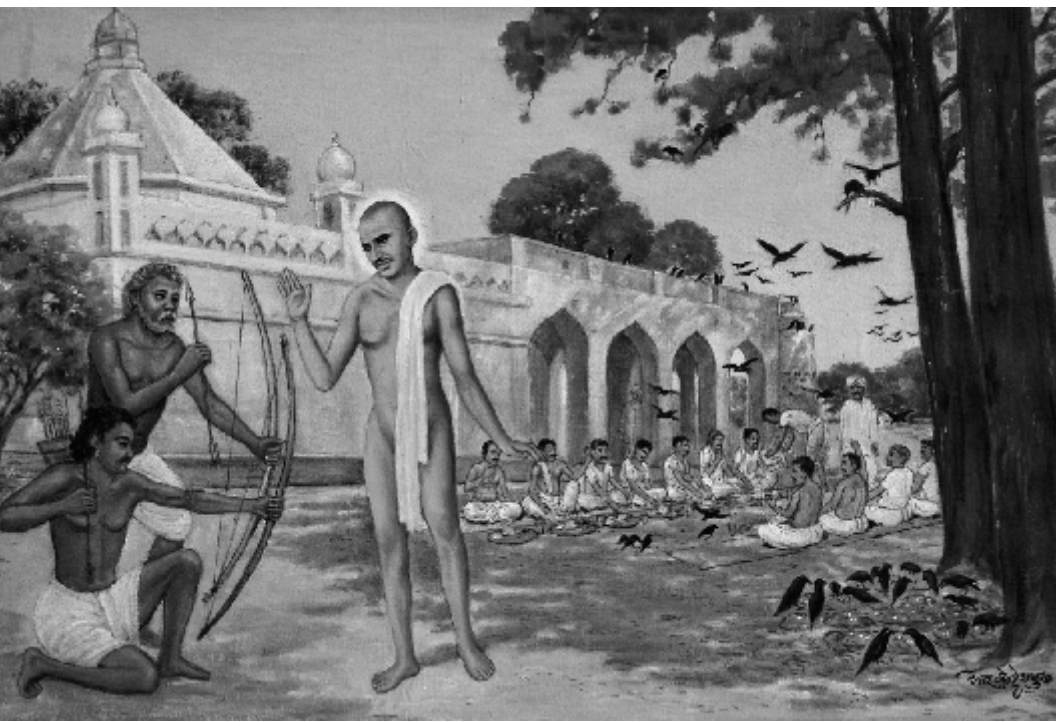


Chapter Eleven



Please don't shoot them. I will tell them.
Thus saying the Saint turned to the crows,
'Don't come to this place from tomorrow.
As this may lower the prestige of Bhaskar's soul.
Eat today whatever you like to your hearts' content.
And don't come back from next day again.'
Devotees were amazed to hear this exchange.
Nonbeliever thought of it as sheer nonsense

Chapter 11

Shree Ganeshay namah

O God Shiva! Sustainer of the cosmos, Pashupati
Cosort of Goddess Bhavani, Dakshinamurti
You are the God with as many facets
As there are people in the creation.
You are formless and omnipresent
And the manifestation of an illusion.
It is impossible to distinguish your nature.
So you appear in countless figures ... 1

Devotees call you as per their preference,
But it makes no difference.
Shaiva's call you Shiva, Vedanti's call you Brahma.
Ramanuja's Sitapati And Vaishanava's Lakshmiapati.
Various methods of worship bestowed you these names.
But everywhere you remain the same.
You are Vishveshwar in Somanath, Kedar in Himalaya
Mahankal on the bank of river Kshipra ... 2

Naganath, Vaijanath, at Verul Ghrishneshwar
And Tryambak on the bank of the Godavari river.
You are Bhimashankar, Mallikarjuna and Rameshwar.
You are Shankar at Gokarna, Mahadeo at Shinganapur.
I bow down to all your forms, O benevolent God.
Please liberate me from the tough elements of nature.
O, consort of Girija you made Kubera wealthy.
Then why this hesitation for me? ... 3

Next year on Das Navami day
The saint came to Balapur once more.
Balkrishna and Sukhlal, the devotees
Were waiting for him there.
Shree Maharaj was accompanied
By Bhaskar, Balabhau, Pitambar,
Ganu, Jagadeo and Dindokar.
The celebration was enthusiastic ... 4

