

KAYAKAVE KAILASA REVISITED: MAHATMA BASAVESHWARA'S PHILOSOPHY OF WORK AS WORSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL FRAMEWORKS

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Article Info

Article History:

Received: 20th February 2026

Accepted: 01st March 2026

Published: 07th March 2026

Keywords:

Basaveshwara, Kayakave Kailasa, Work as Worship, Lingayatism, Contemporary Ethics, Virtue Ethics, Deontology, Utilitarianism, Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

Mahatma Basaveshwara, a prominent 12th-century Indian thinker and social activist, presented the deep idea of "Kayakave Kailasa," which means "Work is Worship" or "Work is Paradise." This concept raises everyday toil to a divine level, stressing respect, fairness, and commitment through routine tasks, regardless of one's position in society. This article reexamines Basaveshwara's doctrines using modern moral theories, such as virtue-based ethics, duty-based ethics, consequence-oriented methods, and current corporate morals like corporate social responsibility (CSR) and eco-friendly progress. By linking old Lingayat vachanas (poetic expressions) to present-day ethical ideas, the research investigates how "Kayakave Kailasa" might tackle urgent problems like disparities in employment, moral work standards, and blending faith into non-religious job settings. The examination shows that Basaveshwara's concepts provide an enduring moral base for encouraging purposeful employment, fairness in society, and complete wellness in our interconnected world today. Through a contrasting method, this study illustrates the importance of native Indian thoughts in enhancing today's moral discussions, supporting a blend that views work as a route to individual and group satisfaction.

Plagiarism Check Report:

Date of Report: March 01, 2026

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How to Cite: Swami, Sheela Kamalakar. (2025). KAYAKAVE KAILASA REVISITED: MAHATMA BASAVESHWARA'S PHILOSOPHY OF WORK AS WORSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL FRAMEWORKS. *IIP: World Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (IIPWJHSS)*, 2(I), 361-364.

INTRODUCTION

In a time defined by swift tech progress, worldwide economic integration, and moral conflicts at jobs, the quest for significant guides for behaviour has grown stronger. Old philosophies, frequently based in religious and ethical customs, give useful understandings that can connect past knowledge with present-day issues. A key example is the thought of Mahatma Basaveshwara (1131–1167 CE), an important person in Indian history famous for starting Lingayatism, a progressive effort in Karnataka that opposed class structures, ceremonies, and societal unfairness. Basaveshwara's main principle, summed up in the Kannada saying "*Kayakave Kailasa*" – meaning "Work is Kailasa" (with Kailasa representing paradise or Shiva's home) – suggests that sincere effort equals holy reverence. This notion made faith available to all by turning it into daily deeds and gave jobs inherent worth, denying that some roles are lesser.

Basaveshwara's ideas arose in the 1200s in a strict feudal setup ruled by Vedic traditions and class divisions. Serving as a politician, writer, and faith guide, he created more than a thousand vachanas – brief, poetic prose pieces – that carried his fair-minded beliefs. These vachanas highlighted loyalty (*bhakti*) to Shiva through unselfish help, kindness (*daya*), and useful effort (*kayaka*), creating the three pillars of Lingayat morals along with *dasoha* (generous sharing). "*Dasoha* is the selfless service to humanity rendered with the realisation that all beings are sparks of divinity and that the spirit of God exists in all creatures. Thus seeking God through service to human being is *Dasoha*" (Sri Danamma Devi). By declaring that "no person deserves to exist on this planet without effort," Basaveshwara condemned laziness and abuse, pushing for a financial system where work builds community peace and inner development. This connects with current views on poverty as a community wrong, similar to later figures like Mahatma Gandhi, who also saw hands-on work as a way to ethical improvement.

