

## Beyond Rituals: Living Basweshwar's Philosophy in the 21st Century: Basweshwar's Thoughts - A Compass for Social Reform

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**Abstract:** *Basweshwar's philosophy, centered on equality, dignity of labor, and social sharing-offers practical solutions to India's present-day problems such as caste discrimination, corruption, unemployment and gender inequality. His principles of Kayaka (work as worship) and Dasoha (sharing and service) remain highly relevant in addressing today's social and economic challenges. Mahatma Basweshwar, the 12th-century philosopher and social reformer, articulated a vision of society grounded in equality, dignity of labor, rational devotion and service to humanity. His principles of Kayaka (work as worship) and Dasoha (sharing and service) remain profoundly relevant in addressing contemporary challenges such as economic inequality, social discrimination, technological disruption, environmental crises and mental health concerns. This paper examines the applicability of Basweshwar's*

*thoughts to present-day problems, situating his philosophy within global discourses on ethics, sustainability and artificial intelligence (AI). Mahatma Basweshwar's philosophy is not just spiritual—it is deeply practical and it offers solutions to many pressing problems of our time. His principles of Kayaka (work as worship), Dasoha (sharing and service), equality and rational devotion can be applied to modern challenges in ways that are surprisingly powerful.*

**Keywords:** *Ancient wisdom, Karma, transformative philosophy, harmonious society, democratic values.*

**Introduction:**

Every year, the calendar fills with commemorations of great men - saints, reformers, thinkers — marked by garlands, speeches, and rituals. Yet, their wisdom remains confined to ceremonial anniversaries only. The true tribute lies not in ritual, but in practice. When we reduce the wisdom of saints, reformers and thinkers to mere anniversaries, their philosophy becomes a hollow ritual. The transformative power lies in *embodying* their values in everyday choices: practicing equality in our interactions, honesty in our work, compassion in our communities and courage in confronting injustice. Commemorative dates are reminders, but daily living is the true tribute. Mahatma Basweshwar, Ambedkar, Gandhi and others did not intend their ideas to be locked in speeches or ceremonies. They envisioned them as guiding principles for everyday life. Applying their thoughts-whether it's Basweshwar's *Kayaka* and *Dasoha*, Ambedkar's social justice or Gandhi's non-violence creates tangible change in society. Birth and death anniversaries often become symbolic rituals. True homage is practicing their ideals in workplaces, classrooms, governance and personal relationships. India's current social problems and social evils can be addressed by applying the thoughts of great saints, social reformers and thinkers. Anniversaries remind us, but daily actions sustain the legacy. To honor great men is not to light lamps once a year, but to carry their flame into the struggles of today - corruption, inequality, intolerance. Their philosophy was never meant for ritual; it was meant for revolution in thought and deed.

India's social fabric continues to face challenges such as caste discrimination, gender inequality, corruption, communalism and poverty. While technological and policy interventions are important, the enduring wisdom of saints, reformers and thinkers-such as Mahatma Basweshwar, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and others, offers ethical and practical solutions. This introspective article explores how their philosophies can be applied to contemporary social evils, emphasizing the need to live their values rather than merely commemorate their anniversaries. India's history is enriched by the contributions of saints and reformers who envisioned a society based on equality, justice and compassion. Yet, despite progress, many social evils persist. The teachings of Basweshwar (*Kayaka* and *Dasoha*), Ambedkar (social justice and constitutional morality), Gandhi (non-violence and truth) and Vivekananda (spiritual humanism and youth empowerment) remain relevant. Applying their thoughts to modern contexts can provide a sustainable solution to India's pressing problems.

Mahatma Basweshwar, the 12<sup>th</sup> century philosopher and social reformer, articulated a vision of society grounded in equality, dignity of labor, rational devotion and service to humanity. He was the prime minister who preferred pavement; he was the voice of the voiceless. His timeless wisdom is needed today to reshape the modern India. His principles of *Kayaka* (work as worship) and *Dasoha* (sharing and service) remain profoundly relevant in addressing contemporary challenges such as economic inequality, social discrimination, technological disruption, environmental crises and mental health concerns. This study examines the applicability of Basweshwar's thoughts to present-day problems, situating his philosophy within global discourses on ethics, sustainability and artificial intelligence (AI). His Vachanas are verses of revolution and we should go beyond mere statue and should live the legacy of his rich thought to tackle modern evils and problems.

Mahatma Basweshwar's philosophy, though rooted in medieval India, offers timeless guidance. His rejection of caste hierarchies, emphasis on rationality and devotion through action provide a framework for building inclusive, ethical and sustainable societies. This study explores how Basweshwar's thoughts can serve as solutions to modern problems. Scholarly interpretations of Basweshwar highlight his pioneering role in social justice and rational spirituality. The *Anubhava Mantapa*, established under his leadership, is often described as the world's first democratic forum, embodying ideals of participatory governance and egalitarian dialogue. In this context, this study seeks to bridge that gap between modern day problems with ancient wisdom. In fact, there is dire need of Mahatma Basweshwar's Philosophy in Addressing Modern Challenges.

