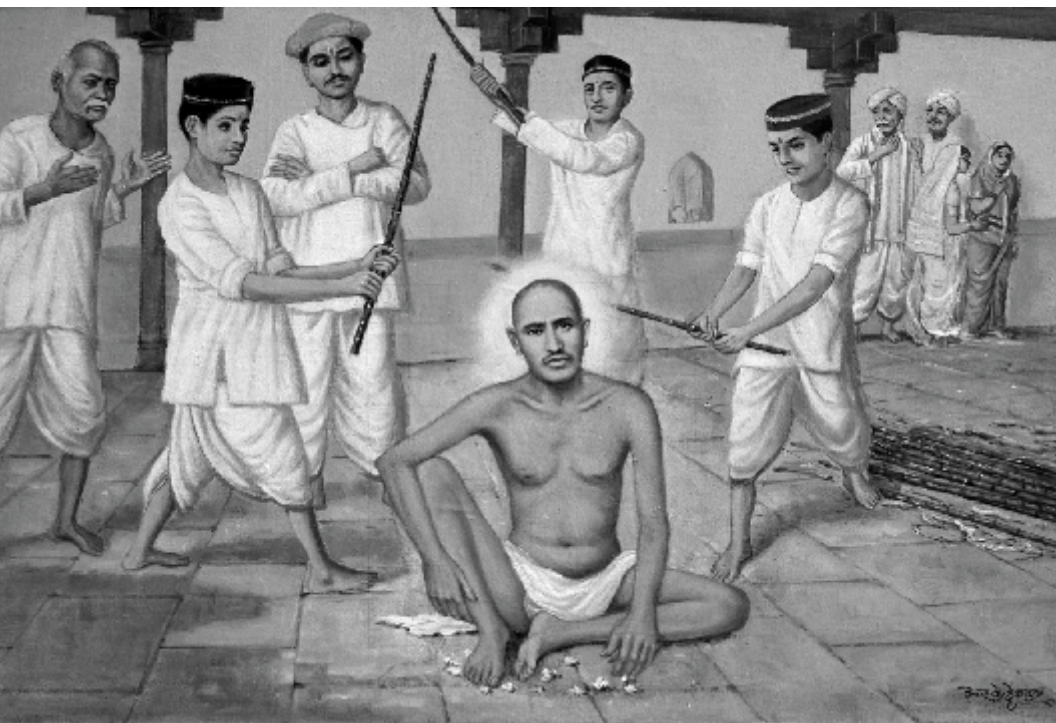


Chapter Seven



The saint smiled unflappably.
No scars were seen on his body
Looking to the fact the rowdy boys got afraid
And bowed down to him falling prostrate.

Chapter 07

Shree Ganeshay namah

Glory to thee O Rama!
God of the color of clouds.
Consort of Sita, Son of Dasharath
And safe haven of saints galore.
With your blessings O Rama,
Monkeys defeated Ravana in Lanka.
Victory follows him
Who enjoys your blessings ... 1

He who gets your favors is revered by people
How so ever low he may be in his social status.
Am I suitable for such favor?
My condition is most pitiable.
I lack knowledge and devotion
My mind is unsteady and suspicious ... 2

With various desires haunting my mind
How can I expect you to be kind?
Logically it may sound alright
But the scripts point out
That you have pardoned many a sinner.
Liberating the pious is no wonder
But real greatness lies in saving the fallen ... 3

There is none greater than you
I invoke you to pardon my failings
And sanctify me O God!

With your blessings.
I completely surrender myself to you ... 4

The celebrations went full swing
With all the people at the temple
Khanderao from the Patil family
Was organizing the festival.
The Patil clan enjoyed a great heritage
Of wealth, land and property.
Devotion to sages and saints
Was a part of their legacy ... 5

With all the authority of a village head
Khanderao celebrated the event as said.
He came from the lineage of Mahadaji
Who had sons named Kadtaji and Kukaji.
Kukaji, the younger was a devotee
Of Vithoba, the Pandharpur Deity.
The family enjoyed blessings of Gomaji
A saint from village Nagzari ... 6

Kadtaji had six sons. They were Khanderao, Ganapati
Narayan Maruti, Hari and Krishnaji. Kukaji had none.
When Kadtaji died
The children were brought up by Kukaji as his own.
It was a rich family in the town ... 7

Kukaji brought prosperity to the Patil family.
Khanderao became the head
After Kukaji's death.
Khanderao had authority and prosperity.
Body building was the brothers' hobby.
They played games with swords and sticks.
Hari amongst them was a great athlete ... 8

People tried to please the Patil clan
Though the festival was for God Hanuman.
Patils had an irrational attitude
Which drove the town into annoying disputes.

