, an eternal and a must metaphor of life, like Upagupta he realizes time the continuum of life, love and death not simply linear but cyclic. He knows that life is only one of the ways of death's expression and death is the culmination of all, the crescendo, and the highest peak. Life is the part of total mystery and love for it is somewhere in between life and death. For him “*Death is the door to the divine*” (Keerti:.com). As a progressive thinker he imagines if *karma* becomes static it enables *dharma* to perish. Analyzing religion, philosophy, spirituality and politics as the socio cultural palimpsests of Kuntala Empire he makes them inseparable from one another. The dramatist has made a hermeneutic approach to Basava's philosophy and to the spiritual and empirical epiphany in the *Vedas* and *Manu Smruti*.

Though the play is a philosophical thesis on Virasaivism, "*There is no doubt this will convey effectively the principles of the total revolution brought about by Basavana, which is unique and unparalleled in the history of the mankind*" (Virupakshappa: xi). The play focuses on Basava's philosophy, rationalism, humanism, rethinking of Saiva culture and caste system in our contemporary perspectives.

Kalburgi recasts Basava as a social scientist, humanist, philanthropist and economist. Basava elevates the low castes and sudras in his redefining of the *sarana* philosophy. In his view, *jangamas* (gurus) and Saiva pontiffs are not the sole authority to philosophize *saranalogy*. Even a common person in *sarana* community irrespective of caste, colour and gender has the right to do this. He equalizes brahmins and sudras, man and woman and rejects the monopoly of Vedic brahmins for their priesthood, education and celebration of Saiva-culture in temples and monasteries. Although Basava is a brahmin by birth he is un-brahminic in faith. He is fed up with the brahminic practices, their authoritarian rule, pride and prejudice and posing themselves as the living gods on earth. He deviates from his tradition and defies the ritualistic abracadabra of mantra as prescribed in the *Vedas* or theorised in *Manu Smruti*. He knows that the much-celebrated philosophy in our caste system is not cerebral enough to serve the benevolent cause of the common people. The followers of Veda make religion a spiritual tantalizer for others in the name of caste. The high priests and Saiva pontiffs make it a prosthesis to common man's life. Basava is worried that religion does not serve any noble purpose in life rather it prostrates them from the mainstream of life. The brahmin pontiffs are the socio-political Cassandras, who have vision for a solipsistic world. Basava believes that the religious scriptures are written for their privileges without any philanthropic notion. Similarly, the socio-cultural tradition established by them does not create any divine manifestation rather it mutilates the emotion of common human beings. Getting the support from royal authority they assert their Nietzschean philosophy in the outlook of yahoos and antagonize Basava's Hegelian socio-cultural philosophy, which is popularly followed by the sudra houyhnhnms. In the socio-political dynamics of brahmins and ksatriyas the condition of low castes and sudras was becoming miserable. Basava, the ideological connoisseur of the time did his best for the promotion of a hagiocratic government in Kalyana under the rule of Bijjala. For time being Basava's movement became a failure as it was diplomatically aborted by the brahmins but his philosophy has been adding new thoughts to the believers of Saivism through the ages. Kalburgi dramatizes its history with philosophical resonance. It seems that he cautions the Indian mass not to be hysteric for India's ancient tradition, religious ethos and caste system but to be heuristic in their rational and humanistic approach for the sovereignty of India.

Bagewadi is known as the Southern Kashi of India. During twelfth century the Bagewadi brahmins were enjoying many advantages in

