

# Basaveshwara's Political Philosophy

Prof. B.G. Patil

## Introduction:

Frankly speaking it is very difficult to trace Basaveshwara's political ideology in one segment. But when a serious student of political science studies his 'vachanas' (his writings in kannada literature) deeply, he will certainly trace one or the other political ideology of the great Indian Philosopher. His vachanas are not restricted to any particular theory or ideology. His single vachana gives many and varied meanings which is his specialty. When vachanas are interpreted properly one will get the right meaning of it.

Basaveshwara is the sole Indian leader in socio-economic-religious-political revolution that took place in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. A great British thinker Aurther Miles in his book "The land of Lingam" says "Basaveshwara is the Indian independent thinker. He fought against the Manuvadi's (the priestly class) when they were at the peak. He tried to abolish caste system through freedom of speech and reason. He advocated that by birth everyone is equal, women are equally competent with men, those who wear 'Linga' are equals, they can eat together and marriage among them was valid".

When we go through his vachanas we find the following political views. But one has to remember that these are not exclusively political views of Basaveshwara. The way you interpret his vachanas, accordingly you will get the meaning.

## **Democracy :**

Basaveshwara is the first Indian thinker who started the system of deliberation and discussion. In that sense, he is a real democrat. His 'Anubhava Mantapa' at Kalyan is the perfect example of a legislative body. People from all walks of life were its members. He called upon them as 'Sharana's, who are the pure and real citizens. Sharana's were free to express their views during deliberations and discussions at the Anubhava Mantapa. All of them used to participate actively in the proceedings of Anubhava Mantapa. Basaveshwara was the leader of this body. But when we study him, we find that, he listened to everybody before coming to a conclusion. That shows the true character of a democratic leader.

Basaveshwara acted according to the rules and regulations established by the Anubhava Mantapa. It was constitutional and representative body. All the members were bound by its rules. The decisions that were taken in this body were majority decisions. But the minority was never suppressed. In one sense there was rule of law in the Anubhava Mantapa.

According to Ranganath Divakar, "Though all other members of Anubhava Mantapa co-operated with Basaveshwara , he is the real leader, the chief, a driving force and the central figure for all the discussions". This statement shows that he was like democratic leader of the group. But one thing is to be noticed he never imposed his views on others. Before taking a decision on any issue the views of each and every member was considered.

His statement, "The one who wishes the betterment of every living creature" shows that he was very much interested in the welfare of all. In the early 12<sup>th</sup> century he developed a concept of welfare state. He thinks of the establishment of a new political society, where in every individual was given importance irrespective of his caste, creed, race or sex.

Basaveshwara is of the firm belief that, the power of good people is the first and foremost asset of a state. Happiness of the people is the happiness of the state. The power of the people was the power of the state.

Harihara in his “Basavaraj Devar Ragale” says that Basaveshwara upholds the principle of common welfare. In this epic story Harihara tries to depict that Sharana’s i.e. the noble citizens have equal rights and powers with the King. No way the King is superior to the commoner. The property of the state belongs to everyone and not to the King alone.

### **Equality :**

Basaveshwara’s concept of equality is very clear and concrete. His single statement, no one is inferior to me and no one is superior to the Shivabhakta (Enaginta kiriyarilla Shivabhaktariginta hiriyarilla i.e. nobody is below me and nobody is above the disciple of God ) shows his concern for equality. His basic intension was to establish a society of equals through his vachana’s. For that he faced a lot of challenge and opposition from the priestly class.

His one vachana, “Evanarava Evanarava Ennadirayya, Eva Nammava Nammava Ennirayya (Never ask who is he, always say that he is our man) clearly shows his intent and concern for the establishment of society of equals. He calls all the sharana’s as ‘Aiyya’ ‘Akka/Avve’(e.g. Kakkayya, Haralayya, Madayya, Muktayakka, Sankavve) the highest respect to an individual in Indian Society.

He is the first thinker who gave equal importance to women. During his days women were restricted to the four walls of the house. But he makes them to attend and participate in the proceedings of the Anubhava Mantapa. More than 35 women members were there in the Anubhava Mantapa. It was more than the present members of Loksabha. To name a few among them are Akkamahadevi, Gangambike, Nilambike, Muktayakka, Kadire Remmevve, Kottanad Somavva, Sule Sankavve.

He makes a strong statement “The base of purity/supremacy is not caste but character”.

### **Freedom :**

He feels that fear establishes Anarchy. If you have to end anarchy and establish a rule of law there is to be freedom of all sort to the Sharana’s. He is a staunch supporter of individual liberty. He says everyone is free to express his views. Freedom of speech and expression was a common feature of the Anubhava Mantapa. Irrespective of the caste and sex the members of the Anubhava Mantapa used to participate in the proceedings actively. Everyone’s view was considered before coming to a conclusion.

Even women members like Aydakki Lakkamma used to advise and criticize the views of their husbands. It is very clear in one of the vachana’s where in Lakkamma calls upon his husband Aydakki Marayya not to collect rice more than requirement. She orders him to return back the extra rice that he has already collected, to the society.

### **Slavery :**

The institution of slavery is as old as humanity. We find Aristotle supporting the institution of slavery for his own reasons. Slaves were never treated as human beings. They were treated as commodities of masters. It was against the basic concept of Basaveshwara. He opposes this institution. He says all those who are the disciples and devotees of Kudal Sangama are equals. His vachana “Nadevarayya Vadeyaru Tanu-  
Mana-Dhanad mele, Nudivarayya Vandu Nimisha Baradidde, Jarivarayya Vadeyaru  
Mana banda Pariyali, Shiva Shiva Anivarayya Mandeyannuri Pranad Vadeyarayya Kudal  
Sangama Deva Nimma Sharanaru” depicts the position of slaves during his times. The slaves had no freedom. Just they have to follow the orders of their masters. They can

do nothing without the guidance, direction and order of their masters. Basaveshwara says this institution is against humanity.

