

BASAVESHWARA AND HIS SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY

A.R. Babar

Materials Science and Thin Film laboratory,
Department of Physics, Shankarrao Mohite Mahavidyalaya, Akluj-413101, India.

Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article History: Received: 20th February 2026 Accepted: 01st March 2026 Published: 07th March 2026 Keywords: Social change, social motion, gender, veerashaivism, vachanas, mysticism, Lingayat saint	Basaveshwara's scientific philosophy is characterized by his advocacy for equality, social reform, and the dignity of labor. He believed in the importance of work as a form of worship and emphasized the need for a casteless society. His teachings, known as "Vachanas," are a testament to his commitment to social justice and his vision for a world where all individuals are treated with dignity and equality. Basaveshwara's philosophy continues to influence contemporary discussions on social equality and the role of religion in society.

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INTRODUCTION

Basaveshwara (1131–1167 CE), commonly known as Basavanna, was a 12th-century philosopher, social reformer, and statesman from Karnataka who introduced a highly rational, scientific, and humanistic approach to life and spirituality. His thought shifted the focus from ritualistic, dogmatic religion to a system based on personal experience, equality, and rational analysis.

1. Rationalism and Rejection of Superstition

Basaveshwara advocated for Arivu (true knowledge) over blind faith.

Rejection of Rituals: He condemned meaningless rites, idol worship, and animal sacrifices, arguing that true devotion requires no intermediaries or rigid formalities.

Questioning Authority: He challenged the established social order based on the caste system, stating that birth does not determine a person's worth.

Conscience over Dogma: He believed that the human conscience, rather than dogmatic scripts, is the ultimate guide to truth.

2. "Kayakave Kailasa" (Work is Worship)

Basaveshwara revolutionized the concept of labor by introducing the doctrine of Kayaka.

Dignity of Labour: He argued that there is no distinction between manual labor and intellectual work; all forms of work are equally divine.

Ethical Production: Kayaka emphasizes that work should be performed with total dedication, and one should not accumulate wealth unjustly.

Socialistic Principle: The surplus earned through honest work should be shared with the community (Dasoha), preventing the amassing of wealth.

3. Anubhava Mantapa: The World's First Parliament

To democratize spiritual and social knowledge, he established the Anubhava Mantapa (Hall of Experience).

Democratic Dialogue: It was a forum for open discussion where people from all castes, genders, and backgrounds gathered to debate, share experiences, and solve societal problems.

Scientific Temper: The discussions at the Anubhava Mantapa were analytical and experience-based, aimed at creating a, egalitarian society.

4. "Sharana" Movement and Social Equality

He initiated the Sharana movement, which focused on creating a casteless and gender-equal society.

Gender Equality: He advocated for equal status for women, supporting their participation in spiritual and social activities.

Inter-caste Harmony: He promoted inter-caste marriages to dismantle the rigid caste system, famously conducting a wedding between a lower-caste man and a Brahmin woman.

5. Vachana Literature: Knowledge for All

Basaveshwara used Vachanas short, pithy poems in Kannada to communicate complex philosophy directly to the masses.

Language of the Masses: He rejected Sanskrit, the elite language, in favor of Kannada, ensuring knowledge was accessible to everyone.

Scientific Thinking: The Vachanas aimed to sharpen human consciousness, encouraging them to think rationally and live a life of integrity.

SUMMARY OF SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY

Basaveshwara's philosophy was a unique synthesis of:

- i. Spiritual Materialism: He understood that body and soul are inseparable, and spiritual liberation is achieved through honest, active life, not by renouncing it.
- ii. Self-Awareness: He taught that one's own awareness is the true teacher (Arive Guru).
- iii. His "Kalyana Rajya" (Welfare State) was a 12th-century model of democracy, equality, and rational living.

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