society. Their ritualistic culture was known as *agrahara* culture. Here the brahmins had their strict adherence to the philosophy in *Veda* and *Manu Smruti*. Basava's father, Madiraj was the mayor of Bagewadi. Basava's mother Madalambika was a religious lady. Like his parents Basava was born and brought up in the strict rules of *agrahara* culture. The Bagewadi brahmins were feeling proud that they were the successors of the great Chalukya Emperor Vikramaditya and the children of Manu. At the age of fifteen Basava opposed his *agrahara* tradition as he had the realization of becoming a prisoner in it without free thought. Although he was fed up with the brahminic dictates he was unable to escape from it. On the full moon day he discerned the idea of changing his sacred thread amidst the chanting of *mantras*. He felt as if these traditional rules have created a nauseating and stifling atmosphere for him. He wondered how some of his community people were living in their baseless ideologies. He took them as the "Veritable bats and owls which have never seen light"(10). He knew that the brahmins' earning of prestige was not due to their hard work but due to the practice of caste-discrimination. They were theorizing life, death and rebirth in *karma* through caste discrimination and encouraging this violence against truth for the foolish earning of glory and respect. Since *mantra* is the rhythmic expression of prayer, they had the monopoly to chant it for their caste. Defining Saiva culture in their privileged status they had earned prestige as gods on the earth. Basava revolted against this tradition and earned the jealousy of the high priests. He tore off his sacred thread and viewed, "(it) pushes me (him) into the swamp of karma" (1) for the last six years. He also expressed about his loss, "this sacred thread ... makes me (Basava) a brahmin instead of a human being"(1). He tried to understand the meaning of his sacred thread that had discriminated him from the people of other castes.

Humanism and rationalism win over narrow parochialism of caste, class and religion across the nations. But for this humanity has to wait and suffer for some time. In view of the Bagewadi brahmins Basava was too young to understand the importance of sacred thread but in reality he had understood its meaninglessness. It was a symbol of contempt for life, a dividing element between the brahmins and the sudras. The orthodox practice of wearing a sacred thread had made a few as the rulers over others. On the other hand they had inflicted miseries and sufferings on others in the name of caste and religion. In his view if this holy thread discriminates, corrupts and divides the society and human beings then where its holiness lies. Basava's rejection of sacred thread, rejection of *Manu Smruti* and disregard to the *agrahara* tradition enraged the brahmins of Bagewadi. They made Basava responsible for ruining the values and morals of society and becoming anti-brahminic. The professors of *agrahara*-culture gave ultimatum to Madiraj to make his son abide the rules and wear the sacred thread failing which his family would face excommunication. His parents knew that any *ex-parte*

decision of the *agrahara* brahmins would excommunicate them from the community. Basava wandered to know if karma confirmed caste and a thread confirmed purity of a person then how it would remain pure when it was exploiting others. He desecrates his sacred thread and discredits his caste. The community people could not persuade Basava nor they could prevent him from defying their authority. They excommunicated Basava and his family by denying water and fire. Basava burnt his sacred thread and lit the Promethean fire to kindle truth in every human heart in order to enlighten the world.

Basava had realised the manipulation of Vedic philosophy with the opportunistic ideology of the brahmins. Manu's philosophy on caste was sought to be irrelevant in Basava's contemporary society. He realized that his community did not like him nor it was the right place for the blooming of his philosophy. His advocacy for truth was proved adamancy and he was believed to endanger *agrahara* culture. Every religion has its philosophy that promotes the upliftment of society, betterment of mankind and energizes one to fight against injustice, disparity and exploitation. A prophet or a messiah or a samaritan becomes a philosopher when his ideologies achieve the higher goals of life. This ideology as philosophy get codified later in scriptures. If the basic purpose of religion is to solve the problems of human beings and find the presence of divinity in all, then Saiva culture is meant to promote the idea, "*Yatra Jivastatra Siva*" (Lord Siva is immanent in all things) (9), including birds and beasts, virtuous and vicious, good and evil. Basava fails to understand why there is the disparity among the Saiva devotees in the name of caste and religion. He is shocked to see that in the name of religion, *karma*, caste and birth liberty is liquidated, manliness is mutilated, conscience is crucified and sainthood is asserted in selfhood. The metaphor of caste has created a division in society. Basava gets completely fed up with the situation and leaves Bagewadi for Kudala Sangama to get the answer to his myriad of questions from Isanyaguru.

Kudala Sangama, the meeting point of two holy rivers was famous for its monastery, the study centre for Saiva culture and for the famous temple of Lord Sangameswara. Basava came here with the intention to continue his search for Truth and prove his reasons to change the static into dynamic. He had a high appreciation for the Saiva culture of Kudala but soon after his arrival he discovered here the static educational methods, which were only meant for a priest or a pedant. He realized that the learning and practice of Saiva-culture was under the control of brahmin high priests and Saiva portiffs. In the name of defining Saiva-culture they had confined it within caste. Religious philosophy was contaminated by the ritualistic practice and devotion was defiled by corruption. The popularized belief was that the Saiva-culture could not continue without temples, linga and priests. The poor borrowed money for alms and charity to donate to the priests and to the temple. This kind of practice in tradition caused poverty and it led many to debt trap. The practice of

