Chapter – 4
Basavanna and Emerson as Transcendentalists:
A Comparative Study

Basavanna and Emerson are great transcendentalists. They both believed in man’s progressive life, leading to the public welfare and personal transcendence. They believed in what we can call social Darwinism. An attempt is made to compare and analyse the two thinkers in so far their thoughts about religion, society, economy, politics, mysticism and literature are concerned.

Basavanna and Emerson about Religion:

Although the orthodox people believe that five acharis Revan, Marul, Ekoram, Panditaradya and Visvesvar founded Lingayatism, it is not proved. First of all, Indian history does not furnish any concrete evidence. Every scholarship in the Lingayat religion and the dynasty of Kalachuris speaks of Basavanna as the founder of Lingayat religion (though Indian constitution has not recognized it as an independent religion, while it has recognized Sikhism). The world has obviously recognized Basavanna’s greatness as the founder of Lingayat religion.

Hinduism, like Christianity or Islam, does not believe in one God, but in many gods (polytheism). It speaks of the concept of universe and society. Accordingly Vishnu, the God has created the universe. Man is a part of this creation. So is the biological world or nature. Hinduism speaks of Karma, the law of action by which each cause has its effect in an endless chain
reaching from one life to the next. Moksa or liberation is from the chain of birth, death and rebirth. It prescribes Varnasrama dharma-- this is the division of society on the basis of profession as Brahmana, Ksatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. Hinduism divides one’s life into four stages as brahmacharya, grahasta, vanaprasta and sanyas. One’s religious duty is conditioned by his birth.

Many great thinkers revived Hinduism over the centuries. Siddartha Gautama, otherwise known as Buddha (c 563-460 BC) born an Indian prince (in today’s Nepal) renounced life and did penance. On enlightenment he founded Buddhism. Now this religion is a widespread Asian religion. Buddhism does not believe in God and it speaks of Karma (as action). The four noble truths of Buddhism state that all existence is suffering, that freedom from suffering is nirvana, and that this is attained through the ‘eightfold path’ of ethical conduct, wisdom, and mental discipline.

In the same age of the Buddha, Mahavir strengthened his own religion called Jainism. This is non-theistic against the teachings of orthodox Brahminism. Jainism teaches salvation by perfection through successive lives and non-injury to living creatures, and it is noted for its ascetics.

This Hindu way of life deteriorated over the centuries. The political chaos over the times, allowed the foreign invasions in India. The Varnasrama dharma itself complicated the affairs. Number one: it divided society into four divisions as Brahman, Ksatriya, Vaisya and Shudra. Unfortunately, this created a class of people called untouchables, who were treated as if animals like the slaves in the 19th century Unites States. Number two, it divided human beings as man and woman.

Politically, it was feudal times. Both kings and priests –like the state and church in the West, exploited the people. The upper classes had a major
pie in both base and superstructure. Hinduism created the concept of caste, God as meant only for the higher-ups, heaven and hell, elitism, salvation for the elites, and damnation for the downtrodden, and other social evils. The class of people called the untouchables and women were treated as if animals. Hinduism upheld Manusmriti, the Vedas, the Puranas and the Geeta although they are not good enough. This provoked Basavanna to write the following:

Shall I say Sastra is great?  
It only exalts Karma!  
Shall I say Veda is great?  
It tells of animal sacrifice  
Shall I say Smriti is great?  
It seeks in the future (VB, 244)

Basavanna founded Hinduism in this form of degeneration in the 12th century. He was shocked by the event of discrimination first by the practice of untouchability. For example, the elders of his village excommunicated him because he dined with an untouchable once. The absence of the incident of baptism for his elder sister caused an uproar in his own home. So he gave up baptism all together. Basavanna noticed numerous such orthodoxy and senseless rites and rituals in his society and times. So he felt that he should reform his society. Even he left his caste of Brahminism, his parental home, his village of Bagewadi, Kudalasangam, and finally his Prime Ministership for the sake of social welfare. Basavanna decided to reform the religion radically. The result, he founded his own religion Lingayatism.

Basavanna’s Lingayat religion is a monotheism. It does not believe in Vedic concepts of Karma and Moksa. Nor it believes in Varna and Ashrama.
Basavanna found that Buddhism deviated from worldly life. Jainism insisted on self-torture.

Basavanna founded his religion on the basis of Ishtalinga worship. So that one need not go to a temple nor depend on a priest. All people can have this istalinga—body-church. Basavanna said that a follower should have a Guru, and Jangama, the social reformer.

The follower should do his kayaka most sincerely and share his earnings with the poor and needy. Astavarnas, Panchacharas and Shatasthalas are the constitutional frameworks of this religion as it is explained in Chapter – 2. Basavanna’s new religion was almost revolutionary and the people from the Asian subcontinent came to him. Most of the people of the 12th century south india embraced Lingayatism. Now this religion is a major religion in south india. Lingayatism is democratic, socialist and scientific in its nature, scope and importance.

Like Basavanna in the 12th century, Ralph Waldo Emerson in the 19th century America reformed his society. Emerson as the spokesman of the 19th century America founded the semi-religious and philosophical sect called Transcendentalism.

Transcendentalism comes from the Latin root ‘trans’ (beyond) and ‘scander’ (to climb). The investigation of what, in human knowledge is known by reasoning alone, independent of the experience of everyday life. In 1836, this idea was presented in Emerson’s prose essay *Nature* which signified his idealism: ‘Nature is the incarnation of thought. The world is the mind precipitated.’

Transcendentalism is a mid 19th century American thought (as existed in New England), and also a movement. It is a belief in the superiority of intuition to sensory knowledge. T. E. Elkins thinks Transcendentalism was
more correctly thought of as an intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual ferment than as a strictly reasoned body of doctrine.

Emerson speaks of Self-Reliance. Emerson’s son Edward once said that in moments of weakness his father longed for a master, but all his theory was against this. He believed that individuals must be outgrown and that even great and good men may become dangerous through overinfluence. Religion itself must be indigenous; imitation is suicide. It seems as if, when the Spirit of God speaks so plainly to each soul, it were an impiety to be listening to one or another saint. Emerson’s poem ‘Sursum Corda,’ speaks of Self-Reliance.

From all this there follows inevitably the great statement: ‘To believe in your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men—that is genius.’ Greatness is ‘the fulfillment of a natural tendency in each man,’ and the first form in which it must appear is self-respect. Life is a trial of strength between men and events, but it is also true that multiplicity is always rushing to be resolved into unity.

Emerson prefers ‘my truth’ to ‘other’ truth, though both are truths, because my truth is the one which I have had, at the first hand. If I cannot recognize it here, I cannot recognize it elsewhere.

Even the Bible asks how a man who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, can possibly love God, whom he has not seen. Emerson was not arrogant about his own perceptions even in literary matters; when a friend (probably Lowell) undervalued Thoreau, Emerson found it necessary to re-read his old neighbor in order to renew his faith in him. But he was perpetually impressed by the fact that if life is one, it is also infinitely varied; nature never repeats herself. Every man is a new method and distributes things anew.
As Emerson’s son says, ‘the self Emerson refers to is the higher self, man’s share of divinity.’ Emerson believed in the existence of One Mind (God), whose potentialities were available to all and to which the individual mind aspired to expand. In his view, the self-reliant man lived with God, independent of men’s opinions. More significantly still, he believed that the essential man, like the essential universe, is good, and that evil is an extraneous quality. Thus, to surrender to life means to surrender to goodness, and ‘a bolder spirit’ is ‘a more surrendered soul, more informed and led by God.’

Nature is said to be the divine book for instructing man. Most philosophers opine that God manifests in Nature, and man’s consciousness. Some feel that god is there in these things. In that sense, man as much as Nature for example, is a relic of God. The Hindu Advaita philosophy calls man (as part of Nature) and God as the one.

Shakespeare wrote of Nature as if part of life. Wordsworth was a high priest of nature. So is Emerson. Let’s us see his poem ‘Poet,’

The gods talk in the breath of the woods,
They talk in the shaken pine,
And fill the long reach of the old seashore
With dialogue divine;
And the poet who overhears
Some random word they say
Is the fated man of men
Whom the ages must obey.³
It is true that Emerson never achieved Thoreau's intimacy with nature. Thoreau spent much time in the wilderness; if God had meant him to live in a swamp, Emerson told him, he would have made him a frog.

Emerson avoided extreme views whether Transcendental or Buddhistic about the world. He asked us to take the world at its face value. Because it agrees with ourselves, and the universe does not jest with us. Let us treat the men and women well. Nevertheless, he felt very strongly that the higher use of the material world is to furnish us with types to express the thoughts of the mind. He believed that spirit forms the matter, and thoughts rule the world. The material world is the expression of the spiritual world. Charles Eliot Norton was surely not far wrong when, at the Concord centenary celebration in 1903, he declared: "The essence of Emerson's spiritual teaching seems to me to be comprised in three fundamental articles, - first, that of the Unity of Being in God and Man; second, that of the creation of the visible, material world by Mind, and its being the symbol of spiritual world; and third, that of the identity and universality of moral law in the spiritual and material universe. These truths are for him the basis of life, the substance of religion, and the meaning of the universe."^4

Emerson speaks of God as 'Oversoul.' Basically the idea of the Oversoul seems to go back to Plotinus and to be conceived of as a kind of reservoir of spiritual power, available to all who open themselves to its influence. Did Emerson believe in personal God. He reduced history to biography and people to thoughts. Once he called God as It. Anyway Emerson’s truths are glimpses and intuitions; it is their function to stimulate and foster the life of the spirit, not to contribute to an iron-clad system of belief.
Emerson called Christianity as profoundly true. He was a seeker. He preached eight sermons on Christ, a total of fifty-one times. Emerson thinks Christ was the finest character in the world and the head of all human culture. Emerson believed that man is a relic of God. All Emerson’s emphasis, however, was on the human side. He seems to say deprive Christ of his humanity and you turn his life into an exhibition, a wonder, an anomaly, robbing it of its meaning for men. Emerson felt that God acted through Christ.