But fate had something in store for Bhaskar
A rabid dog bit him at the gathering.
People were afraid he would soon turn rabid
All possible treatment was given to him.
They all suggested that Bhaskar
Should go and see a doctor.
Bhaskar was disinclined and replied
That the saint would save him from disaster ... 5

When Bhaskar was brought to the saint
Balabhau narrated the entire incident.
Maharaj heard it all, smiled and said,
'None can escape the effect of murder, enmity and debts.
Bhaskar removed the evil from Sukhlal's cow.
That evil has entered in the dog now.
He requested me to remove the wickedness
So that he gets the milk for himself ... 6

You enjoyed the milk. Now you feel sorry for the bite.
Do you want me to save you? Come on. Be frank with it.
This dog bite is an excuse to end your life.
It is over and you have to leave this mundane strife.
I can save you if you want to live longer.
But that will be a sort of give and take affair.
In this illusive world this is the way they score.
Be quick. Tell me. You won't get this chance again ... 7

Said Bhaskar, 'I am your child.
Do whatever you think best for me
Saint Tukaram in one of his abhangs

Said that a mother knows everything
As to what is best for her offspring.
Therefore it is not for me to request.
Please do whatever you think best.
You are an ocean of knowledge.' ... 8

Truth always satisfies people who are candid.
Maharaj was happy as Bhaskar's reply was forthright.
Some devotees requested the saint to save Bhaskar
As he was one of the most dedicated disciples of the seer.
The saint said, 'O you gentlemen! Curb your ignorance.
Know that life and death are delusions.
No one is born and no one dies
Knowledge is essential to understand this illusion ... 9

One cannot be released from this life
Without suffering from the deeds of the past.
Deeds of the past bring you to the present
And again of the present take you to the next
And so on and on the cycle goes on.
How long should one continue in this procession?
Bhaskar has exhausted the effects of the past life
And is now due for liberation ... 10

Do not come in his way. Let him go.
It is difficult to get a devotee like him, I know.
This dog was his enemy in his previous birth.
It has bitten him in Balapur in this term.
The revenge is over but if this leaves bitterness
In Bhaskar, it will prompt him to retaliate.
This will take him to next birth again.
As of today Bhaskar is cleansed of his past misconduct ... 11

He is left with two months of his life.
I can save him from the effects of the dog bite.
If it won't be this way, he will have to come once more
And live on this earth for two more months further.'
Some people did not grasp the values in the statement.
But Balabhau could comprehend it and was happy.

He praised Bhaskar for his devotion to the saint
Thereby freeing him from cycle of life and death ... 12

When they returned to Shegaon monastery
Bhaskar told others the story
Of the happenings at Balapur on Das Navami.
With folded hands he appealed to the gentry,
'Shegaon is fortunate to have Shree Gajanan saint.
Let us honor his being here with a monument.
We are aware that he doesn't need one
But it is essential for the next generation ... 13

They have memorials for Saint Dnyaneshwar at Alandi,
At Sajjangad for Shree Ramadas Swami,
For Saint Tukaram at Dehu Nagari.
We should have one here for Saint Shree Gajanan.'
Though he said so he was not sure of their intentions.
Once during the absence of the Saint
He called many dignitaries to attend
A meeting to discuss and recommend ... 14

The attendees included Bankatlal, Hari Patil, Maruti,
Chandrabhan,
And among others Shripatrao Vavikar, Tarachand Sawkar.
Bhaskar said, 'I am here for two months only, not long.
I wish a grand memorial for the Saint be built at Shegaon.
I will leave this place with great happiness.
Please remember that service to a saint never goes waste.
He alone is the one who will fulfill your desires.
The memorial should draw all praise and prayer.' ... 15

Bhaskar was happy at their promise to fulfill his desire.
Day by day he felt elated
Like a child excited at the thought of a coming festival.
On the thirteenth day of waning moon in Magh
Said Saint Gajanan Maharaj,
'Bhaskar, For Mahashivaratri let us go to Trimbakeshwar.
As there on the banks of Godavari river
Resides Shiva, the Bhavaniwar ... 16