devadasi system, cross-palanquin procession, purchase of *puja* items, donation of palanquins to the temple portiffs were the gaudy affairs making people poor. Basava reacts to the prevalent practices: "*being fed up of agrahara-culture, I came down to this temple-culture. But here also is taught that religion is temple and vice versa. The rituals of agrahara have entered here also thickly*" (25). He had heard much about the democratic principles of temple culture. But to his illusion he discovered that the same priestly culture, mechanical reading of rudra, recital of mantra, offering of *Bel* leaves continue at Kudala Sangama. Lord Siva, the supreme of all gods is worshipped with havis (oblation) and obeisance as per the Rg-Vedic tradition. Sangameswara, the Mahesvara, the *avatar* of Rudra, father of Marut, identical with *Agni* became Mahadeva after his merge with independent deities like Bhava, Sarva, Kala and others. He destroyed the *asuras* and their *tripura* (three cities) and is believed as the giver of boon and origin of gods. Although Isanyaguru teaches the traditional Saiva-culture he understands Basava's logic, awakening intelligence, theory of interpretation and opinion on sacred thread and *istalinga*.

Basava convinced his guru that sacred thread classifies people on the basis of their birth. But *istalinga* removes this distinction among the brahmins, ksatriyas, vaisyas and sudras. He says, "*the sacred thread divides society, the Siva-String (istalinga) unites it*" (21). The sacred thread gives power to a few to conduct sacrifice for virtue but *istalinga* paves the way for spiritual purity through meditation. *Istalinga*'s material body becomes the spiritual one for removing the social divisions. With Basava's introduction of *istalinga* in twelfth century, Saivism got revived, regenerated and revolutionary which later became known as Virasaivism or Lingayata religion. Shree Kumaraswamiji writes, "*the distinctive mark of Virasaivism is the istalinga form of worship; that is to say, it advocates the wearing of a linga upon the body by each person, so that the body shall be a temple fit for God to dwell in*" (100). Virasaivism preaches the habit of wearing *istalinga* constantly and living in actual consciousness of one's duty and contact with God. This also reveals that the Vaidic brahmins inscribe spirituality in the materiality of sacred thread and worship externally without inner purification. But Basava views that external worship without inner purification is meaningless and this kind of worshipping is a taboo.

At Kudala Sangama Basava's free-thinking, frankness, and opinion for the democratisation of Saiva-culture are opposed by the high priest Pasupati and Saiva pontiffs. Basava opposed the vedic process of worship in which there was the promotion of cruelty and sacrifice of innocent animals to gratify Lord Varuna for rain. In reality Saiva culture promotes love and kindness. But in a superstitious practice, the animals were sacrificed to appease Varuna. He condemned the superstitious worshipping of "*pots and bowels, roadside stones and trees (which) enjoy the status of gods*" (25). He prevented the *vipras* trying to take a sheep for

sacrifice before Lord Sangameswara. Without fearing for the consequence he replied them boldly *"You ask your high priest to kill me sacrificially and release this animal. Lord Varuna might be better pleased by the human sacrifice. Tomorrow's rains might come down today itself"* (19). Basava's reply might have hurt the sentiment of the high priest but Isanyaguru appreciated his idea and philosophy. The *guru* got enlightened by his disciple. He realized the intellectual halo of Basava and defined his own responsibility, *"I must guide him ... I must nourish the delicate plant. I must see that this lamp is not put off by the wind"* (12). He is awakened by Basava's idea of Saiva philosophy and says : *"The intelligence of Saivas has been tarnished ... by the smoke of sacrificial fire"* (11-12). He thinks that the temples have become the centres of misusing God and priests have brought the evil practices into the houses. Basava's opposition to the practices like walking about naked after worshipping God Bhairava, walking on cinders, torturing the body, sacrificing pregnant women and cruelty to women in confinement or girls at marriageable age in the village temple really opened the eyes of many conscientious brahmins and also his *guru* Isanyaguru. But these reformations were taken as the open challenges to the authoritarian priests and pontiffs, the so-called preservers and protectors of Saiva-culture.

