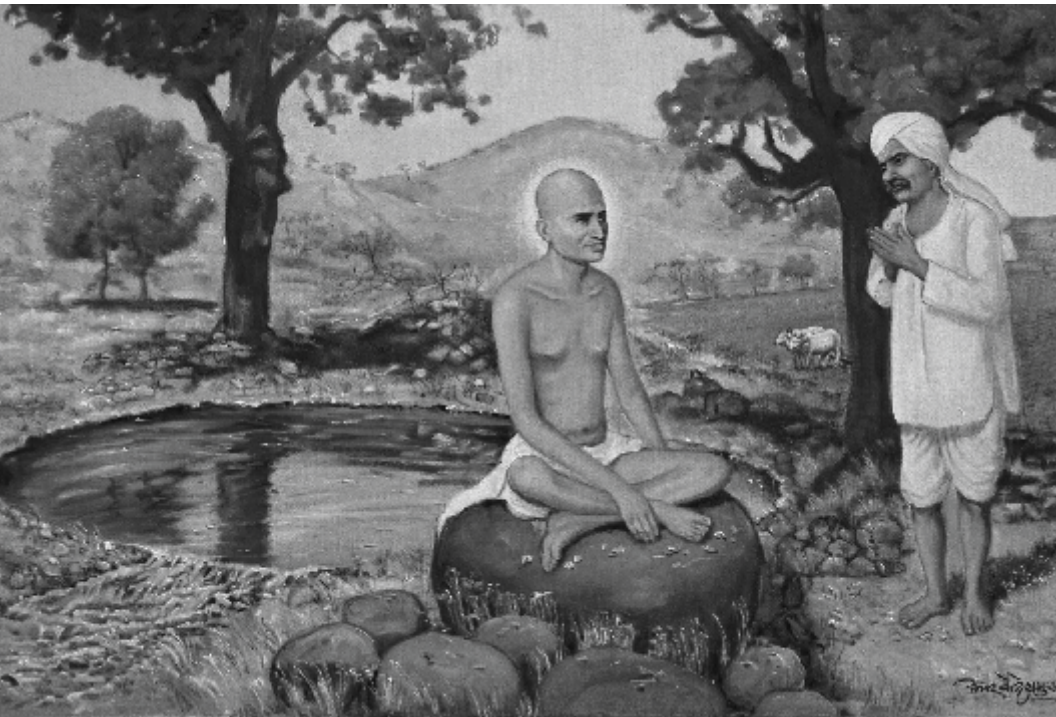


Chapter Five



He peeped into the well
It was completely dry.
He sat under a tree on a rock nearby.
With closed eyes he mediated a while
Solemnly imploring Almighty
To fill in the well for the community.
He invoked God in all His names.
'Please fill in water in this dry space.'

Chapter 05

Shree Ganeshaya namah.

O eternal, unconquerable entity.
Full of happiness and mercy.
I bow down to you and seek your protection.
I am just a browbeaten sinner
Devoid of authority to sing laurels to you.
So help me Almighty ... 1

But I know one thing
People in authority go to any level
To rescue the helpless and poor.
God Shivshankar Mahesh
Smeared his body with ash.
The smallness of the small
Does not bother the big at all ... 2

I am at your mercy and bow down to you.
Mother always fulfills the wants of a child.
I am solely depending on you
To complete this treatise ... 3

Devotees thronged to Shegaon
To revere the Saint.
His reputation had spread far and wide.
He wanted to keep away from it all
And walked away to the woods
Without leaving any clue
About his whereabouts ... 4

One day he walked away
To an ancient temple of Shiva,
An age old structure
In the forest near Pimpalgaon
By the side of a stream
And sat steady in the hall
In padmasana pose
Away from the worldly din ... 5

A group of cowherds
Brought their cattle
For their routine gulp of water.
They entered the temple
When the cows were slurping
And next to God Shiva
They saw the saint sitting ... 6

All these years
They saw none sitting there.
His eyes were closed.
He was in the padmasana pose.
Some of them sat in front of him.
His eyes were still closed
He did not speak to them ... 7

They couldn't understand
The reason of it all.
They brought him some bread
Thinking that he was starving.
They tried to wake him up
From his trance and were surprised
That there was no response ... 8