The Jyotirling there is pleasing to the eyes.
A glimpse of that destroys all wrongdoings.
Come, don't delay. Let us go and take a dip salutary
In the holy waters of the sacred Godavari.
On the Brahmagiri hill near the river
Grow medicinal herbs which are very rare.
Saint Gahininath who resides there
Knows them and the diseases they cure ... 17

We can get for you some medicament
For your anti-rabies treatment.
Bhaskar remarked, 'I don't need any medicines.
I am content with your blessings.
I was freed of the dog- bite poison at Balapur
And have to live for just another two months.
Therefore please let me stay here.
As for me you are Trimbakeshwar ... 18

Your feet are Godavari to me where I bathe.
I don't need any holy place to visit at this stage.'
'Though this may be true.' Said the Saint graciously,
'One shouldn't ignore the importance of a holy place.
Come, let us get ready to go now.
Take with us Pitambar and Balabhau.
They were all there at Trimbakeshwar
On Shivaratri day, festival of the year ... 19

They took bath at the Kushavart reservoir.
Had a glimpse of God Trimbakeshwar.
They offered worship to Gautami at Gangadwar,
Ma Nilambika, Nivrutti and Gahininath.
From there they all came to Nashik to meet Gopaldas
Who was sitting at the gate of the temple of Kalaram.
This was in Panchavati.
In front of it was a pipal tree ... 20

Maharaj sat on the platform below with his disciples.
Gopaldas was happy and said to his people,

'My brother has come from Vidarbha. He is Gajanan.
 Go, pay respects to him and offer him coconut and sugar.
 Put this garland around his neck.
 Though we are two different bodies we two are the same.'
 The disciples offered sweets and garlanded the Saint
 Who asked Bhaskar to give sweets to all those present ...
 21

'Our work at Panchavati is now over.
 Let us go to Nashik to meet Dhumal, the lawyer.'
 Many people came to have a glimpse of the saint.
 A few days later back to Shegaon they went.
 Zyamsingh of Adgaon Visited Shegaon
 With a request to Maharaj to visit Adgaon.
 Maharaj was not well- inclined to go.
 Zyamsingh went back and forth to and fro ... 22

He came back on Ram Navami
 After the worship he said, 'Come with me,
 At Adgaon we will observe Hanuman Jayanti.'
 Strange things happened during the tour
 One afternoon saint pushed Bhaskar to the floor.
 He sat on his chest and pounded him.
 People were aghast but no one dared say anything
 Until Balabhau intervened with a pleading ... 23

With all humility and a voice mellow
 He said, 'Please let him go.
 He is being scorched by the hot earth below.'
 Bhaskar said, 'Don't object to him.
 Let him do what he likes.
 This is not thrashing but just a game.
 Only those who understand the saint well
 Will be able to comprehend the same ... 24

When they returned to their residence
 Shree Gajanan Maharaj said to Balabhau,
 'Only two days are left for Bhaskar now.
 On this Panchami day he has to go.

The reason I thrashed him today
Is that he made me do the same to you one day.
To dispel the effect of that action
I beat him. There was no other intention ... 25

The festival culminated with distribution of Prasad.
When the day of Panchami dawned,
Shree Gajanan Maharaj said to Bhaskar'
'This is your date of departure. Thus now get prepared.'
To the people he asked to recite 'Vitthal Narayan'.
'This brother of you is now going to Vaikunth.
Worship him offering bukka and flowers ... 26

Bhaskar sat facing East in a Padmasan pose,
Concentrating his eyes on the tip of his nose
Surrendering his thoughts to the Almighty.
Worship was performed by the devotees.
The saint was looking happily at them
Chanting of prayers continued till then.
At mid day the saint said aloud 'Har Har'
To Vaikunth, with these words, went Bhaskar ... 27

Only those who are blessed by the saints
Go straight to Vaikunth from this place.
Devotees asked the Saint
About Bhaskar's final place of rest.
He decided on a site near Dwarkeshwar
Where they brought his remains in a palanquin
Decorated with banana leaves and flowers.
On route the devotees were singing prayers ... 28

