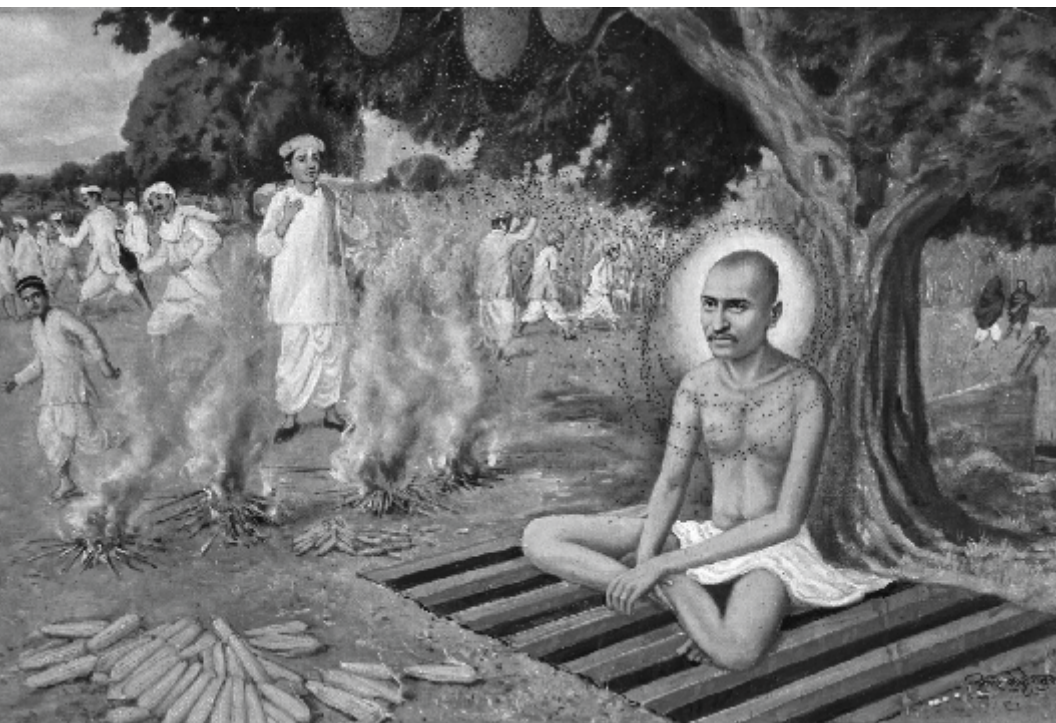


Chapter Six



Everyone loves his own life.
It was true with these people.
Saint Gajanan sat nonchalant
In this entire scramble.
Deeply engrossed in his reflections
He thought of the bees, beehives,
Of himself, the guests and the corn
Saying, 'I am the bee and the stinging thorn

Chapter 06

Shree Ganeshay namah

O emblem of all good fortune
It is an established dictum
That a saint's kind blessings
Drive away inauspicious happening.
I have come to your door
With great belief and hopes.
If you fail me, it would bring disrepute
To you and all seers ... 1

God Madhava, don't get upset with me.
Uphold the prestige of this innocent child.
Kindly remember that they hold the mother
Answerable for any shortcomings
Of her young toddler ... 2

Once Bankatlal organized festivities
At his farm for his friends to enjoy
Roasted corn on the cob.
Saint Gajanan was an honoured invitee,
The main attraction at the party.
They sat near the well, age old
Holding ample water in its fold ... 3

Tall tamarind trees stood around
Looking down on the guests squatting on the ground.
Fire was ignited
At a dozen places to roast the corn pieces.
Smoke rose to the skies Disturbing the beehives ... 4

Wild bees from the trees with their fiery sting
Swung down hovering
On the guests eagerly waiting
Their turn for the cob.
Instead they had to run amuck
Covering their faces with blanket veils ... 5

Everyone loves his own life.
It was true of these people.
Saint Gajanan sat nonchalant in this entire scramble.
Deeply engrossed in his reflection
He thought of the bees, beehives,
Of himself, the guests and the corn
Saying, 'I am the bee and the stinging thorn ... 6

I am the beehive too and a part of this show,
I am the corn and the eater also.
All this is part of the cosmic entity
Wherever in the universe you go' ... 7

The bees converged on him
And covered him like a blanket.
The casing was so perfect
That not an inch of him was left.
They stung him every where
With their deadly barbs.
The guests watched this helplessly
Unable to lend a helping hand ... 8

Bankatlal was sorry that he had brought
Saint Gajanan to the farm.
The saint could know with his divine insight
That Bankatlal was rushing
To save him from this plight.
He was happy that there was one disciple
Trying to save him from this debacle ... 9

He looked at the bees and said,
'Now is the time for you to go and take rest.