### **Basweshwar's Thoughts and Present-Day Problems:**

Basweshwar's thoughts on education, war and peace emphasize equality, dignity and dialogue. He envisioned education as a tool for liberation, rejected violence and exploitation and promoted peace through spiritual democracy and collective discourse. These principles remain highly relevant in addressing modern conflicts and nation building.

### **Basweshwar on Education:**

- **Anubhava Mantapa:** Established as the world's first democratic academy, where men and women of all castes could freely discuss philosophy, ethics and social issues.
- **Education for All:** He rejected caste-based restrictions, promoting universal access to knowledge.

- **Practical Learning:** Emphasized vocational skills (*Kayaka*) alongside spiritual and moral education. He used Kannada Vachanas instead of Sanskrit, making education accessible to common people.

#### **Modern Relevance:**

- Promotes inclusive classrooms, skill-based learning, and vernacular education.
- Counters elitism in education by valuing practical knowledge and dignity of labor.

#### **Basweshwara on War:**

- **Rejection of Violence:** He opposed wars rooted in greed, caste supremacy, or ritual orthodoxy.
- **Critique of Exploitation:** Saw war as a product of inequality and selfishness.
- **Spiritual Resistance:** Advocated reform through dialogue, poetry and collective action rather than armed conflict.

#### **Modern Relevance of Mahatma Basweshwar's Thoughts:**

- Encourages nonviolent resistance against oppression.
- Provides ethical grounding for peace movements and critiques of militarism.

#### **Basweshwara on Peace:**

- **Equality as Peace:** True peace arises when caste, gender and class barriers are dismantled.
- **Dasoha (Sharing & Service):** Promotes social harmony through resource sharing and community welfare.
- **Dialogue & Democracy:** The Anubhava Mantapa embodied peaceful resolution of disputes through open discussion.
- **Spiritual Democracy:** Peace is sustained when all beings are treated with dignity and respect.

#### **Basweshwara on Work (*Kayaka*):**

- **Work as Worship:** He declared that honest labor is sacred, rejecting idleness and exploitation.
- **Dignity of All Professions:** No work is inferior; every occupation contributes to society.
- **Self-Reliance:** Encouraged individuals to earn through their own effort rather than dependence or exploitation.
- **Integration with Education:** Practical skills and vocational training were seen as essential parts of learning.

**Modern Relevance:**

- Counters unemployment and underemployment by valuing skill-based education.
- Inspires entrepreneurship and dignity for manual labor.
- Provides ethical grounding for sustainable work practices in today's economy.

His vision challenges modern inequalities in access to quality education. His rejection of violence resonates in an era of global conflicts and terrorism. His emphasis on equality and dialogue provides a timeless model for building harmonious societies. Basweshwar's philosophy provides a moral compass for navigating modern challenges. By integrating his principles into policy, education and technology, societies can balance innovation with compassion ensuring that progress uplifts humanity rather than intensify inequality. Basweshwar's philosophy provides a moral compass for navigating modern challenges. His emphasis on equality, rationality, and service aligns with global ethical frameworks such as UNESCO's AI ethics guidelines and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. By integrating his principles into policy, education, and technology, societies can balance innovation with compassion, ensuring that progress uplifts humanity rather than exacerbating inequality.

Mahatma Basweshwar's thoughts are not relics of the past but living principles capable of solving present-day problems. His vision of dignity in labor, equality, rational devotion and service offers practical and ethical solutions to economic inequality, social discrimination, technological disruption, and environmental crises. In the era of AI, his philosophy reminds us that true progress lies not in technological advancement alone, but in ensuring that such progress is human-centered, inclusive and compassionate. Mahatma Basweshwar's philosophy, centered on equality, dignity of labor and devotion through action offers profound relevance in the AI era, where ethical use of technology, inclusivity and human-centered values are critical. His principles of *Kayaka* (work as worship) and *Dasoha* (sharing and service) can guide AI development toward social justice and collective well-being. In brief, Mahatma Basweshwar's thoughts provide a moral compass for the AI era - urging us to design technology that uplifts humanity, honors labor and fosters equality.

**Conclusion:**

In brief, celebrating anniversaries is important for remembrance, but **the highest tribute is action**. When we embody Mahatma Basweshwar's dignity of labor, Babasaheb Ambedkar's fight for equality, or Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolence in our choices, we transform society in ways

that ceremonies alone cannot achieve. India's social problems cannot be solved by technology or policy alone; they require ethical grounding. The teachings of Mahatma Basवेश्वर, Ambedkar, Gandhi, Vivekananda and others provide timeless solutions. By applying their thoughts in daily life-rather than limiting them to commemorative anniversaries-India can move toward a society that is inclusive just and sustainable. The true homage to these great men lies in living their philosophy. From 'Commemoration to Commitment' will be the true tribute to thinkers.

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