Isanyaguru thinks Basava an extra-ordinary and different kind of student from others. He was the source of some hidden power through which one can realise spirituality. His philosophy was based on his personal hypothesis, humanism and spirituality. If Kudala was the *sangam* (confluence) of two rivers Basava's philosophy had established the *sangam* or confluence of mundane existentiality and spiritual sensitivity. Without surrendering to the evils he surrogated for the suffering of the sudras. His life and career demonstrate that truth needs time to be proved and to assert its existence. But without its own army truth cannot come across time and may be forgotten in memory's oblivion. His philosophy of truth was rejected in Bagewadi. His truth neither could defend him in Bagewadi nor it could save his father from the hauteur of agrahara brahmins who died due to their ex-communication. But he could be able to spread his spiritual halo by enlightening the life of *saranas*. Basava's philosophy energized the *saranas* who under his guidance started to liberate themselves from slavery to salvation.

In history Basava is a philosopher and reformer but in philosophy he is the pioneer of Virasaivism in the self of a *grahastha* as well as a saint. There is the confluence of *grahasta* dharma and *sanyasa* dharma in him. He leaves his house and culture like a saint for a greater mission but his mission never missed his duty and responsibility for his family. He returns from Kudala Sangama to Bagewadi to attend his father in deathbed. But after his father's death he performed his funeral rite with his elder sister Nagalambika. He neither apologised to the *agrahara* community nor sought their help for his father's cremation. When the

agrahara community liked to show humanitarian gesture for the cremation of Madarasa's dead body without relaxing the order of ostracism on Basava and his sister, the victims could realize the intensity of cruel law and antagonism of the victimizers. Basava replied bluntly, "*I want neither your society nor your funeral rites. Don't touch my father*", "*Don't pollute my father, who had a pure heart*"(15). Reacting to the warning of the priests they thought nothing would be more worse than this. They left Bagewadi rejecting its *agrahara* culture and its stifling atmosphere. They donated their property to the servants with whose sweat it had grown. As they made their departure for good the Bagewadi brahmins closed their doors but others shed tears for them. Basava's move from static to dynamic and Bagewadi to Kudala Sangama to Kalyana is a spiritual odyssey like that of Lord Krishna's march from Mathura to Gopa, Budha's march from Kapilvastu to Bodhagaya, Jesus's march from Nazareth to Bethlehem, Mahammad's march from Mecca to Madina and Lamas' march from Lasha to Ladakh. Like the great prophets and spiritual leaders Basava is apprehensive that the society which must be like parents to its people often become hostile and treat them like orphans due to its escapist, selfish and opportunistic leaders. Basava's life and philosophy has become history now but the dramatist reminds us his contribution that had encountered the caste demons. Kalburgi's rewriting of history on Basava is like that of Girish Karnad's in *Tale-Danda* with an oblique motif to reform the contemporary society. Making the facts of history into fiction in his presentation he draws this twelfth century spiritual leader whose philosophy enlightens the world by removing the evils like apartheid, untouchability, and complex caste and class systems.

At Kudala Sangama Basava had realized the effect of temple and monastery tradition on the people of Shiggavi and Morageri. The evils like self-aggrandizement, black-marketing and money-lending business of local pontiffs had corrupted Saiva-culture and administration: For him religion was a process not a product. In his view religion must be constructive in approach to life and society but conservatism in religion brings an end to all social and moral progress of the mankind. Any attempt to mix superstition, taboos and orthodoxy in it spoils the spirit of religion and this religion is changed into conservatism and fundamentalism. Pasupati, the temple chief of Sangameswara and Vamasaktideva, the monastery chief of Kedareswara spoil the secular spirit of Saiva-culture by spiritually exploiting the common people. Basava finds the verity of exploitation as in his close observation: "*The kith and kin of the pontiffs have been fattening themselves on the alms and fees offered by poor people*"; and "*The relatives of pontiffs enjoy the butter and these feline devotees taste the milk whereas the poor ones have to be content with only butter-milk*" (32). The mankind is in danger when the ethical and spiritual values of the individuals are lost. The true religion is only that which preaches humanism and saves the mankind

from moral depravity. Basava's philosophy oxygenized the untouchables sudras and the downtrodden in *sarana* community. Basava had a vision for democratic socialism, which could improve the spiritual realizations among the *saranas* through recurrent reformations in social, cultural, religious and economic fields. A post-modern approach to this great historical personality reveals that Basava was one of the great moderns who could have inspired for the Ambedkarization and Mandalization of India in twentieth century.

