Introduction

The present thesis “The Philosophy of Transcendentalism in the Works of Basavanna and R. W. Emerson: A Comparative Study” is a complex study involving the study of literature, religion and philosophy.

Study of literature helps us in the process of culture and civilization. If culture is ‘sweetness and light,’ it is necessary for every one who lives as part of human culture. Culture is the way we live. Accordingly, man needs to cultivate the arts and literature. According to Aristotle, these arts and literature are part of productive philosophy and they have a carry over value for our attainment of nobility and greater consciousness. All this necessitates us to study literature as the product of imagination for the refinement of life.

Modern poet and critic T. S. Eliot is of the opinion that the best way to understand and evaluate a work of art is to compare it with other works of art. According to him, comparison and contrast are the two tools of study. Comparative study of literature is very helpful in this regard. Comparative literature plays a vital role in our academic life. It bridges the gap between writers and readers and critics. Comparative study is not initiated just for its own sake but it is there for the sake of studying literatures. What we must do is to see how we can reorganize the whole literatures for the sake of comparing. Yet comparative study must be directed to our timely needs and requirements. The study of our own literature is not enough for our fuller developments. Nor can the study of national literature be sufficient either.

Then occurs the question what must be the criterion of comparative literature. Some scholars argue that language must be a criterion of comparative literature. For example, India has many languages and comparison of literature of one language with another language must be undertaken. For instance, a novel written in Kannada say on freedom
struggle must be compared with a novel of the same theme in Panjabi. Though the same language is spoken in the breadth and length of a country, its literature will be different in its nature and presentation. For example, English literature is not similar to American literature though both are in English. This is because of the reason that nationalities are different everywhere. Therefore, Sisir Kumar Das argues that comparative literature has to be both interlinguistic and nationalistic, because literature is born in a language yet it goes beyond it.

There was a time when people either were unaware of the wisdom of other races, nations, religions, and cultures or they did not feel to study it. The problem of illiteracy and lack of tolerance was a major reason for this. No ancient Greek felt the need to read the literatures produced in other countries. Socrates' speech or Sophocles' plays were not read by any ancient Indians though Alexander the Great ruled a part of North India. This is also applicable to other countries.

Because of socio-political or economic revolutions, colonization, science and technology, the world is becoming smaller day by day. In view of this, both Goethe and Tagore insisted for the study of global literature.

The impact of globalization has furthered the cause of translations and subsequently comparative study of literature. Colonialism, continuous migrations of people from one region to another, business expansions and global trade are the reasons that have led people to turn polyglots. The newer situation, in turn has helped people in acquainting with others' cultures and literatures. The mass media and the art of cinema have helped the process of multi-culturalism. Accordingly translation and adaptations have made the world literatures converge towards each other. In this connection, comparative study of literature helps us by correcting readers' taste,
liberalizing their interests and expanding their intellectual horizon. Sisir Kumar Das says,

'I think comparative literature which is not different from the study of single literature so far as the critical methodology is concerned but differs only in matter and attitude can play a vital role in the reorganization of literature faculties and in the teaching of literature.'¹

A mere confinement to one language, one-culture and one-nation in studies will not make man a noble and knowledgeable being. Comparative study encompasses many variants of comparative criticism of literatures. In M. K. Bhatnagar’s view,

The scope of comparative studies is vast and not precisely outlined or defined. It is only through that of formulation it can be floated and projected as theory . . . Comparative studies of English literature can be made to yield insights not merely into texts but also disparate cultures, societies, ideologies and concerns.²

Perhaps the origin of comparative literature in modern times can be attributed to Matthew Arnold’s remark. Once he said: “Every critic should try and possess one great literature, at least, besides his own and the unlike his own the better.”³