Likewise, Basavanna believed that man is his own religion. His body is to be treated as a temple. Man has to worship his Istalinga. Basavanna advocated that the formless Ultimate Reality which is responsible for creation and sustenance of this universe is God, and not the idols worshipped in temples. Basavanna called it Parasiva, or Void or Linga. According to Agamic diction *Linga madhye Jagatsarvam*, i.e., all the worlds are concealed in Linga. Linga is Sat (existence) Chit (consciousness) and Anand (Bliss). It has come to our palm as Istalinga. He writes,

Thou art as wide as the world,
Thou art as wide as the sky,
Thou art wider than these,
Thy feel go beyond the underworld,
Thy crown goes beyond the universe.
O Lord Kudalasangamadeva,
Thou who art imperceptible,
Beyond understanding,
Beyond compare,
Reduced to a small size
As to rest on my palm! (VB, 244).
The investigations of the modern astronomy are in conformity with Basavanna’s concept of God. If religion is the basis for Basavanna’s total revolution, Istalinga became the basis for his religious revolution.

Thus when one marches ahead in spiritual practice, his divine consciousness is kindled and becomes infinite in the end. Evolution of consciousness takes place in six stages. This Basavanna named as the path of Shatasthalara. Sthala means a step in spiritual progress. It consists of the six steps Bhakta Sthala, Maheswara Sthala, Prasadi Sthala, Pranalingi Sthala, Sharana Sthala and Aikya Sthala. Basavanna’s new religion based on Istalinga led to the following consequences:

1) It gave religious freedom to everyone including the untouchable and woman.

2) It made the affairs of religion scientific, easy and accessible.

In other words, it gave a death knell to the idea of Brahminism.

Man should respect Guru, and Jangam. He need not bother about Vedas and false traditions. His vachana “Shall I say Sasthra is great?’ previously quoted explicates this. Man should live a gentlemen’s life. He should conduct his life with self-reliance. He should live in the present and face life boldly. This is how he can live a life of peace and dignity. Rajendra Gunjal observes,

In Basavanna’s time, prayers were offered in a temple through a priest, an agent between God and his devotee. Basavanna uprooted this system of intermediaries by providing every man the opportunity to offer worship to God, Himself. The Ishtalinga was his God. Why should a man go to the temple and allow his prayers to pass through the priest in ununderstandable language?5
Emerson regarded the Bible as the greatest book, much ahead to Shakespeare's writings. He used it for conducting his sermons. As Basavanna condemned the Vedas as bogus, Emerson condemned certain parts of the biblical scriptures as malevolent for man. The sacraments meant no more to him than they do to a Quaker. Prayer as a form also troubled him, but prayer as a state of mind, 'the contemplation of the facts of life,' was another matter. He tended to feel that prayer which craves a particular commodity is vicious. As soon as a man is at one with God, he will not beg. God cannot grant unreasonable requests. Basavanna believed that good life itself is heaven.

For the Christian Sabbath he had a very warm feeling. It was the jubilee of the whole world. Emerson's attitude toward the Christian belief in immortality has occasioned considerable discussion. Emerson thought the rationality of the universe encourages the hope of immortality, but on the actual question of the survival of the individual he was vague. He was right, of course, to emphasize the spiritual significance of 'depth of life' over mere 'length of life.' It seems both Basavanna and Emerson believe that good life itself is providence-like. Robert Spiller adds,

'Heaven,' echoes Emerson from the Aids to Reflection, 'is the name we give to the True State, the world of Reason, not of the Understanding; of the Real, not the Apparent.' Here was a new covenant of the spirit, built upon the foundation of Puritanism, tested by the rigors of American experience, and shaped by the architecture of romantic theory and the democratic ideal.6

People study occultism to know about future. Emerson called it demonology. He did not believe in mesmerism or phrenology. He rejected 226
fate and miracles. He wondered about people who believed in superstitions like witchcraft, ghostcraft, palmistry and magic. But he believed in dreams, that shed light on our life. Emerson considered the church an expediency. Like Thoreau he did not regard it. He thought it chose darkness rather than light and also bigotry, prescribing silly and degrading penances in order to propitiate the Deity. Basavanna condemned the Vedic superstition in much stronger terms.

As the perfect socialist expects the state to disappear when men shall have learned to live without it, so Emerson argued that Solomon built his Temple because his own life was not a temple and that churches are filled on Sundays because the worshippers do not keep the commandments on Monday. After 1839 he ceased to attend church, and in the early fifties he took legal action to separate himself not only from the church in Concord, but from the parish. Thoreau also followed the suit. Though Emerson’s mother had been brought up in the Church of England, Prayer as the institution does not get very respectful handling in English Traits. George Santayana observes:

While he thus preferred to withdraw, without rancor and without contempt, from the ancient fellowship of the church, he assumed an attitude hardly less cool and deprecatory toward the enthusiasms of the new era.7

Likewise, Basavanna avoided the temple worship, for it fostered the use of priestcraft. Both the Sharanas and the American transcendentalists advocated the fact of body – churching in this regard. No doubt, the priests exploited the believers. Secondly, the Hindu church did not allow the untouchables and women. Thirdly, the Temple-worship was not accessible
to everyone. It was rather a costly affair often involving ritual and sacrifice.

So Basavanna writes:

The rich build the temple
Poor am I, what can I do?
My leg is the pillar and body the temple,
And my head the golden pinnacle,
O Kudalasangamadeva,
What that stands will perish
And what that moves does not (VB, 274).

Emerson calls the Church sinister, worldly, and impious, playing upon man’s fear of death to get his money and substituting authority for reason, and he puts ‘the Purgatory, the Indulgences, and the Inquisition of Popery,’ along with ‘the vindictive mythology of Calvinism,’ in the same class with ‘the Dionysia and Saturnalia of Greece and Rome, the human sacrifice of the Druids, the Sradda of Hindus.’ Though he thought good preaching one of man’s great gifts, he once wrote that he valued the silence in the church auditorium. Silence is a solvent that destroys personality, and gives us leave to be great and universal. His own temperamental sympathy with Quakerism is of course self-evident. ‘I believe I am more of a Quaker than anything else,’ he said once.

Emerson believed in religion, however. According to him, religion is to lift the low and mean. He did not admire the atheists. He agreed with Marcus Aurelius that ‘it is pleasant to die if there be gods, and sad to live if there be none.’ For himself, he did not understand how a man can live believing only in chemistry. ‘Unlovely, nay, frightful, is the solitude of the soul which is without God in the world.’ The heart of Emerson’s religion
was his insistence upon the necessity of a direct and immediate apprehension of spiritual reality. ‘God is, not was; . . . speaketh, not spake.’ Our fathers beheld God and nature face to face; why should we see them only through their eyes? This is to treat God as if He were dead and to make religion a parrot’s talk. Emerson wished to stop putting time between God and himself. To a soul which is alive to God, the world itself is renewed every moment. Robert Spiller observes of Emerson’s views about religion:

His rebellion, when it finally came, was twofold: against the last vestiges of ecclesiastical authority over the spiritual life of the individual, and against the eighteenth century rationalism which had killed spirituality, he thought, when it denied revelation. The first pointed to a final schism in which each man becomes his own church; the second sought to provide the rules for a new and personal orthodoxy. In the end, self-reliance was sanctioned by submission to the “Beautiful Necessity.” As, long before, Jonathan Edwards had paradoxically sought to bring the straying Arminians back to orthodoxy by a personal appeal to the heart as well as to logic, so Emerson attacked the intellectual liberals of his day.8

Another important thing about both Basavanna and Emerson is that the old is to be reviewed and adapted to our use as the times require it. Both think that the presentness of the past is to be retained; and the old to be discarded. Like T. S. Eliot, they think that the present must modify the past. Milton Konvitz observes thus of Emerson’s stand:

Keeping his ye in the centrality of man and his power to become a creature made in the image of God, Emerson was naturally led to
devalue the past and the tradition, and to emphasise instead the duty and the right of each man to trust himself. The Socratic ‘Know thyself!’ became, in Emerson’s thought, ‘study nature!’ -- which also meant ‘Make natural’—which in turn also meant ‘trust thyself,’—which became ‘make thyself’. As man makes the world and himself, he also makes the past, his past. Out of the abyss of,

The past the dark, unfathomed retrospect!
The teeming gulf! The sleepers and the shadows!
The past! The infinite greatness of the past.⁹

Social Reforms:

Basavanna was a great social reformer. Most of the reformers do social work as much as religious work. Every religion has two aspects, namely, (i) tradition or ritualism and (ii) moral, ethical and human values.

The other aspect of religion is very important. It includes human values such as truth, non-violence, compassion, service to mankind, brotherhood and religious tolerance. Basavanna attached more importance to human values. Like Aristotle, he considered virtues as practical philosophy. He tried to build a society based in these everlasting values. According to him, we are all children of only one God. All the religions of the world advocate that we have descended from only one ultimate source. As social Darwinism confirms this we are all brotherm.

