

# The Concept of Dasoha

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The sharanas were convinced that man is a social being. According to them, man has to depend upon society for the complete blossoming of inner power and to derive total bliss thereof. We can say that in order to realize this pure happiness, man has been struggling in this varied world for a long time.

It is absolutely imperative that every human being achieves liberation. When individuals grow, society also grows. Every man must achieve his growth keeping in view the wellbeing of society. It is the inner expansion that is aimed at and only when this is accomplished, the human life can be said to be complete and wholesome.

It is interesting to note that the Sharanas never undermined the importance of the body and placed it at the center in dealing with the principle of Dasoha. The Bhagavad Gita says, *“Atman throws away a worn-out body-like cloth and wears another one.”* Here atman is made all important. One can see the fundamental departure from such an understanding of the body. The sharanas never said that the body is lesser than the soul. They said that we must employ the body for the Sadhana. *“When the body loses its aberration, then there is no danger,”* says Akkamahadevi. *“When the body itself is a temple, where is the need for another one?”* asks Allamaprabhu.

Basava went a step further and declared, *“This body being jangama (the moving one) knows no extinction.”*

*Non-attachment to the body  
Non-ego in the mind  
Fearless in the self  
Non-desire in the intellect*

These are some of the things the sharanas prescribed for the sadhakas. They underlined that one could realize that whatever is everlasting through the ‘body’, is supposed to be transient.

This leads us to the concept of Dasoha, which literally means, “I’m the servant”, and it is reached after the individual evolves from the position of soha, that is, ‘I’m, the Sanskrit word Dasoham becomes Dasoha in Kannada. This concept of Dasoha reflects the attitude of the sharanas towards wealth or riches. They never advocated this wealth is Maya or illusion and hence we should shun it. They saw that wealth was necessary for all the good works of life. But what they warned against was that it should not cause attachment or indulgence. The way it is earned and the way it is spent - both should stem from the necessity of renunciation. Basaveswara has said in clear terms that money should be spent with great care:

The sinners' wealth serves not a  
worthy cause only to expiate sins  
A dog's milt is used in offerings  
The money that is not used sharanas  
Is nothing but a waste, O Lord!  
The money that is earned through the  
sweat of the eyebrow is fit for  
Dasoha

The concept of Dasoha is inextricably intertwined with the concept of Kayaka so much so that they can almost be termed as 'twin' principles. Kayaka means 'of the body' and therefore it is an extension of Dasoha. As a sharana says "*Kayaka means that your body should sweat and the mind should suffer pain, and how can you call it Dasoha when you get something by pestering and begging?*" The sharanas refused the money that was the result of greed and that which was earned through righteous means was valued at most. The one uncompromising rule was that one should never feel at any time that 'this is mine', on the contrary, the feeling that 'I am just an instrument' is honorable.

The story of Aydakki Maarayaa and his wife Aydakki Lakkama is pertinent in this context as it reveals the greatness of Kayaka philosophy. The adjective 'Aydakki' meant 'rice picking' and that was the work assigned to the couple, Marayya and Lakkamma. Once it so happened that Marayya collected more rice than usual for the day and when he returned home to hand it over to his wife, the latter was almost 'horrified' at the excess quantity of

rice. Therefore, she immediately asked her husband to put the excess back to where it was. Marayya simply carried out her wishes without any further question. The profundity of this principle should be understood in its proper perspective as it contains a very great message for us living in an age of relentless grabbing.

The misery of modern man is because of his avarice and greed. In the twentieth century, Gandhiji waged a war against possession and underlined the necessity of non-possession, particularly in the Indian context where more than fifty percent of the people live below the poverty line. If we fail to share the precious resources with the majority of the have nots, we have not learned any lesson taught to us by the savants of yore.

The spirit of the time is pulling us in the opposite directions, in the sense, that each one wants to possess more and more with the result of a large majority of the people ending up having less and less. The philosophy of globalization is prone to widen the gap between the rich and the poor. The west cries from the rooftops that panacea for all our problems lies in globalization, particularly, it gives a clarion call to the so-called developing countries to go global.

Many amongst us hoard and amass wealth by a breathless pursuit of material well-being, which is nothing but a mirage. Basaveshwara gave an opposite message to mankind. He

vowed that *“I will not keep a shred of gold neither a thread of robe for today or for tomorrow.”* It is extremely difficult to put this principle into practice in its letter and spirit. But it is also true that the survival of mankind depends crucially on the principle of saving today more than ever before. Basava further said that *“all that you have given I will utilize for you again.”* Can we ever imagine that our leaders would internalize that daring, which goads us all to give back the excess to the have nots because it is noble to do so?

This is the age of borders and fences and what a far cry from the times of Basavanna who never believed in fences to his fields. He said that *“Let the birds be happy eating the corn, after all, the birds are the messengers of the lord; whatever is left after they eat, we will accept.”* Therefore, a dasohi - that is, the one who follows the principle of Dasoha – is a friend of all living things and knows no caste and never discriminates. A true dasohi respects the people of all occupations as long as they pursue the goal in the spiritual domain. Nuliya Chandayya and Molige Marayya were dear to all the sharanas. The ropemaker Chaandayya takes Lingayya to task when the latter sells rope for a higher price. When he comes home with more money than usual, Chandayya reprimanded: *“It’s a futile service when a person desires more money not satisfied with the prescribed wage.”*

A dasohi is one who transcends the desire: *“he will see wealth everywhere if he does his work with a purity of mind.”* A dasohi is never dissatisfied, he never craves things.

Thus, the principle of Dasoha is intertwined with the philosophy of Kayaka, as indicated at the beginning of the essay. The root of Dasoha is embedded in the Kayaka philosophy. Similarly, Kayaka can only realize its ultimate goal through Dasoha. Both are interdependent and complementary to each other.

Is there a clash of interest between the expectations of the people of today and those who advocated Dasoha in the bygone era? They led simple, righteous life: it was a life of contentment. But today, life is one of indulgence excessively tilted towards worldly pleasures. Is the modern man as acutely conscious of the well-being of all living beings as the sharanas? Hasn't the birth of the billionth child in the country (India) herald the exit of pity from the people's heart, because, in a situation of quantity, quality must automatically suffer? If we can answer these and many other related questions, we will realize the wisdom behind the words of the sharanas.

In conclusion, one need not look towards the other countries to understand the nature of ‘work ethics’; our own Gurus taught us centuries ago and what they taught was not merely aimed at achieving

material well-being but underlined the Spiritual progress. And therefore there is a need to carry the message of Dasoha (To work with non-ego) and Kayaka (the work charged with spirituality) to lead us all in reducing the human misery trait of real humanists.