The importance of "*Kayakave Kailasa*" now is its ability to shape today's moral guides. Current morals, shaped by Western ideas like Aristotle's character ethics, Kant's duty ethics, and Mill's benefit ethics, frequently deal with the ethical sides of jobs in market-driven worlds. Problems such as exhaustion, freelance job abuse, and company avarice show the necessity for morals that combine goal, respect, and longevity. Asian thoughts, including Indian ones, give added views by focusing on full health and linkages. This research relooks at Basaveshwara's ideas by checking its overlaps with these guides, claiming that "Work as Worship" can improve today's ways to job morals, guidance, and community duty.

The research is organized like this: The initial part outlines Basaveshwara's ideas, centring on main vachanas and their social-past setting. The next looks at today's moral guides, pointing out similarities and differences with "*Kayakave Kailasa*." The third uses this re-examined idea to present problems, like moral oversight and eco-friendliness. Lastly, the wrap-up combines findings and proposes paths for more study.

Basaveshwara's Philosophy: The Essence of Kayakave Kailasa

Mahatma Basaveshwara's thoughtful inputs are firmly part of the Bhakti trend, which aimed to make faith open by favouring individual loyalty over formal rites. Coming from a Brahmin background but turning away from class benefits, Basaveshwara set up the *Anubhava Mantapa* – an "Experience Hall" – as a place for faith talks among folks from every background, including females and lower classes. His *vachanas*, composed in easy Kannada instead of exclusive Sanskrit, made ideas open to all, questioning the Brahmin control on wisdom.

Central to his lessons is "*Kayakave Kailasa*," which changes ordinary effort into a holy deed. In a vachana, Basaveshwara says: "Effort is God's home; without effort, paradise doesn't exist." This lifts *kayaka* (body or mind work) to reverence status, meaning loyalty isn't limited to shrines but *shows* in useful activities. Different from rite reverence, which he saw as shallow, *kayaka* needs honesty and giving, matching the Lingayat denial of statue reverence for the *ishtalinga* – a private Shiva sign worn near the neck as an ongoing divine note.

This idea carries deep moral effects. Firstly, it boosts work respect. Basaveshwara claimed all jobs, from cleaning to ruling, have faith worth, fighting class-linked job ranks. In a vachana, he sees missing usual reverence because of deep work involvement as no wrong, stressing full dive into effort as real loyalty. This echoes Gandhian views, where hand work is an ethical must. Secondly, it builds community fairness. By connecting effort to reverence, Basaveshwara weakened abuse, pushing *dasoha* – dividing work results – as key for group unity. He viewed poverty as a community wrong, not a faith good, and laziness as wrong.

Thirdly, “*Kayakave Kailasa*” mixes faith with finances. Basaveshwara saw the world as divine kayaka outcome, with nature parts (sun, moon, seas) showing endless effort. Thus, human effort joins world order, pushing longevity and moral resource handling. This foresees today’s nature morals, where effort honours natural bounds. “Basava spread social awareness through his poetry, popularly known as *Vachanaas*” (wikipedia). In vachanas, Basaveshwara commonly employs daily images – growing, threading, forging – to show faith facts. For example, he likens the body to a weaving tool, where moral deeds create rescue cloth. This full view differs from split ideas dividing holy and everyday areas, stating awakening (*lingaikya*) comes from joined existence.

Basaveshwara’s thoughts affected later changers, like Gandhi and Vivekananda, who adjusted “Work is Worship” for country and community goals. Still, his ideas stay less examined in world moral talks, hidden by Vedic or Buddhist customs. Relooking at it shows a practical morals that evens personal with group, faith with matter.

Contemporary Ethical Frameworks: Parallels and Contrasts

Today’s morals include varied customs, from old Western thoughts to new world models shaped by diverse cultures and global links. Main guides cover character ethics, duty ethics, benefit ethics, and used areas like company and nature morals. Checking these via “*Kayakave Kailasa*” shows matches and splits, improving each.

Character ethics, based in Aristotle, stresses trait growth via routines that build eudaimonia (thriving). Basaveshwara’s ideas fit well, seeing *kayaka* as a trait-forming habit. Sincere effort grows kindness, control, and modesty – traits like Aristotelian balances. In current settings, this links with good mindset studies on “flow” in purposeful jobs, where deep involvement brings completion. But Basaveshwara includes a faith side, seeing traits as reverence, which boosts drive past self-growth.