Basavanna thinks of equality between people, and equality between sexes. He discarded the division of society based on professions (or varna or caste). He thinks that there is no relationship between craft and caste; and all
crafts or occupations are equal. So there is no one as high or low. He thinks all professions are necessary for life. Basavanna writes,

    Unless the flow of blood appear,  
    There is no harbourage 
    Wherein the embryo may dwell. 
    The function of the seed is ever the same. 
    Greed, lust, anger and joy, 
    All other passions are the same. 
    Whatever you read or hear, what fruit? 
    What is the rule to judge a caste? 
    'The embryo needs the seven elements; 
    It is the same birth out of the same womb; 
    Same, then, the usefulness of caste?' 
    You are a blacksmith if you heat; 
    A washerman, if you read the Books! 
    Is anybody in the world 
    Delievered through the ear? 
    Therefore, O Kudalasangama Lord, 
    The well-born is the man who knows 
    The nature of Divinity! (VB, p. 193)

The American Transcendentalist Emerson too liked this idea of Basavanna. He writes,

    As long as any man exists there is some need of him: let him fight for his own. This faith that in a life at first hand there is something sacred is perhaps the most characteristic note in Emerson's writings.
The matchless eloquence with which Emerson proclaimed the sovereignty of the living individual electrified and emancipated his generation, and this bugle-blast will doubtless be regarded by future critics as the soul of his message.\textsuperscript{10}

Basavanna writes:

The man who slays is a pariah,
The man who eats carrion is low-born.
Where is the caste here?
Our Kudalasangama's Sharana
Who loves all living beings
Alone is a well-born one! (VB, 193).

According to Basavanna, one becomes great or small by virtue of one's actions. People become good or bad, just on the basis of their actions.

The spark of divinity is hidden in every particle of the universe. It is exhibited in a greater degree in human beings. Basavanna tried to elevate the so-called untouchables and the low caste people as 'Deva manavas.' Under this experiment, a large number of untouchables and people from lower strata of the society attained spiritual heights. The celebrated names are Haralayya, Chennayya, Marayya and others. Special mention must be made of Urilinga Peddi. He was an untouchable by birth and a thief by profession. After getting himself initiated by his Guru Urilingadeva, he attained such a spiritual height that he succeeded Urilinga Deva as the head of that math. It is very rare to find such an example elsewhere. Basavanna's attempt to remove untouchability by establishing equality and by kindling the spark of divinity among all people is unique. Revd Chennappa Uttangi says,
“Lingayatism experimented on a small scale and solved the problem of uplifting and educating the untouchables who stand even today outside the pale of Hinduism, destitute of the sense of human rights.” Had such attempts been continued through all the centuries after Basavanna, untouchability would have been wiped out completely from India.

Further, Basavanna extended the bonds of universal kinship to everyone on the earth. He considered all the people of the world as members of one human family. He believed in an open and inclusive society. He says:

Let them not say, O Lord,
‘Who is he, who is he?
Let them say rather He is ours,
He is ours, He is ours’
O Kudalasangamdeva, let me be
A son of Thine own house! (VB, 22).

Basavanna was a great humanist. He believed in kindness as the core of social life. Compassion should be the guiding principle for all religions. Without compassion there can be no religion at all,

What sort of religion can it be
without compassion?
Compassion needs must be
Towards all living things;
Compassion is the root of
All religious faiths:
Lord Kudalasangama does not care
For what is not like this (VB, 92).
All living creatures in the universe need to be shown compassion. We have violated this principle and made the world a battlefield. Basavanna writes:

Thou shall not steel nor kill,
Nor speak a lie,
Be angry with no one,
Nor scorn another man,
Nor glory in thyself,
This is your inward purity,
This is your outward purity,
This is the way to win our Lord
Kudalasangama (VB, 77).

It is needless to say that this seven point code of conduct will promote the welfare of an individual, society and the entire mankind.

Like Basavanna Emerson thinks that man is a social animal. Like Aristotle, Basava and Emerson think that man should live for others. Then what matters is an active social awareness and participation. The prerequisite for this is action (which Basavanna calls kayaka). Emerson insisted on meaningful action. Every man has the wisdom to steer his own boat, he declared, though he must certainly have known that many wreck them on the rocks. Rejecting automatic progress, Emerson believed in the goodness and holiness and perfection of mankind only potentially and he recognized the importance of discipline. Emerson speaks of the ‘fool-part’ of mankind and finds ‘imbecility’ in many human activities, and he sounds much like Carlyle when he says that the masses need to be schooled, not flattered.

Like Basavanna Emerson was not ambitious. He did not want to accumulate whether money or power. He even did not want to dominate the
minds of men but only to awaken them to greater consciousness and good action. Emerson led a poor life, no doubt.

Both Basavanna and Emerson believed in social progress through reform or science. They tried to eliminate social discriminations (untouchability and casteism in the case of India and racism in the case of America). Basavanna advocated a great social awakening as that of Jonathan Edwards in the 18th century America. Emerson had an interest in science for reform. He met scientists like Agassiz. Dr Charles Jackson, his brother-in-law was a chemist who had a hand in the invention of anesthesia. Emerson with Henry James attended scientific lectures in Paris. He regularly watched scientific progress. He admired both Humboldt and Linnaeus. He read about astronomy. The compass fascinated him as if ‘the god in one’s hand.’ He bought a telescope. He had an abiding interest in evolution.

In Lafayette, Indiana, for a lecture in 1860, Emerson was waiting eagerly for access to a copy of *The Origin of Species*, and Frank Sanborn quotes him as having said that Agassiz himself was really a Darwinian and that his saying ‘We are not children of monkeys but children of God.’ From the beginning Emerson was clear that science, which deals with processes, cannot touch religion, which exists in a world of values; like John Fiske, Lyman Abbott, and others after him, Emerson therefore perceived the futility of the silly ‘conflict between science and religion.’

Basavanna says that man must conduct his life properly. This man must love others, help them and live for them. Emerson loved all forms of life. In Wagenknecht’s words, “Emerson wanted to explore and to ‘poetize’ ‘the near, the low, the common.’ Emerson wanted to share the passions of other men; sometimes he even thought he would have liked to live in revolutionary times. And because he believed that even the writer
should do his share of the world's labor (For ex. Basavanna says the Guru and Jangama should also do their duty). Emerson enjoyed the society of the humble.

Both Basavanna and Emerson condemned the gulf between the rich and poor, and between the highbrow and the lowbrow. Emerson complained of the arrogant contempt learned men feel for the unlearned, a contempt which has certainly not lessened with the years and which has helped to polarize all societies in the world.

Emerson thinks 'we are complete when we are alone, but only fractions in society.' One must work and live in society, maintaining his status and dignity. ‘Society’ does achieve a certain freedom for those who are 'in,' and good manners, originating in strokes of genius or love.

Both Basavanna and Emerson liked to reform the women—the better half of the world.

Basavanna kept the door of religion open to woman. He declared that soul has no sex. That means the souls present in male and female bodies are the same. Woman is generally considered as Maya (evil force) which comes in the way of spiritual progress. This idea is discarded in Lingayatism. According to Allamaprabhu, woman is not Maya, but our own desire for woman is Maya. Siddharama went a step further and said that woman is the goddess herself. He writes,

Woman created by you is at the top of your head.
Woman created by you is on your lap.
Woman created by you is on the tongue of Brahma.
Woman created by you is at the chest of Narayana.
Therefore woman is not mere female entity.
Woman is not a monster.
Woman is Kapilasiddha Mallikarjuna himself.\textsuperscript{12}

Akkamahadevi says that if woman is Maya for man, man is Maya for woman. It is said,

Basavanna’s concern for the emancipation of women is something astounding even to this day. It is an open secret that our sentiments and sayings on women are most often honored in their breach. But for a brief spell or two, it was not until 12th century, the woman was given her honored place. There may be instances of queens, princesses and such other exalted women in the past taking part in the daily rituals of life as equals of men. But the common lot was totally neglected. Mostly they were treated as slaves and chattels and for all the ill-treatment meted out to the women, they had the sanction of their religion.\textsuperscript{13}

Inspired by these ideas, many women created history by achieving great heights in spiritual, social and religious fields. Akkamahadevi and a galaxy of other women saints such as Nilambike, Akkanagamma, Aydakki Lakkamma and Moligeya Mahadevi may be quoted as illustrious examples. Sadasiva Wodeyar observes,

Lingayatism discarded this idea of inferior status to woman. It gave equal status to women and encouraged them to participate fully in all social and religious activities and thus helped them to live a full life.\textsuperscript{14}

Woman was treated equal on a par with man in society. Amongst three hundred thirty vachanakaras of the twelfth century there were more than thirty women vachanakaras, many of them belonging to backward classes.

Emerson believed that woman makes man’s life happy. They are not only wise themselves, they make us wise. He felt that man has harmed
woman. He believed that the failure of the Greeks to make women full-
fledged human partners aborted the development of their civilization. So is
the case with other civilizations later. Emerson gave women greater intuitive
power than men and thought them more inclined to virtue.

Affection dominates woman as intellect does man. Man seeks truth,
woman goodness. Emerson disliked what he called the ‘Go home and mind
your mending’ end of Tennyson’s Princess. He was not willing to allow man
either to define woman’s ‘rights’ or to prescribe her ‘duties,’ and he is on
record as having believed that all his own ‘points’ would be carried sooner if
women were given the vote. In English Traits he declares that ‘England
produces under favorable condition of ease and culture the finest women in
the world.’

