

## Reflection of educational ideals values and contributions of Sri Basaveshwara

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### Abstract

There are numerous great reformer saints in this land who have marked their ideologies for the well being of the society on the whole and for the spiritual elevation of the individual in particular. Jagad Jyothi Basaveshwara is one such reformer saint who lived in 12th century in Karnataka. A true visionary with ideas ahead of his time; he envisioned a society that flourished enriching one and all. He was a mystic by nature, an idealist by choice and statesmen by profession. He was the prime minister in the kingdom of the Kalachuri King Bijjala (1156-1167). He could balance his life as a bureaucrat and as a spiritual reformer so well without one interfering with the other. To bring about social justice for the uncared, Basava founded of Lingayatism including every one from the high class to the untouchables into the sect and called them all Sharanas Hence Basava is popularly called as Vishwa Guru (Teacher of the World) and Bhakti-Bhandari. Basava coined the famous quote “Kayakave Kailasa” Work is Worship.

**Methodology:** The present paper is primarily based on secondary sources like the Books, Journals and Articles etc. The method used is historic-analytic method.

**Objective of the Paper:** The objective of the paper is to analyze the educational values and ideals and contributions of Basaveshwara in the field of education.

**Keywords:** jagad jyothi basaveshwara, kayakave kailasa, vishwa guru

### Introduction

*“To be successful in life you just follow one vachana or philosophy of Lord Basava You will come out with flying colours in life and you will meet the objective of taking birth on Earth.”*

– Former President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

Basavanna was a Hindu philosopher, statesman, Kannada poet in the Shiva-focussed Bhakti movement and a social reformer during the reign of the Kalachuri-dynasty king Bijjala I in Karnataka, India. Basavanna spread social awareness through his poetry, popularly known as *Vachanaas*. Basavanna rejected gender or social discrimination, superstitions and rituals such as the wearing of sacred thread, but introduced *Ishtalinga* necklace, with an image of the Shiva Linga, to every person regardless of his or her birth, to be a constant reminder of one's bhakti to Shiva. As the chief minister of his kingdom, he introduced new public institutions such as the *Anubhava Mantapa*, which welcomed men and women from all socio-economic backgrounds to discuss spiritual and mundane questions of life, in open. The traditional legends and hagiographic texts state Basava to be the founder of the Lingayats. However, modern scholarship relying on historical evidence such as the Kalachuri inscriptions state that Basava was the poet philosopher who revived, refined and energized an already existing tradition. The *Basavarajadevara ragale* by the Kannada poet Harihara is the earliest available account on the life of the social reformer and is considered important because the author was a near contemporary of his protagonist. A full account of

Basava's life and ideas are narrated in a 13th-century sacred Telugu text of Lingayat community, the Basava *purana* by Palkuriki Somanatha. Today several dark clouds of violence, bloodshed, human / suicide bombs, terrorism, hate-crime seem to gather strength with their ugly faces on the horizon of the world, threatening the very existence of humanity on this beautiful Earth of ours. The common men and women look disillusioned and perplexed, frustrated and show symptoms of gathering anger and indignation. At such a crucial time in our history, we can go back to Basava and seek guidance, inspiration and light from his philosophy. If Basava's philosophy is properly understood and interpreted to the common man, it will help society in its onward march in search of peace, happiness, prosperity, social equality and spiritual good.

### Philosophy of Basaveshwara

*“It is no exaggeration to say that the message of Lord Basava is like a reservoir into which all previous thoughts flowed in from which all thought flowed out. Kind like Buddha, simple like Mahavir, compassionate like Jesus, bold like Mohammed. Basava strikes us almost as a wonder of creation, but what attracts us most to him, are those teachings of which he anticipated the greatest of the modern thinker”-Karl Marx*

### God is One but Names are Many

Basaveshwara's entire philosophy may be summed up in three propositions, viz., God is real, the world is a challenge and an inspiration, and the goal of life is to attune itself to living in communion, and the goal of life is to attune itself to living in

communion with the Divine Being and making life harmonious with society. His philosophy successfully strikes a balance between the outer and inner in a man, the Bahiranga and the Antharanga. He was an active reformer and at the same time the Bhakti bhandari, the very treasure of devotion. The philosophy of life of Basava has to be gathered, from his sayings, the vachanas, which have come floating to us down these 800 years and more.