The trend of comparative approach started in the first century BC when Latin and Greek literatures interacted with each other. This was possible because of the rise of Romans. Those early writers looked for the treatment of subject, style, choice of selection and arrangement of material. For example, Plutarch (66 AD) followed comparative method in his *Parallel Lives* and Terence (3rd century AD) resorted to comparative studies. Longinus looked for certain universal features in literature and made one of them the matter of his investigation. Comparative study of literature first
began in France. It seems Van Tieghem did a pioneering work on comparative study in France. Many scholarly books were written in this regard. Rene Etiemble’s *The Crisis in Comparative Literature* was published in America in 1966. Etiemble thinks comparative literature as a form of humanism considering all national literatures as a common spiritual wealth of mankind and an interdependent entity. Comparative literature is a genre of literary research without any boundaries of language, ethics and politics. Accordingly, comparative literature can help us for establishing a global history of literature and global study of literature. Haskell Block thinks doing of comparative study of literature is equal to specialization in international literature. The university of Alberta has a journal called *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, which is nourishing Canadian comparative studies. V. M. Zhirmunsky from Russia drives home a significant point when he says only a comparative study of literature can help us to derive the universal nature of all great literatures.

The Eastern countries like China, India and Japan also developed comparative studies. This was in consonance with the diasporic literature. Most of the expatriates followed this tradition. Comparative study of literature in China is coming up. Andrew Plake’s studies of the art of narrative in Chinese fiction is a point in case. J. Y. Liu of Stanford University worked on literary theories in China. Etiemble has a high regard for the development of comparative literature in China in the 1980’s. If the first and second stages of growth of comparative study of literature occurred in France and Canada respectively, the third stage of growth occurred in China.

In England when there arose a controversy of superiority of ancient knowledge over the modern, comparative study had its relative origin to
begin with. Mostly the phase of Renaissance furthered it. First there was a comparative study of medieval texts with the ancient, followed by interlingual. The process of colonization too played an important role in accentuating comparative studies in art, literature and philosophy. For example, the English translation of Geeta by Charles Wilkins, and Kalidas's Sakuntala by William Jones made English writers compare them with their own classics.

However, comparative literature in India, in spite of its great literary traditions, did not make any headway until modern times. Because India was under the British rule for long. Although Sanskrit and Tamil literatures flourished side by side, no worth mentioning comparative studies of these two literatures are done. Mostly lack of historiography is the reason. Comparative literature proper is started in India only when the British interacted with us in the 19th and 20th centuries. Scholars such as Charles Grover, F. W. Ellis and G. V. Pope did some comparative studies. G. V. Pope's historic statement 'No literature can stand alone' is very significant. In a sense the Bengal writers promoted the business of comparative studies. Michael Madhusudhan Dutt (1824-1873), Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and Bankimchandra Chattopadyaya (1838-1894) wrote first in imitation of the western works. M. M. Dutt pleaded for a unified world of letters in which the poets of Europe and India would work together. However, the first major Indian writer to set up an intellectual environment for comparative study of literature is Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore in his essay “Visva Sahitya” (World Literature, 1947) spoke for comparative literature. He pleaded for an international approach to literature.

Comparative study in the field of literature has to focus upon common genres like epic, drama, poetry, novel, and short story that are written in all
languages. Comparative literature studies are very good to broaden man's existential makeup. In the words of Harry Levin ‘it can counteract one’s innate provinciality.’ Does India have a literature of its own? Indian literature, many critics tell us, does not exist. Tamil literature exists. Marathi literature exists but Indian literature – no, that does not exist. How far can one really speak of Indian literature? Do writers in Malayalam recognize writers in Assamese or Gujarati? Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya talked of Indian literature. Probably he meant Sanskrit literature and the nascent Bengali literature. In a way, Indian English literature including literatures translated into English is treated as Indian literature in the West today.

Chapter-1 of the thesis “Comparative Study: Its Relevance and Importance” is an elaborate analysis of the prerequisites of comparative study in the context.