The bees flew back to their hives.
It was just a minute's flight.
The saint smiled and said,
'Bankat, you see, on me
'You gave a good feast to the bees ... 10

Remember, in times of calamity
No one helps except the Almighty.
When the poisonous flies dived down to attack
The party lovers fled away in a pack.
These selfish people love good food and sweets
And ran away
When the bees came to sting ... 11

Said Bankat with an apology,
'I am responsible for this tragedy.
To pull out the burning barbs forthwith
Shall I summon an expert goldsmith?'
The saint said, 'This is nothing bizarre.
Stinging is a part of bees nature.
They behaved accordingly
The sting does not affect me ... 12

They are a part of God's creation
I too am, is His incarnation.
Just tell me how water can ever harm water.'
Bankat was happy at this awakening.
He got a goldsmith to pull out the stings.
The saint laughed and said,
'You would not be able to see them ... 13

In such a case it is clear
That they cannot be pulled out by pincers.'
He then took a deep breath
And held it up for a while.
The sting popped out of his body,
Leaving the observers breathless.
They were glad to realize the greatness
Of Gajanan the majestic saint ... 14

The crowd reassembled.
The fiery bees were quiet.
Maize corns were roasted without any quagmire.
Guests enjoyed the feast to a great extent
And went home in the evening
With great content ... 15

Shree Narasingji a Maratha saint
Of great distinction had become one with God
Because of his devotion.
He was the disciple
Of Kotashya Ali and stayed in dense woods
Not accessible easily ... 16

Biography of Shree Narsingaji
Is narrated in Bhaktiilamrut pages
Where details of his great deeds
Are narrated in detail.
The forest lay near Akot
Just thirty six miles to the North-east
Of Bankatlal's domicile ... 17

The woods were deep and dense
With tall trees, wild grass and creepers,
Inhabited by snakes and similar creatures.
In such a dreadful forest
Shree Narasingji stayed alone
In complete seclusion.
Gajanan went to see him on his own ... 18

Water merges with water
Like things mix with each other
Unlike things don't do it ever.
Looking at Shree Gajanan
Narasingji was happy beyond depiction.
One was Hari, the other was Har
One was Rama, the other Muralidhar.
One was sage Vashishtha, other Parashar ... 19

One, the banks of Ganges, other Godavari
One Kohinoor, other kousthubhamani
One Vainateya, other son of Anjani.
When they met they were very happy.
They sat next to each other
And exchanged experiences
Said the saint to Narasinga
'In picking family life you did well.' ... 20

Renouncing that I followed the path of yoga
To know the ultimate reality, Brahma.
The path of yoga has many strange things
Incomprehensible to human beings.
To hide them, on many occasions
I behave like a crazy person.
There are three paths to ultimate reality
Action, devotion and yogic ability ... 21

Apparently they look as three different paths
But in reality they have the same goal.
Yoga is suppression of activities
Of body, mind and will
So that the self may realize its distinction
From them and attain liberation.
If a yogi feels proud of his path
He will remain away from the ultimate fact ... 22

When you take up the yogic path
Remain detached like the drop of water on a lotus leaf
To understand the principle behind it.
If you accept family life
Be like a pebble in the river
Remaining wet all the while
Yet not soaking up a drop of water ... 23

Remain free from expectations
With complete concentration
On the master of this creation.
Then nothing is impossible

You, I and God are one
The people around are not different.
Such should be your behavior
If you pick this as your option ... 24

With great modesty said Shree Narasingji,
'I am grateful to you for meeting me.
Prapanch, this business of life
Is very much unreal like the shadow at noontime.
I will follow your kind counsel.
Please come to me again and again ... 25

Everything is predestined in this world
Yet we have to perform our duty as well
As is prescribed by the Almighty.
I request you come here again.
As the younger brother it would be my gain
I will await you like Bharat at Nandigram
Waiting for his brother Shree Ram ... 26

With your yogic power
It is easy for you to be here
Without touching your feet anywhere.
You can travel anywhere you like
The three worlds to you are all alike'.
With great affection they discussed
Various points of importance over and over ... 27