Duty ethics, shown by Kant, favours obligation and all-applicable rules. “*Kayakave Kailasa*” has this obligation-focused way, with *kayaka* as a command based in *dharma* (rightness). Basaveshwara’s denial of laziness matches Kant’s absolute command against sponging. However, Kant is logic-based, while Basaveshwara’s duty is loyalty-based, rooted in bhakti. In today’s uses, this shapes career morals, where jobs are moral obligations, as in rules for health or legal fields.

Benefit ethics, from Bentham and Mill, judges deeds by results for group joy. Basaveshwara’s focus on *dasoha* – spreading effort gains – matches this, boosting community good via jobs. Yet, his ideas question pure benefit by demanding inner holiness of effort, preventing abuse for bigger gain. This gives a fix to benefit issues in markets, where staff health is given up for earnings.

In company morals, “Work as Worship” fits with CSR and involved party ideas, where firms seek moral ways past earnings. Indian oversight takes from old writings like the *Bhagavad Gita*, stressing *karma yoga* (giving deeds), like *kayaka*. Current guides like the Three-Part Measure (folks, world, earnings) mirror Basaveshwara’s full sight. In faith morals like Christian, matches are in “morals as reverence,” where deeds honour God, similar to *kayaka* as loyalty.

Nature morals gains from Basaveshwara’s world view, seeing human effort as nature’s *kayaka* part. This backs longevity, differing human-centered Western sights with linked Indian thoughts. In women-focused morals, his adding of females in faith talks boosts sex fairness in jobs.

Basava was not an academic philosopher. He never schematised his views nor did he build what is called a philosophical system. Indian commentators and reformers are mostly non-academic, for they care very little for theories, immune from logical errors. Moreover, Indian thinkers, whether academic or non-academic, only explain the old Indian philosophy and their originality lies principally in matters of interpretation. Basava is no exception to this. Following the Agamic tradition he preaches the reality of God, of man and of the world. This robust outlook enlivened Basava to be wakeful to the flow-rides and ebb-tides of the material life (Lingayat Religion).

In total, today’s guides get more from “*Kayakave Kailasa*” by adding faith, fighting non-faith materialism.

Revisiting *Kayakave Kailasa* in Modern Ethical Contexts

Using Basaveshwara’s ideas on current matters shows its changing power. In the freelance setup,

where unstable jobs reduce respect, “*Kayakave Kailasa*” pushes for just effort as reverence, calling for rules that guarantee fair pay and safety. This questions machine replacement, suggesting moral AI that boosts human *kayaka*.

In guidance, it grows helper guidance, where overseers see duties as loyal help. Indian companies like Tata Group show this via moral ruling drawn from old knowledge. During job-life mismatch, Basaveshwara’s deep *kayaka* pushes aware involvement, like karma yoga, cutting exhaustion.

In today’s era of rapid technological advancement, material aspirations, and competitive pressure, there is an observable decline in ethical sensitivity, emotional intelligence, and social responsibility among learners. This moral vacuum has led to increasing societal challenges such as corruption, violence, intolerance, mental health issues, and environmental apathy. In this context, the moral and ethical principles of ancient Indian thought hold remarkable contemporary relevance (Khare & Mishra, 2025).

For longevity, it urges nature-kind effort, seeing eco-damage as against reverence. In world morals, it links East-West gaps, improving rights talks with work respect. Issues include non-faith fitting, but mixes like “work as worship” in faith companies prove possible. In learning, adding vachanas can grow moral views, as in Indian plans using thoughts. In the end, relooking “*Kayakave Kailasa*” gives a plan for moral refresh.

CONCLUSION

Basaveshwara’s “*Kayakave Kailasa*” stays a light for moral existence, linking old knowledge with current wants. By adding reverence to effort, it handles distance in today’s world, boosting respect and fairness. Later studies might check real uses in groups.

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