Lingayatism or Veerashaivism is a Shaivite sect. The sect was founded in the twelfth century by Basavanna in the region of Karnataka, and it developed as a reaction against Brahmin dominance and discrimination. Lingayats rejected the sanctity of the Vedas and the authority of Brahmanas. Certain Vedic principles were accepted but were reinterpreted with Shaivite terminology. Thus Shiva was recognized as the eternal principle. Shiva’s divine symbol was the Linga. The Lingayats are called lingam-carriers. It is useless to go on pilgrimage or worship in temples or perform any other ritual actions. The Shunya Sampadane, written by the Sharanas throws more light on their practices.

Lingayats are still a practicing sect, but caste distinctions gradually reappeared. Jangamas, or hereditary priests became a part of the sect. Lingayats have five main Mathas at Kedarnath, Srisailam, Balehonnur, Ujjain and Varanasi. All members are attached to one of these centres and
initiated by a guru. Each carries a small linga and wears a white dot on the forehead. The dead are buried instead of being cremated. Certain daily rites, such as worship of the linga, and some Samskaras, such as initiation of male children, are practiced. Their philosophy is described as Shaktivishistadvaita. The literature of the sect is in Kannada. It is said, "Striking features of Lingayatism are its rejection of the caste system, its condemnation of child marriage, and its proclamation of the equality of the sexes. Though it has a hereditary priesthood of its own, it avoids all the rituals of the Brahmins and in some respects seems a protest against Brahmin domination. Its ethics are those of equality and humility, as befits those who follow the great God. Honesty and hard work in one’s daily occupation were deemed important; and in some ways the group seems like a Hindu counterpart of Protestant Christianity.4"

In the 12th century India, the Chalukyas of Kalyan were ruling South India. Their king Taila III was weak, and Bijjala of Tardawadi usurped Taila III’s throne. The political situation was not so good and Bijjala’s Prime Minister Basavanna leveled the crisis.

The Vedic religion with all its sub-sects was deeply engrossed in the Karma Marga. Religion had ceased to have any relevance to day-to-day living. The futile discourses at the philosophic level and the meaningless hold of Karma and fatalism at the religious level could lead the followers nowhere. Even Buddhism and Jainism were not doing well.

Basavanna, was born in Ingalesvara, now in the Bijapur district. Madiraja and Madalambe were his parents. Madiraja was the chief of Bagawadi. The family of Basavanna appears to enjoy great reputation and prestige in all respects-father was the chief of Bagawadi, mother a religious
Basavanna by birth was a genuine devotee and a seeker after truth. Basavanna left his home for Kudalasangama. The first soul that gave him the courage of conviction and moral support, was his sister Nagalambe. Kudalasangama was a noted centre of learning. Veda, Agama, Kavya, Purana, Sastra and other lores pertaining to Bhakti might have been studied there.

Basavanna must have studied the Vedic lore only to be convinced that it could not lead him to eternal peace. The lore of the Shaiva saints like Jedara Dasimayya, Revanasiddhesvara, Sakalesa Madarasa and Kondaguli Kesiraja might have appealed to his mind. Also the 63 Puratanas seem to have impressed him. Basavanna was born to link this world with the other in spirit. Baladeva, his maternal uncle, was a minister at Mangalawada. He had seen spiritual awakening in Basavanna and seemed to have approved of his discarding the thread ceremony in favor of Linga worship. He gave his daughter Gangambike in marriage to Basavanna. As if to heighten the spiritual power of Basavanna, another source of divine power was born to Nagalambe and Shivadeva at Kudalasangam. This was Channabasavanna holding his spiritual discourse with various Shaiva saints who were flocking around him at Kudalasangama.