Basavanna speaks of marital fidelity. He said that if the married
people live a happy life, it pleases God. So does Emerson. Finally, of
course, there is the ultimate question of marital fidelity. It was not
Emerson’s way to evade ultimate questions. In his essay on Montaigne, he
called both marriage and the state ‘open,’ questions, still on trial obviously,
still bound to justify themselves by their utility. Love exists in time,
experiencing birth, climax, and decay, like all other living things, and
marriage is empirical, not ideal. Let us see his poem ‘Give all to love’:

Give all to love;
Obey thy heart;
Friends, kindred, days,
Estate, good-fame,
Plans, credit and the Muse, -
Nothing refuse.15

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Emerson did not believe in sexual freedom. For the plain truth of the matter is that indulgence weakens and desensitizes.

Basavanna lived a happy life with his two wives. Emerson also led a happy life.

Basavanna had a son called Sanganabasayya, who died young, making Basavanna unhappy. Sanganabasayya is said to have written several vachans.

Likewise, something more must be said of the great sorrow and the great joy among Emerson’s children — Waldo, the subject of ‘Threnody,’ who died on January 27, 1842, when he was not yet six years old, after only a few days’ illness with scarlet fever. Louisa May Alcott never forgot the look on Emerson’s face when, upon her coming to the door to inquire how the boy was getting on, he replied, ‘Child, he is dead.’ Margaret Fuller wept when Waldo died; and Thoreau said Waldo was much spiritual to live upon earth. Emerson’s essay “Experience” has views about this. The glory of home had passed with Waldo.

Basavanna speaks of corporate culture. He values discipline and social commitment. His following vachana termed as the Bible of Lingayatism, speaks a code of conduct for man.

Basavanna writes:

Thou shall not steel nor kill,
Nor speak a lie,
Be angry with no one,
Nor scorn another man,
Nor glory in thyself,
This is your inward purity,
This is your outward purity,
Emerson’s free thinking may be found in regard to life. It is said,
Ralph Waldo Emerson was the first philosopher of the American
spirit. Although America had won its political independence twenty-
two years before he was born it still took its culture from abroad.
Cooper was writing in the style of Addison. Emerson lived his early
life in an expansionist period when Americans were pushing West in
unprecedented numbers and acting upon the principle of democracy
with considerable swagger and gusto. Complete independence in spirit
as well as in fact was everywhere in the air. President Monroe had
given public notice of it in his Doctrine of 1823. Clay had boldly
declared: “We look too much abroad. ... Let us become real and true
Americans.” What the statesmen had already accomplished in the
sphere of politics Emerson applied to culture, not by action, but by
exhortation and radiance.\textsuperscript{16}

Emerson saw evil as a negative thing. He valued the right culture and
caracter. He once said the whole use of literature is the moral. He thought
that the importation of European luxuries did not make the Americans better
people. Nor did he not criticize the Puritans for their shortcomings.

Emerson was well aware that liberality in religion and politics do not
always go hand in hand. The Puritans began to turn bigoted and intolerant
late in Elizabeth’s reign, and they continued along this road until they
persecuted Quakers and hanged witches.

Emerson’s sensitiveness to beauty was great, and beauty was for him
its own excuse for being, an ultimate end, and in its largest and profoundest
sense one expression of the universe. With truth and goodness, it made up the triple face of God. Yet from one point of view, Emerson weakened the expression of his allegiance to beauty by going on to assert that perfect beauty and perfect goodness are one and the same.

Basavanna spoke of social evils as part of life. Emerson thought that this earthly life itself is erratic. Therefore the ideal exists in thought only. There was never a time when life was not hard. Every man has the problems of pain, suffering, hardship, grief, separation, loss and tragedy. Nature is neutral rather. In both “Heroism” and “Fate” Emerson enumerates physical horrors as mercilessly as H. G. Wells was to do it in The Undying Fire.

Emerson regretted for the evil in man. The world has more fools than wise men. Few indeed, are really sane. Sometimes he even seems to accept the medieval view that to be in harmony with the world was necessarily to be at enmity with God.

Basavanna thinks that the rich are the evil people. In other words, they are the capitalists. Unfortunately, the intellectuals were no better than the others. Governors were as evil as the governed, and educated men used their wit and learning in the service of the devil. Emerson thinks most people are filled with envy, hatred, and lust. Emerson criticized the reformers as that of sinners. He was harder on Goethe than on Napoleon.

Basavanna did not care for king Bijjal, whenever the question of state or the individual arose. He advocated that state exists for individuals (subjects). He distributed the state wealth freely and fairly, convincing the king for public welfare. Even when the king was to punish Haralayya and Madhuvarasa for having married their son and daughter respectively in
intercaste way, Basavanna pleaded with the king to be broad-minded for saving them. Because Lingayatism did not allow casteism.

Both Basavanna and Emerson were great free thinkers. Basavanna condemned casteism and untouchability. Emerson made a life-long effort for the abolition of slavery. Both Emerson and Thoreau tried their best to abolish slavery. In 1849 Emerson told an antislavery meeting in Worcester that he thought 'the scope left for human exertion, for individual talent to be very small' and rejoiced that 'higher laws than any human will' control us. Actually Emerson could not have such a strong will to become a reformer. When he did not take a public stand, it was never fear that motivated him. He opened his Boston pulpit to abolitionists before he became an abolitionist himself; later he urged the Concord Lyceum to hear Wendell Phillips; he greeted Theodore Parker cordially in public at the time when that great preacher was most in disfavor. His Bowdoin Prize essay of 1821 declared that 'the plague spot of slavery must be purged thoroughly'; eleven years later he found that living in a land which tolerated slavery was too high a price to pay for life. President Van Buren's crime against the Cherokee Indians darkened the world for him. He hated the letter he wrote the President, protesting their removal from their homeland, for such 'stirring in the philanthropic mud' was not congenial to him. Emerson wrote: "You sir, will bring down that renowned chair in which you sit into infamy if your seal is set to this instrument of perfidy; and the name of this nation, hitherto the sweet omen of religion and liberty, will stink to the world."17

Emerson did not like the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law.

Brooks Atkinson observes, "Life seemed good fundamentally; nature and man could be trusted. Life was something not to be learned but to be lived. Now was the appointed hour for making a fresh start. The doctrine was
a receptive one. Better an imperfect theory, with glimpse of the truth, than digested systems that were dead." Milton Konvitz adds,

What lies at the heart of this enduring fame and continuing influence? Again, Emerson’s estimate of Milton helps us. “Better than any other man,” he wrote of Milton, “he has discharged the office of every great man, namely, to raise the idea of Man in the minds of his contemporaries and of posterity, to draw after nature a life of man, exhibiting such a composition of grace, of strength, and of virtue, as poet had not described nor here lived. Human nature in these ages is indebted to him for its best portrait.

This task has been performed by Emerson preeminently among American writers.

This is not to say that Emerson had illusions about man, society, and human history; he did not close his eyes to past or present evils, sins, and crimes. He saw, for instance, that the business and commercial life of his fellow Americans was full of selfishness, distrust, concealment, and even theft and fraud; that men and women had forgotten the prayers and dreams of their childhood and had taken on themselves the harness of routine and obsequiousness.

**Economic Reforms:**

Economy is the base of life. The Indian folk saying ‘Kanchanam karyasiddhi,’ elucidates it. Chanakya has elaborated it in his monumental work *Arthasastra*. This is no less implicit in the West which made such revolution as industrial revolution and spoke of American Dream.

Both Basavanna and Emerson have spoken of the primacy of economic reforms for the evolution of human societies. The concept of
reform emerges from economization. If we analyze the works of J. S. Mill or Bentham, we find that they try to reform, and every economic reform is interrelated to religion, society and politics. Marxism is full of economic reforms.

Basavanna and Lingayat religion speak of the primacy of economy for the growth of civilization. Basavanna speaks of Kayaka and Dasoh. Kayaka means sincere and fair work. Kayaka means more than the meaning the English word ‘work’ provides. Kayaka refers to ‘Kaya’ (body) and ‘ka’ (work). Basavanna had spiritualized the concept by advocating that one must work for his livelihood. This work must be sincere and proficient. Work culture leads to health, wealth and wisdom. When one does Kayaka he should do justice to it; and he should not take neither more nor less wages and he should be contented with it. Man must use his income for his proper growth. Economists believe that a good worker’s income seems to remain surplus. The man should not misspend it. Nor should he hoard it, or use it for lending. Basavanna advocates that he must give it to the needy and poor who deserve financial assistance. Basavanna calls this as dasoh. His concept of dasoh is much different from dana (donation or philanthropy). Man gives Dasoh, with little pride about it. It is like paying tax for a worthy cause. But man gives dana for self-exalting causes and he is proud of it. Pride leads to fallacy. So Basavanna did not allow either priding or the feeling of humility in those who receive it.

In Lingayat religion dasoha is compulsory and should be done with hard earned money say by ‘Satya Suddha kayaka’ meaning honest work. This makes kayaka compulsory for every one. Since every one should work without fail, it leads to the creation of a sound social and economic condition in society, solving the problem of unemployment. As part of the money
earned thus should be used for dasoha, it prevents amassing of wealth by individuals. Therefore kayaka dasoha (both complementary) concept is a well-knit system of production and distribution. In fact, it is spirituality oriented socialism. This spirituality based socialism has survived 850 years and is still a practicing principle, whereas Karl Marx's system of distribution of wealth, which is based on materialistic concept, has met with its end in many parts of the world.