When they reached the temple of Dwarakeshwar
All memorial services were performed for Bhaskar.
People present grieved at his departure,
Saying that he was the greatest devotee of the Saint ever.
From next day they started feeding of the poor.
Dwarkeshwar was one mile North of Adgaon
Situated between Akoli and Adgaon
Among trees of neem, pipal, audumber and mandar ... 29

Food offering called 'Sant Bhandara' for the people
Continued for ten days at Dwarakeshwar temple.
They all squatted in the shade of tall tamarind trees
To have their share of food offerings.
Crows in the woods troubled them to a great extent
By crowing, picking morsels and dropping waste.
Annoyed by the nuisance they called the Bhils
To shoot at them while the people ate ... 30

When he saw this the Maharaj said, 'Mind you,
Don't shoot the crows. They are here too
To share the offering with people like you.
Bhaskar's soul is in heaven. He is not in the queue.
Normally souls of the dead hover in the sky for ten days.
On the eleventh a ball of rice is offered to the crows.
When crows touch it to heaven the soul goes.
For Bhaskar this process was not required, of course ... 31

That's why the crows were angry
Bhaskar's soul had reached heaven already.
He had attained detachment while on this planet
And thus needed no such offerings for him to attain
liberation.
Such things are required for those entangled in desires
And are not favored for direct ascent to the heavenly sphere.
Crows want to convey by showing their rage
That they be given their share as in other cases ... 32

Please don't shoot. I will handle them.'
Thus saying the Saint turned to the crows,
'Don't come to this place from tomorrow.
As this may lower the prestige of Bhaskar's soul.
Eat today whatever you like to your hearts' content.
And don't come back from tomorrow ever again.'
Devotees were amazed to hear this exchange.
Nonbelievers thought of it as sheer nonsense ... 33

'How can birds obey orders of human beings?
They asked each other that evening.

Next day deliberately they went to the place
To gauge the effect of what the saint had said.
Not a single crow was spotted at the scene.
It was a great surprise to the skeptic beings.
They surrendered to Maharaj then and there.
No crows visited the place for next twelve years. ... 34

The Saint returned to Shegaon after fourteen days
With the remaining disciples in his entourage.
Since it was a time of drought
Wells were being dug all across.
At one site it went well until ten feet downward.
They struck a black rock which stopped the work.
Four holes were made in the rock for dynamite
And fastening ends of ropes inside ... 35

Gun powder was packed in those openings
With proper placements of ends of the strings.
Through them were passed small burning pipes
To slide down and ignite the stuffed dynamite.
Somehow the pipes got stuck in knots in between.
They did not slide down further.
Water was about to soak in the gun powder
Making it ineffective to explode under. 36

Someone was required to go and press
The pipes down to save the technical snug.
No one was ready to take such a risk.
The contractor asked Ganu Javar to go down quick.
His utter poverty made him obey the authority.
It is only a sheep which is killed before a Deity.
Ganu had great faith in Shree Gajanan.
Remembering the Saint in his heart he went down ... 37

He pulled the obstructed pipe which slid down
And touched the gun powder
Before he could pull another.
At the first explosion Ganu was trapped in the well.

He prayed to the Saint to save him from this hell.
The entire well got filled with smoke.
Ganu caught hold of a rock below
Behind which there was a cavern to hide ... 38

Remaining three dynamites exploded one after other
Throwing stones out scattered everywhere.
People thought that Ganu was shattered to pieces.
The contractor asked that his body be searched in debris.
Ganu heard him and shouted from inside the well,
'O mistry, Ganu is not dead. He is alive and well.
By the grace of Shree Gajanan he is safe in a cave.
A big rock is obstructing his safe escape.' ... 39

People rejoiced hearing Ganu's voice
And went down to clear the space
Ganu came up and bowed down
To Maharaj for his kind grace.
Maharaj smiled and said,
'The big stone which obstructed you, saved you
Don't repeat such feats again.
Don't touch an ignited pipe. You're here by God's grace ... 40

When people came to see Ganu he said,
'O Maharaj, It was you holding my hand
When the dynamite exploded,
Putting me safe in the cavern
And saving me from the jaws of death.
I am here by your kind grace.'
Such was the greatness of Maharaj
Which I have no words to express ... 41

Let this treatise
Bring happiness to the devotees.