This is the way real saints behave.
While hypocrites fight and rave.
Don't select them as a guru ever.
They breed greed. Be aware.
They don't have any powers
To guide a shattered boat to the pier.
They do gather a lot of publicity
Shun them with prudence and discrimination ... 28

Setting up a monastery or composing poetry
Do not raise a man to sainthood

It needs knowledge and a selfless mood.
Can anyone accept gold plated brass
As a real piece of gold?
Can anyone take a woman of disrepute
To be the queen of his household? ... 29

Good consciousness and good outlook
Stay with one who rejects a crook.
The two saints who met were real and rare.
News went round to Akot about their meeting there
Like the confluence of Godavari
And Bhagirathi river ... 30

With flowers and coconuts
They rushed to the forest.
By the time they were there
Saint Gajanan had already left
With the kind permission of Saint Narasingaji
Disappointing the devotees
Of Akot and thereabouts ... 31

In one of his wanderings with his followers
Shree Gajanan reached a town
Called Shivar, on the banks of Chadrabhaga
Near Daryapur, Vidharbha
Not of Pandharpur
Abode of God Vithoba ... 32

Herein lived a learned Brahmin
With Vrajabhushan as his name.
He had mastered four languages
And was famous all over the place.
A devotee of Sun God
Every morning as a habit
He bathed in Chandrabhaga
And offered prayers to God of light ... 33

He was respected by learned men.
As if a gift of his daily prayers

The saint went to the river near Shivar.
When Vrajabhushan came for his routine bath
He saw the saint on the bank.
Dawn was invading the blue
Birds were chirping with joy
Welcoming the lord of the sky ... 34

Darkness disappeared like fools
From a congregation of learned men.
As the Sun peeped up the horizon
The saint sat engrossed in his blissful domain
Surrounded by disciples as rays of light.
Vrajabhushan saw saint Gajanan,
A shining form with long arms
Eyes focused on nose in concentration ... 35

Vrajabhushan's joy knew no bounds
He rushed to the revered saint
Washed his feet and offered worship
Bowed down to him with great respect
Reciting the twelve names of Sun,
Performing aarati and singing prayers in verse
Which went thus: ... 36

'I got the reward of my penance
By a glimpse of your feet divine.
I have been offering prayers to Sun God
I see Him here now. What a delight.
O Gajanan! You are the Brahma,
Full of knowledge and support this universe.
You take births again and again ... 37

All my concerns have vanished
As I see you.
Bestow all your kindness to me.
This is all I ask of you.'
Saint Gajanan hugged him
As a mother to the child and placing hand on his head
Spoke to him some words of choice ... 38

'You will be respected and loved by people.
Don't relinquish the path of duty.
Don't think of rituals as meaningless.
Yet don't get involved in them completely.
Do your duty unmindful of the fruits.
This is the way to meet God
And keep your outlook unblemished ... 39

Hold these words in your mind.
Now go home.
I will always meet you in your meditations.'
Thus saying the saint gave him
Some coconut pieces and travelled back
With followers to Shegaon ... 40

Shegaon was Shivgaon formerly
But in due course changed its name
Which eventually stayed.
Seventeen Patils lived in this place.
The Saint returned to Shegaon but not for long.
He visited many places
As he moved along ... 41

Summer passed by. It was Shravan,
Month of rain and festivals.
Annual celebrations were on at Hanuman temple.
Families of Patils, all devotees
Gathered under the temple's canopy.
Patil being a powerful authority
People cooperated in all his activity ... 42

This month-long function
Had all religious aspects,
Abhishek, prayers and feasts
For devotees to their hearts content.
Khandu Patil a noble person
Was the leader of the function.
Authority is like a tiger skin
And becomes terror to people and kin ... 43

Yet people united achieve a lot
Which a king alone cannot.
The Saint came to the temple
To attend festivals in Shravan.
He said to Bankatlal, 'Now hear
From now I will be staying here.
Hope you don't mind this choice
Seers don't live in a friend's house ... 44

I have relinquished all worldly ties
And will live in a temple all my life.
That doesn't mean I ignore you at all.
I am here at your beck and call.
Shankaracharya moved from place to place
Machchindra and Jalandar avoided houses.
Shivaji's mentor Ramdas saint
Selected Sajjangad as his place ... 45

Think over it and don't say no.
After all this place is yours too.'
Bankatlal was helpless
And gave his consent.
Maharaj came to the temple
And every one rejoiced.
Bhaskar Patil stayed with him.
He enjoyed the choice ... 46

May this composition help seekers
To reach the feet of the saint.