Basavanna implemented many radical concepts of economy. Basavanna as the chief-minister under Bijjala set forth his ideas as a statesman and not as a mean and short sighted politician.

Basavanna condemns discrimination in work. The Vedic concept of craft culminated in caste. Then people attached the feeling of pride and humility with the concept of work as superior and inferior. Priest's work became superior while cobler's work became inferior. Basavanna condemned it wholeheartedly. He said that all works are good and all works are necessary for the sustenance of civilization.

Gandhi valued labour and also considered public money and money with the rich as Public Trust to be utilized for the benefit of society at large. Similarly Rabindranath Tagore, talked of labour as divine. Gandhi's mind was captivated by Ruskin's *Unto this Last* and its three teachings as he understood were:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That the lawyer's work has the same value as a barber's in as much as all have the same right of earning livelihood for their work.
3. That a life of labour i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and handicraftsman is the life worth living.
We find all these principles are the core of the doctrine of kayaka. B. B. Kanavi thinks,

If we distinguish between manual labor and intellectual labour, then problems arise. This can be overcome through dasoha. One with intellect can earn more but he has to retain what he needs and the rest he must surrender to the society. Hence kayaka and dasoha have to go together. If we stick to the principles, there is no labor high or low, even from the point of view of the reward; then it is difficult in practice to equally reward both. Since both are considered equal, both must get equal rewards.  

What Basavanna envisaged was a self-contained and self-sufficient economy free from the clutches of social divisions by caste and gender or by the economic evils of monopoly or money-lending.

Basavanna was very much against accumulation of wealth.

‘If I should say
I want, this day, another day
A single particle of gold,
A single thread of cloth,
Let thy and the pioneer’s
Be upon me!
But for Thy Saranas,
There is nothing that I know,
O Kudala Sangam Lord’ VB, 68).

Gandhi also held similar views when he thought that nature produces enough for our wants from day today, and if everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism, there would be no man dying of starvation.
Basava vehemently condemned borrowing and lending for interest and exploitation therefrom, which is very well reflected in the following vachana:

The goods and chattels you have got,
Do neither lend nor hire
Except to Siva’s devotees.
It is well if they return,
If not, it is twice as well
If it is there, it is Linga’s food:
And Linga’s food if here,
If what is Linga’s goes to it.
There is no joy that it is come,
No sorrow that it is not come…
Therefore, let nought, be lent or hired
To any but Siva’s devotees,
O Kudala Sangama lord (VB, 109).

Basavanna realized and advocated a life of community as against isolation, a life which could be more natural, simple and ridden by few and limited wants. He was a visionary and true statesman.

Like Basavanna, Emerson thinks that man must prepare himself for his life. This he can do with hardship, care and vision. Robert Spiller writes of Emerson’s own preparation for thirty-three years:

Preparation-routine-retrospect; these are the entries on the calendar, the frame of life for a reticent New England man who is Emerson the seer. He devoted thirty-three years to what he thought of later as “preparation” before he published his first book in 1836; some two decades provided the “very few hours” when his genius was at high
pitch and all of his great work was' produced from the essential stability and calm of "routine"; and finally there were almost thirty years of "retrospect" before his death in 1882. The central twenty years have left us our impression of a man who always stood firm on moral ground and admonished his fellows to turn their eyes from evil, to have faith in themselves and in one another, and to seek God through Nature,. But the Emersonian confidence and calm were not achieved, nor were they maintained, without struggle, doubt, and self-examination.21

Like Basavanna Emerson did not believe in power or wealth as means for happiness. He lived a poor life. He would live a poorer life if he could not get his first wife's fortune. He had to struggle for bringing up his family. He left the job of a preacher, and then became a lectuerer. He was paid often a small sum of money from lectures than from books. Brooks Atkinson observes:

The life of lecturing was arduous; since Emerson was a poor business man and usually spoke for any fee that was offered he never earned much money. But he was of a naturally hopeful temperament, easily believing the best of everything and he was buoyed up all his life by sublime faith.22

When William Henry Furness paid him $ 1200 for six lectures in Philadelphia, he exclaimed, 'What a swindle!' Such earnings were exceptional. Then he spent more than he earned. On the other hand, he spent $ 3500 to buy a house which is said to have cost $7800 to build, afterward increasing his land holdings considerably (in 1844 he bought eleven acres on the shore of Walden Pond at $ 8.10 an acre) and in 1848, when he asked the
Fitchburg Railroad to pay for the destruction of a woodlot which he believed had been fired by sparks from a locomotive, they did it. He called his 1000 dollar check for Parnassus the largest sum he ever had from writing.

Emerson thinks that man must work for his living. He thinks man must flourish or perish. In his eyes poverty was demoralizing, and spending without earning was the 'doctrine of the snake.' Man must earn because he is a consumer. He felt that we should spend money as we wish it for right cause. He knew how to receive graciously as well as to give.

Emerson's real ambition, however was for spiritual insight. He believed that man must do the work proficiently. He thought that a great and loved soul is near us though its body has died thousand years ago. He heard from Richard Price that our conceptions of good and evil are innate. We can feel the truth of a situation only when we experience it. So we should do work for our living as we work for love. He thought that our life should be experience-bound.

Emerson believed that every man has a vocation and that his talent was his call. Thus the doctrine of 'accommodation' which Calvin developed with reference to theological matters was, in a sense, extended by Emerson to the whole of life.

"Self-Reliance," "History" and "The Oversoul" are perhaps Emerson's most characteristic essays, outlining his beliefs about man himself and about his relations with other men and with the world.

Politics:

Basavanna was the Prime Minister of King Bijjal of the Kalachuris in the 12th century South India. His times were feudal in nature.
It was impossible even to speak about democratic values if not socialism under such a regime. Basavanna, therefore, used religion as a medium to establish democratic values in society.

This was achieved through Anubhava Mantap, a forum of free thinking. All the problems pertaining to both spiritual and mundane aspects of life were discussed here. Allamaprabhu, a great Shivayogi and mystic, was the president of the forum and Chennabasavanna, who is known as the architect of Lingayatism was its secretary. Basavanna was the very soul of this unique institution. It was, in fact, one of the first religious parliaments in the world which served as a forum for establishing an egalitarian society.

The whole edifice of Anubhava Mantap rested chiefly on the three great personalities, Basavanna, Channabasavanna and Allamaprabhu who may be compared to the three apostles of the early Christian Church.

This institution of Anubhava Mantapa reminds one of the early councils of Asoka, or the Sangam of the Tamilians, or the parliament of religions of Janaka of the Upanishadic days, or the later parliament of religions of Akbar. But unlike these it inverted the order of producer of the theory and practice of religion. In short this movement may be said to be somewhat unique in the history of India.

Likewise Emerson had his own brand of socio-political association called Transcendentalism.

The town of Concord was a larger home and the circle of friends that gathered in the Emerson drawing room was but an extended family. The Thoreaus, Hoars, and Ripleys were native citizens, but Alcott, Ellery Channing, and Hawthorne were later comers; Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, the mystic Jones Very, and many others of the transcendental set were never more than visitors. The Social Circle which met frequently at the
Emerson home on Tuesday evenings consisted of “twenty-five of our citizens: doctor, lawyer, farmer, trader, miller, mechanic; solidest men, who yield the solidest gossip.”

A very different group had formed the habit of gathering at one another’s houses for an afternoon of serious conversation, whether in Boston or Concord, and so the “Transcendental Club” came into being without deliberate intention or constitution. It was, as one facetious member remarked, ‘like going to heaven in a swing,’ and Emerson himself at times mocked their earnest aspirations. Perhaps they only agreed in having fallen upon Coleridge and Wordsworth and Goethe, then on Carlyle, with pleasure and sympathy. Otherwise, their education and reading were not marked, but had the American superficialness, and their studies were solitary, like his own. Bronson Alcott, the Orphic philosopher, existed in an ethereal sphere which he shared with Plato; Thoreau came fresh from the woods and fields; Emerson from his study; Parker, ‘the Savonarola,’ and Brownson from their churches, the one a Unitarian, the other inclining toward Rome. Margaret Fuller and occasionally Hawthorne’s sister-in-law Elizabeth Peabody shot bolts of aggressive femininity into the company with their radical notion that women are people, seeking friendship on a plane transcending sex.

One such friendship, violent on Margaret’s part, acquiescent but at times disturbing on Emerson’s, produced the modest quarterly journal called *The Dial*, organ of the movement for four years. George Ripley, inspired by Owen and Fourier, attempted the most famous of all communistic experiments at Brook Farm, even though the stars of the movement took only a casual part, preferring to shine each in his own sphere. A third practical—if we may stretch the word—result was the Concord School of Philosophy, founded in 1879 by Alcott in his own back yard, a highly
successful pioneer, of the American summer session. For at least a quarter of
a century, the idyllic town was the intellectual seed pod of the nation.

Basavanna achieved the much sought after social reforms with the help of politics.

Basavanna as a man appeared to be the King’s savior as well as the reformer. Therefore, the King permitted all kinds of social reforms. The point is that Basavanna brought in two kinds of political ideologies -- one democratic and the other socialist.

Basavanna’s democratic ideas are embodied in his creation of liberty, equality and brotherhood. The French Revolution of 1789 re-created these ideals later. His philosophy of Lingayatism stood for a new way of life, free from the traditional dead dogmas and oppressive structures of various castes, rites and rituals. It was with equal vehemence that Basavanna and the other Sharanas attacked the un-holy alliance between the profession and caste. It was here the Karma and Varna theory of Vedic religion came under heavy blow. Basavanna gave equality between the peoples and the sexes.