### **Social Equality**

Social Equality was the breath of Basava's philosophy. He rejected the caste system and vehemently denounced the notion that some communities are superior to others and eradicated the complexes of superiority or inferiority from the minds of his associates. His teachings were addressed to all men and women alike. Service to the community at large and devotion to the Lord constitute the means for human liberation. He preached the equality of women, rejected caste system and the distinctions and the hereditary right of Brahmins to priesthood as well as its traditional ritual worship. However he laid emphasis on devotion rather than asceticism and rejected temple worship and icon worship, except for a Linga known as Ishtalinga, worn around the neck, which should be worshipped daily. The Lingayats believe that after death they will go straight to unite with GOD i.e., Lingaikya and there will be no return to the world. The Lingayats, therefore need no orthodox funeral sites and bury their dead as is done with holy men. The wedding between and outcaste Harijan cobbler's son and the daughter of a Brahmin was the zenith of the social revolution in twelfth century. This flouting of social convention led to King Bijjala condemning the couple's parents to death. This act caused riots against the king who was assassinated. Basava, who was opposed to the community's violence against the king, lived out his days. In a nutshell, Basava's SOCIAL reformation for self-purification and self-development of every individual is given in the following Vachana, which also summarizes the Indian penal code.

*“Do not Steal, Do not kill  
Do not Utter Lies, Do not Lose Temper,  
Do not Detest Others, Do not Glorify Yourself,  
Do not Blame Others. These alone will purify Within And  
External and these are the ways to please our  
Lord Kudalasangamdeva”*

### **Emancipation of Women**

The greatest of Mahatma Basaveshwara's manifold contributions towards the rejuvenation of the contemporary tradition-ridden society was his recognition of “*Woman's Individuality and Her Rights*”. Women were not entitled to offer prayers, to practice penances, to undertake pilgrimage, to recite mantras, worship God or work shoulder to shoulder with the men. The movement of Basaveshwara not only granted equal rights for women in all these aspects but also raised her status to motherhood and divinity. In the words of Siddaramdeva-the associate Shiva Sharana of Basaveshwara “Women is not Maya (illusion) but, woman is really divine”-it shows a great respect and divinity.

### **Kayaka-Work Doctrine**

Basaveshwara's concept of Kayaka (Work doctrine) not only states that everyone should earn his living by work done with the sweat of his brow but also in the spirit of dedication of that work to God. His concept of Kayaka cuts at the root of traditional varna or caste order of society and the varnashrama i.e. Brahamana, Kshatriya, Vysya and Shudra. Kayaka is a spiritual view of labor. Carlyle says “Work is Worship”, but Sharanas say “Kayakave is Kailas” i.e. “Work is the Abode of God”. Kayaka does not encourage amassing of wealth or hoarding of money. It is not motivated by profit. Kayaka is to be done in the spirit of Daasoha sharing the earnings with society by feeding the Jangamas.

### **Importance of Kayaka**

Basava became the revolutionary who taught that right conduct is heaven. He declared that engaging in work itself is heaven and he taught the ideals of simple living and the equality between men and women. Thus Basava brought about reforms in all fields such as religion, morality, social life, economics, language and literature. No man or woman in the history of mankind has accomplished what Basava achieved within a few years. He is truly a great saint who preached to the people about humanity, honesty, simplicity, and the dignity of labour, equality among all human beings and human rights. The “Anubhava Mantapa” established by Basava in the 12th century laid the foundation of social democracy. He believed that a man becomes great not by his birth but by his conduct in society. He preached that everyone should continue in his professional work while leading a virtuous and spiritual life. He believed in the principle, “Kaayakave Kailasa” (Work is worship). Basava wrote many vachanas. Before the birth of Basava, it was customary to write religious and ethical texts in Sanskrit. But Basava began to write them in Kannada, the language of the common people. “Koodalasangama” was his personal deity. This name appears at the end of every vachana as a mark of identity. He spent his final days in Koodala Sangama.

### **Anubhava Mantapa - An Academy of Experiences**

The formation of Anubhava Mantapa — the academy of socio-spiritual experiences was an outstanding work of Basaveshwara. It was an assemblage of supermen of the time, from the breadth and length of India, holding discussions and implementing discussions for the welfare of humanity. It was a place where these Vachanas were recited and philosophical discourses held. After deliberations they used to reach the conclusions embodied in the work SHUNYA SAMPADANE. The Sharanas for socio-spiritual pursuits conveyed these guiding principles to society at large. Late Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, renowned philosopher and former president of India has termed Anubhava Mantapa as “The First Religious Parliament of the world”.

### **Vachanas**

Basaveshwara and his associate Sharanas started and enriched a literary form that had a universality of appeal, the Vachana or Brief Prose — Poetry lyric. Vachana literature committed to social upliftment and self-realization was simple enough to

be understood by the most ignorant and great enough to be admired by the sophisticated. The following exceptionally unique and excellent qualities / traits made Basavanna, the “Vishwa Jyothi”.