They touched his body
It was warm. He was alive.
No cause for alarm.
Some thought him to be a phantom.
How can that be
In a holy temple? ... 9

May be he is God Himself
They further thought
And considered themselves
A fortunate lot.
They worshipped him
With water and flowers.
Washed his feet,
Offered onion and bread ... 10

They sat around him and sang prayers.
Then they remembered
That it was time to go back.
The elders will worry over the delay
And come searching for the children.
The calves will start lowing
For the mother cows' return ... 11

They went home and told their parents
About the strange appearance
Of a pious saint
At the old temple of Shiva
Which changed the status for a while.
People of the village
Went there early next day ... 12

The saint was still there
In his trance in the same position as he was.
Food offered earlier was still lying there.
Some thought he was a yogi
Others called him an incarnation of God ... 13

On one point they agreed
That the saint was in a trance.
They remembered Saint Jallandar
Who stayed in a trance for twelve years.
They brought the saint to Pimpalgaon
With great pomp and flare.
On a special palanquin
They took him there ... 14

They scattered vermillion powder
And various flowers on him
On the way to Pimpalgaon.
A special seat was arranged for him
In the temple of Hanuman.
Since he did not come out of trance
The villagers decided to fast
Until he returned to awareness ... 15

The Saint immediately opened his eyes
And came out of his stupor.
Jubilant villagers bowed down to him,
And got him food as an offering.
News of the saint coming to Pimpalgaon
Spread in the neighborhood
And reached Shegaon ... 16

In Tuesday's weekly market crowd
They talked of the Saint and his whereabouts.
Bankatlal and his wife rushed to Pimpalgaon.
They requested the Saint
With folded hands
To come back to Shegaon ... 17

'How can a child be separated from his mother?
Devotees are on fast there
To ensure that you come back earlier.
I will end my life now
If you don't come back with me from here.'
On hearing this, saint boarded the cart
Which Bankat had brought ... 18

People remembered the story of Akrur
Taking back Lord Krishna from the town of Gokul.
Bankatlal said,
'The Saint is not going far away.
He will be in Shegaon,
Just a few miles away ... 19

The Saint would go to them if he decided to do so.'
Bankatlal being a money lender
People owed him money
And did not dare to say no
To their Shegaon journey.
The Saint said, 'Bankat. 'This is no way
For a lender to take things away' ... 20

'When I look to your affairs
I feel scared to be there.
Lakshmi, Goddess of wealth, mother of all people,
Consort of Vishnu from the trinity
Is locked in your captivity.
I got frightened and ran away
Seeing you treat her this way.' ... 21

Bankatlal replied with a laugh
'Mother Lakshmi cannot be impaired by locks.
She stays with me because you are here.
A child feels safe under mother's care.
Your sacred feet are the real wealth to me.
I do not care for anything else.
That's why I came to Pimpalgaon
To bring you back to this dwell.' ... 22

'Nothing here belongs to me, it's all yours
How can a watchman stop the owner
From entering his own quarters?
You may do whatever you like
Go where ever you want to go
Bless the whole world but don't forget us
Simple folks of town Shegaon' ... 23

'Cows go out in the morning
But return to their shed in the evening.
That's what we request you to do.
That's our earnest entreaty.'
Thus Bankatlal brought the Saint back
To the lovely town of Shegaon

Where he stayed for a few days
And then went away ... 24

It so happened that one fine morning
The Saint left for Adgaon without an inkling
Like transporting of God Hanuman
With the speed of a windy storm.
It was Vaishakh in summer.
Water had dried up everywhere.
At hot noon he reached village Akoli,
Lips dry with thirst and perspiring profusely ... 25

He looked around for water.
A farmer named Bhaskar
Was working in his field further.
A farmer toils hard to produce food for all
Facing all vagaries of weather.
He is an important member
Of the society in general ... 26

Water was so scarce in Akoli.
One may get Ghee more easily.
Bhaskar had brought for himself
A pitcher full of water and some bread.
These were kept under a shrub.
The saint asked of him just a few sips to gulp.
'Please give me water. I am thirsty.' ... 27

'Please don't say no. It is considered a pious deed
To give water to the thirsty indeed.
In scorching summer
Wealthy people open water booths
For travelers on highways to quench their thirst.
A gulp or two is what I need.' ... 28

Bhaskar replied,
'How can I reckon it a good turn
To offer water to a useless person
Unmindful of his naked condition?