Basavanna’s socialist ideals are that of kayaka of Marx’s eight hundred years before Marx. Dasoh is also a socialist value.

Lingayatism was the first to preach the dignity of labour in this country. This philosophy is called the philosophy of kayaka. Lingayatism preached that a man should be respected irrespective of whatever vocation he follows in life. Basavanna had believed in community discussion (a basic principle of democracy) and community living.

Basavanna was a great revolutionary. And as revolutionary he was a free thinker. Basavanna writes, reacting against the orthodox Vedic religion:

    Shall I say Sastra is great?
It only exalts Karma!
Shall I say Veda is great?
It tells of animal sacrifice
Shall I say Smriti is great?
It seeks in the future (VB, 169).

In a way, Basavanna disapproved the feudal order. He revolted against the concept of monarchy. For example, he considered these things as unfair and useless. This reminds us Confucius’s ideas about rationalist way of life. The Chinese Civil Service is based on Confucian wisdom. Confucius said that Govt is meant for the welfare of people. When a high minister asked about government, Confucius, employing a pointed pun, said, “‘To govern is to set things right, who will dare to deviate from the right?’ Therefore, the first duty of a nobleman is ‘to cultivate himself so as to give peace and comfort to all the people.’ Confucius said, ‘Lead the people by laws and regulate them by penalties, and the people will try to keep out of jail but will have no sense of shame. Lead the people by virtue and restrain them by the usage of decorum and the people will have a sense of shame and moreover will become good.”

We can say that Basavanna established an alternative political order through his Anubhava Mantap. It is from there he eradicated untouchability, caste system and gender-difference. He advocated kayaka and dasoh theory as well. King Bijjal himself liked his reforms. R. T. Jangam observes, Basavanna’s Anubhava Mantapa was virtually a philosophical workshop of the various intellectuals and scholars designed to evolve various principles and codes of conduct for the guidance and adoption of the masses. In case of Marx, the methods were intellectualistic no
doubt. But he appears to be more self-assured and more individualistic than democratic. To be sure, he was greatly assisted and to the extent influenced by Friedrich Engles who was his long-time collaborator. He was also in constant discussion and correspondence with the leaders of various parties and movements in different countries.24

The 19th century Americans still looked to Europe for inspiration as well as guidance. Emerson wanted to stop this evil altogether, thinking that America should become America as we think of it today – as the leader of the world. Emerson always liked to criticize America’s shortcomings.

Emerson felt that Americans had not achieved any remarkable growth in their culture and civilization. Their art was graceful but sterile, not new but derivative, and they themselves slight and vain, too easily pleased and depressed. Their statesmen lacked ideas and served property, not principle, inclining always toward selfish verdict. Robert Spiller has this to observe about Emerson’s reformation:

Emerson’s preeminence has caused our literary historians some embarrassment. America was ready for a Shakespeare, a Dante, or a Dostoevski to give literary voice to her achieved majority. She was given an apologist-an Aristotle, a Paul, a Bacon. In the wise and temperate Emerson the heat became radiant light. It was he who brought into its first sharp focus the full meaning of two centuries of life on the Atlantic seaboard of this continent; of the economic and spiritual revolutions which had unsettled the Old World and settled the New; of the experiment in democracy which was to make a Holy Commonwealth into a world power.

He did this in two ways: by carrying to its ultimate statement the individual’s revolt from authority, which marked the transition
from the medieval world to the modern; and by formulating the
dichotomy between the vision of a Jonathan Edwards and the common
sense of a Benjamin Franklin a conflict and a balance which has
always provided the creative tension in American life. But he
translated these discoveries neither into formal philosophy nor into
fully formed art. His logic and his metaphysics remained without
system; his art, like that of all great American romantics, retained its
organic freedom.\textsuperscript{25}

Brooks Atkinson too thinks that,

In philosophy Emerson was a transcendentalist. He believed in the
"over-soul" the universal soul of which everything living was a part.
Even in Emerson's own day the word "transcendentalism" was
considered confusing, and the popular meaning of the word is still
"vague, obscure, visionary." Scholars accustomed to exact knowledge
could not surprising. Transcendentalism had no system; it was more
poetry than thought. "What is popularity called transcendentalism
among us is idealism," Emerson once said. To a young country just
beginning to enjoy its independence and lustily expanding in all
directions this style of thinking was natural and satisfying.\textsuperscript{26}

Emerson was happy about America's diversity in climate. America
has cold climate. Emerson knew that hotter climates are drier and they do
not produce great civilizations. As a New Englander Emerson liked the
North. He praised Boston as the centre of civilization. New Englanders were
a mild and intelligent people, but viewed from another angle, they could also
appear overcautious, committed to prosperity, a debating-society,
hypocritical, and weak.
It has been said of Emerson that he cared for little outside America. A foreign country, he thinks, is a point of comparison wherefrom to judge one’s own. His Phi Beta Kappa poem of 1834 makes America an asylum for all races enthusiastically. Emerson believed in following, but not in just imitation.

Emerson believed that Europe had a superior civilization, while America a superior climate and countryside. Emerson thought that the past lay with Europe, but the future with America.

There is a story about a Boston lady who upon being asked whether she had traveled, replied, ‘Why should I travel when I am already here?’ The Transcendentalists might have questioned her unspoken premise, but they would not have found her conclusion unreasonable. So it is not surprising to find Emerson describing travel as a superstition whose idols are Italy, England, and Egypt and travel is ‘a fool’s paradise.’ He said ‘he who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself.’

Emerson traveled a lot for preaching and lecturing. People bet that he could travel to remote and hard places, but he did.

Both Basavanna and Emerson disliked power as well as wealth. They considered power as a risky thing. They believed that power corrupts man. Though Basavanna was the Prime Minister of king Bijjal, he did not accumulate wealth, nor hoped for it. He never prided about his political positions.

Emerson was not a politician, nor a statesman. Even he did not subscribe to any party. He called the whigs cowardly; and the Democrats corrupt. Calhoun, Clay, and Webster were not gentlemen, but underlings who took their cue from society’s dregs. Emerson believed that the
intellectuals must modify the governance of the state. Emerson was liberal until the Civil War and thereafter conservative.

In Emerson’s view, society was fluid, law a memorandum, and foolish legislation rope sand. According to him, all parties and ministers are tainted. Lord Acton once said that politics is the field of the scoundrels. Though it was the best government for us, democracy was not necessarily the best *per se*, for it is not an end in itself; the end is man and his development. Man exists for his own sake, and not to add a laborer to the state.

Emerson’s ideas about political welfare resembled the ideals of both Basavanna and Marx. Edward Wagenknecht informs that Emerson made a speech in honor of the Chinese Embassy in 1868, and appreciated Japan at a banquet of 1872. Emerson once said:

The only safe rule is found in the self-adjusting meter of demand and supply. Do not legislate. Meddle, and you snap the sinews with your sumptuary laws. Give no bounties, make equal laws, secure life and property, and you need not give alms. Open the doors of opportunity to talent and virtue and they do themselves justice, and property will not be in bad hands. In a free and just commonwealth, property rushes from the idle and imbecile to the industrious, brave and persevering.27

Emerson was not a communist, nor a capitalist. He felt that poverty demoralized the victims. In 1823 he saw that trade determined a country’s tale. In 1846 he felt that capitalists made a brisk business over the poor. In 1848 he saw the dominance of science and technology. He said: “As long as our civilization is essentially one of property, of fences, of exclusiveness, it will be mocked by our delusions. Our riches will leave us sick; there will be bitterness in our laughter, and our wine will burn our mouth.

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Emerson was a great political reformer indirectly. Tremaine McDowell observes,

In reality Emerson was from the 1830’s to the Civil War the most urbane deviser of intellectual bombshells in the United States.28

Mysticism:

Basavanna was a religious man. Such people have a tendency to have a discourse with God. Basavanna and other Sharanas believed that man can get knowledge through their intuition, apart from, through the senses. Sharanas (meaning the ones surrendered to God) sought the glimpse of God and truth by contemplation and self-surrender.

Such old sciences as miracles and myths, and modern sciences as occultism (for ex, the theosophy), phrenology and alchemy speak of man’s otherworldly business.

Madame H.B. Blavatsky who started the Theosophical Society argues that even miracles take place as per the laws of Nature. Chennabasavanna has spoken of cosmology and ontology in the same fashion. Some ages back, science held that it is not possible to create anything from the void. But, today science advocates that the universe is evolved out of energy emanated from the Bigbang which took place in the void. Chandimarasa, a Sharana of the 12th century states:

The Undefinable Great assumes the form of
Self-born Linga by virtue of its inherent strength.
From this Linga is evolved Shivasaktyamaka,
Shivasaktyamaka creates Atma,
Atma creates Akasa
Akasa Creates Vayu,
Vayu generates Agni
Agni transforms itself into Appu,
Appu transforms itself into earth.
The earth generates all the life phenomena.
All these are created by your will alone,
O Lord Simmaligeya Cannarama.29

The universe is evolved step by step. To start with the undefinable
great, the void assumes the form of spherical Linga which gave rise to
Shivasaktyamaka. Shivasktyamaka was a fundamental unit representing
divine consciousness and energy. This generated Atma, the soul. The soul
created Akasa or sky. Akasa created Vayu or gas. Vayu generated Agni or
fire. Fire transformed itself into water which finally assumed the form of the
earth. All the animate and inanimate objects came into existence from the
earth. In short, everything is created out of the energy evolved by the will of
the void. This is Sharanas’ concept of the creation of earth.