Like liberalization, globalization, industrialization and democratization in the twenty-first century Basava had started a 'cognitive revolution' through a socio-cultural awakening in the twelfth century. Basava's revivalistic attitude towards rituals and traditional mindsets was aimed at replacing the Vedic geocentricity in the new worldview of Kantian heliocentricity. This had compelled Basava to search for a new world where his philosophy could be materialized. This made him to leave the narrower world of Kudala Sangama for Kalyana, the capital city of Kuntala empire with the advice of his guru Isanyaguru. His father-in-law, Baladeva took this "*lamp of Kudala Sangama*" (34) to Bijjala's court for removing the darkness of Kalyana with an objective outlook. He introduced Basava to Bijjala for a cognitive socio-economic revolution in Kuntala Empire. Basava's entry into Bijjala's court was an event but later it became history. Basava's objective approach to life, religion, Saiva culture, caste system and civil administration in Kalyana brought a cognitive revolution through a socio-cultural and economic Renaissance prior to the Florentine variety in Europe with a vision for the understanding of truth and God in oriental variety.

Basava's arrival in Kalyana is the beginning of a new period in Kannada socio-cultural history. Bijjala sought his help to solve the socio-economic crisis due to some irregularities in his treasury, which he was unable to grip with the help of administration for years together. He was convinced of Basava's honesty, hard work, compassion, dedication, and appointed him as the chief accountant of his treasury. It was a kind of fire-ordeal for Basava, which was related to multi-level socio-cultural and financial problems of the empire. Basava's innovative measures and self-propelled strategies helped him to bring possible changes up to emperor's satisfaction. But he was appointed as the Finance Minister after the death of Siddharasa. Becoming the head of the finance matters in state affairs he brought gradual changes. He knew it well that "*the army and the treasury are the two wheels of the chariot called kingdom*" (34) which could set all the things right. His emphasis on hard work, practice of compassion, honesty in finance, stoppage of leakage, enhancing of work ethics, avoiding discrimination between jobs and ideas of becoming a model for others were the necessities for royal administration. Basava's approach to life, administration and ethics has a universalistic appeal, which the leaders, bureaucrats and common citizen of every nation require to follow for a vibrant socialism and developing

economy.

Being a vassal Bijjala had never dreamt of becoming an emperor. The historicity of his career reveals that he had succeeded to gain the favour of the vassals of Chalukyas, the Sindas of Kurugod, the Kadambas of Goa and the throne of the coward king, Tailapa. His subjects also developed unquestioned faith in him for his dynamism. But in his difficulty he had never expected that Basava would be so helpful after the death of his much-experienced Finance Minister Siddharasa. Basava was committed to remain clean amidst money and power. His *perestroika* (reconstruction) and *glasnost* (openness) in administration, finance and socio-cultural matters helped not only to gain public approval but also brought all possible solutions of the emperor, the poor and the downtrodden. He took all possible steps to weaken the two forces - the priests and the pontiffs who had created the wall between the privileged and underprivileged in the name of caste, class and religion. In order to overcome the poverty of the kingdom he brought some reformation in finance, administration, social customs and practices. He did enough for social equality, elevation of faith in God and spirituality. His ideas of collective work, faith in body temple and defining the responsibility of the emperor for his subjects, peace and non-violence were not only hypothetical but also holistic and philosophically heteroglossic. He knew that peace is indispensable for a nation's stability, violence and battle are meaningless rituals in the history of mankind. For peace and happiness he ordered his cowherd to give his calves to the robbers who had taken away his cows. He did not like his cows to suffer without their calves. He performed the feet-washing of *jangamas* which shows his regard for the spiritual guides, "*since the guru has gained the first-hand knowledge of God and the world of experience, the devotee finds great delight in serving and imitating him, and in acquiring knowledge from him*" (Kumaraswamiji: 102). Basava owes them for their dynamic knowledge of God. They become the spiritual and religious guides of the people by initiating an insight into the knowledge of God by a spiritually magnetized touch and a *cidrasa* (divine aura) among the devotees. Basava views that Bijjala is designated as an emperor but in reality he is the servant of the people. For him no profession is high or low. He advocated that a cobbler's job is equally important to that of an emperor's if it is done with devotion and sincerity.

