



## SAINT PHILOSOPHY: THE ETERNAL PATH FOR HUMANITY

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The biggest challenge facing today's self centered social system is to treat people as human beings. Taking the review of human social development, it is found that human beings found eternal values in their self-discovery to live life beyond his/her natural needs and instincts. Founded these enduring values he/she passed it on as words of experience for the next generation. Time proved that the path to eternal happiness and peace goes through empirical knowledge/experienced knowledge. The experiments of exploring values with this method have been taking place in human society from generation to generation. By studying all these, human beings have developed a philosophical framework for eternal thoughts, sustainable development, peace and prosperity, which is later known as philosophy. Anyone who enriched human society by introducing and changing to create the new framework of philosophy over time was recognized as a 'priest of humanity'. This research paper is an attempt to reflect on the motivations for living the lives of people who built philosophy and practiced it in this experienced way.

India is a country of diverse traditions. Despite the various philosophies, traditions and languages the work of uniting people in this country has been come to existence. Saints have worked in the land of this country to inculcate the tradition of humanity in the minds of the people. While studying the devotional tradition in different parts of India, it offered a very easy path of devotion to the common man by putting aside hypocrite rituals, customs and traditions. Saints from different sects strengthened the devotional sects through their literature and their own behavior and kept the flag of humanity flying high.

Lord Buddha has mentioned that ignorance is the root of all misery. The process of self realization involves the paths like *Karma* (path of action), *Dnyan* (the path of knowledge), *Dhyan* (the path of meditation) and *Bhakti* (the part of the devotion) that have been going on since ancient times. Sanskrit language has been influential and dominant since Vedic period, so that the literature, religion, ethics stuck in scriptures only and it got stuck in the hands of a handful of people. Of the four *Varnas*, the *Brahmins* (the learned ones), *Kshatriya* (fighters) *Vaishya* (traders) and the *Shudra* (downtrodden castes), only the Brahmins restricted the right to scriptures to themselves and forbade rest of others to know it. This led to cultural domination of Brahmins and the backwardness of other *Varnas* in the political, economic and social spheres. As a result of this, the hegemonic culture of Brahmins had spread every sector of the society. They got tremendous authorities to exploit the common man. Every common man was harassed and tortured due to these restrictions



laid by Brahmins. As a solution to all this, the devotional tradition emerged in different parts of India. This was occurred in Maharashtra too. In Maharashtra the sects like Mahanubhav, Nath, Varkari bypassed mainstream Vedic religious practice and created their own identity and proved the solution over hegemonic religious culture.

Along with the Saints like Kabir, Mirabai, Narsi Mehta, Surdas, Tulsidas in the Saint tradition of India, sains like Dnyandev, Namdev, Janabai, Chokhamela, Savta Mali, Soyarabai, Eknath and Tukaram in Marathi saint literature have guided the human society by presenting their life thoughts and devotional thoughts in the form of abhanga/poetry. In Maharashtra, this saint tradition can be traced back to the thirteenth century to the seventeenth century.

While reviewing saint literature Dr. R. B. Mancharkar has presented his views on saint literature in his article in Marathi, Marathi Sant sahityachi prastutata meaning 'relevance of Marathi saint literature' as follows-

The term 'Saint Literature' does not mean a kind of literature. It includes a wide variety of short and long prose and verse including classical, philosophy, critic, narrative and poetic. It is not a literature of homogeneous form. It is composite by form, different in type and high and low in quality. Not all of it achieves the quality of level of literature but, there is no doubt that some of them are on top notch.<sup>1</sup>

Examining the greatness and scope of saint literature, it is noticed that Abhinavgupta had presented his 'spiritual poetics' on the basis of Kashmiri Shaivism philosophy. As a result of this, it is possible to take Bharatmuni's 'Rasa theory' at the highest level of Salvation. Extensive texts such as Dnyandev's *Dnyaneshvari*, *Amrutanubhav*, *Vivek Sindhu* of saint poet Mukundraj Sant Eknath's *Bhagwat*, *Bhavarth Ramayan*, *Rukmini Swayamvar* and *Bharud*, *Geetarnav* of 125 lakhs *Ovis* by Dasopant (1551-1612) who was contemporary of Eknath, *Dasbodh* by Ramdas, *Yatharthdeepika* by Vaman Pandit are found in the Shaivite tradition through poetry. It is characterized by 'Shant Rasa'. Just as Shaivite tradition gave importance to 'Shant Rasa', likewise, Vaishnavite considered 'Bhakti Rasa' important at their priority level. Saints in the Vaishnavite tradition have composed their poems taking into consideration Vitthal as their deity. Abhangas of Saints like Namdev, Janabai, Savta Mali, Goroba Kumbhar, Chokhamela, Eknath, Tukaram, Niloba and Bahinabai Shivurkar comes in Vaishnavite tradition.