Sharanas think that three types of energies may be identified in nature
(i) Physical energy, (ii) Psychic energy and (iii) Spiritual energy. Spiritual
energy is the basis for the other two.

Biographies of the saints of all religions mention the miracles. Jesus
converted water into wine. He brought back the dead to life. After his
crucifixion he came out of his tomb and appeared before his devotees. One
will have to believe them. The biography of Prophet Mohammad mentions
many miracles. Shri Krisna redeemed his devotees by being omnipresent. He
protected Droupadi when her saree was being removed by Dusyasana. He
lifted the mountain by his toe and protected the world from chaotic ruin.
Lingayat Puranas state many such instances of miracles performed by Basavanna. Basavanna himself has stated in one of his vachanas that he performed as many as eighty-eight miracles:

My piety I make myself
Eighty-eight miracles, is like the guise
Of a pattering mountebank!
Although my mind is not in body caught,
Although my body is not caught in mind,
My body has in Allamaprabhu been caught,
My mind is in Chennabasava;
In which way shall I love Thee, Lord
Kudalasangama (VB, 299).

Great men do not perform miracles to exhibit their spiritual powers. They happen naturally during the course of their redeeming. Perhaps there is some truth in the statement that they are natural phenomena in their lives. Because of perfection in Linga mysticism, Basavanna had five alchemic powers. He possessed the powers of (i) mind, (ii) thought, (iii) walk, (iv) talk and (v) vision. He used these powers for the welfare of all beings. By dint of these powers whatever he thought he could achieve it.

Mahadeva Bhopala, the king of Kashmir sent one Chikkayya to Kalyan to take revenge on Basavanna for having attracted the Jangamas of his country. The intention of Chikkayya was to assassinate Basavanna as per the orders of his king. After coming to Kalyan he came to know that anyone could enter Mahamane in Jangama garb and join Dasoha. He dressed himself as a Jangama and carried a brinjal within his casket, instead of Istalinga. Basavanna’s practice was to come to every Jangama and request
him to accept the dasoha offered after Linga worship. When he approached Chikkayya, he was surprised to see Chikkayya sitting without doing Linga worship. He appeared to be disturbed. He was afraid that the secret would be out. Basavanna came to know his desire through his divine vision and insisted on his offering Linga worship. Chikkayya had no option but to open his casket and to his utter surprise, the brinjal had turned to Istalinga! This is due to the vision alchemy effect of Basavanna. As soon as Basavanna cost his eyes on the brinjal, it turned into Linga. Chikkayya was immediately transformed into his devotee. He repented. Basavanna told that the Linga had already pardoned him.

Basavanna achieved much in Shivayoga which is a synthesis of Hatha, Laya, Mantra and Rajayoga. Therefore, Shivayoga is considered as an integral yoga and superior to all yogas. Basavanna, like Allamprabhu, was a great Shivayogi with internal and external perfection.

The orthodox people were opposed to the progressive ideas of Basavanna. They strongly condemned his ideas of equating all with Brahmins and belittling their superiority. They conspired to get him removed from the position of Prime Ministership. They used Manchanna, a senior minister in Bijjal’s court for the purpose. They lodged a complaint with Bijjal through Manchanna that Basavanna was using the royal treasury for Jangamas in the name of Jangama dasoha. Bijjal asked Basavanna to submit the accounts before the sunset. Sixty clerks began counting money ceaselessly but could not complete the job. Basavanna ordered the sun not to move further till the accounts were finalized. A lot of time passed away but the sun remained where he was, it is said for eleven days! The order of universe was deranged and the people were afraid of some calamity. Bijjal asked Basavanna to explain this disorder. Basavanna told the truth. Bijjal
bowed to the great Basavanna and acquitted him. Then, Basavanna asked the sun to continue his routine course and the clerks reported to the king that the treasury money was intact. Bijjal asked Basavanna to forgive him for doubting his integrity. B. Virupaksappa observes,

There was a time when people thought that those who did not perform miracles were not considered Sharanas. It was, of course, a belief of that period. Perhaps for this reason many miracles are associated with the names of almost all great men. Why speak of those days, even today, in Christian faith, it is necessary to perform a miracle to get sainthood. One will have to apply to Pope for sanctioning sainthood. The applicant can get sainthood only if he has performed at least one or two miracles. Mother Theresa was not at all bothered about sainthood. Some of her admirers after her death, applied for sainthood. They pleaded in their application that taking into consideration her curing of uncurable lepers as a miracle, sainthood may be awarded to her.30

This is how Basavanna achieved the unattainable in life. He says,

He who can give a form to Void
Is a Sharana,
He who can turn that form to Void
Is Linga experient
If he can’t give form to Void,
How is he a Sharana?
If he can’t turn form to Void,
How is he a Linga experient?
If these two can be made in one,
Can there, O Kudalasangama Lord,
Be room in thee? (VB, 311).

Shri Kumara Swamiji observe aptly,

Man’s final end or the purpose of his existence is to love, know and be united with the immanent and transcendent Godhead. This identification of the self with God or the Supreme can be achieved only by the death of the ego and rising of the spirit. The total identification brings with it the manifestation of God’s power, knowledge, bliss and beauty to some extent.\textsuperscript{31}

Emerson was a mystic. Like Kant, or like our Basavanna he believed in God Almighty. Emerson believed that man derives immense strength from somewhere which is beyond our senses. He called this power as intuition. The Romantic critics Wordsworth and Coleridge called this faculty as imagination. Whether it is intuition or imagination, it is a gateway for eternal knowledge. Emerson thinks more of this knowledge is spiritual or transcendental. In other words, Emerson believed more in intuition than in tuition.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the mystic as “the One who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender to obtain union with or absorption of truths inaccessible to the understanding.”\textsuperscript{32} If this be the proper definition of a mystic, then both Basavanna and Emerson were fine mystics. They were humanists as well as rationalists. Usually the transcendentalist was most sympathetic with every form of life. Emerson’s sermon “Miracles” (1831) speaks of God’s granting man things which he prays for, provided that it is reasonable. It is said,

The prayer of Socrates at the end of the \textit{Phaedrus}, Emerson would say, is always answered – “what we pray to ourselves for is always granted.” Socrates asked of Pan the grace that the outer and inner man
be at one. "But they are at one," Emerson would say. There is always "This undersong, this perfect harmony." Person and event make one another and reflect one another; 'events are only one actualization' of what a man thinks. A man's fortunes are the fruits of his character. They are the children of his body and mind. The pleasure of life is according to the man that lives it, and not according to the work or place... Man determines his own existence. He makes himself by making his world. He makes the world by making himself. Know then that the world exists for you. ... What we are, that only can we see. All that Adam had, all that Caesar could, you have can do... Build therefore your own world.33

Emerson was also a humanitarian. He believed that all the flora and fauna as part of life. Nature was the external form of the internal spirit, the metaphor of human mind. So nature is as truly beautiful as it is good. His essay "The Problem" makes clear that nature, art and religion are in harmony. We must work in harmony with her or she ruins us. Even roads and cities must follow her lines. He said an immoral law was a perversion of nature and it is upon this basis he opposed social discrimination, particularly slavery in America. In "Woodnotes," nature is faithful to all who trust her, and Emerson beloved white pine becomes a symbol of nature and of the man who lives in harmony with her.

Come, lay thee in my soothing shade,
And heal the hurts which sin has made.34

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Emerson is of the opinion that Nature cures man’s sin, while the Bible says ‘only divine grace can cure it.’ Emerson thinks the evil as much as good is the necessary part of life. He believed in moral universe.

Literature for Life:

The term culture includes man’s way of life. Culture relates to man’s internal world. It is training. If the mind receives good training it helps life to proceed on the right path and helps for perfection. Civilization pertains to the exterior of man, whereas culture is his inner quality. A blend of these two formulates the values of life. We have achieved material progress and are advanced in civilization but are lagging behind in culture. But, our forefathers were at the top in respect of the inner qualities. Vivekanand thinks education is the manifestation of divine perfection in man. No knowledge comes from outside. It is hidden in a person. It blossoms due to various experiences in life.

Cultures and civilizations lacking inner strength have disappeared. For example, Roman Civilization fell because of Romans’ pride.

A great socio-religious revolution took place in south India in the twelfth century under the leadership of Basavanna. It discarded all the man-made barriers. The main aim of the movement was to work for the welfare of all. As a result of which, an egalitarian society based on moral and spiritual values emerged. A spiritual academy known as Anubhava Mantapa came into existence. Here the principles were laid down for the development of man’s inner and outer being. Teaching was through vachanas in the vernacular language, i.e., Kannada instead of Sanskrit. Sharanas taught these values to people after imbibing them.
Vachanas (sayings), one of the best forms of literature, touch the heart of man because the man who mused so, spoke forth through the language most familiar to him, even at the highest level, in one's own mother tongue.

According to Sharanas, there is no line of demarcation between the mundane world and the divine. They viewed life in its entirety. They considered the mundane and spiritual aspects of life as two faces of the same coin. Basavanna says:

Behold! between the worlds
Of mortals and gods
There is no difference!
To speak the truth is the world of gods.
To speak untruth, the mortal world.
Good work is Heaven
Bad work is Hell
And you can witness it,
O Lord Kudalasangama! (VB, 78).