Basava's reforms promoted the system of administration, and social justice. His stress on work-culture, worship of inner conscience, the concept of *istalinga* and establishment of Socio-Spiritual Academy like that of Buddha's *Sangha* gave a boost to the confidence of the *saranas*. He promoted *Vacana* literature in order to counter the earlier religious literature for the spread of democratic spirit and humanitarian message. He levied tax on *agraharas*, cut down half of the royal grant to the brahmins and annual grants to the temples and monasteries and advocated about *istalinga* among the *saranas*. The establishment of

Socio-Spiritual Academy was:

One of the monumental deeds of Basava, the founder of Virasaivism, was the founding of an institution called Sivanubhava-mantapa (the religious house of experience) ... It was a spiritual as well as a social institution, organized by Basava and presided over by Allama Prabhu, a great saint ... It was a nucleus round which gathered persons of all ranks and professions from prince to peasant, to take part in the discussions of religious, social and spiritual matters ... The institution, moreover, is responsible for introducing important religious practices ... undertaking activities of social amelioration, such as the elevation of the status of women, the abolition of caste distinctions, and the removal of untouchability, and for inculcating the dignity of manual labour and simplicity of life in the community (Kumaraswamiji, 98-99).

Basava's socio-cultural and economic steps reduced the status of brahmins and the importance of *agrahara* culture. This nearly forced the brahmins to remain in fasting and wear rags in place of silken garments. The fall in number of devotees, number of gifts and respect led the brahmins not only to live in misery but also to lose their respect in society. Basava's treatment and attitude to *agrahara* brahmins, temple priests, monastery pontiffs, officers, common *jangamas*, *velevalis* (loyal servant), *mastis* (loyal wife), prostitutes and widows were same and equal to all. He abolished the practice of uttering *Samboli* (beware) by the untouchables during their approach on the road and stacking of skeleton by the well side in the lane area, which was marking the identity of untouchable locality. He also removed the practice of bearing the thickets of thorns by the untouchables on their backs. Basava knew that all these practices were the social crimes meant for selfish ends. For him "The earth is common to the temple of Siva as well as to the land of untouchables". The water is common to ablution as well as to libation. Caste is common to those who know their selves" (57). On the basis of work or birth no one is superior or inferior or high or low rather one becomes low who creates this distinction. He demonstrates his philosophy first by taking food in a low caste, Nagimayya's house. It was an attempt to purify the high caste soul, which had been polluted for ages. He views that the food prepared by the brahmins from the royal grant is impure as it is the harvest of the low castes from their hard labour. The basic aim of *sarana* movement was to remove the distinctions based on caste, class, community and gender. The Socio-Spiritual Academy was established with an aim to remove these disparities. Basava's *modus operandi* was to achieve equality in society by developing the economic and spiritual prospect for people. His intension to reform the vedic tradition by creating the awareness of *kayaka* and *dasoha* was meant for narrowing the gap between the brahmins and sudras, rich and poor, men and women and ending the varna-system through the establishment of

blood relation between the brahmins and non-brahmins. Setting the example for others he married Nilambika, Emperor's younger sister, a ksatriya bride with the consent of his first wife Gangambika. Basava's aim was not to break the tradition rather to create a generation in Darwinian evolutionary socialism by which the wrongs in history could be corrected. His philosophy of *varna*-cloning in marital relationship prior to Shavian eugenics was even cheered by his first-wife who appreciated her husband's second marriage with the ksatriya bride, a "*victory to the secular marriage*" and "*victory to the sarana philosophy*" (66). If Gangambika was Basava's religious wife, Nilambika was his ideological wife who said about her marriage, "*an important step towards the removal of varna-discrimination*" (66). Replying to Bijjala's objection to this marriage Nilambika replied, "*It is better to be a slave in the abode of Saranas than to be a queen in the palace ... it is better to be the wife of a poor man with dynamic values than to be the wife of a king with static values*" (68). Basava continued his reforms with his two wives, sister and a good number of *sarana* followers. His pilgrim's progress not only removed the disparities among the common people but also served a *religio medici* to all their ills and evils of the society. He made Kuntala Empire a veritable heaven by converting the slaves into *saranas*, prostitutes into pious wives and Kalyana into a Kailash.