Apart from this, the extensive text such as *Leela Charitra* by Mahanubhav sect is considered as large and basic text. This text is mixed with prose and verse. The texts Navnathbhaktikathasar in Nath sect and Gurucharitra in the Dutt sect also have an influence on the public mind in Maharashtra.

The provoking thoughts in these saint literatures created a specific culture in human life. As the distance between God and the devotees was reduced by saints, the common people could experience self realization and salvation. By virtue and ethical behavior, man was excited and he was able to achieve the welfare of community along with human development. In this regard the opinion by Dr. R. B. Mancharkar is important. He writes-



Saint literature came from the folk language and folk verses. It has an array of folklore and weaving of folk principles. Their experiences have become eloquent from the paradigm chosen by them from people's life. Saint poem is mainly an audio and rarely visual poem that increases her intoxication by the presenter's performance. They kept their literature running through the mediums which were connected to masses. So they involved people from all walks of life in their literature. They brought the knowledge from top to bottom.<sup>2</sup>

Of all these sects, the performance and contribution of the saints in the Varkari sect is like Supernatural and wonderful. The structure of Marathi language and Marathi literature has still survived and will remain forever. The influence of the life, work and literature of saints of the Varkari sect on the Marathi people has lasted more than seven hundred and fifty years and still it is working. Two important quotations about the features of saint literature are noteworthy. The first one is of Dr. R. B. Mancharkar he writes-

Saints make a link between the material world of abstract ideas and daily life. When it comes to their poetry, people get enlightenment through it. Marathi Saint Literature is very aesthetic and awakening.<sup>3</sup>

Another remark in this regard is of Bhalchandra Nemade opinions-

Normally, saints are revered in an idealistic culture, because they have struck a compromise between the abstract metaphysical aspiration of humanity and everyday reality. When such a compromise is reflected in their literature, it lives with humanity. People see in such a literature the process of self-realization.<sup>4</sup>

So considering the strength, scope and social contribution of saint literature it can be seen as a link between the past and the future in the present. A more analytical and Critical search reveals that in the twentieth and twenty-first century, humans made spectacular and remarkable progress in Science and Technology. Pharmacology controlled the disease. Although man has been empowered by modern science, he seems to be confused not only in his most of tough and conflict struggling situations in daily life but in the intricacies of materialism also. This is because human problems are not of material world, but of their psychological world. No matter how far we go in material prosperity the modernism at last 200 years has revealed its limit. Achieving basic services, comfort and convenience it has been realized that peace of mind and strength and health of mind are essential in life. Saint literature helps to get out of the trap of uncontrolled cravings, chauvinism, competition, stress, depression and addiction offered by this modern age. As Tukaram says- ठेवीले अनंते तैसेचि रहावे। चित्ती असू द्यावे समाधान । meaning 'Let live as it is, as God wishes to be. Let the mind be gratified.' Behind this thought is Tukaram's great empirical theory. Saint Eknath says - काया ही पंढरी आत्मा हा विठ्ठल । meaning 'Body is Pandharpur, soul is Vitthal' has revealed the true meaning of worship. Regarding the concept of God saint Dnyandev says - जे जे भेटे भूत, ते ते मानिजे भगवंत । meaning, 'whoever you met, be sure it is God'



So we may say that saints express their knowledge in the form of words on the basis of three experienced realities that are of scriptures, master (Guru) and soul.

विष्णुमय जग वैष्णवांचा धर्म। meaning 'the whole universe is occupied by His presence' this is the belief of true religion of Vaishnavite. The Saints have great faith in this ideology and they had instilled this belief in the others. Dr. S. S. Antarkar writes about the work of saints and their thoughts-

The main function of the saints is in the form of philosophy. What is the nature of man? What is the nature of universe? What is the place of human in universe? What is the relationship of human beings with non human animals and nature? What is the success of human life? These and other fundamental philosophical questions have been discussed by the saints. According to saints, man has nothing to do with non human beings and nature, but with equality as all are generated from the same god.<sup>5</sup>

The moral constitution for the development of humanity is revealed to the human society all over the world through both, the conduct and the thoughts of saints as the saying goes- बोले तैसा चाले त्याची वंदावी पाऊले। meaning 'One who acts as he speaks, must worship his feet.'

Although human world come closer with modern technology but the gaps between the minds are created at large. At last, man has to communicate without achieving much through this materialism, eternal thinking has to be done and have to discover. This is eternal thought is so certain that in today's modern age there can be no other thought like Saint literature. Therefore there is no doubt that saint literature will continue to be a guide today and tomorrow and will continue to be a progressive force in human society.

#### Works Cited:

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