Suddenly there was a call for Basavanna to leave Kudalasangama around the year 1152 A.D. Bijjala was then ruling directly over Tardawadi. Basavanna might have first gone to Mangalawda, as Harihara puts it, and stayed there for a couple of years and rose to prominence by dint of his own ability. After the death of Baladeva Basavanna became Minister to Bijjala in 1162 A.D.
Basavanna’s life at Kalyan since 1154 was most eventful. The dreams were realized. He wanted to establish a new religion which would elevate the people to heavenly felicity here and in this world itself. It was Channabasavanna who systematized the metaphysics of Veerashaiva system. The social revolution, however, is the hall-mark of this great movement. The cardinal principles for which Basavanna stood were of equality, liberty and fraternity. This reminds us the French Revolution of 1789. He would never accept any hierarchy in society. The orthodox of the older traditions and other vicious people like Kondiya Manchanna who were jealous of Basavanna’s great achievements, carried tales to Bijjala now and then to malign him. They accused him of misappropriation in the treasury for maintaining the followers. To add fuel to the fire, a historical marriage ceremony took place at Kalyan between the children of Madhuvarasa, who was formerly a Brahmin, and Haralayya, an untouchable.

This was an unbearable shock to the sensitive mind of Basavanna. Violence in any form was against his grain and principle. He began to feel that his mission in Kalyan came to an end. He took upon himself the blame that he could not convince the king and thus prevent this tragedy; and hence with great sorrow in his heart he left Kalyan for Kudalasangama. Then there was battle and bloodshed and the Sharanas scattered towards Ulavi and Srishail. So the revolution came to an end.

Worship of Ishtalinga constitutes the kernel of Veerashaivism. The new faith is a departure from the labyrinth of mechanical ritualism of the Vedic traditions. In this faith there is no place for the scared fire and the sacrificial rituals. And social gradation such as Brahmana, Sudra, and the four fold asrama scheme of life are not accepted. The sacraments and rituals are reduced to the minimum, the most essential being only three, initiation,
marriage and funeral. The soul, being pure, is free from physical pollutions. The goal of human life is the union of the individual soul with the Supreme. This can be achieved by the rules of Ashtavaranas, the eight-fold covering, which is the means for developing one’s individuality; the Panchacharas the five-fold conduct which elevates the individual in his social environment; and Shatsthalas, the six-fold stage which leads him on the path of spiritual progress and perfection. Among the Ashtavaraṇa, the triad, the Guru (the spiritual guide), the Linga (the mystic emblem of the Supreme) and the Jangama (the itinerant minister of religion and morality) occupy a prominent place. Thus, this religion is free from the shortcomings like the rituals, superstitions and distinctions based on caste, creed and six.

Chapter – 2 is an elaborate discussion about Basavanna’s philosophy of transcendence.

This scholar finds a world of similarity between Basavanna’s socio-religions revolution in the mid-12th century and Emerson’s social reform in the mid-19th century America. Emerson was an American essayist, philosopher and poet. He is also called the father of American literature. It was in his age, American literature reached its golden age. His reading of essay “The American Scholar” at Harvard declared the independence of American literature in 1837. In Robert Spiller’s view, he became the spokesman for his time and country. Emerson’s preparation may be reconstructed from letters and journals. The romantic pattern of introspection, doubt, and psychological crisis found in a Carlyle or a Goethe was his as well, marked by the familiar circumstances of poverty, loneliness, illness, idealized love, and the discovery of death.

Emerson who was brought up in a literary tradition sought refuge in books. Emerson, through aunt Mary discovered Milton, Bacon, Shakespeare
and Burke and a host others to follow. Slowly, as he took over his own education, he added Plato, Montaigne, Newton, Swedenborg, and Plutarch to his list of imperatives. More commonly he turned to histories, anthologies, and translations as shortcuts to usable ideas: Gerando, Schlegel, Stael, Cousin, Hammer’s translations of Persian poetry into German, and Taylor’s translations of the Neo-Platonists. Emerson retired from his ministry soon in 1832. Because he loved independence of mind. ‘Whoso would be a man,’ he wrote later, ‘must be a non-conformist . . . Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.’ Then Emerson taught in a school, and did something else, believing that he would regenerate his mind, manners, inward and outward estate. Three points emerge from this inventory, which are central to an understanding of the later Emerson: his faith in the moral imagination rather than the intellect, his lack of self-confidence, and his choice of eloquence as his natural medium of expression.

Emerson’s 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.