Basava's financial reforms are based on his humanitarian ideology and proletarian socialism. His economic philosophy promotes Marxian class struggle, Kantian empiricism and objective reality in phenomenal world, Hegelian dialectics of greater unity and truth, Keynesian scope for full engagement and later economic reforms. His economic reforms were meant to bring a change in human status and individual psyche by enjoying the wealth of the kingdom. His reforms cannot be separated from sociological disparities like treatment to the untouchables, prostitutes, widows, bonded slaves, and low castes who are directly or indirectly responsible for the sound economy of the kingdom. Since the sudras have the substantial contribution to Kalyana's economy through their hard labour, their socio-economic miseries cannot be overlooked. This makes Basava to think about their socio-economic and spiritual interests. He arranged marriages between prostitutes and *saranas*, took food in an untouchable's house, prevented widows from entering into the funeral pyres of their husbands, arranged widow marriages, encouraged people to become *saranas*, promoted the idea of *istalinga* and wearing *vibhuti* among the people. These reform activities diminished the importance of brahmins which was promoting capitalist economy and endangering social unity. Reducing tax on common farmers, putting tax on *agraharas* and stopping of royal grants to priests, pontiffs, temples and monasteries were the innovative pragmatics that brought unity in diversity of the Kuntala Empire.

Every action (good or bad) has its opposite reaction. This Newtonian implication was apparently visible with the dissatisfaction of the

brahmins, high priests and pontiffs who complained to Bijjala against Basava's intention. They antagonised against Basava and his reformatory steps, which were steadily gaining the momentum for social equality. King Bijjala had realized that Basava's reformatory steps were for the upliftment of low castes and downtrodden for establishing social equality. At the same time he had the observation of power dynamics of brahmins inside the administration. In between Basava's veracity of truth and brahmin's velocity of anger Bijjala was visualizing a greater prospect of his kingdom. But standing between Scylla and Charybdis he failed to save him and his empire. He confesses before his queen Rambha helplessly, "Truly speaking his (Basava's) path is the right one, but our society has trodden another path ... Basaveswara is right in his principles but the harsh reality is altogether different" (64). The Brahmins in the city of Kalyana were not ready to accept Basava's reformation. For them *Manu Smriti* was the written constitution that could dictate the law for social administration. He had realized the mind of the Brahmins, which was so much carapaced with the age-old plaques of taboos and superstitions that it could not be easily removed by Basava's calcification of new ideas and conscience to it. While the brahmins plead for the self of the 'Other' (Vedic brahmins), Basava pleads for the self of the 'other' (sudras). Bijjala had realised that Basava's steps might act like belladonna to the evil practices of the society but it might not be effective to the malice of the brahmins. He diplomatically watched and waited for a right time to take action and solve the matter. But the officers, brahmin priests and Saiva pontiffs became impatient in their Chanakyan ethics of motive hunting malignity and tried their best to abort Basava's noble attempts.

Basava's noble steps first became Frankenstein when Madhuvayya, a *sarana* (previously a brahmin) gave his daughter, Nilavati in marriage with Silavanta, the son of Haralayya, a cobbler (now a *sarana*). Secondly, *Sunya Chair*, the highest place for learning which was being traditionally occupied by brahmins for thousand years is now occupied by a low caste *sarana*, Allamaprabhu. This made the brahmins to agitate as they felt their hierarchy was in danger. While the *saranas* celebrated the marriage between Nilavati and Silavanta as a "victory to secular marriage" (76), the brahmins considered it an attempt to destroy brahminism. Though Basava's advocacy was against the artificial greatness of brahmins it was aimed at removing the artificial lowness imposed on the lowcastes. But the *varna* advocates could not tolerate this practice of blood relation between the *saranas*, and Silavanta's taking of *padodaka* (holy water from deities) and *prasada* (holy-food) and Nilavati's taking of meat and wine. The *saranas* taught the *varna*-advocates, "There is no connection between caste and knowledge" (77). Basava viewed that even a low-caste, a maidservant's son or a prostitute's son can be a veritable Siva. The low castes have also their rights to philosophize life and uphold knowledge. His motto was to uphold knowledge and defy caste at all levels - be it social or religious. This made the brahmins infuriated as they