Khanderao abused each one in the village
Not sparing even a saint or a sage.
When the brothers went to the temple
They started teasing Saint Gajanan ... 9

They fashioned indecent puns
Using the name of Saint Gajanan.
They challenged him to a wrestling fight
Asking him to prove his saintly might.
They invited the Saint to the stand
Or face a beating at their hands.
The Saint laughed at their folly
Bhaskar said, 'Let us go back to Akoli ... 10

Let us be away from these insolent boys
Corrupted by power, money and might.'
The Saint said, 'Bhaskar wait a bit
Patil brothers are all my devotees.
All they lack is decorum and modesty.
To understand them watch them closely.
Notice their affectionate liaison
Each of them is like my son ... 11

They enjoy blessings from various saints
Power is often accompanied by rudeness.
How can a tiger behave like a cow
Or burning fire be as cold as snow
How can the edge of a sword be mellow?
This attitude will eventually go
Like the turbidity of monsoon water
Getting clearer with the approach of winter ... 12

One day Hari came to the temple ground
And challenged the saint to a wrestling bout.
'Don't keep chanting your favorite hymn
'Gana gana ganat bote.' O! What a rhyme.
Since you are the heart of all respect
I want to test you in all aspects.

If you defeat me in wrestling you get a prize.'
The saint nodded to accept and sat quiet ... 13

He said, 'Come on, you are very strong
Pull me up from this position where I belong.
Hari used his strength all the way
But couldn't move the saint an inch away.
He tried all the tricks of wrestling
Until his tired body started perspiring.
He soon realized that the saint had won
Though his build looked a thin and frail one ... 14

The saint was a great mountain of strength
Undisturbed like a mighty elephant
Underrating the might of other creatures.
Hari felt like a jackal there.
Or like a barking dog before a tiger.
He had never bent down to a saint's feet
But now was the time to accept defeat
In utter surrender to the sacred seer ... 15

The saint looked up and said with a smile
'Defeat me or get me the promised prize.
Wrestling is the best of manly game form
Krishna in childhood played it with Balram.
They killed Mushtik and Chanur
Guards of Kansa, the wicked ruler.
Good health is the best wealth. Second is land,
And then money which all should have ... 16

Krishna living on banks of Yamuna
Made his playmates strong.
That's the way you do it in Shegaon.
Make them sturdy with great aplomb.
This is the only prize I am seeking.'
Hari astutely said, 'It can only be with your blessings.'
This was the moment when he learnt restraint.
And started behaving properly with the Saint ... 17

His brothers teased him for his weakness
And said, 'We are sons of Patil. Don't forget.
We enjoy the best authority in this region.
Why should we bow down to this naked person?
He is crazy gathering undeserved attention.
We have to curb this dumb orientation.
Let us now take immediate steps
And stop this nonsense in public interest.' ... 18

It is our duty to caution the precincts.
Phonies dupe folks by posing as saints.
Even gold has to stand the test of purity.
The sugarcane incident proved Tukaram's veracity.
Dyneshwar made a mark making a buffalo sing.
Gajanan has to prove himself by similar testing.
He has to attest his mettle in the popularity test.
Why don't we test him to that effect? ... 19

Thus saying they came to the temple
With a bundle of solid sugar cane.
Hari Patil was quiet and stayed away
But others were boisterous all the way.
They called the saint obscene names
And said, 'If you want to taste sugar cane
You have to bear a beating by them
But no scars could be seen anywhere.' ... 20