**Guru Basava as a moral teacher**

Basaveshwara was a guide of the people to behave in the Society morally and purify their life and get salvation. Our greed, lust, leads to immorality, and we have to give all these things up with the help of the lord:  
 Greed, lust, sloth, lies,  
 Infirmary of sense,  
 Roguery and fraud,  
 Anger and meanness and untruth-  
 Tear these away from off my tongue!  
 Why? They bar my way to Thee  
 Therefore, erase all these  
 And sanctify the fivefold sense,  
 O Lord Kudala Sangama!  
 Others’ women, please,  
 One should not see or speak to.  
 Please, don’t be like a dog following sheep.  
 For one single desire  
 Koodalasangamadeva will immerse you in hell  
 for a thousand years.

Worldly life is a lamp exposed to blowing wind.  
 Wealth is gathering of crowd in market place.  
 Don’t trust them and be undone.  
 Forget wealth and worship our Koodalasangamadeva.  
 Showing the goodness of action through words,  
 Showing the goodness of words through action,  
 Hiding the goodness of both action and words in you,  
 They themselves becoming perfect-  
 I carry the spittoon of such persons,  
 I will carry their footwear.  
 This is the work I desire to do,  
 This is the union I woo for.  
 Koodalasangamadeva this is the action of uniting with you.  
 Guru Basava advised always be with the good company. Bad  
 company leads to bad thoughts and bad actions.  
 Come near: be in the company of good.  
 Go away: be far from the bad.  
 What does it matter which snake it is?  
 All have poison.  
 Don’t be in company of such people.  
 Company of the wicked  
 Who are not pure Within  
 Is the company of world destroying Poison.  
 Koodalasangamadeva.

**Table 1:** The educational ideals of Sri Basaveswhara are listed below, which are derived from the above vachanas.

Religious Ideals	Social Ideals
Moodha Nambika Virodhi (ಮೂಢನಂಬಿಕೆ ವಿರೋಧಿ)	Samatha Vaadi (ಸಮತಾ ವಾದಿ)
Neethivaadi (ನೀತಿವಾದಿ)	Jaathi Paddhathi Virodhi (ಜಾತಿ ಪದ್ಧತಿ ವಿರೋಧಿ)
Mantra Purusha (ಮಂತ್ರ ಪುರುಷ)	Stree Kulodharak (ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಕುಲೋದ್ಧಾರಕ)
Anubhavi (ಅನುಭಾವಿ)	Manavatha Vaadi (ಮಾನವತಾ ವಾದಿ)
Darshnik (ದಾರ್ಶನಿಕ)	Dalithodharak (ದಲಿತೋದ್ಧಾರಕ)
Thathva Jnani (ತತ್ವ ಜ್ಞಾನಿ)	Vishwa Kutumbi (ವಿಶ್ವ ಕುಟುಂಬಿ)
Jnana Yogi (ಜ್ಞಾನ ಯೋಗಿ)	Ganitha Shastrajna (ಗಣಿತ ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಜ್ಞ)
Kayaka Yogi (ಕಾಯಕ ಯೋಗಿ)	Lipi Shastrajna (ಲಿಪಿ ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಜ್ಞ)
Bhakti Yogi (ಭಕ್ತಿ ಯೋಗಿ)	Artha Shastrajna (ಅರ್ಥ ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಜ್ಞ)
Sthithaprajna (ಸ್ಥಿತಪ್ರಜ್ಞ)	Mano Shastrajna (ಮನೋ ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಜ್ಞ)
Raj Yogi (ರಾಜ ಯೋಗಿ)	Ahimsa Vaadi (ಅಹಿಂಸಾ ವಾದಿ)
Kundalini Yogi (ಕುಂಡಲಿನಿ ಯೋಗಿ)	Sahitya Sarvabhoma (ಸಾಹಿತ್ಯ ಸಾರ್ವಭೌಮ)
Eka Devopasak (ಏಕ ದೇವೋಪಾಸಕ)	Samaj Sudharak (ಸಮಾಜ ಸುಧಾರಕ)
Shiva Yogi (ಶಿವ ಯೋಗಿ)	Samaj Sevak (ಸಮಾಜ ಸೇವಕ)
Paripurna Sakshathkari (ಪರಿಪೂರ್ಣ ಸಾಕ್ಷಾತ್ಕಾರಿ)	Nava Samaja Nirmapak (ನವ ಸಮಾಜ ನಿರ್ಮಾಪಕ)
Sansar Yogi (ಸಂಸಾರ ಯೋಗಿ)	Mano Kuladhari — Jagadguru (ಮನುಕುಲೋದ್ಧಾರಿ-ಜಗದ್ಗುರು)