Religious books relate a good action
To offerings made to orphans,
Disabled and to persons
To help redeem a social ill ... 29

It is a sin to quench your thirst
As you are one of the undeserving people around.
No one will ever nourish a snake
On humanitarian grounds.
Or offer protection to a thief in his own house.
You are getting fat begging from door to door.
A burden to society, nothing more ... 30

I have brought this water on my head
For me and not you, O dumb-head.
I won't give you a drop so walk away you flop.
Because of lazy people like you
Thriving in our society
We are defamed to a great extent
In the world community ... 31

The saint smiled and walked his way
And saw a well not far away.
Seeing him thus walking by Bhaskar yelled out aloud
'That well is not worth a try.
It is completely dry.
There is no other around us
Within a two mile radius. ... 32

The saint said, 'If that be right
I'll try to get water in it.
I am aware that you deserving people
Face great torture without water.
Let me try something in society's interest.
God will help me
If my intentions are honest.' ... 33

He peeped into the well. It was completely dry.
He sat under a tree on a rock nearby.

With closed eyes he meditated a while
Solemnly imploring Almighty
To fill in the well for the community.
He invoked God in all His names.
'Please fill in water in this dry space.' ... 34

'People look worried
There is not a drop left in any of the wells.
All human efforts have failed.
Please come to their rescue
Impossible things you can do.
You saved cats from a burning furnace
And emerged from a pillar at Pralhad's request ... 35

'You devoured twelve villages
Around Gokul as Vaishawanar.
You lifted a mountain as Murari
On your little finger.
You posed as an untouchable for Sant Damajipant
And tended the cattle
Of Sant Chokhamela.' ... 36

You protected the birds of sant Savata Mali
And created water for Namadeo
In a hot Marwad alley.
God Almighty! If you so desire
You can fill this well with water.'
His invocation went on fervently
And a spring of water shot up in the well ... 37

God's creativity has no limits
He can craft what He thinks fit.
The saint quenched his thirst
With water from the well.
Bhaskar could not believe
What he had seen.
How can a well dry for twelve years
Be now full surging with water? ... 38

It means that the person whom he sleighted
Was not an ordinary man but a saint.
Realizing the fault Bhaskar ran to him
And on his feet fell prostrate.
'Pardon me.' He said, 'I am an ignorant child.
I didn't know you well
And insulted you wildly.' ... 39

When milkmaids insulted Krishna
He did not take them seriously.
Please pardon me thus
And don't deal with me sternly.
External appearances are deceptive.
I was carried away by that.
My ignorance is wiped away
With the miracle you performed.' ... 40

'I realize your powers
And will never leave your feet.
You as a mother should not desert me.
I recognize that mundane things are a deceit.'
'Don't lament.' Said the seer,
'I created water here to avoid you bringing it
From places not near ... 41

Don't give up your pursuits.
This water is for you.
Cultivate rich fields
As you used to do.'
'Don't tempt me, O saint!
Said Bhaskar in humiliation
'I was like the dry well.
You have filled it with comprehension.' ... 42

'This is a fine spring of faith.
With this water I will grow
A fruit garden of deep devotion.
O saint! Bless me so.

I will plant trees of good moral education,
Flowers and plants of determin'd action.
I will do away with the transitory attachment
Enticing me in worldly temptation.' ... 43

Look at the transformation
That came about in Bhaskar's action
With the brief association
Of a saintly incarnation.
Sant Tukaram in his dissertation
Writes of the effects of a saint's darshan
It's worthwhile reading that script
For your own benefit ... 44

News of a dry well filling with water
Spread to the villages like wild fire.
People rushed to the Saint to see him first
And went to the well to quench their thirst
Like flies dashing to the honey jar
Or ants to a lump of sugar.
The water was cool tasty and clear
Sweeter than the heavenly nectar ... 45

They all cheered the saint
Again and again.
Instead of going to Adgaon
He returned to Shegaon
With Bhaskar.
May this treatise
Be your real guide
And make you prosper ... 46