were steadily loosing their hierarchy and traditional culture. They accused Basava of destroying brahminism and inviting the fall of Kalyana. They felt as if brahmanical culture was losing importance before Basava's Socio-Spiritual Academy. As Basava's *kayaka* and *dasoha* ideologies were pro-civilian with his economic reforms, the Vaidic brahmins realized that they were becoming weaker and sudras were becoming stronger. The Brahmins did not like Bijjala's wait and watch policy rather they wanted to make him instrumental to suppress Basava's movement. Although many of them were convinced that Basava's steps were humanitarian in outlook they were blinded by their opportunistic ideology.

The brahmins threatened to invite the fall of Kalyana saying it a creation of Basava. But Basava was committed to carry out and propagate the *sarana* culture with the knowledge-oriented *jangama*-culture and bring an end to the caste and class oppression, which was calculatively theorized by the high priests and Vaidic brahmins. He was not worried whether the city of Kalyana got ruined or not but he knew it well that more ten cities like Kalyana could be built on his new philosophy. As Basava's movement was becoming strong pragmatically the brahmins wanted to bring an end to this twelve year old vexed problem. Bijjala expressed his frustration in this kind of civil unrest, *"I have accepted many challenges in my life and achieved victory in many wars. But... the trial of Basava has turned out to be the biggest challenge to me"* (83). He realized Basava's populist economic policy but became angry as it had denied royal authority over the treasury. Bijjala's neutrality to the popularity of *Sarana* philosophy and brahmins' hatching of 'divide and rule' policy earned devastating consequence for the city of Kalyana. But his banishing of Basava from the city of Kalyana and awarding death sentence to Haralayya and Madhuvayya became the immediate cause of Kalyana's fall. Bijjala mistook Basava's economic philosophy as a disobedience to royal authority. He said in his wisdom and ignorance, *"Your (Basava's) religious reforms have my total approval. But you had better give up both the foolish ideas of 'economic equality' and 'social equality' "* (86). Again believing in truth and half-truth he assumed that Basava would endanger the sovereignty of his empire and invite trouble for administration by destroying the ancient culture and sanctity of religious places. But Basava's spiritual mission was for the promotion of humanism, which endangered the traditional culture and questioned the royal authority. Basava knew it well that when a new tradition has its sway the older one revolts before its death. This made Basava a fearless and empirical philosopher to bring reality into truth.

An emperor laughs to die but an empire grows to fall. Bijjala's individualistic philosophy, could not survive before Basava's humanistic philosophy. At last Basava's Socio-Spiritual Academy had a fall with the withdrawal of many Vaidic brahmins, and toppling of palace-culture (capitalism) and temple culture (individualism) over *sarana* culture

(socialism and humanism). Compassion as the foundation of religion crumbled and the philosopher is accused as a heretic by the great pretenders of truth. Jagadeva and Mallibomma, the two *sarana* body guards of the emperor murdered Bijjala in order to take revenge on Basava's banishment and death of Haralayya and Madhuvyya. The history of Kalyana became bloody, the philosophy turned phoney, chaos prevailed, murder and fire dominated human psyche. The shabby affair in the kingdom failed to metabolize Basava's philosophy in human psyche. The victory of individualism over humanism became visible with the fall of the signet of the golden bull in the banner of Kalyana. Thus making Vedic philosophy and *sarana* philosophy as the stasis of his play Kalburgi conveys a message that as long as caste and class distinctions are there in society no nation can have a real progress. Developing the plot on historical teleology's Kalburgi has become heteroglossic in his artistic manoeuvre to analyze India's ancient culture, religion, economics, ethics, humanism and philosophy with a greater vision for Pan-Indian nationalism.

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The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction

- Bran Nicol

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Postmodern fiction presents its readers with a challenge: instead of enjoying it passively, they have to work to understand it, to question their own responses and to examine their views about what fiction is... It (this book) introduces the most prominent British and American novelists associated with postmodernism, from the 'pioneers', Beckett, Borges and Burroughs, to important post-war writers such as Pynchon, Carter, Atwood, Morrison, Gibson, Auster, DeLillo, and Ellis. - Bran Nicol