The inner drama of Emerson’s struggle is written between the lines of more than 160 sermons preached between 1822 and 1832, a selection of which has been published as Young Emerson Speaks. His real farewell came a month later in his final sermon to his congregation on “The Genuine Man” who ‘parts with his individuality, leaves all thought of private stake, personal feeling, and in compensation he has in some sort the strength of the whole. At his age thirty in 1833, he made a year-long trip to Europe. Now he
was jobless and widower. He traveled yet for confronting new people and things, as much as himself. He was happy for he was a man, and an American. What matters is that Europe as Old World did not fascinate him. The great cities Paris and London, not to speak of Rome did not attract him; nor the Romantics Wordsworth and Coleridge. Carlyle alone pleased him and both became friends. Emerson published his book of essays, *Essays, First Series* in 1841. With this rededication Emerson discovered a new way of life. Within three years after his return from Europe all his major decisions had been made, his life put in order. In the winter of 1833-1834 he began his lectures; that summer he made Concord his home; the next year he married Lydia Jackson of Plymouth, bought the Old Coolidge house on the Cambridge Turnpike. Emerson tried to study what we can call 'The first Principle'; or God. He studied Bacon, the Quakers, the Swedenborgians, the Methodists, Neo-Platonism and Oriental insights.

The Thoreaus, Hoars, and Ripleys were native citizens, but Alcott, Ellery Channing, and Hawthorne were late 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 citizens: doctor, lawyer, farmer, trader, miller, mechanic; solidest men, who yield the solidest gossip.' All these people had a 'Transcendental Club.' They started the journal *Dial*; and George Ripley began a community experiment at Brook Farm. They started the Concord School of Philosophy in 1879. So Concord became a centre of intellectual studies for decades.

Emerson continued to write further. The 'new art' of Emerson is contained in five volumes— all, except some of the poems, written within the
decade 1844-1854, none published immediately. They are *Poems* (1847), *Representative Men* (1850), *English Traits* (1856), *The Conduct of Life* (1860), and *May-Day* (1867). That in this period he passed from a state of romantic tension to one of ‘classic’ or organic restraint more suitable to the New England disposition.

Emerson delivered innumerable lectures for decades. He lectured not only in America, but also in Europe. In England he was a guest of honor at the Grand Soiree of the Manchester Athenaeum, where he addressed several thousand people. He met the great now on their own level: among them Dickens, Tennyson, and Carlyle again. But the real and enduring profit of these journeys lay in his two ripest and roundest books, *English Traits* and *The Conduct of Life*. The famous American Civil War broke in the year *The Conduct of Life* appeared. Now Emerson, having finished his great career, calmed down, unable to be dragged by the war.

Never up to the moment of his death in 1882 did he equal the achievement of *The Conduct of Life*. He gathered together one more collection of his essays, *Society and Solitude* (1870).

Chapter – 3 is a critical analysis of Emerson’s philosophy of transcendence.

Philosophy is a rational critical thinking about the conduct of life, and world. Still the philosophy of life is subject to change and differences.

The Greeks were the first to think of philosophy. Mathematics was the first distinct style of rational thinking to establish its independence. By the 17th century natural science was free. The social sciences detached themselves in the 18th century; psychology in the 19th. They called philosophy as the theory of knowledge. The Greek philosophers who
followed Aristotle had the habit of dividing philosophy into three parts: logic, physics, and ethics.

Transcendentalism is a 19th century American philosophical trend that had its active discussion from 1840 to 1860. Transcendentalism is a belief in the superiority of intuitive to sensory knowledge. It is an intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual ferment. The European Unitarianism based on John Locke insisted only that knowledge which could be demonstrated to the senses was valid. Emerson did not agree with this. He thought that this destroyed the validity of man's conscience. Emerson and his friends — it is significant that most of the early transcendentalists were young Unitarian ministers — were ripe for a philosophy that had a broader moral and aesthetic appeal. They found it in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and the other German transcendentalists of the late 18th century, which was brought to America through the writings and translations of Thomas Carlyle and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The Americans were basically eclectic in their philosophy and borrowed ideas from their amazingly widespread reading in such esoteric sources as the religious books of the Orient (particularly the Bhagavad Gita of Hinduism and the Sayings of Confucius), the writings of the French authors Madame de Stael, Victor Cousin, and Francois and those of the Cambridge Platonists and the 17th century metaphysical writers of England.