We will acclaim you as a yogi
If the thrashing shows no marks.
If it does then of course, you are a quack.
The saint smiled at the children's prattle.
Maruti said it seems he is baffled.
Ganapati said silence means half consent
They all started beating the reverend.
Except Bhaskar all devotees dispersed ... 21

He appealed to them to stop the torture
And spare the saint of benevolent nature.
Your family enjoys a great reputation

Be kind to all who are under your protection.
He may not be a saint as you believe
But spare him as an innocent man on the street.
Brave hunters attack fierce tigers
They don't shoot innocent grasshoppers ... 22

King Ravan's Lanka was set afire by Hanuman.
He never touched shanties of poor men.
The boys advised Bhaskar to stay off the fight
We are just testing his saintly might.
People here call him a great saint
We are assessing his saintly traits.
They continued thrashing him wild
Like pods in the field for the yield ... 23

The saint smiled unflappably.
No scars were seen on his body
Looking to the fact the rowdy boys got afraid
And bowed down to him falling prostrate.
Saint said, 'Boys your hands must be aching
I will compress juice for you. It's refreshing.'
He squeezed the canes with his bare hands
And gave juice to the boys as refreshment ... 24

How could he squeeze juice without a device?
This can be possible only with yogic exercise.
With this he wanted people to recognize
That yoga can improve national might.
The boys bowed down and ran back to Khanderao.
They told him of happenings and the saint of Shegaon.
With this Khanderao started visiting the saint
But his rustic language did not change ... 25

He never used honorific terms for any one.
Generally singular words are used on two occasions.
As in affection of mother and the offspring
Or by an authority to a menial under him.
Khanderao reckoned each one as his subject
And spoke to them with little respect.

That's why he addressed the saint in diminutives
But inflicting insult was not his motive.
His heart was like coconut with a hard shell,
Soft inside with sweet core and tasty kernel ... 26

Once Kukaji called Khandu Patil and said,
You speak of Gajanan as a great saint.
As you know day by day I am growing old,
I would like to see a grandson before I go.
Why do you stand dumb before him?
Go request the Saint to bless you with an offspring.
If he is really a seer
He will fulfill your desire ... 27

Khanderao approached the saint in a while.
Said uncle Kukaji is getting old
He wants to see the face of my child.
If you enjoy powers to fulfill devotees' desires
Why not bless me with a child as a favor?
Said the saint, 'Good! You ask for something
With all the wealth and power at your command.
You order everyone then why not the creator?' ... 28

'This is something beyond human volition,'
Said Khandu. 'Crops need water for growth.
Bringing rain down is beyond human try
That is why in famine the land is dry.
Human efforts bring fruitful results
When rain pours down on the thirsty fields.
That is the case with me O saint!
So bestow all your favors on me.' ... 29

The saint smiled and said, 'You beg for a child.
Since it is asking for alms
I bless you with a son.
You have to name him as Bhikya.
It is not all in my hands but I will request the Almighty
To fulfill your desires. ... 30

In turn you have to host a mango juice meal
To all the Brahmins in the town every year
As a token of your gratitude to the Creator.'
Khandu accepted the proposal and back he went
To tell Kukaji of the conversation with the saint.
Kukaji was happy. In due time a son was born
To Khandu's wife, bringing joy all around.
Kukaji's happiness knew no bounds ... 31

Khandu distributed sugar and wheat to the poor
And sweets to the children of Shegaon.
The child was named as Bhiku
Who grew up like the waxing moon.
As promised Khandu fed Brahmins with mango juice
And the practice continues with the descendents.
By the grace of the saint the child started crawling
In the house of Khandu Patil ... 32

This irritated the Deshmukh family of Shegaon
With Patils they were at daggers drawn.
The feud was going on for long
Between these two families strong.
They hunted for a chance to hurt each other.
They fought like two Pandits, two ministers,
Two fighters, two mechanics
Or two dogs facing each other ... 33

After seeing the grandchild, Kukaji died
On the banks of Bhima at Pandharpur.
Khandu was sad to lose his protector.
Looking to his state of mind
Deshmukhs grabbed the chance
To put the Patils in danger.
The details will follow
In the subsequent chapter ... 34

Please listen to this treatise to
Bring to you auspicious tidings.