If we achieve purity in speech and actions, that itself is the divine life. If perfection is achieved in one, utterly neglecting the other, it amounts to an incompleteness. The education imparted to achieve this end is education for life. We should have formulated such an education policy after independence. Gandhi advocated basic education, involving work-experience and moral values.

Another example of rational attitude towards life is to have corporate culture. This is to carry out our work not looking for auspicious time, star, day or week. Time is continuous and indivisible. We have divided it into day, week, month etc. We consider them auspicious or otherwise arbitrarily
without any scientific basis. In the eyes of God, there are no good or bad days. Emerson says, “The present hour is the decisive hour and every day is doomsday.”

In day-to-day life, we behave roughly exhibiting anger and pride. God lives in modest and gentle behaviour. Divinity is hidden in all beings. Of course, man is a crown of creation. When we meet someone, saluting him is saluting God. This speaks of fraternity.

Basavanna even taught us how to behave with people who visit our house,

Does it make you ugly if you say
‘Come right in, how do you do?’

Does your floor cave in when you say
‘Do sit down please?’

Or does your head, or belly, burst
If only you speak to one?

If you have nothing to give, not even a grace,

Lord Kudalasangama, be sure,

Will pull you down and chop your nose (VB, 79).

Not only human beings but all beings under the sun are our kith and kin. They are to be shown compassion.

Emerson also believes in love, compassion and good conduct of life. He gives utmost importance to discipline and social commitment. We learn that he ‘looked his guest kindly and searchingly in the eyes on his arrival, but, in talking with him, he looked fixedly rather beside than at him, while answering his questions not directly, but suggestively.’ Holmes says that hearing him talk was like watching somebody cross a brook on stepping-stones.
Yet Emerson had his own brand of social charm. He disliked ridicule and sarcasm and was generally accounted a good-natured man. Sometimes he worked off frustrations in his garden, permitting nature to restore his self-respect. Emerson was skillful and patient in dealing with the innumerable bores and eccentrics whom his fame attracted.

After all, communication was a business for Emerson. Emerson grew up in the great age of American oratory, in the world of Daniel Webster, Wendell Phillips, and Edward Everett. When, in "Spiritual Laws," he describes a 'public oration' as 'an escapade, a non-committal, an apology, a gag, and not a communication, not a speech, not a man,' he is only rejecting formality and insincerity. Emerson loved friendship, which according to him was the act of meeting like-minded people.

According to Emerson, the passion of love is both physical and spiritual, and it 'seizes on man and works a revolution in his mind and body; unites him to his race, pledges him to the domestic and civil relations, carries him with new sympathy into nature, enhances the power of the senses, opens the imagination, adds to his character heroic and sacred attributes, establishes marriage and gives permanence to human society.

Love transforms life. Love purifies our intellect and heart. His poem 'Initial, Daemonic and Celestial Love' has this stanza:

> Love on his errand bound to go 
> Can swim the fold and wade through snow, 
> Where way is none, 't will creep and wind 
> And eat through Alps its home to find.

Emerson recognized frankly that without the power to rouse passion, other gifts are of no avail:

> Thy beauty, if it lack the fire

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Which drives me mad with sweet desire,
What boots it?36

Emerson is said to have loved beauty in man, woman, things and ideas.

Vegetarian food is superior to non-vegetarian one. Vegetarian food induces Satvika Vritti (good instincts) and promotes goodness. Recent investigations have shown that it promotes longevity. Basavanna advocated vegetarian food. Gandhi has spoken about it at great length. Even he has made experiment with it. Basavanna had specified the wine seller to sell it only after speaking about its evil effects. Use of alcohol is harmful to health. Basavanna thinks their use makes us lose control over our senses, and sets us on the wrong path.

Emerson did not love bad manners. He rarely went to drinks nor indulged in meat. His son says that emerosn did not attend certain social parties which encouraged degeneration.

Basavanna as well as Akkamahadevi was a fine poet. There is a close relationship between philosophy and poetry and poetry is more philosophical than history as Aristotle thinks. Mysticism and poetry are just like sister disciplines.

Armando Menezes thinks, “It is unfortunate that the term vachana is used to describe the outpourings of the Lingayat saints, should mean, literally, a ‘saying’ or ‘utterance.’”37 What is evident is that among the vachanas of some of the Lingayat saints, and notably among those of Basavanna and Akkamahadevi there are enough to establish for their authors the title of poet. The following of Basavanna’s vachana speaks of a saint who is both a man and lover:

‘The Cakora waits, intent,
The Moonlight’s silver dawn;
The lotus's heart is bent
Upon the splendid morn;
The bee's, on the flower's scent,
Even thus, for Thee, even thus
My heart is tremulous,
O Kudala Sangama Lord.\textsuperscript{38}

Here we have all the unmistakable marks of true poetry.

Likewise Emerson was an artist in words. Like Aristotle, Emerson thinks art is not an imitation, but creation and interpretation. It is a prophecy of reality. Emerson, just like Basavanna, thinks that art is for life.

Emerson loved Greek sculpture. Emerson virtually wiped out the distinction between the fine and practical arts. 'The most perfect form to answer an end is so far beautiful.' Like Shaw in \textit{Back to Methuselah}, he thought that all art might well be dispensed with when life shall have attained beauty.

Emerson liked the theatre, though he did not visit it often. He loved to read the Elizabethan playwrights, and talked of drama as an effective art. He loved circus as a balancing art. He liked dance. Finally he liked movie in the 1860s. He took great interest in Church music.

Emerson read a lot, though he said that reading alone does not build life. Books destroy time and space, enable us to move with the speed of thought, and establish communication with great minds. Emerson felt that the people who read same books will love one another. His penchant for reading is explicit in the following doggerel he wrote,

\begin{verbatim}
When shall I be tired of reading?
When the moon is tired and waxing and waning,
When the cloud is tired of raining,
\end{verbatim}
When the sea of ebbing and flowing,
When the grass is weary of growing,
When the planets tire of going.
And when death is sick of feeding,
Then shall I be tired of reading.\(^{39}\)

In his European trips Emerson read great writers like Goethe, Manzoni, Byron and others. He valued foreign literature because it helped break subservience to the conventions with which we are familiar.

Yet the famous Kappa Phi Beta address, "The American Scholar," leaves the impression that Emerson considered reading almost as dangerous as it is useful. 'Books are the best of things, well said; abused, among the worst.' Their service should be confined to the scholar's idle hours. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings.' Imitation, even of Shakespeare, is dangerous.

In literature Emerson read the Bible, Plato and the Neo-Platonists, Catholic mystics, English Renaissance literature, the seventeenth-century mystics and religious writers, and indeed, English and American literature in general, Hindu and Persian literature, and much besides. Emerson's book *Parnassus* seems to be an anthology of English poetry.

Emerson was a great writer. He calls writing the greatest of arts, the subtlest, and of most miraculous effect; apparently he thought it superior to the others because it employed less material channels of expression. 'The man is only half himself,' he says, 'the other half is expression.' Emerson knew that if writing is a gift, it is also a knack. He did not believe that the writer is always completely in control of either himself or his craft. Every writer is a skater, and must go partly where the skates carry him. Emerson concerned himself with contemporary subjects and burning issues.
Basavanna as a poet-singer once wrote that he would sing as it comes to him. Of course, his vachanas speak of Truth.

Emerson was a great sermonist and then a lecturer (that means a fine essayist too). Brooks Atkinson observes,

The duty of the scholar, he believed, was “to cheer, to raise and to guide men by showing them facts among appearances.” As he traveled about the country, “emptying his decanters and demijohns of popular wisdom,” as he termed his lectures, he felt that he was enriching the lives of human beings and doing the work that suited his genius. When he had tried his lecturers on various audiences he rewrote them as essays and published them in book form. Almost all his writings, except the poetry, were first spoken from lecture platform.40

Emerson was a poet essentially. Of course, he was a low poet with husky voice. On the other hand, he told Elizabeth Peabody that though he was not a great poet, ‘whatever is of me is a poet.’ Wagenknecht thinks Emerson’s theory was that ‘argument,’ ‘thought,’ or ‘experience’ should determine form, and that ideas should be expressed through symbols, which bring him close to modern symbolists and imagists and all those who hold ‘organic’ theories concerning art and favor implicational and presentational methods. Emerson was really an idealist poet. In any case, it is difficult to see how anybody could place the ideal of the poet higher than Emerson does. He is the darling of the gods, and his achievement has value even for those who do not understand it. Emerson writes of the poet,

His learning should be deep and large,
And his training should not scant
The deepest lore of wealth or want:

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His flesh should feel, his eyes should read
Every maxim of dreadful Need;
In its fullness he should taste
Life's honeycomb, but not too fast;
Full fed, but not intoxicated;
He should be loved; he should be hated;
A blooming child to children dear,
His heart should palpitate to fear.
In 'weak, unhappy times' he must be silent and await the,
  open hours
When the Gods' will sallies free,
And the dull idiot might see
The flowing fortunes of a thousand years.41

Tony Tanner says,

It is important to remember that he regarded himself as a serious poet and it would be appropriate to say that many of his poems aspire to the condition of poetry. (Tony Tanner. Introduction, Essays and Poems, ed by Christopher Bigsby, p. xxviii)

Poetry brings guidance, consolation, and joy to men. It has an advantage over philosophy because 'the poet is in the natural attitude; he is believing; the philosopher, after some struggle, having only reasons for believing. Perhaps poetry even has an advantage over religion, for it allows the imagination 'to flow, and not to freeze.'
References:


