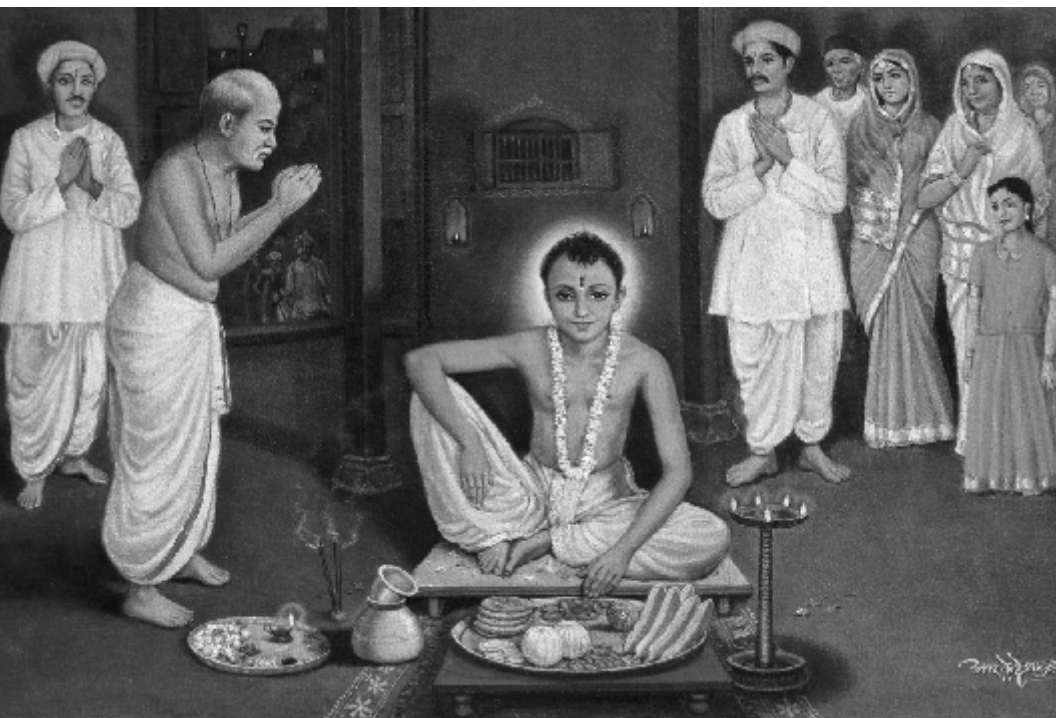


# Chapter Two



Devotees gathered from all over  
At Bankatlal's house,  
To have a glimpse of Gajanan  
Just as they congregate  
At religious places  
On auspicious dates.  
Gajanan at Shegon stood on a rock  
Of determination like  
Vithoba at Pandharpur

## Chapter 02

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Shree Ganeshaya namah

Bless me O God! from Chandrabhaga banks,  
Consort of Rukmini  
Lord of creation.  
Nothing is worthwhile without your sanction.  
Like a human body without a soul ... 1

A lake looks pleasant because of the water in it.  
The juicy core of a fruit  
Lends essence to the rugged cover.  
Friend of the destitute  
Help me in this endeavor ... 2

In the last chapter we read  
How the saint left abruptly.  
Bankatlal was miserable.  
The saint's radiant personality  
Got fixed in his memory.  
He pined for Shree Gajanan  
Forgetting food, water  
And even the daily routine ... 3

He could not share  
His mental disturbance with anyone.  
Not even with his father.  
His search continued  
Every day through out the Shegaon town ... 4

Bankat's father Bhavaniram  
Noticed anxiety writ large  
On his face every evening.  
He then asked Bankatlal  
What bothers you after all?  
With all mundane comforts  
Stacked around you ... 5

Bankatlal brushed aside the query  
And continued his search  
Until he told his neighbor  
Ramajipant Deshmukh, a pious citizen,  
Of his meeting and his ardent search  
For Shree Gajanan ... 6

Very few are blessed by good deeds of their past  
To get to see a saint so rare.  
Go. Search him out and take me to him.  
His sight I too desire ... 7

Days rolled by.  
A religious Kirtankar, Govindbua Taklikar  
Visited Shegaon's Shiv Mandir.  
Devotees from far and near  
Assembled there,  
Pious songs to hear ... 8

Bankat and his tailor friend Pitamber  
Were in the congregation  
Where accidentally  
They saw Shree Gajanan.  
They were delighted  
As when a miser strikes gold  
Or a peacock  
At the sight of a rain cloud ... 9

They approached the saint.  
Bowing to him they said  
'Do you want anything to eat.'

'Yes, some 'bhakri' and 'choon'  
From the gardener's House  
Would be a great treat.'  
From the gardener they brought him bhakari  
And seasoned chick pea flour choon ... 10

'Get me some water  
In this pitcher from that stream near'  
'No, no, the flow there is polluted.  
I'll get you some fresh from the reservoir.'  
'No! Dip the pitcher in the flow.  
Don't fill it by hand. Is it clear?' ... 11

After the discussions Pitamber was at the stream.  
There was no place for the pitcher to dip.  
Yet when it touched the surface of the river  
A hole formed in the riverted  
And fresh water gushed into the pitcher.  
It was a miracle ... 12

He tried it again and was surprised to see  
That when the pitcher touched the stream  
Water turned utterly clean.  
He did then realize that this was because  
Of the saint's blessing.  
The saint sipped the offering ... 13

'The food was great and the water clear.  
Get me supari as a mouth freshener.'  
Bankat gave him the nut and a coin.  
The coin He returned  
Saying, I'm not a businessman.  
I honor only devotion.  
Go Now. Listen to the kirtan' ... 14

Then He sat under a neem tree's shade  
Listening to Govindbua's talk.  
After Bua's prologue  
He recited the entire epilogue

With great aplomb.  
Surprise reigned all over.  
He who has delivered the script in this manner  
Must be a saint of great honor ... 15

Govindbua and the devotees  
Requested Him to come  
Inside the temple canopy.  
'You are the incarnation  
Of God Shankar come in here  
That's the place for you to be.'  
Said the Bua to the Saint ... 16

The Saint brushed him away.  
'Be firm on what you say.  
If as said God is every where  
Why do you force me to come in there?  
Practice what you preach.  
Don't be a preacher to merely earn a livelihood.  
Now go back and sing  
The stanzas untold' ... 17

'Residents of Shegaon'  
Declared Govindbua with great pride  
'Your good deeds of the past  
Have brought you a sage.  
He has arrived here as Vithoba in Pandharpur.  
He'll bring bliss everywhere' ... 18

Beaming with joy  
Bankat went home and told his father  
Of the entire episode.  
He got his father's consent to bring home the saint.  
Bankat went searching for him  
As the Saint was again missing ... 19

Four days after sun set  
The Sun was seen rising again  
In the form of Gajanan

By Bankat at the market.  
Cows gathered around him  
Thinking Him to be Krishna, the cowherd.  
Traders lit lamps  
As Bankat took him home ... 20

Bhavaniram was overjoyed  
At the sight of the Saint  
And offered him the swing as a seat.  
'You are God Shankar incarnate  
Arriving here at sunset.  
I wish to offer you food  
Which you kindly accept.  
Sages declare this as a lucky moment' ... 21

No food was ready except puries fried earlier.  
Bhavaniram offered them  
With fruits, almonds and dates.  
He worshipped the saint who ate all the offering  
In the served plate ... 22

He spent the night there.  
As the sun came up  
Bhavaniram arranged for his shower  
With plenty of water, fragrant oils and soap.  
He was draped in a yellow silk robe  
And offered a seat and flowers ... 23

He was decorated with garlands,  
Sandalwood paste  
And was offered fruits for breakfast.  
The gathering at door was great  
As for Krishna at Dwarka Bet.  
It was Monday, God Shankar's day ... 24

Each devotee fulfilled his desire  
Except Ichcharam, Bankat's cousin  
Who kept a fast until evening.  
At sunset Ichcharam took bath

And approached Gajanan Maharaj,  
An avatar of Shivashankar  
And asked him to have food  
As he wouldn't eat before the saint did ... 25

A plate full of food  
Was brought by Ichcharam.  
It had rice and vegetables, Varieties of sweets.  
As much fare, as four men could eat ... 26

Said Gajanan to himself,  
'Ganpya! You young man.  
You eat too much. You have been greedy.  
How much would you eat now  
On a full belly?  
Try and swallow all this up  
People are awaiting to see you gulp ... 27

He ate it all.  
Not even a grain of salt was left in the plate.  
To show the result of over eating  
He threw it all up.  
This was an act of winning over greed  
As saint Ramdas once did in the past ... 28

Devotees cleaned the place  
And gave him a bath.  
He was offered an honoured seat.  
They thronged and sang together  
The saint joined them  
With a hymn 'Gan gan ganat bote.'  
'All existence is part of the eternal' ... 29

The Saint earlier had no name.  
Brahma for that matter has none.  
They started calling him Gajanan  
On the basis of his favorite Chant.  
Saints are engrossed  
In their own thoughts

And are always absorbed in trance.  
Their joy is beyond compare ... 30

Devotees gathered from all over  
At Bankatlal's house,  
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At religious places  
On auspicious dates.  
Gajanan at Shegaon stood on a rock  
Of determination like Vithoba at Pandharpur ... 31

What is caste or class for him  
Who has attained salvation?  
The Rays of the sun  
Does not discriminate amongst people.  
More devotees came to Shegaon.  
Care was taken of  
Their food and shelter ... 32

How things were managed  
Is beyond description.  
Saint Gajanan is potent.  
He guides me in this narration.  
His routine was irregular.  
Sometimes a shower, sometimes a swim  
All as per his whim ... 33

Once in a while He smoked  
Fulfilling a devotee's wish  
But it was never an addiction.  
Let us move on  
To the next chapter.  
Let it be of interest  
To all the readers ... 34