**Anubhava Mantapa a Spiritual Parliament**

The method adopted by Basava for propagating the tenets of his faith is unique. He settled at Kalyana as a Minister of Bijjala. He discharged the duties of his minister-ship as a Kaayaka. He practised what he preached. He established a spiritual parliament called Anubhava Mantapa at Kalyana. People from far and near came and settled at Kalyana and

participated in the discourses that were carried on at the Anubhava Mantapa. This institution is unique in several respects. In the history of the spiritual movements in the World there is no other example, except that of Basava, where a founder of a faith or a reformist has adopted the democratic method of meeting together for discussing arid for laying down the path of spiritual advancement and social

reconstruction based on free thinking. Almost all the renowned teachers of the various countries in the world moved from place to place to preach their gospel or to interpret the earlier scriptures. Basava adopted a new method. He did not renounce life like Buddha nor did he move from place to place preaching his gospel. He did not write his commentaries like Shankara on old scriptures. He was a free thinker and led a host of people to think freely like him. The members of the Anubhava Mantapa who participated in its deliberations followed various Kaayakas, or Occupations. The deliberations and discussions took place in Kannada. They have been recorded in the form of Vachanas. Each Saying or Vachana is a self-contained unit and is a free expression of the Sharana on spiritual, ethical or economic subject. The fundamental principles accepted by Basava and the other Sharanas of the Anubhava Mantapa may be summarised as follows:

1. All men are equal.
2. No man is high or low either by birth, sex or occupation.
3. There is no discrimination between man and man and between man and woman.
4. Woman has equal rights with man to follow the path of self-evolution.
5. Each one should follow a profession of his choice.
6. Women also can take up any Kaayaka.
7. All Kaayakas are honourable professions. No Kaayaka is either low or high.
8. Varnas (or castes) and Ashamas (or stages) are to be discarded.
9. Self-development is to be achieved through Kaayaka.
10. Renunciation and dwelling in forest are ruled out as cowardly tendencies to escape from life.
11. Inter-group marriages and free dining should be encouraged.
12. Untouchability has no place in the society.
13. Every man is free to think on all spiritual and social subjects.
14. Reason and experience are the only guiding lights for free thinking and spiritual advancement.
15. Language of the people should be the medium for imparting spiritual and secular education.
16. All men have equal rights to participate in spiritual discussions, to acquire spiritual knowledge and to follow the same path of self-evolution.

The Anubhava Mantapa was a regular institution. The deliberations that took place in it were a sort of symposium. They are recorded in the form of Vachanas in Kannada. Men and women, married and unmarried people who followed different Kaayakas participated in the deliberations. Each one of them has composed Vachana. Some of the Kaayakas followed by the Sharanas of the Anubhava Mantapa are mentioned here — Pot-making, wood-cutting, washing, shoe-making, haircutting, cattle-grazing, rowing, farming, sewing, tailoring, basket making, weaving, trading, carpentry, smithy, etc... All the Sharanas irrespective of their Kaayakas enjoyed equal status. Maarayya was a Prince, Machideva was a washerrnan, Appanna was a barber, Chowadayya was a ferryman, Chennayya was a cobbler, Ketayya was a basket-maker, Raamanna was a cattle grazer, Sidharaama was an earth mover, and so on. This Anubhava Mantapa has, perhaps,

no parallel in the spiritual history of mankind.

### Conclusion

*"It has not been possible for me to practice all the precepts of Basaveshwara which he taught 800 years ago and which he also practiced. I have adopted a few of them. I am yet a seeker in this aspect and not an accomplished one. Had Basava lived during our times, he would have been a saint worthy of worship. If you, his followers, practise his precepts, you could uplift not just Bharath, but the whole world "*

### Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the Nation, India

The message of Basava is a message of love and compassion coupled with devotion. It treats all men and women as equal and it makes no distinction between one person and another. It promotes compassion towards all living beings including animals and plants. "Gird up your loins" said Basava and come to the field; yours is the lot to fight, not to yield. "Life is a struggle and a battle; nothing can be won without trouble". It is the pride of India that it produced as early as the 12th century a Saint, Hilosopher, Social Reformer, Revolutionist, Administrator, Economist Rationalist, Free Thinker, Woman Emancipator And The Champion Of The Poor, Downtrodden And The Untouchables, Sri Mahatma Basaveshwara, who was the Prime Minister In Kalyan (now known as Basava Kalyan in North Karnataka South India) under King Bijjala. He lived much earlier than modern social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Mahatma Gandhi etc. Basavanna lived as a man of God. He showed others also the way to become godly men. Even after eight hundred years the light that was lit by him continues to shine brightly. And Basavanna himself is such an effulgent light of life. Basava was a true humanitarian. He believed, preached and practised the modern principles embodying humanitarianism such as compassion, fraternity and democracy. For Basava, compassion was not built on faith but it was supported by reason and science. The heritage of Basava and his contemporary Sharanas (ordinary people who were self-realised under the divine leadership and grace of Lord Basava) is obviously a living tradition which is capable of inspiring a community even after nine centuries. It is especially the combination of sincere spirituality and social awareness which constitutes the strength of that tradition and it appeals, even today.

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