### **Secularism :**

Basaveshwara's Anubhava Mantapa was a secular body. The Sharana's who used to assemble there belonged to all caste and communities. Its head was Shri Allama Prabhu, who was lower caste man (Natawara Caste). All the proceedings were conducted under his leadership. Kakkayya and Channayya were untouchables. Madhuvarasa was a Brahman. Women like Akkamahadevi, Gangambike, Nilambike, Muktayakka, Sule Sankavve were members. So it was a perfect secular body. With no hesitation we have to say that in 12<sup>th</sup> Century he established a secular institution.

### **Corruption :**

Basaveshwara was aware of the seriousness of corruption in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. He warns the general public regarding the evil effects of corruption through his vachana "Papiya Dhana Prayaschitakallade Satpatrakke Salladayya, Naya halu nayagallade, Panchamrutakke Salladayya, Namma Kudal Sangana Sharaniragallade Maduv Artha Vyarthakanayya". Here he clearly says that unlawful and unnecessary collection of wealth is sin and harmful to the society.

The sinner's wealth serves not a worthy cause

Only to expiate his sins!

A dog's milk serves only a dog,

Not for a five-fold both.

Mark, Sir! The wealth you render any one

But our Kioala Sanga's Sharana's

Is given in vain

### **Defection :**

Anti defection law is the product of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. But in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century itself Basaveshwara depicts the fickle attitude of the human beings. It can be seen in his vachana, “Bhaktara Kandade Bolarappirayya, Savanara Kandade Bettaleyappirayya, Haruvara Kandade Harinamavimberayya, Avaravara Kandade Avaravarante, Sulige Huttidavara Tvaradadirayya Kudal Sangana Pujisi Annya Daivangalegenigi Bhaktaraemishikoba Anjanigala Nanembenayya”.

He says when one person finds the man of his taste he speaks like him. That is exactly like the present politicians who change their political affiliation like a chameleon for their own reasons.

### **Non Alignment:**

Most of us are of the opinion that non-alignment is the principle Indian foreign policy. But the non alignment principle was the gift of Basaveshwara to the mankind. His vachana Lokada Donkava Niveke Tidduviri, Nimma Nimma Tanava Santaishikolli, Nimma Nimma Manava Santaishikolli, Nere Maneya Dukhakke Aluvavara Mechha Kudal Sangama Deva.

If we apply this vachana to foreign policy, it is safe for a country to conduct its business. It calls upon the countries not to interfere in others affairs and not be worried about their progress or down fall. Every state has to concentrate on its own business for its prosperity. The same is applicable to political parties and politicians.

Why should you try to mend.

The failings of the world?

Assuage your bodies first,

Each one of you !

Assuage you minds, each one!

Lord Kudala Sangama

Does not approve

Those who bemoan

## The neighbor's grief.

### **Duties :**

Majority of the political thinkers are of the opinion that rights and duties are the modern principles. But Basaveshwara speaks of the duties of the individuals. He fixes seven duties to his citizens which are known as Sapta Sutras. In this vachana "Kalabeda Kolabeda Husiya Nudiyalu Beda Muniya Beda Annyarige Asahya Padabeda, Tanna Bannisabeda, Idiru Haliyalu Beda Ide Antaranga Shudhhi, Ide Bahiranga Shudhhi, Ide Kudal Sangama Devanolisuva Pari". He calls upon the people not to steal, not to kill, Not to lie, Not to be angry, Not to insult others, Not to praise himself and don't condemn others. It leads to the purification of the soul. If we take Kudal Sangama Deva as the nation and follow these duties we can make a strong and stable country.

Don't steal, Don't kill, Don't tell lies

Don't get angry, Don't insult others

Don't praise yourself, Don't condemn others

This is inner purity, This is outer purity

This is the path to please our Lord

Koodala sangamadeva

### **Communism :**

His principle of communism is based on work i.e. Kayak. Work is the physical labour for him. No one is entitled for his food unless he works. The one is involved in work need not do the Ling Pooja or Gurudarshan. If you earn something without work, it is of no use for any religious activity. To him, one has to collect the property to his daily needs only. He was against collection of property for tomorrow. If he earns more that is to be used for social development as it is the property of the society. He is of the opinion that the property is to be divided and distributed among the members of the society judiciously. According to him service to human beings is service to the God.

## **Conclusion :**

Looking at all these aspects, it is very clear that Basaveshwara's contribution to Indian political thoughts is invaluable. He gave a new meaning to democracy, freedom, equality, communism and secularism. If his concept of care and love for the sharanas(citizens) is followed by the present politicians, it will be of great use for the mankind. If his concept of public money for public welfare is followed, the real welfare of the state will undoubtedly be established. Lord Basaveshwara is no doubt the greatest humanist the world has ever seen.

## **Reference :**

1. Basava Darshan by Dejjagou
2. Kayak Mimansa by Dr. B.V. Vasantkumar
3. Dina Bandhu Basavanna by K. Channabasappa
4. Manavatavani Basavanna by Dr. Vasant Patil
5. Basavannanavar Pramukha Chintanegalu [Silver Jubilee Publications, Shri Basaveshwara Peetha K.U.D.]
6. Basavamarg [Silver Jubilee Publications, Shri Basaveshwara Peetha K.U.D.]
7. Shiva Sharanara Kayak Sidhanta [Silver Jubilee Publications, Shri Basaveshwara Peetha K.U.D.]
8. Basaveshwara [Silver Jubilee Publications, Shri Basaveshwara Peetha K.U.D.]