Transcendentalism has had an influence far out of proportion to its size as a movement. Walt Whitman testified that it was transcendentalism that led him to the writing of Leaves of Grass, and Emily Dickinson could well have said the same for her own poetry. Nathaniel Hawthorne never accepted fully the principles of the movement, but deeply felt its influence. Charles William Eliot traced the inspiration for his elective system in
collegiate education to Emerson, as did John Dewey for progressive education. Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, was strongly influenced by Bronson Alcott. The early leaders of the British Labour Party were well acquainted with the philosophy of Thoreau; and Mahatma Gandhi, the leaders of the anti-Nazi resistance movement in continental Europe during World War II, and Martin Luther King in the United States in the 1960’s have all acknowledged the debt that their civil disobedience campaigns owed to Thoreau’s essay on that subject.

The present thesis is entitled “The Philosophy of Transcendentalism in the Works of Basavanna and R. W. Emerson: 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 Darvinism. 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.

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 rational / human. 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. Basavanna founded Hinduism in this form of degeneration in the 12th century.

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. 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. This 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. Emerson speaks of Self-Reliance. He writes,
‘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.’

In Emerson’s view, the self-reliant man lived with God, independent of men’s opinions. 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. In that sense, man as much as Nature for example, is a relic of God. The Hindu Advaita philosophy calls man and God as the one.

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.

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.

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, brother-hood and religious tolerance. Basavanna attached more importance to human values. Like Aristotle, he considered virtues as practical philosophy. 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.

The American Transcendentalist Emerson too liked this idea. According to Basavanna, one becomes great or small by virtue of one’s 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. Further, Basavanna extended the bonds of universal kinship to every one 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).
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.

Economy is the base of life. 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. Basavanna speaks of Kayaka and Dasoh. Kayaka means sincere and fair 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 is likely 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 economic assistance. Basavanna calls this dasoh. His concept of dasoh is much different from *dana* (donation or philanthropy).

Basavanna condemns discrimination in work. The Vedic concept of craft culminated in caste. Basavanna condemned it wholeheartedly. He said that all works are good and all works are necessary for the sustenance of civilization. Likewise 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
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.

Like Basavanna Emerson did not believe in power or wealth as means for happiness. 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. Emerson felt that we should spend money as we wish it for right cause. 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.

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 Mantapa, 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.

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. Other different groups 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. These people revolutionized American thought and life.

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 ideals are embodied in his creation of liberty, equality and brotherhood.

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 living. 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. We can say that Basavanna established an alternative political order through his Anubhava Mantapa. It is from there he eradicated untouchability, caste system and gender-difference.

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.
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. 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 the intellectuals must modify the governance of the state. His ideas about political welfare resembled the ideals of both Basavanna and Marx. 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.8

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 senses. Sharanas (meaning the ones surrendered to God) sought the glimpse of God and truth by contemplation and self-surrender. 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.

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. 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. Basavanna achieved much in Shivayoga which is a synthesis of Hatha, Laya, Mantra and Rajayoga.

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. Emerson is of the opinion that Nature cures man’s sin, while the Bible says ‘only divine grace can cure it.’

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.

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. 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.

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.”

Emerson believes in love, compassion and good conduct of life. He gives utmost importance to discipline and social commitment. Emerson had his own brand of social charm. He disliked ridicule and sarcasm and was generally accounted a good-natured man. Emerson is said to have loved beauty in man, woman, things and ideas.

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.’” 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.

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. Like Shaw in Back to Methuselah, he thought that all art might well be dispensed with when life shall have attained beauty.
References:


