

|| Adhyay 1 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmah! Shri Ganesha, You are famous for your generosity and valour. O Gouriputra, all intellectuals and saints first remember you before starting any work. With your powerful Blessings all obstructions are just like cotton before fire. So I solemnly bow at your feet and invoke your blessings to bring out the best and the sweetest poetic recitation of my narration. I am ignorant, dull and have no qualities of a poet. But if you bless me, my work will be done.

Now I give my obeisance to "Adi Maya Saraswati-Sharada", who is born of Brahma and who is a great inspiration to the poets. Next I pay my obeisance to Jagadamba, to whom I pray for upholding my self-respect. Her blessings are so great that with her "Ashis" even a lame can climb a mountain and a dumb become a good orator. In keeping with that reputation kindly help Dasganu to write this book of Shri Gajanan. Now I beseech the "Puran Purush" Panduranga of Pandharpur to have an obliging glance at me. You are the sole supporter of this universe and occupy every animate and inanimate object in it. You are the creator of everything, omnipotent and command all the actions in the universe. You are this world, the life in this world and also the ultimate power. You are Saguna, Nirguna, my father and also my mother. O Purushottama! You are so great that I am too small to comprehend You. Shri Rama blessed the monkeys who thereafter gained enormous strength. Same thing happened with the cowherd boys of Gokula. Saints have said that money is not required to receive Your favour, but a complete surrender at Your feet earns us Your support. That is why I have come to Your door. Please do not disappoint me. O Panduranga of Pandharpur, kindly help me write this great saint's biography, by residing in me.

O Bhavanivara, Nilkantha, Gangadhara, Onkarrupa, Trimbakeshwara bless me. "Paras" changes iron into gold. Now Your favour is "Paras" and I am iron. Kindly help and do not disappoint me. Nothing is impossible for You since every thing is in Your hands. Kindly come quickly and help this child of Yours compose this book. Now I pay my obeisance to my family Deity who resides at Kolhapur. I beseech Her to bless me with everything auspicious. O Durgamata Bhavani of Tuljapur, I invoke Your blessings by having your hand on my head. Then I pay my obeisance to Lord Dattatraya and request Him for inspiration to sing in praise of Gajanan.

Now I bow to the Saints of Saints Shri Shandilya, Shri Vashishta, Shri Goutam, Shri Parashar and Shri Shankaracharya the sun in the sky of wisdom. My obeisance to all the saints and sages who should, by holding my hand, get this writing done. Shri Gahani, Nivrutti, Shri Dyaneshwar, Shri Tukaram and Ramdas are dependable ships in the ocean of life. I bow to them.

O Saibaba of Shirdi and Waman Shastri (Shri Dasganu's Guru) kindly free me of all fears. By the kind grace of You all only, I shall be able to write this book. So be kind to me. Only the real affection can teach a child to speak; and I share a relationship with you like that of a child with the mother. Pen writes letters, but receives no credit for writing them. A pen is only a means for writing; Dasganu is a pen and I beseech all the saints to hold it to write and make this biography melodious.

Now listeners, get ready and listen single-mindedly to the biography of a saint for your own good. On this earth, saints are Gods, ocean of renunciation, and giver of Moksha. Saints are the embodiment of all that is good and sacred and are full on sanctity. Now calmly listen to the life story of such a Saint. Saints never deceive anybody. They are full of wisdom that guides us on to the path leading to the ultimate truth. God Himself is indebted to those who surrender themselves at the feet of the saints. Now with an open mind, listen to the biography of Shri Gajanan Maharaj.

No other country is as fortunate as Bharat in being a birthplace of so many saints and therefore it has never fallen short of any happiness so far. It is so because, since time immemorial, our land continuously has had the touch of sacred feet of saints. Shri Narad, Dhruva, Kayadhukumar, Uddhava, Sudama, Subhadra, Anjanikumar, Dharma Raja, Jagatguru Shankaracharya were all born in this country. Madhawa, Vallabha and Ramanuja, the able defenders of our religion, too were born here. The greatness of Narsi Mehta, Tulsidas, Kabir, Kamal, Surdas and Gourang Prabhu is quite beyond my power to describe.

Intense devotion of Princess Mirabai made lord Vishnu swallow poison for her. The great deeds performed by the supreme yogis like Shri Goraknath, Macchindra and Jalander are described in great detail in the sacred book "Navanath". Shri Namdeo, Narahari, Janabai, Kanho, Sakhubai, Chokha, Savata, Kurmadas and Damajipanth won over Shri Hari by "Bhakti" only. God became "Mahar" for Damajipant. Since Mahipati has already written the biographies of Mukundraj, Janardan, Bodhala, Nipat and Niranjan, I do not repeat them here. I only suggest that you read the sacred books "Bhakti Vijay" and "Bhaktimala". After that I have composed songs in the praise of three saints and equal to them is Shri Gajanan Maharaj who greatly influenced the public. With my good fortune, I am now getting an opportunity to write this detailed biography of this great saint. In fact, He was first seen by me at Akot, but His biography is being written by me last for the following reasons: When we prepare a plain garland, the middle gem (Merumani) in it is attached at last; so the story of Shri Gajanan Maharaj is like that Merumani.

Shegaon, a small village in Khamgaon Taluka of Berar is a great market center. Though a small village, it gained importance due to Shri Gajanan Maharaj and became a world famous place. In this Shegaon Lake, a lotus in the form of Shri Gajanan Maharaj sprung up and its fragrance spread all over the universe. Shri Gajanan Maharaj is a diamond of Shegaon mine and I, with my

limited intelligence, wish to narrate His glory. Please listen to it and do not forget that you can attain "Moksha" by complete surrender at His feet. Shri Gajanan Maharaj's biography is like a cloud and you the peacocks. The rain in the form of Shri Gajanan Maharaj's stories will make you dance in happiness. People of Shegaon are really fortunate to get Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Good deeds only can invoke the blessings of Saints who are superior even to the Gods.

It was Kartik Ekadashi day when Ramchandra Patil met me at Pandharpur and requested me to write the biography of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. It was in fact my long cherished desire to sing in praise of Shri Gajanan, but was not getting the opportunity. Shri Gajanan Maharaj seemed to have understood my wish and so made Ramchandra Patil a tool for the fulfilment of that desire. Nobody can know the designs of great saints like Shri Gajanan Maharaj who was a gem amongst the saints. Historically, nothing is known about His caste, creed or place of origin, like Brahma whose origin nobody knows. Like a brilliant diamond we should only appreciate its brilliance and not bother about the mine of its origin.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj appeared at Shegaon on 7th Vadya Magh of 1800 Saka. Some say that he came from Sajjangad the place of Shri Ramdas Swami. Though there is no sufficient proof to accept this fact, it may have some sense in it.

There was wide spread corruption and misery and it is possible that Shri Ramdas Swami, for the good of the people, took rebirth as Gajanan Maharaj. Yogis can enter anybody and many saints have done so in the past. Gorakh was born in dustbin, Kanifa in the ear of elephant and Changdeo in the "Narayan Doha": all unlike the traditional human birth. Same may be the case of Shri Gajanan Maharaj - the king of Yogis. It will be seen from His actions that Shri Gajanan Maharaj had detailed knowledge of all yogic feats. Yoga has got a unique importance incomparable with anything else.

Shri Gajanan appeared in Shegaon on 7th Vadya Magh for the spiritual liberation of the sinners. It so happened that there was one pious Brahmin named Devidas Paturkar at Shegaon and, to celebrate the puberty function of his son, he had arranged a lunch for his friends. The leftover food from the plates was thrown outside the house and Shri Gajanan Maharaj was seen sitting near that food. He had a worn out old shirt on His body, a dry gourd for drinking water, a pipe of clay for smoking and nothing else. His body was lustrous like the rising sun and eyes with concentrated at the tip of nose indicative of His yogic strength. Sitting by the roadside He was picking up particles of food thrown there. His action of picking up the food particles from the leaf plates lying on road was to convey to the common man that food is Brahma. "Shruti" and "Upanishad" say the same thing. Bankatlal Agrawal and Damodar Pant, who were passing by, were surprised to see His behaviour. They thought that had this man been really hungry, He would have begged for food and Shri Paturkar, being a pious man, would have given the food to

Him. Thinking thus, Bankatlal said to his friend, "Let us watch His actions. Vyas has said in Bhagawat that real saints, many a times, behave like mad men, and this can be a case like that."

Thousands of people must have passed that way but only these two persons were attracted to observe Maharaj. Only wise men and experts can detect a diamond lying in the heap of pebbles. Bankatlal asked Him as to why He was eating the food lying on the road and volunteered to serve good food. In reply Shri Gajanan simply looked at them. They were delighted to see His broad chest, muscular shoulders, eyes concentrated at the tip of nose, and a joyful face. They respectfully bowed to Him and asked Devidaspant to immediately bring a dishful of food. Shri Devidas brought the food and put it before Shri Gajanan Maharaj . He having no likes and dislikes, mixed all the food & sweets together and satisfied His hunger.

It was like an emperor being presented with a small village. So was this food presented to Shri Gajanan who had already satisfied Himself by consuming "Brahma Rasa". Bankatlal regretted having called Him a mad man. It was a very hot noontime and even the birds did not dare come out of their nests. Under such unfavourable conditions, Shri Gajanan was sitting fearlessly and was full of joy as if He was Brahma Himself. So Shri Gajanan Maharaj had taken food but then Damodarant observed that there was no water in His Tumba. Bankatlal said, "Maharaj, if You permit me, I will go and bring water for You". Shri Gajanan Maharaj smiled and said, "If you wish, go and bring water. Brahma is everywhere and he won't differentiate between you and me, but we have to follow the worldly traditions. So when food is taken the body needs water too". Bankatlal felt happy over this reply and rushed to bring the water for Shri Gajanan Maharaj . In the meantime, Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to the roadside tank where water was stored for the cattle and satisfied His thirst with that water. Bankatlal returned with a jar of cold water and requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj not to drink the dirty water from that tank. Shri Gajanan said, "Everything in the universe is pervaded by Brahma without any differentiation of clean or dirty, good or bad. Brahma is in clean water as well as in dirty water and the one who drinks it is also occupied by Brahma Himself. You should try to understand the omnipotent nature of God and also to know the origin of this world. Instead of this, you are involving yourself in wordly attachments."

Hearing so from Shri Gajanan Maharaj , both Bankatlal and Damodarant bent down to prostrate before Shri Gajanan Maharaj ; knowing their intentions, Shri Gajanan Maharaj ran away with the speed of wind.

May this Gajanan Vijay Granth bring happiness to all.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter One

|| Adhyay 2 ||

Shri Ganeshayanamah! O lord of Rukmini residing on the bank of Chandrabhaga (river), God of Gods, Friend of the poor, kindly look at me. O God! Everything is futile without Your favour. No one cares for a lifeless body. Beauty of a lake is due to the water in it. Juicy core of a fruit gives importance to its husk. Same is the case with Your blessings. Kindly oblige me by removing all my sins, woes and poverty.

In the last chapter we have seen that Shri Gajanan suddenly left Bankatlal and went away. Since then Shri Bankatlal was craving to see Shri Gajanan again. Forgetting all worldly things like food and water he was constantly thinking of Shri Gajanan only, like a calf for its mother. But he could not share his mental condition with anybody not even with his father. His search continued throughout Shegaon but could not find Shri Gajanan. His father however, noticed the anxiety and despair written large on the face of his young son. He asked him the reason for his unhappiness especially because God had blessed them abundantly with every thing required for a happy life. Bankatlal did not reply and continued his search for Shri Gajanan. At last Bankatlal told everything about Shri Gajanan and his search for Him to a neighbour Ramajipant Deshmukh, a pious old man. Hearing the details from Bankatlal, Ramajipant noted that He must be some yogi, and meeting with such yogis is possible only if one has to his credit a lot of good deed from the previous birth. He, therefore, encouraged Bankatlal to continue his search and also to take him for the Darshan of that yogi when found.

After a few days there came the renowned Kirtankar, Govindbua Taklikar to Shegaon. His Kirtan was arranged in the Shankarji's temple where a lot of people assembled to listen to him. Bankatlal also went there. He met his friend Pitambar in the temple and narrated to him everything about Shri Gajanan. They sat listening to the Kirtan and lo! There was Shri Gajanan Maharaj also attentively listening to Govind Bua. They were as delighted as does a miser at the sight of gold or a peacock at the glimpse of a cloud. Bankat and Pitambar got up, went to Shri Gajanan, bowed before Him and asked if He would like to eat something. Gajanan looked up and said, "Go and bring some bread for me from the house of some Mali (Caste). Bankatlal immediately brought bread and vegetable and gave it to Shri Gajanan. He ate it and asked Pitambar to bring some water in His "Tumba" from the river. Pitambar said that the river was practically dry and offered to bring water from somebody's house. Shri Gajanan insisted on getting water from the river only and with a further condition that the water not be filled by hand, but taken directly by dipping the Tumba in the river. Pitambar went to the river and saw that the water was not at all sufficient for dipping the Tumba. What to do? He was in a fix. Ultimately he dared and lowered the Tumba in the water and lo! There was a miracle; the Tumba went straight full with water and the dirty water from the river became clean in the Tumba. He tried again and was surprised to see that wherever he dipped the Tumba in the water, clean water rushed into it

to the brim. He now understood that it was due to the yogic power of Shri Gajanan. Pitambar brought and offered the water to Shri Gajanan. He drank the water and said "Don't try to satisfy me with the bread of that Mali. I want a nut from you".

Bankatlal gave Him a nut and along with it offered a copper coin as Dakshina (offering). Shri Gajanan said that He was not a businessman to accept money, and asked for Bhakti only. Then Shri Gajanan asked Bankat and Pitambar to listen to the Kirtan attentively.

Govind-Bua started the Kirtan with a stanza from Shri Bhagavat. Govind-Bua recited the first part of the stanza and Shri Gajanan loudly recited the latter part of it. Govind-Bua was surprised and said that the man who recited this stanza must be a man of great authority. Saying so, he requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to come inside the temple. Likewise other people also requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj , but Shri Gajanan Maharaj ignored them all. Then Govind-Bua himself came out and said to Maharaj, "You are the incarnation of Lord Shankar. Please come in. The temple will be empty without You. By the grace of some good deeds of my previous birth I have come across saint like you. So kindly come into the temple." Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Be firm on what you say. Just now you have said that God is every where, then why force me to come in the temple? You should practice what you preach and a student should avoid playing with words. It is not proper for you to behave against the preaching of the stanza from Bhagavat that you just preached to these people. I don't wish for you to be preaching just for livelyhood. Now go and continue your Kirtan".

Bua returned and announced to the audience, "An invaluable gem has come to your Shegaon. Protect Him carefully. With the arrival of this Pandurang in human form, Shegaon has become Pandharpur. See that He lives with you, serve Him well and obey Him. That alone will bring you all immense happiness".

Bankatlal brimming with joy returned home and told his father Bhavaniram about Shri Gajanan and received his consent to bring Shri Gajanan Maharaj home. Then he started his search for Shri Gajanan. After four days of wondering, Bankatlal Saw Shri Gajanan Maharaj in Manik Chowk. It was evening time and the sun was setting, but for Shri Bankatlal it was the rising of sun in the form of Shri Gajanan. Cows returning home, gathered around Shri Gajanan thinking Him to be Shri Krishna. Shopkeepers were preparing to light the lamps when Shri Bankatlal brought Shri Gajanan Maharaj to his house. Bhavaniram, overjoyed at the sight of a saint, prostrated before Him, offered Him a wooden Pata to sit on and said "You are an incarnation of Shri Shankar, coming to us at the evening. I wish to offer You food, so please kindly accept it. I am really very fortunate to have You at my place in the evening. Skandhapurana says that it is a great fortune to worship Lord Shankar in the evening."

Saying so, he respectfully worshipped Shri Gajanan Maharaj with Bilwapatra. Bankatlal's father

was now worried because he had requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to accept the food at his house; however, in fact the food was not yet ready, and if this saint did not wait till the food gets ready, it would be a great disappointment, as this would mean that Lord Shankar going away, without taking any food in the evening from his house. So he was in a fix. What to do? He thought over the matter and decided to offer Shri Gajanan Maharaj puris which were prepared in the morning, as fried food is not treated as stale. Moreover he knew that his mind was pious and sincere in offering food to Shri Gajanan. Accordingly he brought a thali full of puris, almonds, dates, bananas, and oranges and put it before Shri Gajanan. He applied Bukka on His forehead and put a garland around His neck.

Shri Gajanan ate everything that was served, consumed about three seers of food and stayed that night with Bankatlal. Next morning Bankatlal gave Shri Gajanan a ceremonious bath with one hundred pitchers of water. Men and women washed Him with soap and massaged His body with scented oils. After the bath, a very costly Pitambar (yellow robe) was given to Him to wear and made Him sit on a well-decorated high seat. Garlands of flowers and Tulsi were put around His neck, Kesar paste was applied on His forehead and fruits and sweets were offered to Him to eat. Thus Bankat's house became Dwarka for all the devotees. That was Monday, the auspicious day of worshipping Lord Shankar. All the people fulfilled their desire of worshipping Shri Gajanan except one. That was Ichharam, a cousin of Bankatlal. He was a devotee of Lord Shankar and it being a Monday, the day of Lord Shiva, he wished to worship Shri Gajanan at evening time by treating Him to be Lord Shiva. At Sunset time, Ichharam took a bath and with great devotion offered Puja to Shri Gajanan. He told Shri Gajanan Maharaj that he had a fast since morning and would take food only if Shri Gajanan accepted and ate food offered by him. Saying so, Ichharam brought a thali full of rice, many varieties of Sweets, curry, puris, ghee, fruits and many other things, sufficient to feed at least four persons and put it before Shri Gajanan. Looking at that thali Shri Gajanan Maharaj said to Himself, "You, greedy Ganpya, always want to eat and eat. Now eat all this food without hesitation and let all these people see Your greediness". Saying so, He started eating everything that was served to Him and did not leave even a grain of salt in the thali. Then to show the result of forceful eating, Shri Gajanan vomited everything that He ate. Shri Ramdas Swami once did the same thing. It so happened that he felt a craze to eat Sweet Kheer. He asked for it and ate it to His full. Overeating resulted in vomiting. Shri Ramdas started eating that what he vomited just to win over his desire. Similarly Shri Gajanan, though quite strong to digest anything, vomited only to teach a lesson to those who pressurize Him to eat. Thereafter the devotees cleaned the place, gave a bath to Shri Gajanan and made Him sit on a raised seat.

Many people came to pay respect to Gajanan. They started singing devotional songs. Shri Gajanan Maharaj was very happy to listen to them and then He began chanting to Himself "Gan Ganat Bote" in the same tune in which the Bhajan was sung. It continued this way for the whole night. Because of His above utterance of "Gan Gan Ganat Bote", people started calling him "Gajanan". In fact He Himself being Brahma needs no name. Yogis are perpetually engrossed in

their yogic trance and the joy that they derive out of that has no comparison. As people go to Pandharpur in Ashadha, to Nasik in Sinhastha or to Haridwar for Kumbhamela, they started going to Shegaon to worship Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Swami Samarth Gajanan is the incarnation of Vithal Narayan and is standing like a rock of determination at Shegaon. His words were the bank of holy Godavari, the joy begotten out of it was Haridwar and the whole Shegaon was crowded by people who wished to meet Shri Gajanan in this temple which was Bankatlal's house. Thus innumerable people were coming to Bankatlal's house for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan. One who has attained Brahmajapada has no caste. The rays of the sun equally bless everything and everybody. Fresh batches of people were coming daily to Shegaon and food was served to hundreds of people. In fact it is all beyond the power of description of a small fly like me. Everything is being said and narrated by Shri Gajanan Himself by using me as a tool for that purpose. His life story is vast and I fall too short to describe it. However, I now narrate to you His daily routine. At times He took a good bath and some times used to drink dirty water. His daily routine was most uncertain like the speed of air. He loved smoking but had no craving for it. Now listen to the next chapter with faith.

Dasganu desires this book to be an ideal guide for the devotees.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"

Here ends Chapter Two

|| Adhyay 3 ||

Shri Ganeshayanamah! O Sachhidananda Shri Hari, be kind to me as You have never been harsh to the fallen ones. You are the ocean of kindness, a mother to the sufferers and a Kalpataru to Your devotees. O Rama, such is Your reputation as sung by the saints. So, Purushottama, please bless this Dasganu without delay.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj stayed at Bankatlals house. People from distant places started coming to Him for Darshan. Flies gather where there is honey with no invitation.

Now listen to what happened one day. Shri Gajanan Maharaj was sitting in a jubilant mood. It was morning time. Eastern horizon was red and birds were singing. Soft breeze was blowing and old people, sitting in their beds, were chanting Gods name. The sun, peeping up from the east, drove away the darkness. Pious married ladies were sprinkling water in their courtyard and calves were running to the cows. At such a pleasant morning, an ascetic came for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. With his worn out clothes, he was looking like a beggar. How can such a beggarly looking person expect good reception from the rich people sitting around Shri Gajanan Maharaj ? He had a small loincloth, a kerchief around his head and a small bag hanging from his shoulder. His dry disorderly hair was hanging on his back. He quietly sat in one corner before Shri Gajanan. Amongst many people coming for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , this poor man was totally neglected. Sitting there, he was wondering as to how to get near Shri Gajanan to touch His feet. Having heard of the greatness of Shri Gajanan at Kashi, he had vowed to present Ganja to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . In the first place, now he was finding it difficult to get a chance to fulfil his vow, and if at all he got a chance, the utterance of the word Ganja in the temple would make him face kicks from the people around. But after all, his coming to Shri Gajanan was only for the fulfilment of the vow of offering Ganja to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . His vow of offering Ganja was because he liked it the most and so he thought it to be the best offering. While he was thinking so, Shri Gajanan understood and pointing to him asked the devotees to bring forth that ascetic to him. He was happy to see that Shri Gajanan knew everything that was going on in his mind. Saints know everything about the past, present and future. So he now expected Shri Gajanan to know the purpose of his coming to Shegaon. When he was brought-forth, Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, “Take Out that bundle which you have been keeping in your bag for the last three months.” Overwhelmed with joy, the ascetic started rolling like a child before Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Maharaj said, “Shamelessly you vowed to offer Ganja to me and now feel shy to take it out of your bag.” The shrewd ascetic said that he would take it out and offer Ganja with a request that Shri Gajanan Maharaj , as a token of his remembrance, accept the offering permanently. He further said, “I know that You don’t need Ganja, but kindly accept it as my humble offering. God fulfills all the desires of devotees. For example, Anjani prayed to Lord Shiva to come to her womb and take birth as her child. Lord Shiva accepted and took birth as

Maharudra Hanuman. Taking the form of a monkey was accepted by Lord Shiva to fulfil the desire of His devotee.” Shri Gajanan hesitated a bit but then agreed. The ascetic, then, took out Ganja, rubbed it in his hand, filled in the pipe and gave it to Shri Gajanan Maharaj to smoke. This is how Shri Gajanan started smoking Ganja, but He never became an addict to it. Just like a lotus leaf, he was free from attachments. The ascetic stayed there for a few days and then went away to Rameshwar.

Sometimes Shri Gajanan Maharaj used to recite Vedic verses in sweet clear tones, while other times observed silence. His Reciting of the Vedas indicated that He was a Brahmin. Sometimes he used to sing a composition in different ragas or go on singing His Mantra, “Gan Gan Ganat Bote”. At other times He observed silence or quietly slept. Sometimes He behaved like a mad man, wandered in the jungles or entered somebody’s house unexpectedly.

At Shegaon there was a famous man named Janrao Deshmukh. He was on deathbed and all the doctors declared him to be as a hopeless case, and accordingly notified his relatives. They prayed to God, took vows in exchange of his life, but to no avail. So they thought of the last remedy i.e. of approaching Shri Gajanan Maharaj with the belief that saints can perform any miracle. Shri Dnyaneshwar brought Sachhidananda back to life, and the same can be done by Shri Gajanan for Janrao. So one of the relatives went to the house of Bankatlal, where Shri Gajanan was staying, and narrating the whole story of Janrao requested him to give Pada Tirtha of Shri Gajanan which they would give to Janrao Deshmukh. Shri Bankatlal with the permission of his father Bhavaniram, took a glass of water touched it to the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and told Him that the Tirtha was being given to Janrao Deshmukh. Shri Gajanan Maharaj gave His consent. Thereafter the Tirtha was given to Janrao Deshmukh who immediately regained consciousness and thereafter slowly recovered from the illness. All the medicines were stopped and Janrao was kept on a daily dose of the Tirtha from the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . He gained his normal health within a week and went to Shri Bhavaniram’s house for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Look, the water from the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj had the effect of life saving nectar. This is so because the saints are the God incarnates in Kalyuga.

With such a happening one may say that nobody should die in Shegaon as long as Shri Gajanan Maharaj is there. This statement, however, is not logical. Saints do not prevent death, nor do they behave against the laws of the nature. But they can avoid death if it is unnatural or accidental. Shri Dnyaneshwar avoided the death of Shri Sachhidananda at Newasha, but the same Sachhidananda later on had to die at Alandi. That means, the saints can check unnatural or accidental death and it is not at all difficult for them.

There are three types of deaths namely, Adhyatmic (subjective) meaning natural or destined, Adhibhoutic (Phenomenal) meaning by material effects and Adhidaivic (God sent) meaning accidental or un-natural. Of these three, the first, Adhyatmic, is most powerful and nobody can

avoid it. The second i.e. Adhibhoutic is the result of bad eating and living habits and an undisciplined lifestyle which gives rise to various diseases in the body. This type of death, however, can be averted with the help of a competent doctor. The third i.e. Adhidaivic can be prevented by prayers and blessings of Saints. This category is further divided into two types: Bhoutic, caused by material effects, and Daivic, caused by the displeasure of God.

Adhyatmic i.e. the natural death cannot be prevented by anybody. Remember that Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna, died in the presence of Shri Krishna Himself. Janrao's death was of an unnatural type and so could be prevented by Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Some deaths can be averted by vows of offerings to God. But they should be taken with full faith in the Almighty. In fact it is the strength of the faith involved that works to prevent the unnatural type of death. This sort of death can also be avoided by the Pada Tirtha of a saint who is pious and free from the six hostile forces of life. One should surrender to a real saint and keep away from the hypocrites. After his full recovery, Deshmukh celebrated the blessings by feeding hundreds of people at the Math where Shri Gajanan Maharaj stayed.

The incident of saving Deshmukh created problems for Shri Gajanan Maharaj and to avoid them, He had to become rather strict and indifferent to the people. His real devotees, however, could bear with that attitude of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . God Narsimha, by His very appearance, created terror in the minds of people, but Pralhad was not afraid of that outward look. Tigress is fearful to others, but not to her cubs playing in her lap. Likewise the real devotees were not afraid of the strictness showed by Shri Gajanan Maharaj .

Now listen to another story. It is seen that the earth, when in contact with musk, gets its fragrance. Similarly by mere contact of sandal wood and ordinary wood also gets its fragrance. This is quite natural, but it will be absurd if the wood thinks itself to be sandalwood. Along with the Sugarcane also grows some useless bushes. Saints and Satan are both born on the same earth. Along with diamonds, ordinary pebbles too are found in the mines. Though found in one place they differ in value. An ordinary pebble cannot get the lustre of a diamond and will simply be trampled under our feet, while the diamond picked up.

Vithoba Ghatol, like an above pebble, a hypocrite, was staying with Shri Gajanan Maharaj at Shegaon. He was dishonest and insincere, but showed off as being a great devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . He used to call himself the Kalyan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , and said that Shri Gajanan depended for everything, i.e. food, pipe and other comforts, on him. He was taking all sorts of advantages by his association with Shri Gajanan Maharaj and boasted himself to be a bull before Lord Shiva. By his divine vision, Shri Gajanan Maharaj knew what Vithoba was doing and so taught him a lesson by following incident.

It so happened that some people came to Shegaon for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . At that time Shri Gajanan was sleeping, and no body could dare wake Him up. These people were in hurry to go, but at the same time wanted the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . They approached Vithoba and said, “Vithoba, we are in hurry to go back and want the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj before going. Amongst all the disciples, you are the most intelligent, nearer and dearer to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . So kindly wake him up and let us have his Darshan.” This request flattered Vithoba and he immediately went and woke up Shri Gajanan Maharaj . The people got the Darshan, but it invited calamity for Vithoba. Shri Gajanan got a stick and thrashed Vithoba severely with it and said, “You rascal, you have started business here, and if I tolerate you, I shall be guilty before God. So I must punish you: Wine should not be treated as a sweet drink, poison should not be touched, and thieves should not be made friends.” Saying so, He knocked him again with the stick. Vithoba ran away and never returned again. This is how the real saints behave.

Hypocrites pose as saints, with the help of selfish people, and misguide the public. This is an antisocial act. Real saints will always try to eliminate such elements from society. A chaste lady will not like a prostitute as a neighbor; gold will not like the ornaments of aluminium. Saints may accept bad people, but will not give them importance. It is so because the saints realise that these people are sufferers because of their sins of previous life. It is just like the earth, which allows a prickly-pear to grow along with Mogra. Mogra and prickly-pear are both the children of earth but they get different treatment. So also the saints will offer protection to all but have different values to individuals.

Vithoba was most unfortunate. He got the touch of a Saint’s feet, but unfortunately lost the same. He failed to understand the greatness of a saint. Had he realised it, he would have attained divine pleasure.

By sitting under the Kalpavriksha he desired for an ordinary pebble or asked for a coconut shell from Kamdhenu. Nobody, in association with saint, should do like this.

May this Gajanan Vijay Granth be a saviour to all devotees.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Three

|| Adhyay 4 ||

Shri Ganeshayanamah! O Almighty, All Powerful God! Nilkantha, Gangadhara, Mahakal Trimbakeshwara, Shri Omkara manifest Yourself to me. You and Vishnu are One and the same as water is to aqua. People worship either of Your forms as per their liking. One who sincerely loves You, gets Your affection as a child gets from his mother. I am an innocent child craving for Your love; You are all powerful, a Kalpataru. Kindly fulfil all my desires.

Swami Gajanan was staying at the house of Bankatlal when the following incident occurred. On the third of Vaisakh Shudha day, people offer an earthen pitcher full of water to their dead forefathers. In Vidarbha, this day is known as Akshaya Tritiya and is celebrated on a large scale. On this day, Shri Gajanan Maharaj was sitting with some boys, probably to reveal some of His super natural power. He told the boys to fill up His pipe with tobacco and light it for smoking. The boys prepared the pipe and started searching for fire. They could not find it anywhere. So Bankatlal advised them to go to Jankiram, the Goldsmith, to ask him to ignite the pipe for Maharaj, as all goldsmiths first ignite fire in the morning to start off with their business and then attend to other works.

The children then went to Jankiram and asked him for an ignited piece of coal for the pipe of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Jankiram got angry and refused to oblige to the children's request saying that he did not like giving fire to any body on Akshaya Tritiya day. The boys told him not to be superstitious as the fire was required for the pipe of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, the God of Gods. Jankiram turned down their request and said, "I don't accept Shri Gajanan as a saint. He has no caste, eats from anybody's hand, smokes tobacco and Ganja, remains naked, drinks sewage water and behaves like a mad man. Bankatlal is a fool to go after Him. I will not give fire for His pipe. If He is really a Saint, He should be able to create fire by His super natural powers as was done by Saint Jalander. So get out." The boys, disappointed went back to Bankatlal's house and narrated everything to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Shri Gajanan Maharaj smiled and took the pipe in His hand and asked Bankatlal to hold one matchstick, without igniting it, on the pipe. Bankatlal did it and was surprised to see the match stick igniting itself on the pipe! Such was the supernatural power of Shri Gajanan Maharaj!

Now listen to what happened to Jankiram by this incident. Neem leaves have a special significance on the New Year's Day (Gudi Padwa), so does the tamarind curry on Akshaya Tritiya day. Shri Jankiram had invited many people for lunch on that day and the main dish was tamarind curry. When this curry was served to the people it was seen full of small dirty worms. It created nausea amongst the people gathered to eat and caused many people to leave the house without eating any food. The gold smith felt very sorry and it suddenly occurred to him that this happened because he had refused to provide fire for the pipe of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. He

thought to himself, "Shri Gajanan is the pure water of Janhavi, the king of Kings and I treated Him like a beggar. He is the knower of the past, the present and the future and I thought Him to be a mad person. A Kalpavriksha was thought by me to be a thorny bush. He is a Chintamani and I thought Him to be splint. I could not understand His divine power. By my ill luck I lost an opportunity of getting the Blessings from a great Saint. I am a mere burden to this earth, an animal of two legs."

Thinking so, he condemned himself again and again and at last he decided to go and surrender at the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . He took some tamarind curry with him, went to Bankatlal's house and narrated his misfortune to Bankatlal. He said "Bankatlalji look to this curry full of worms. I am completely disgraced as all the invitees for lunch had to go without food. It is all due to my own fault. This morning I had refused the fire for the pipe of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and this is the result."

Bankatlal said that the tamarind used by him might have been infested by worms. Jankiram said, "The tamarind was new and clear. Now all that I want is to prostrate before Shri Gajanan and beg His pardon for my blunder". Jankiram went and falling at the feet of Shri Gajanan said, "O Maharaj I beg to be pardoned for all my mistakes. You are Lord Shiva in Shegaon and I did not recognize You. Now I am free from all doubts, and whatever punishment is given to me today should be enough to improve me. You are the protector of orphans like me, so kindly pardon me." Shri Gajanan Maharaj replied, "You are telling a lie. Your curry is fine and there are no worms in it". And really the curry was clean and fine. All the worms had disappeared in a moment! The people around, saw the miracle and bowed before Shri Gajanan Maharaj.

Now listen to the story of Chandu Mukin, a devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. In the month of Jeshta in summer all the devotees were sitting around Shri Gajanan Maharaj . They were offering Him fruits, sugar balls, garlands, applying sandalwood paste to his body were cooling air by hand fans. At that time Shri Gajanan Maharaj said that He did not want mangoes or fruits but two "Kanholes" that were kept in the earthen pitcher at Chandu's House. Chandu, with folded hands said that there were no Kanholes at his house, but would get prepared fresh if necessary. Maharaj replied that He did not want fresh Kanholes, but only those stale ones that were lying in the earthen pitcher at his house. Chandu went home and told his wife what Shri Gajanan Maharaj had said. His wife said that the "Kanholes" were prepared a month ago on Akshaya Tritiya day and were all consumed the same day, and if at all some were left, they must be stale and hard by this time. She however, showed her readiness to prepare fresh "Kanholes" for Shri Gajanan Maharaj . But Chandu replied that Maharaj wanted only the stale ones and not fresh ones. He asked her to remember where she kept them since Swamiji could not lie. She paused and immediately remembered that what Swamiji had said was, in fact, correct. She remembered that two Kanholes were really kept by her in the earthen pitcher. She took out the Kanholes and gave them to Chandu; the wonder was that they had not hardened or dried at all. Looking to it they

both were happy. Chandu went back and offered the "Kanholes" to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . All were surprised at the divine knowledge of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Shri Gajanan happily ate the "Kanholes" as fruits offered by Shabari to Shri Ram.

At Chincholi, a town near Shegaon, there was a Brahmin by the name of Madhao. He was over sixty years old and was very weak. He passed his youth in attaining material pleasure only. It is not possible to change ones fate. Madhao lost all his children and wife and was left alone in this world at an old age. He lost all interest in life, sold out all his possessions and regretted that while in material pursuits he never remembered the Almighty God. Again and again he begged pardon from God and prayed for helping him out of the tragedy of his life. Full of repentance he came to Shri Gajanan and squatted at His doors fasting and chanting the name of God. After one full day of his fasting Shri Gajanan said, "What you are doing is not proper. Why did you not remember God before this? It is just like calling a doctor after the death of patient or like marrying in old age, after spending one's youth being a bachelor. Everything should be done in its proper time. Otherwise the action bears no fruits. There is no use digging a well when the house is on fire. The family for whom you toiled in your good days has left you alone. You wasted all your time attaining things that were transient and forgot the One truth which is eternal. Consequently, you now have to bear the results of your actions from which there is no escape. So do not be obstinate. Be reasonable." Other people also tried to persuade him but he ignored them all, kept up his fast and the chanting of "Narayan, Narayan".

To teach Madaho a lesson, Shri Gajanan played a trick on Madhao. At mid night when it was pitch dark, and nobody was near about, He changed His human form into a fearful form of Yama, the God of death, and with a big open jaw rushed towards Madhao, as if to eat him. Madhao was dumb founded and with a throbbing heart, started to run away. Looking at his condition, Shri Gajanan Maharaj regained His normal self and loudly said, "Is this the boldness that you have got? Remember that you are the food of death, and it will swallow you like this only. What I have shown is an indication of future happening of Yamalok wherefrom you will not be able to run away". Madhao replied, "Kindly save me from Yamalok. I do not want this life also. My last request to You is to send me to Vaikunth. You have already shown me Yamalok once, so do not send me there again. I am fully aware of my sins and if you wish, it is not difficult for You to free me from them. I am fortunate enough to be at your feet, probably because of some good deeds to my credit. The one who meets a saint during his lifetime cannot go to Yamalok". Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Keep on chanting the name of Narayan, as your death is quite near now. If you still want to live, tell me and I will extend your life span." Madhao said, "I do not want to live any more. This world is all unreal and so kindly don't let me get involved in its attractions". Upon which, Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "TATHASTU - I give you what you want. You will not be reborn on this earth." Such was the secret conversation between them, for which my words fall short to describe. Madhao lost all the worldly responses, people thought it to be the effect of his fasting. Madhao died at the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj

and finally escaped the cycle of birth and death.

Once Shri Gajanan Maharaj wished to listen to the Vedas and so asked the devotees to get some learned Brahmins for their recitation. The devotees said that learned Brahmins, able to recite Vedas, were not available their days. Swamiji however, asked them to go ahead with the making of the necessary preparations saying that the Brahmins would come the next day. The devotees were happy; they started the preparations and collected a sum of one hundred rupees for that purpose. The next day, at noontime, a team of learned Brahmins really arrived at Shegaon! They recited the Vedas before Shri Gajanan Maharaj. All of them were given "Dakshina". Then they went away. This shows that Almighty God fulfils all the desires of the saints. Bankatlal, and now his descendants, continued this recitation of Vedas on that particular day every year.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"

Here ends Chapter Four

|| Adhyay 5 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmah! O God! You are unconquerable to the foes. O Adwait, Sachhidananda, Karunalaya, relieve this Dasganu of all his fears. I am a fallen and poor sinful person and possess no authority. Thus I am entirely helpless. But great people often help the poor. Look, Lord Shankar has applied ash to His body. The smallness of the small does not degrade the Great Ones. So with this understanding, let this Dasganu be at Your feet. A mother fulfils all desires of her child. I am at Your mercy. Do whatever you like, but be kind to me as all my aspirations depend on You.

While Maharaj stayed at Shegaon, hundreds of people started coming there to receive His Darshan. His reputation spread far and wide; Shri Gajanan, however, wanted to keep away from all people. So he used to wander in forests for months without giving anybody any knowledge of His movements. In His wanderings, once, He went to Pimpalgaon. There was a temple of Lord Shiva in the forest near Pimpalgaon; Shri Gajanan went there and sat in Padmasan Mudra. There was a small stream near the temple where the cowherd boys came with their cattle. As the cows were drinking water at the stream, the boys went to the temple for the Darshan of Lord Shiva. They saw Shri Gajanan sitting there with closed eyes and were surprised. They used to visit that temple often, but had never seen anybody sitting there like Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Some of them sat before Him, but the saint did not open His eyes nor spoke anything. The boys could not understand the reason why He sat like that at the temple. They thought that He must be very tired and so must be unable to open His mouth or eyes. Some of them thought that He must be very hungry and so they put some bread before Him and started shaking Him. Even then there was no response from the saint. It was all very surprising for them. The boys said that He couldn't possibly be dead since He was sitting in an upright position and had a warm body. One of them suggested that He might be a ghost. Some, however, argued to that saying that a ghost couldn't dare come in the proximity of Lord Shiva. Then they thought to themselves that He must, therefore, be a God from heaven, and with this idea occurring to them, considered themselves to be fortunate to get the Darshan of God. So they decided to offer Him puja, and brought water and flowers to wash His feet. They put flowers on His head and some bread and onions before Him as Naivedyam. They performed Bhajan sitting there for some time. Being engrossed in performing the Bhajan, they forgot about returning home. Soon they remembered that they were late and that it might create anxiety amongst elders and their parents might even come out in search of the cowherds. Moreover the calves also might be lowing for the mother cows. So they returned home immediately and narrated everything about the Saint to the elders. Next morning the villagers came to the temple and saw the saint sitting in the same position without touching the bread that was offered to Him the previous day. Some said that He must be a yogi, while others thought that Lord Shiva Himself might have come out of Lingam to give them Darshan. They, however, were unanimous on one point that the saint was in deep Samadhi and should not be disturbed till He comes out of the trance. They remembered that in Bengal Saint Jalander was

in Samadhi for full twelve years. Then a palanquin was brought and the saint put in it and brought to Pimpalgaon accompanied by a great fanfare of procession and on the way Gulal and flowers were scattered on Him. After reaching Pimpalgaon, He was ceremoniously put on a raised seat in Lord Hanuman's temple. That day also passed but the yogi did not come out of trance. Next day the villagers decided to sit in prayers observing complete fast till He came out of the trance, and surprisingly, the saint immediately opened His eyes and came out of the Samadhi. The jubilant villagers prostrated before Shri Gajanan as a mark of respect, and offered Him sweets and food. The news of Shri Gajanan spread to the neighbouring villages. The following Tuesday, people of Pimpalgaon went to Shegaon for marketing and incidentally told the people there that they too had got a saint at Pimpalgaon, who is a God incarnate. The news spread in Shegaon and reached Bankatlal, who immediately went to Pimpalgaon along with his wife and with folded hands said to Shri Gajanan Maharaj , "You had promised to return soon, but it is now more than a fortnight since You left Shegaon. Shegaon is lifeless without You and all are anxious to see You back. I have brought the cart for You, so let us go back to Shegaon. It is not good to separate a child from his mother. Because of Your absence, many regular visiting devotees might not have taken food. And despite this, if You don't come to Shegaon, I will kill myself."

So Shri Gajanan sat in the cart to leave for Shegaon. At this sight, the people of Pimpalgaon remembered the occasion when Akrura had come to Gokul to take away Shrikrishna. They thought of Bankatlal as Akrura, who however, told them that Shri Gajanan Maharaj was not going far away as He would stay in Shegaon only and they could very well visit Maharaj there whenever they liked. Most of the people from Pimpalgaon were tenants for Bankatlal and so were unable to displease him. They helplessly saw the saint go away with Bankatlal. On the way Maharaj jokingly said to Bankatlal, "It is not proper for a "Savkar" to forcibly take away others property. Looking to the affairs at your house, I am afraid to come with you. You have locked Lakshmi, the mother of the people, the wife of Lord Shri Mahavishnu, and the most powerful deity Herself, in your house. Looking to the plight of the Jagadamba, I got frightened and so ran away". Hearing that, Bankatlal laughed and said, "Gurunath, the mother was not scared by my locks, but stayed in my house because of your presence there. Mother and child have to stay together. Your feet are the real wealth for me. I do not care for any other wealth. That is why I had to come to Pimpalgaon in its search. My house is not mine any more. It now belongs to you. How can a watchman obstruct the owner of the house? You may do anything you like, go anywhere you want to go, and Bless the whole world, but do not forget us, the people of Shegaon. Cows go out in the morning to feed themselves in the woods, but return home in the evening. That is what You too should do with us." Thus Bankatlal brought Shri Gajanan Maharaj to Shegaon.

However, after some days, Shri Gajanan Maharaj again went away. It so happened that one fine morning, Shri Gajanan left for Adgaon without anybody's knowledge. Like Lord Hanuman, His

speed was that of the wind. It was the month of Vaishakh and the severe summer had dried up water everywhere. At such a hot noon, Shri Gajanan Maharaj reached Akola. Perspiring profusely with lips gone dry due to the thirst, He looked around for water. At that time a farmer, named Bhaskar, was working in his field. A farmer is an important person in the society who provides food to all, bearing all the agonies of heat and cold. There was an acute shortage of water around Akola, so much so that one might get ghee under normal circumstances, but not water in that area. Bhaskar had brought water for himself in an earthen pitcher and had kept it under a bush. Shri Gajanan Maharaj came to him and said, "I am thirsty. Give me water and do not say 'No'. As one cannot live without water, it is a great 'Punya' to give water to the thirsty. That is why rich people during the summer open water booths on highways to quench the thirst of thirsty people." Bhaskar replied that, "How can one get 'Punya' by giving water to the useless naked man like you? This talk of Punya is good only in context with orphans, disabled or social work; religious books too say the same thing. It is sin to give water to sluggish people like you. Will anybody nourish a snake on humanitarian grounds or give shelter to a thief in his house? You have become fat by begging from door to door and are a dead weight to the society by your actions. I have brought the pitcher of water on my head for me and not for you. I will not give water to you. Go away immediately from here, you rascal. Because of lazy people like you amongst us, we have become useless in the world." Hearing Bhaskar, Shri Gajanan Maharaj smiled and went away. He saw one well at some distance and went there. Seeing Him go to that well, Bhaskar loudly shouted, "Do not go to that well, it is dry. There is no well filled with water within two miles of radius from here." Maharaj said, "It is true, but I will try to fill water in it. When People like you get tormented due to the lack of water, I must do something in the interest of the society. God will help me if my intentions are honest."

Saying so, Shri Gajanan went to the well and peeped into it. It was completely dry. In a dejected mood he sat on a nearby rock under the tree, closed his eyes, meditated for some time, and solemnly implored the Almighty to give water to the village. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "O God, Wamana, Vasudeva, Pradyumna, Raghava, Vithala, Narahari, the people of Akola are worried about drinking water. There is not a drop left in any of the wells nearby. All human efforts have failed, so now You have to come to their rescue. You can do even the most impossible things. Panduranga, You saved cats in the burning furnace, You appeared out of a pillar to honour the words of Pralhad. Vaishwanara, You swallowed twelve villages in Gokul, O Murari, You lifted a mountain on Your finger tip, You became a Mahar for Damajipant, You did the work of Chokha Mahar, and protected the birds of Savata Mali. You created water for Namdeo in the dry land of Marwad. If You wish, anything can be done."

After Gajanan Maharaj made such an imploration to the Almighty, a powerful spring burst in the well and in minutes it was full of water. The might of God is unlimited, enabling Him to do anything that is desired by His the devotees. Shri Gajanan drank the water from the well and quenched His thirst. Bhaskar saw this miracle and could not believe his eyes. He knew that the

well contained not a drop of water for last twelve years and now it is full of water. How can it be? It meant that this man was not an ordinary, useless person, but a great saint. Bhaskar, realising his fault, left his field, went running to the saint and fell at His feet. He said, "O God incarnate, kindly pardon me. I am an ignorant child of Yours, please be kind to me. Not knowing Your real self I insulted you. I regret it now. Please excuse me. Milkmaids, at times, insulted lord Krishna, but He never took it seriously. O kindhearted God, Your external appearance has deceived me. By this act of miracle, You have freed me of ignorance and manifested Your true self to me. I now realise Your power by this creation of water. I will, now, never leave Your feet, and, You as a mother, should not desert this child of Yours. I have now fully realized that the material attachment is unreal, so do not discard me." Shri Gajanan said, "Don't lament like this, I have created water in this well to save you the trouble of bringing water on your head from long distances. Then why do you renounce prapanch? This water has come for you, use it and grow a nice garden." Bhaskar said, "Gurudeo, don't tempt me like this. My determination itself is a well; It was absolutely dry without a drop of water. Your miracle was an explosive, which broke the rock inside that well, and out came a fine spring of faith. With that water, now, I will grow the garden of deep devotion to You. By Your kind blessing, I will plant the fruit trees of good moral and flower plants of good deeds everywhere. I will do away with all the momentary attachments of worldly property."

Look, O listeners, what a transformation had taken place in Bhaskara's attitude with a brief association with a saint! Darshan of a real saint is unique in nature; it has been narrated in detail by Saint Tukaram in his hymns. Read those hymns, meditate over them, and experience the truth in your own interest. The news of creating water in a dry well spread like wild fire and people, like flies rushing to honey, or ants running after sugar, came for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj in huge numbers. They went to the well, drank the water and quenched their thirst. The water was clean, cold, tasty and sweeter than nectar. People cheered Shri Gajanan Maharaj again and again. Shri Gajanan Maharaj did not stay in Adgaon; He instead returned to Shegaon with Bhaskar.

May the 'Gajanan Vijay Granth', composed by Dasganu, be an ideal guide for devotees to understand the greatness of a real saint.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Five

|| Adhyay 6 ||

Shri Ganeshayanamah! O most auspicious One! It is the experience of saints that Your Blessings drive away everything that is inauspicious. Believing it, O God, I have come to Your door with great hopes. If You disappoint me, it will mean disrepute to You and the saints as well. So, Madhava, uphold my prestige and never be angry with this innocent child of Yours. Please remember that any shortcoming of a child brings blame to the mother.

One time Bankatlal took Shri Gajanan Maharaj to his farm to eat maize corns. Many other people had gathered there for this party of corn and the seating arrangement was made near a well. The well had ample water and there were many tamarind trees around. Fire was lit at 8-10 places to fry the corn and a lot of smoke was rising up in the sky. There was a big honeycomb on the tamarind tree and. due to the smoke, the bees rushed out to attack the people seated below the tree. Leaving the corn the people started to flee the place. Some of them covered their heads with blankets. In this world nothing is more precious than one's own life. So was the case with these people. In all this havoc, Shri Gajanan Maharaj sat undisturbed and thought about the honeybees. He thought to Himself, "I am the bees, I am honeycomb. The one who has come to eat corn is I, and the corn is also me." While he was blissfully thinking this, innumerable bees landed on his body giving him an appearance of wearing a blanket of bees. The insects were biting and piercing their needle like thorns in His body, but Shri Gajanan Maharaj did not bother about it. This went on for some time making the helpless devotees miserable. Bankatlal felt very sorry for having brought Shri Gajanan Maharaj to the farm and felt that he himself was responsible for the bites inflicted by the bees on Shri Gajanan. Thinking so, Bankatlal was about to rush to the rescue of Shri Gajanan Maharaj when by His divine power Shri Gajanan understood it and said to the bees, "Oh insects! Go back to the honey comb and don't harm my beloved Bankatlal, who is the only real devotee amongst all the people here". Hearing this, the bees really flew back to the honeycomb. Shri Gajanan Maharaj laughs and said to Bankatlal, "You have given a good feast of these bees to Me. Those poisonous insects attacked and all the Laddu Bhakta ran away. Give a thought to it and remember that, in times of calamity, nobody, except God, helps you."

Bankatlal said, "Oh Maharaj, I very much regret for having brought You here. I am responsible for causing You these bee bites today. I am a great sinner. Kindly tell me what I shall do to relieve You of these bee-bites; shall I call a goldsmith to pull out the bee thorns with his pincers?" Shri Gajanan Maharaj replied "Bankat, nothing extraordinary has happened, as it is the nature of bees to bite and they behaved accordingly. I assure you that these bites will not affect me as I know the "Sachhidananda" in those bees. He is in those bees and I am His incarnation. How can water hurt water? You have given a good feast of these bees to me. These poisonous insects attacked me and all the Laddu-Bhakta ran away. Give a thought to this and remember that in times of calamity nobody other than God helps you. These selfish people gathered here for a feast, and ran away when the bees attacked." Hearing this divine knowledge, Bankatlal kept quiet and brought a gold smith to pull out the bee thorns from the body of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . The goldsmith came with a pair of pincers and started searching for the thorns in His body. Shri Gajanan Maharaj laughed and said that eyes would not see the thorns and the pincers are useless to pull them out. And in order to prove what he said, He inhaled the air and held His breath. The thorns immediately came out of the body. Looking at this miracle, people were glad to realise the

greatness of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . After that, all the people enjoyed the feast of maize corns and returned home in the evening. Once, Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to Akot to meet his saint brother Narsinghji, who was a disciple of Kotasha. Although Maratha by caste, he had become dear to Shri Vithala by his Bhakti (devotion). Since I have narrated his detailed life in the Bhaktileelamrut, I don't repeat in here. Akot is 36 miles to the north-east of Shegaon and Shri Gajanan Maharaj went there with the speed of wind. Shri Narsinghji was staying in the dense forest near Akot to get solitude. This forest, without any habitants, was very dense with big trees, creepers, wild grass and many snakes. In such a dreadful forest Shri Narsinghji was living all alone. Shri Gajanan went there to meet him. Water mixes with water and like things always merge with each other. Unlike things never mix with each other. So looking at Shri Gajanan, Shri Narsinghji was happy beyond description. One was Hari and the other Har, one was Rama, while other, the son of Vasudeo-Devaki. One was Ganga and the other Godavari. One was the Kohinoor, and the other Kaustubha. One was the Vashistha and the other, son of Anjani. Both of them met each other and were very happy. They sat near each other and exchanged their experiences

Shri Gajanan said, "Narsingha, you have done well by leading a family life. I renounced that and followed the path of Yoga, to know the ultimate reality, the "Brahma". In this path of yoga, many strange things, incomprehensible to the common man, happen, and to hide them I, many times, behave like a mad man. To know the ultimate Truth there are three paths - Karma, Bhakti and Yoga. Apparently they look like three different paths, but in reality they reach the same goal. If a yogi feels proud of his path, he will remain away from the ultimate Truth. He should keep himself clean from the effect of Yogakriya, like a lotus leaf. Then only he can know the ultimate Truth. Same is the case with family life. You should not have attachment with your family. A pebble remains in water, but does not allow the water to enter it. Such should be your behaviour in family life - free from any expectations and with full concentration in Almighty. Then nothing is impossible. You, I and God are one, and the people too are not different from Him."

Shri Narsinghji said, "I am grateful to you for meeting me. This "Prapanch" is unreal like the shadow at noon. I will follow your advice, but keep on coming to me. Everything is predestined in this world, and we have to perform our duty in this life as per desire of God. My only request is that you should come frequently to meet me as I am your younger brother. Just like Bharat, waiting at Nandigram for Shri Ram, I am here at Akot for you. With your yogic achievements, it is very easy for you to come here. A yogi, without touching anywhere, can traverse around the universe in minutes."

With intimate love for each other, they were speaking all that night. Real saints behave like this only, but the hypocrites quarrel with each other. These hypocrites should not be accepted as Guru as they are like a broken ship on the sea. They receive a lot of publicity, but carefully we should discard them. Living in a 'math' or learning an art of composing poems does not make one a saint, but only self knowledge does. Can we accept gold-coated articles as gold, or a prostitute as a house wife? These two saints were real and pious. When people knew that Shri Gajanan Maharaj had come to meet Shri Narsinghji, They thought it to be the confluence of Godavari and Bhagirathi and by going there they could get the satisfaction of taking a dip in that confluence. So the people with coconuts in their hands started rushing to the forest. But Shri Gajanan, with the permission of Shri Narsinghji had already left and all the people were

disappointed.

Once, in his usual wanderings, Shri Gajanan, with his disciples, reached a village named Shivar. This place is on the bank of Chandrabhaga (not of Pandharpur) near Daryapur and the place where Shri Vrajabhushan, a learned man, lived. He had knowledge pertaining to four various languages and was famous all over the Vidarbha; he was also a great devotee of the Sun God. It was his daily routine to get up early in the morning, take a bath in the Chandrabhaga and offer prayers to the Sun. He was respected by all the intellectuals. Shri Gajanan Maharaj came to this Shivar village as if to give Vrajabhushan the fruits of his prayers. He as usual came to the Chandrabhaga for his bath and saw Shri Gajanan Maharaj sitting on the bank of that river. It was morning time with twilight spreading all over the sky, cocks were crowing all around and the Chatak and Bharadwaj birds were flying as if they were paying their respects to the rising sun. With the sun peeping up the horizon, darkness quickly disappeared, like fools leaving the congregation at the sight of the learned. At such a pleasant morning, Shri Gajanan was sitting there in full bliss of "Brahminand" with his disciples around him like the rays of the sun. While offering his usual prayers to the sun, Vrajabhushan saw Shri Gajanan Maharaj with his lustrous body, long arms and the eyes concentrated at the tip of his nose. With great joy he went running to Shri Gajanan Maharaj, poured water on his feet, offered puja, went round him, and prostrated before him twelve times reciting the holy names of the sun. Then respectfully performed Arati and prostrated before him singing hymns in the praise of Shri Gajanan.

Vrajabhushan said, "By the Darshan of these divine feet, I got today the fruits of my penance. So far I was offering prayers to the sun in the sky, but today I see him in the form of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. O Gajanan, you are the real Brahma full of knowledge and the supporter of this universe. You take many births, ages after ages, and by your Darshan all the woes vanish. Kindly bless me." Saying so, Vrajabhushan finished his prayers and Shri Gajanan affectionately embraced him like a mother does to her child. Then placing his hand on the head of Vrajabhushan, Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "You will be respected and loved by the people. Don't leave the path of Karma (duty) nor think the rituals to be meaningless, but at the same time don't get too involved in them. Do your duty and renounce the fruit. This will enable you to meet Shri Krishna and keep you clean of the effects of your actions. Remember my words and go home. I will always meet you in meditations." Saying so, Shri Gajanan Maharaj gave Vrajabhushan the prasad of a coconut and went back to Shegaon.

This Shegaon was formerly known as Shivargaon and later on became Shegaon. There were seventeen Patils in this village. Shri Gajanan Maharaj returned to Shegaon but did not stay there for long. He kept on moving from place to place. He visited Akot, Akola, Malkapur and many other places. Months of Jeshta and Ashadha passed, Shravana came and the annual functions of Lord Hanuman started in the temple. This is a big temple at Shegaon and all the Patil families were devotees of Hanuman. Patil being a powerful authority in the village, all the people normally co-operated with everything that he did. The function lasts for a month with Abhishek, reading of holy books, Kirtan and feeding the people to their hearts content. Khandu Patil, noble hearted, was the leader of the function. The authority of the Patil is like a tiger's skin, and who-so-ever puts it on, becomes a terror to the people. There is a proverb in Marathi meaning that whatever a king cannot do, can be done by the united people. The proverb aptly applies here. So Shri Gajanan Maharaj came to this temple in the month of Shravana to attend the functions, and

told Bankatlal, "Henceforth I will stay in this temple and you should not mind it. Saints and sages are not supposed to stay permanently with men leading family life. I am a Sanyasi and so shall stay in this temple only, but whenever you want me I will visit your house. I am giving you this secret knowledge. Shri Shankaracharya had to move from place to place. Sages Macchindra and Jalander avoided the houses of people leading family life and stayed in forests under trees. Shivaji, who protected Hindus and punished Yavans, loved Ramdas Swami, but Swamiji preferred to stay away at Sajjangad. Think over this, obey me, and don't bother about my place of stay. This is in your own interest."

Helplessly, Bankatlal gave his consent to what Shri Gajanan Maharaj said. Shri Gajanan Maharaj came to the temple and all were happy. Bhaskar Patil stayed there in His service.

May the Gajanan Vijay Granth be an ideal guide for the devotees to understand the greatness of a real saint.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"

Here ends Chapter Six

|| Adhyay 7 ||

Shri Ganeshayanamah! Jai to You Rama, Meghashyama, Sitapate, Dasharathe! You are the refuge to the saints. It was by Your blessings that the monkeys gained strength and defeated Ravana in Lanka. Your blessings always bring victory and fulfilment of desires. A favorite of the King, howsoever incapable he may be, becomes lovable to the ministers. Am I suitable for such a favour? With this question, O Panduranga, I realise that my condition is most pitiable as I lack real knowledge and devotion. My mind is always unsteady, suspicious and full of desires. With all this, how can I expect to get your favor? Logically, it seems right, but O God, even the Puranas say that you have got a genuine liking for the sinners. It is no wonder if you liberate the pious ones. But real greatness lies in saving a sinner. Since there is nobody greater than you in this world, I invoke you to ignore my sins and bless me. O Narayana, accept this Dasganu who has surrendered at your feet and uphold your greatness.

Under the leadership of Khanderao Path, all the villagers actively participated in the function at Hanuman temple. These Patil people have an ancient heritage of wealth and landed property. Devotion to saints and sages has been their family tradition and now with the authority as village head, this worshipping is done with greater enthusiasm. Mahadaji Patil had two sons, Kadtaji and Kukaji. Kukaji, the younger was a great devotee of Pandurang of Pandharpur. The family had the blessings of Shri Gomaji Maharaj of Nagzari. Kadtaji Patil had six sons and Kukaji none. After the death of Kadtaji Patil, Kukaji did the bringing up of these six children as his own, and also brought great prosperity to the family. After Kukaji, Khandu Patil became the head of the family. He was a terror to the village and used his authority fearlessly. He had five brothers, Ganpat, Narayan, Maruti, Hari and Krishnaji. In addition to the authority of Patil, wielded by him, he possessed a lot of wealth too. All the brothers were fond of regular exercise, playing swords & sticks. Hari Patil liked wrestling. For name's sake the celebrations were for Lord Hanuman, but in fact everybody was interested in pleasing the Patil. The attitude of the Patil was rude and unreasonable which frequently resulted in quarrels and disputes in Shegaon. He abused everybody and did not spare even the saints. Patil, with his brothers, went to the temple of Lord Hanuman and started jesting at Shri Gajanan Maharaj by making bad puns on his name. One of them even challenged Maharaj to come out for wrestling and prove the greatness bestowed upon Him by the people. The brothers asked Shri Gajanan Maharaj to prove His greatness or get ready to receive beatings at their hands. Shri Gajanan Maharaj just laughed away their remarks and never got angry. Looking at all this rude behaviour of Patil brothers, Shri Bhaskara said, "Maharaj let us go to Akoli, away from these insolent boys, corrupted by their strength, money and power". Shri Gajanan Maharaj replied, "Bhaskar, wait a bit. All these Patil brothers are my great devotees. They lack modesty, but observe them closely to know their affection for me. They are just like my sons and have already recieved blessings from the other saints. Executive power generally is accompanied by rudeness. How can a tiger behave like a cow? Can fire ever be cold? Sword will be useless if it is soft. After some time this insolence will disappear as muddy water of rainy seasons becomes clear in winter."

One day Hari Patil came to the temple and said to Shri Gajanan, "come on wrestle with me and I will defeat you, don't sit quietly chanting "Gan Gan Ganat Bote". All people praise you and I want to test that greatness of yours. If you defeat me in wrestling, I will give you a prize." Maharaj accepted the challenge and sat down saying, "Come on, if you are really strong, come

and pull me up." Hari Patil wrestled and applied all his strength, but could not move Shri Gajanan Maharaj even an inch. He used all his strength and the tricks of wrestling and all his body started perspiring, but could not move Shri Gajanan Maharaj at all. He realized that though Maharaj appeared thin and frail, His strength was like that of an immovable mountain and for that reason he, like an elephant, ignored all the teasing from others. Hari Patil felt himself like a jackal before an elephant or a barking dog before a tiger. Accepting the defeat he, who never bent before anybody, now decided to surrender and bow before Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Looking to his condition Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Now, defeat me or give me the prize promised by you. Wrestling is the best of all manly sports. Shri Krishna and Balaram played wrestling in their childhood. Mushtik and Chanur, the great wrestlers and bodyguards of Kansa were killed by them. Good health is the best wealth, second is landed property and third is money. Shri Krishna, who was living on the banks of Yamuna, made all the boys of Gokul strong. I want you to do the same and make the boys of Shegaon strong. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said that this was the only prize he wanted. Hari shrewdly replied that it was possible only with His blessings. Since then Hari started behaving well with Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Looking to this, his other brothers started questioning his "cowardly" behavior. They said, "We, being sons of Patils, the highest authority of the village, should not bow before such a naked man. This mad man is getting unnecessary popularity and we must take immediate steps to stop it in public interest. If we neglect our duty, people will go astray. It is our duty to caution the people in time. Hypocrites put on the garb of sages and innocent people are befooled. Gold has to stand an acid test to prove its genuineness. Incident of sugarcane showed saint Tukaram's control on His mind and Dnyaneshwar was accepted a saint only when he made a buffalo speak. As we should not respect anybody without proper test, Shri Gajanan Maharaj too should be put to test."

Saying so, they came to the temple with a bundle of sugarcanes. Hari was quiet, but other brothers said to Shri Gajanan Maharaj , "You fool! If you want to eat these sugarcanes, fulfil our condition: we shall beat you with these sugarcanes and if this beating does not raise marks on your body, then only we shall accept you as a yogi." Shri Gajanan Maharaj smiled and ignored their talk like one ignores children's prattle. Maruti said, "He appears to be afraid of the sugarcane beating." Ganapati said, "His silence implies acceptance to the beatings." Saying so all the brothers rushed and started beating Shri Gajanan Maharaj with the sugarcanes. All people in the temple, except Bhaskar, started running away. Bhaskar appealed to them to stop beating Shri Gajanan Maharaj . He said, "Please do not beat him. You are born in the Patil family and so should be kind to others. If you do not think him to be a great saint, then treat him as an innocent man and ignore him. Brave hunters always attack the tigers and never shoot at insects. Hanuman attacked and burnt Ravana's Lanka and not hurt poor people." The boys replied, "People of this village treat him as a great saint, and therefore, we want to test his greatness, so you keep away." So saying the boys continued beating Shri Gajanan Maharaj with sugarcanes like a farmers beating grain bunches for taking out the grain. Shri Gajanan Maharaj kept smiling and did not reply. The beating did not raise a single mark on His body. Looking to this fact the boys got afraid and bowed before Shri Gajanan Maharaj saying that He was a real yogi. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "O boys, your hands must be aching by beating me, and so to refresh you I will give you sugarcane juice." Saying so he took sugarcanes one by one and with his hands squeezed the juice from the sugarcanes and gave it to them to drink. Thus Shri Gajanan Maharaj squeezed juice out of sugarcanes without any machine. The boys were very happy. People said that this was possible due to the yogic strength of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . By this miracle Shri Gajanan

Maharaj conveyed that if we want to make our nation strong, we must learn yoga. The boys prostrated before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and went away. They told the whole story to Khandu Patil saying that Shri Gajanan is really a God in Shegaon. He was surprised and started going to Shri Gajanan Maharaj , but his rough way of speaking with Shri Gajanan Maharaj did not change. He used to call Shri Gajanan Maharaj as Ganya or Gajya. This type of addressing a person in a singular fashion occurs in two cases. First, when there is intimate love involved as is between a mother and child and second, when a person speaks to his servants or poor people. Patil is accustomed to speak in a singular manner as all the people in the village are his subjects. However, in his heart he had great respect and love for Shri Gajanan Maharaj . It was just like a coconut that has a hard and rough surface, but sweet and tasty fennel.

Once Kukaji called Khandu Patil and said, "You always say that Shri Gajanan Maharaj is a great saint, then why are you dumb before him? You have no children and since I am getting old, I would very much like to see a grandchild. You should go and request Him to bless you with a child; if he is a real saint he will fulfil our desire." Thereupon Khandu Patil went to the Lord Maruti temple and said to Shri Gajanan Maharaj , "O Ganya, my uncle has grown old and desires to see me with a child. People call you a saint, able to fulfil the desires of His devotees, and I wish you to prove it by giving me a child." Maharaj said, "It is good that you have begged for something from me. You have got power, money and believe in your personal efforts, then why are you asking me for this favour? You behave like power or money can give you anything, then why not get a child by your own efforts? You have got a lot of land, money, mills and shops and nobody disobeys you, then why don't you order Brahma to give you a child? Khandu said, "This is something beyond human efforts. Crops need water for their growth, but bringing rains is not in the hands of human beings. That is why during famine lands lie dry. But once the rains come, human efforts prove fruitful. Same is the case with me." At this, Swamiji smiled and said, "You have now begged for a child; since it is a begging, I bless that you will get a son. It is not entirely in my hands to bless you thus, but I will request the Almighty to fulfil your desire. In return, I ask you to feed mango juice to Brahmins every year and name the son Bhikya, as a token of your gratefulness." Khandu Patil accepted these conditions, went home and told about this conversation to his uncle. Kukaji was very happy. After some days Swamiji's blessings proved true and Khandu Patil got a son. He was very happy and Kukaji's happiness knew no bounds. Khandu Patil distributed jaggery and wheat to the poor and sweets to the children of Shegaon. The child was rightly named Bhikya who, like a moon, went on growing. Khandu Patil, as promised, fed Brahmins with mango juice and continued this practice throughout his life; his decendents still continue this practice. The child, by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, started crawling in the house of Khandu Patil.

The happiness of the Patils made the Deshmukhs unhappy. Shegaon was a divided village since long; there were two rival groups in Shegaon: one of the Patils and the other of the Deshmukhs. They were always searching for an opportunity to destroy each other. Two Pundits, two ministers, two fighters, two mechanics and two dogs when face-to-face, always fight. Same was the case with Patils and Deshmukhs. After seeing his grandchild, Kukaji died at Pandharpur on the bank of the river Bhima; Khandu Patil was sad to have lost his protector. Looking to Khandu Patil's state of mind, the Deshmukh exploited the opportunity to put Patil into trouble, the details of which will be narrated in the next chapter.

|| SHRI GAJANAN VIJAY GRANTH ||

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Seven

|| Adhyay 8 ||

Shri Ganeshayanamah! O Son of Vasudeo & Devaki! O Beloved one of Gopa & Gopis! O Killer of demons! Bless me Shri Hari. Devotion and penance is required to get your favor, but I am not suitable to attain any of these. I do not know all your gospels as they written in an ancient language, not known to me; I am also dull and so cannot study that language. Tell me how can a frog get honey from a lotus? If I try to get your favor by feeding people, that too is not possible due to the poverty bestowed upon me by you. Getting your blessings by visiting holy shrines and places is also not possible due to my poor health and fading eyesight. Thus I am helpless all around. It is seen that the hopes of the poor are never fulfilled. Apparently it is true, but if You wish, Your blessings can enable me to attain all the bliss. The speciality of Your blessings is that they do not require money to obtain them. When clouds pour water, all the rivers and lakes get filled with it. I am hungry for such blessings from YYou. Please give me atleast a morsel of it and make me happy. A drop of nectar can remove all the diseases.

Let it be as it is. In the previous chapter we have seen that the Patil and the Deshmukh were divided. Whenever there is such division in society, it destroys all happiness. Tuberculosis to the body and divisions in the society entail death and all attempts prove futile.

On the bank of a lake, one Mahar was arguing with Khandu Patil regarding some work given to him by Patil, who was the highest authority in the village. That Marya Mahar had the support of the Deshmukhs. Patil told him to do some work, but he refused to do it in very rough language. Patil asked him to behave himself reminding him that he was addressing the head of the village and admonished Marya thereby. Marya did not obey Patil and instead started to ridicule him. The cause of the argument was very simple; Patil wanted to send some important dak to the Police Station in Akola and had asked Marya to carry it for him. Marya had blatantly refused to go saying that he was a subordinate to the Deshmukh only. He made some nasty gesticulations at Patil, which infuriated him. In the fury, Patil gave a forceful blow with a stick on Marya's hand. This blow fractured Marya's hand, making him unconscious. Patil sent the dak with some other man. The relatives of the Marya took him to the Deshmukh, who grabbed this opportunity to corner and trouble Khandu Patil. Deshmukh took Marya to the police station and reported the matter to the officer. Whenever there are conflicting groups in the society, even the small things are magnified by the individual groups to denounce each other. The Officer registered the complaint and issued orders to arrest Khandu Patil. The news spread like wildfire in Shegaon and Patil, naturally, got frightened and worried over the impending danger. He prayed to the Almighty God to save him from the humiliation of arrest. For a man of dignity, an insult is worse than death. All his brothers too were worried and were feeling helpless. Then it suddenly occurred to Khandu Patil that he should surrender himself to Shri Gajanan Maharaj and seek His help as none else would be able to save him from this calamity. His brothers went to Akola for legal and personal efforts. Khandu Patil went straight to Shri Gajanan Maharaj that night. He prostrated before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and narrated the whole episode. He said, "I gave a beating to one Mahar as he refused to do Government work and that matter is being used by the Deshmukh to put me in trouble. They are arranging to get me arrested and there is nobody to save me except you. Tomorrow the policemen will come to arrest me. Please kill me before that. I am a man of dignity and an insult, such as arrest, is as good as death to me. I do accept my mistake, but that is being exaggerated out of proportion. Please save me from this contempt.

Arjun had prepared to burn himself to save his dignity in the episode of Jaydratha. God saved him and protected his honour. God also saved the honour and respect of Draupadi by covering her by sari after sari. Similarly my self respect, like Draupadi's, is being stripped off by these Deshmukh Kaurawas." Saying so Patil wept bitterly. All his brothers too were very much worried over the impending humiliation to the family. Shri Gajanan Maharaj took Khandu Patil in his embrace to pacify him and said -"A man with responsibilities has got to face such situations frequently, and so should not mind it. Such things are the outcome of selfishness, and a lack of pious thinking. Both of you, Patil and Deshmukh, belong to the same caste, but due to selfishness, are trying to destroy each other. In the past the enmity between the Kaurawas and the Pandawas was also the result of selfishness only. But since the Pandawas were legally right, they had received God's blessings for the upkeep of truth. Consequently the Kaurawas were all killed. So don't be afraid. All of Deshmukh's efforts to arrest you will fail." This prediction, made by Shree Gajanan Maharaj, came true. Patil was declared innocent by the court of law. The words uttered by true saints can never be futile. After this incident, the Patil brothers became more devoted to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Who will not like to drink nectar? After some days, Khandu Patil requested and affectionately took Maharaj to stay at his house.

While Maharaj lived at the house of Khandu Patil, some Telangi Brahmins also visited there. These Telangi Brahmins were known to be quite orthodox, learned and in charge of the authority of Vedic knowledge, but their biggest drawback was that they were somewhat greedy for money. They came to Shri Gajanan Maharaj with the hope of getting some money from Him. When they came, Shri Gajanan Maharaj was sleeping. The Brahmins started reciting Vedic hymns loudly to awaken Shri Gajanan Maharaj . There was some mistake in their recitation, but they did not correct it, so Shri Gajanan Maharaj got up and said to them, "Why have you become Vedic? You are lowering the greatness of Vedas unnecessarily. This knowledge is not for the purpose of running a business but for the salvation Of human beings. At least show some respect to the saffron head-dress, which indicates that you are a Vedic. I will now recite the hymns and you repeat the same as I pronounce. Do not misguide innocent poor believers." Saying so Shri Gajanan Maharaj recited the same chapter of Vedas that was recited incorrectly by these Brahmins; his pronunciation was clear, loud and his recitation, errorless. It appeared as if Vashistha himself was reciting the holy Vedas. The Brahmins were astonished and felt embarrassed to even lift their faces. The analogy can be compared to a lit candle fantasizing that it has better capacity to spread light around itself than the mighty sun. The Brahmins first thought that Shri Gajanan Maharaj was a mad person, but now found Him to be a learned saint. They were convinced that all the four Vedas were on the tip of His tongue. They took Shri Gajanan Maharaj a to be a God incarnate and a Brahmin by caste - a yogi free of any bondage or attachment, and because of their good deeds of previous life, they believed they were fortunate enough to get the "Darshan" of such a Godly saint. Shri Gajanan Maharaj a asked Khandu Patil to give them a rupee each as dakshina. The Brahmins accepted this dakshina and happily went away.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj , like a true saint, disliked the attachment of Shegaon's locals. In the northern region of Shegaon there was a garden where vegetables were grown in abundance. Under the cool dark shade of a neem tree, there was a temple of Lord Shiva in the Garden. Krishnaji Patil owned the temple. Shri Gajanan Maharaj went there and sat on a platform under a tree near the Shiva temple and said to Krishnaji, "I have come to your garden to stay here for a

few days near Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva is the God of all Gods and since He liked to stay in your garden, I too wish to be near Him. So erect a small shade for me here." Krishnaji thereupon got erected a tin shade on the platform. The Garden became a holy place due to the presence of Shri Gajanan Maharaj there. This is so because a place of the king's stay becomes the capital of the Kingdom. Bhaskar and Tukaram Kokatya stayed with Shri Gajanan Maharaj to render Him necessary service. Krishnaji used to attend personally to Shri Gajanan Maharaj's food and ate only after Maharaj had taken His meals. While Maharaj lived thus in Krishnaji's garden, some 15 to 20 ascetics, who had heard about Shri Gajanan Maharaj, arrived there. They told Krishnaji Patil that they were on a pilgrimage and were on their way to Rameshwar with the holy water from the Ganga with them. They also said that they were the disciples of Shri Brahmagiri Maharaj, who was also with them, and with him they had visited, on foot, several holy places like Gangotri, Jamnotri, Hinglal and Girnar Dakur. They further said, "Our Brahmagiri, who enslaved God Himself, has come to you probably due to the good deeds of your past life. So feed us 'Shira Puri' and give us some Ganja to smoke. We shall stay here for three days and leave on the fourth day. Do not hesitate to take this opportunity to serve us instead of this mad man whom you are feeding here. It is like kicking a cow and feeding a donkey. We are ascetics who know all the Vedas and have renounced everything. If you would like, come and listen to our discourse."

Krishnaji said, "I will entertain you with Shira Puri tomorrow. For today, please take these breads and besan. You will get a lot of Ganja to smoke as Shri Shiva Himself is sitting here in the form of Shri Gajanan Maharaj."

In the noon time the ascetics took their meals of bread and besan near the well. In the evening they sat under the shade before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and their mahant, Shri Brahmagiri, started reading the Bhagwad Geeta. The ascetics and some people from town were listening to the discourse of Brahmagiri, who started to preach on the first stanza of Nainam Chindanti. The Bramhachari was a pure hypocrite with no personal spiritual attainment. The people, therefore, were naturally not impressed by his talk and said that he was only playing with words. When his discourse was over, all the people went to Shri Gajanan Maharaj for His Darshan. They said, "We heard the philosophy over there, but see here in Shri Gajanan Maharaj the reality itself. There we heard the history and here is the Man himself." The ascetics who were smoking Ganja were irritated by these remarks. Shri Gajanan Maharaj, at that time, was sitting on a cot and Bhaskar was giving him a Ganja pipe to smoke. A spark from the pipe fell on the cot and slowly smoke started coming out of it; in a little while, the entire cot was in flames. Looking at the sight, Bhaskar requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to leave the cot, saying that the cot was of teak wood and won't extinguish without water. Thereupon Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Don't bring water to extinguish the fire. O Brahmachari Maharaj! Come and sit with me on this cot! You know the entire Geeta with its meaning; now the time has come to put your knowledge of Geeta to test. Prove that the element of fire does not burn a true Brahmin. You have just imparted a discourse on "Nainam Chindanti" for an hour, so you should not be afraid of sitting with me on this burning cot. Bhaskar, go and bring him with due respect to sit with me here."

Bhaskar was a well-built strong man and at the orders of Shri Gajanan Maharaj caught hold of Brahmagiri's hand to bring him to Shri Gajanan Maharaj. The entire cot was on fire and the

flames were leaping up from all around it; however, Shri Gajanan Maharaj did not move a bit and was sitting firm on it. Shri Vyas has written in the Bhagwat that Shri Pralhad, son of Kayadhu, was made to stand in fire and in a way the same scene was relived by Shri Gajanan Maharaj in the garden of Krishnaji Patil. When Bhaskar caught hold of Brahmagiri to take him to Maharaj, Brahmagiri started praying to Bhaskar to let him go by saying, "Please do not take me to the burning cot. I accept that I failed to appreciate the authority and greatness of Shri Gajanan Maharaj." But Bhaskar, not paying any heed to Brahmagiri's requests, dragged and brought him before Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said "Now prove that 'Nainam Dahti Pawak'!" At this, Brahmagiri got frightened and said, "To tell you the truth, I became an ascetic to enjoy good food only, so excuse me. I fruitlessly tried to learn the Geeta and called you mad, but now I regret all this and surrender before you. Please forgive me." People of Shegaon begged Shri Gajanan Maharaj to leave the burning cot for their sake, as they were afraid to see Him engulfed in flames. Brahmagiri hung his head in shame and said nothing. Shri Gajanan Maharaj got down from the cot to respect the public sentiments and immediately thereafter the burning cot collapsed. Practically all of the cot was burnt, but people poured water and extinguished it, thereby salvaging a portion of it as evidence to demonstrate Maharaj's greatness to other people. After this incidence, Brahmagiri shed away his entire ego and prostrated before Shri Gajanan Maharaj. The objects that Ganga water touches cannot remain impure. Then at midnight Shri Gajanan Maharaj advised Brahmagiri and said "Leave all your hypocrisy; an ascetic has to denounce all worldly attachments. Without self-realization one should not preach anything to others. Learning of words without understanding or practicing the spirit behind is useless. To save our culture from destruction it is necessary to understand the spirit behind the things we learn. Saints like Macchindra, Jalander, Gorakh Gahaninath and Dnyaneshwar were of great authority. Shri Shankaracharya was a saint who had attained self-realization and Eknatha, though a man of family had attained Brahmopada. Swami Samarth Brahmachari too had attained self-realization. You should remember all these great sages and stop wandering for Shira Puri, as it will be a useless and fruitless wandering." Brahmagiri calmly listened to all this advice and felt real detachment for the material things. Early next morning he left the place along with his disciples without meeting anybody.

Next day, when people heard of the happenings in the garden, they came to see the burnt cot.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Eight

|| Adhyay 9 ||

Shri Ganeshayanamah! O Rukmini's consort! O You, who lives on the bank of Chandrabhaga, adores flute and blesses saints! You are the saviour of the fallen and the giver of blessings. Greatness of the great cannot exist without the presence of small ones, and God cannot get his importance without the existence of sinners. Oh God! Please remember that because of us, the sinners, you are called the savior. A paras has importance because its touch turns iron into gold. Godavari is called a holy river because it accepts water from small brooks. Oh, Madhava think over this and give a helping hand to this Dasganu to save him from drowning.

One Kirtankar named Govindbua Taklikar once came to Shegaon to perform kirtan. There was an ancient temple of God Shiva at Shegaon and it was renovated by a rich man named Mote. Nowadays the rich are not very fond of spending money over buildings or renovating religious institutions like temples, instead they like investing their money on motors, cars and cycles. Mote Saokar was not that kind of a person. Though rich, he was a believer in God, and that was why he got the temple renovated. So the temple was called Mote's temple. Now listen to the story. Govindbua Taklikar camped in the above mentioned Mote's temple and had tied his horse in front of the main door. The horse had very bad habits like kicking anybody coming near it, and of biting. It frequently snapped the ropes holding it, never stayed steady and at times used to run away in the jungles. Day and night it used to neigh, creating a lot of noise. Govindbua had gotten an iron chain prepared for it, but had forgotten to bring the same with him during his trip to Shegaon. The horse was some how tied with a rope while Govindbua slept in the temple monitoring the horse at all times.

It was past midnight and everything, had drowned in pitch darkness. Night birds, creating fearful sounds, were searching for their feed. All the doors in the villages were closed and there was a fearful dead silence all around. Nobody was seen on the roads. At that time Shri Gajanan came to the place where the horse was tied. Saints' birth on this earth is ordained by Gods to improve the bad people, and as medicine cures disease, the saints help remove the wickedness from the disillusioned people. So Shri Gajanan Maharaj, on that particular night, came to the horse and happily slept under its four legs. He was reciting His usual Mantra, "Gana Gan Ganat Bote", the meaning of which nobody knew. My interpretation of this symbolic Bhajan is as follows - Gani means count, Individual soul, (Gana) means devotee, who is not different from Brahma and to suggest it the word "Ganat" is used. Bote appears to be the corrupt form of Bate meaning individual soul in Brahma Himself and not anything different from it.

There are two versions of this Bhajan, but we need not bother about it, as we are concerned about the story at this moment. So Shri Gajanan Maharaj slept under the four legs of the horse and was reciting the above mentioned Bhajan. The horse stood still as if restrained by the means of the chain of this Bhajan.

Govindbua was anxious about his violent horse and so frequently used to get up to see whether the horse was properly restrained and not creating any havoc in the neighborhood. When he saw that his horse was standing still, he was surprised and feared that his horse might have inflicted some sort of an illness. The horse's silence was quite unusual as it had never been silent like this before. So, anxiously, he went to the horse and was astonished to see that somebody was

sleeping under its stomach. When he carefully looked down, he found that Shri Gajanan Maharaj was sleeping there. It dawned on him that it was due to Shri Gajanan Maharaj's presence that the horse kept quiet. Just like the fragrance of Musk driving away the bad smell, the divine power emanating from Maharaj drove away all the sins surrounding the horse. Govindbua prostrated before Maharaj, placed his forehead on Maharaj's feet and said, "O Maharaj, you are really Gajanan, who clears all the obstructions. I have seen and experienced this today. My horse, being very wicked, caused all the people a lot of worry and anxiety, and so You have come to drive away its wickedness. It had possessed several bad habits like jumping and kicking while someone was riding it. I was fed up with it and had offered to sell it, but nobody wanted it, not even for free. It is really good that you have obliged me by calming down this animal. Horse owned by a preacher like me should be a gentle one, since it is the sole means of transportation for us. A Tiger is harmful in the house of a cowherd." Thus the horse suddenly became gentle and thereby Shri Gajanan Maharaj manifested His power to save even the animal life from straying away to the wrong path.

Then He said to the Horse "O friend, don't be naughty hereafter and quit all your bad habits from this moment on. Remember that you are standing here before Shiva and so should behave like a bull. Do not trouble anybody henceforth." Saying so, Shri Gajanan, who controlled the behaviour of an animal, went away. The next day, while Shri Gajanan Maharaj was in the garden, Govindbua came there riding his horse. All the people of Shegaon knew the misbehaving horse of Govindbua very well and feared it greatly. When they saw it coming one of them said, "Govindbua, why have you brought this trouble with you? This horse will harm the ladies and children here." Thereupon Govindbua said that Shri Gajanan Maharaj had made the horse sober last night and forced it to abandon all its bad habits and that there was no need for anyone to fear it anymore. The horse was allowed to stand unrestrained under a tree and it stood there for an hour in a well behaved manner. There was lot of vegetables and grass around the horse but he did not touch them at all. See, how powerful are the saints, who can control the mannerisms of even the animals and change their habits. In praise of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, Govindbua chanted as follows, "Nobody in the world is able to understand your actions. Your Blessings can bring around any villain. Please place your hand on my head as my benefactor." So praising Him, Govindbua left for Takli on his horse.

Every day people used to come to Shegaon with the intentions of fulfilling their desires. Among them were two persons from Balapur, who, on their way, vowed to offer Ganja to Shri Gajanan Maharaj, the next time they visited Shegaon, in exchange for the completion of their desires. They believed that Shri Gajanan Maharaj liked Ganja more than sweets. The next time they visited Shegaon, however, they forgot to bring the Ganja along with them. They felt shy and vowed to bring twice the quantity the next time they visited Shegaon. The next time they, they again forgot to bring Ganja with them. Referring to them Shri Gajanan Maharaj said to Bhaskar, "Look at the way people behave these days. They vow to do something enthusiastically and then forget all about it. They are Brahmins by caste and yet do not know the fact that Brahmins are expected to practise as they preach. That is why this caste has lost its superiority. When they vow something and forget about fulfilling it, how can they expect to get their desires fulfilled? Bhaskar, one should adhere to what he speaks or vows in order to get the blessings of God." These words hurt the two Brahmins very much and they looked at each other in surprise to realize that Maharaj knew everything that was in their mind. When they saw that Shri Gajanan

Maharaj knew everything about their vow and subsequently having failed to fulfil it, they were guilt struck and immediately got up to go to the market to shop for Ganja and thereby bring the Ganja to Maharaj right away to correct their mistakes. Thereupon Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Why are you now crying over the spilt milk? I do not care for Ganja; so don't go to the market now. Only remember the lesson that one should keep up his vows and promises made before God or saints in order to deserve God's blessings, as liars don't get them. Now you go, and bring Ganja only after the fulfilment of your desires. It will be fulfilled by next week. But remember to come here five times for the Darshan of Shri Shiva, by whose blessings Kubera became rich. Go, prostrate before Him and do not forget to bring Ganja next time you visit Shegaon. One should not violate the vows made to Gods and saints."

They accordingly bowed before Lord Shiva and returned to Balapur. Next week, after the fulfilment of their wishes, they came to Shegaon to offer Ganja as per their vow.

Now listen to another story from Balapur. Balkrishana of Balapur was a great devotee of Shri Ramdas Swami. His wife Putalabai was an equally pious lady, and she, with her husband, used to visit Sajjangad every year on foot. Their journey started in the month of Poush with a horse to carry their luggage. They carried three things with them - A kubadi, a small dari and the sacred book of Dasbodh. His piety was free from any form of ego. They accepted alms for food from the villages on way and offered the same food to Shri Ram before eating it. Every year they used to leave Balapur on the 9th Vadya of 'Poush' month. On the way, they continuously chanted the name of Rama and thus with the chant of Shri Ram Nama emanating from their lips they travelled via Shegaon, Khamgaon, Mehkar, Deulgaon Raja and Jalna, where they paid respects to Shri Anand Swami. Then from Jalna they went to Jamb, the birthplace of Shri Ramdas Swami, where they used to stay for three days. From there, they went to Divara, Bid, Mohari, Beleshwar and Domgaon, the place of Kalyan, the arch devotee of Shri Ramdas Swami. Thereafter to Narsingpur, Pandharpur, Nate Pote Shingnapur, Wai and Satara; thus they used to reach Sajjangad on the 1st Vadya of Magh month to attend the celebrations of Navami (Magh). As an offering to Shri Ramdas Swami, Balkrishana used to feed the Brahmins to the best extent possible for him. He was a real Ramdasi; it is really difficult to find any Ramdasi like him nowadays. After the celebrations of Ram Navami he used to return the same way he followed while going there. This routine of his continued till he became 60 years old. On the eve of starting his return journey, he sat near the Samadhi of Shri Ramdas Swami with tears in his eyes; with extreme grief said, "O all powerful Ramdas Swami! O my teacher and guide! I have become old now and as such it will not be possible for me to come here all the way hereafter on foot. Even journeying here by a vehicle appears difficult for me. I could follow this routine of an annual visit so far, but it may not be possible hereafter. You know that to follow any sacred or devotional routine, good health is required of the follower." Praying thus, Balkrishna went to sleep. In the dream he saw Shri Ramdas Swami saying to him, "Don't despair. You need not come to Sajjangad hereafter. I am very much pleased by your devotion and so wish you to celebrate Navami at your home next year. I will come to you at that time. This is my promise. Expenditure for the celebration of Navami should be within your means."

Balkrishna was very happy about the dream. He returned to Balapur with his wife. Now listen to what happened next year at Balapur. Balkrishna started the celebration of Ramdas Navami on the first day of Magh Vadya at Balapur. The daily routine was the reading of the Dasbodh during the

day, and the performing of the Kirtan at night. At noon he offered food to the Brahmins and performed Arati in the evening. But all the while Balkrishna was eagerly waiting to see Shri Swami come and visit him as per His promise. The villagers contributed money for this celebration upon the request of Balkrishna, and thus the 'Utsava' continued for nine days at Balapur.

On the 9th day there was a surprise. At noon on that day Shri Gajanan Maharaj appeared at the door of Balkrishna Bua's house when he, along with other people, was offering worship to Shri Ram. People at the door called Shri Balkrishna so that he could properly receive Shri Gajanan Maharaj. He said that he was very happy to know about the arrival of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, but at the same time was eagerly waiting for Shri Ramdas Swami to come to his house as per His promise. He was certain that the Swamiji's words would not go waste. At that moment, Shri Gajanan Maharaj started reciting shlokas from the Dasbodh. Upon hearing those lines, Balkrishna rushed to the door and saw Shri Gajanan Maharaj with his long arms and usual self, without any clothes adorning the body. He prostrated before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and when he looked up he saw Shri Ramdas Swami in place of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Balkrishna Bua was overwhelmed with the love and affection for his benefactor for keeping up the promise, and his eyes were full of tears due to the extreme happiness. Moments later, Swamiji appeared to him to be Shri Gajanan Maharaj and as he was disappointed at the disappearance of Shri Ramdas, again Shri Swamiji appeared in place of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Thus alternately Ramdas Swami and Gajanan Maharaj would appear before him like images in a cinema. He was confused and could not understand this mystery. Then Maharaj said, "Don't get confused, I am your Ramdas Swami. In the past I was staying at Sajjangad and now I reside in the garden at Shegaon. As per my promise given to you last year at Sajjangad, I have come to you. Do not have any doubts, I am Ramdas. Know the "Atman" only and forget its covering of a body. Remember what is said in the Geeta. Come on now and offer me a paat to sit on."

Shri Gajanan Maharaj gotahold of Balakrishna's hand, entered his house and sat on a paat. The news of the Saint's arrival spread in Balapur and people started coming to get His glimpse. Balkrishna worshipped Shri Gajanan Maharaj, but the whole day was thinking about what Shri Gajanan Maharaj had said. At night Shri Ramdas appeared in his dream and said, "Shri Gajanan Maharaj is My incarnation, and so do not have any doubt about it. Otherwise it will entail your downfall. Your worship to Him is the same as worship to Me." On seeing the dream, Balkrishna most respectfully prostrated before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and said, "You have removed all my doubts by appearing in my dream. I am now fully satisfied with the celebrations of Navami, and feel very much grateful to You. Now please do me a favor by staying with me for a few days." Thereupon Shri Gajanan Maharaj promised to come again after some days and went away. He reached Shegaon in a moment and was not seen by anybody on the way.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"

Here ends Chapter Nine

|| Adhyay 10 ||

Shri Ganeshayanamah! O Poorna-Brahma of Pandharpur! You are a shelter for pious people. Please do not send me away from Your feet. O Narayana, do not disown this Dasganu nor think of my sins. I know that there is no Punya to my credit and as such I don't deserve to come to you. In spite of this, please accept and oblige me like that holy Godavari does to the small nalas entering her. Please do so and save me from all grief and sins. You are all powerful and if You wish, can do anything. Even a pauper becomes rich by Your blessings.

Once Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to Amravati and stayed with Shri Atmaram Bhikaji. This Atmaram, Kayastha Prabhu by caste, was a big officer at Amravati. He was a well behaved, pious man who loved and respected saints very much. Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to him and Shri Atmaram worshipped him with full faith and devotion. He bathed Him with hot water, applied Chandan paste to His body, offered Him a silk bordered Dhoti of Umred and applied Keshari Tilak on His forehead. Then he garlanded Shri Gajanan Maharaj, gave an offering of many sweet dishes and a Dakshina of one hundred rupees, followed by an Aarti, which was scented by Agarbathis and placed flowers on His head. Atmaram did all this with great love and devotion. People of Amravati came in great numbers to get a glimpse of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Everybody wished to take Shri Gajanan Maharaj to his house for worship. Though many desired so, only a few could get the favor of doing so, as it requires a lot of Punya to one's credit to feel the presence of the holy feet of the saint in their house. Whosoever had that Punya to their credit, Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to their houses. The saints understand everything by their divine power.

There was one leading pleader at Amravati by the name of Ganesh Shri Krishna Khaparde alias Dadasaheb. He was a pious Shukla Yajurvedi Brahmin, at whose request Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to him and accepted his worship. There was one Ganeshappa, a Lingayat Wani who had a devoted wife by name Chandrabhai. She said to her husband that the saint must somehow be taken to their house and asked him to request Shri Gajanan Maharaj accordingly. She said, "If our minds are pious then our house will be graced by Shri Gajanan Maharaj as God always helps his devotees." Ganeshappa said that it was foolish on her part to think so, as it requires a lot of recommendation from influential people to arrange the saint's visit. He further reminded her of the troubles Shri Khaparde had to face in order to invite the saint to his house and in view of that wished her not to press the matter any more. But Chandrabai said, "I don't agree with you. My mind says that he will come to our house. You know that saints have special affection for the poor. So just request him to come to us." In spite of her constant urging, Ganesappa could not gather enough courage to invite Shri Gajanan Maharaj to his house. But Shri Gajanan Maharaj read their minds and eventually said, "I wish to come to your house. Tell me how far it is from here. You should not hesitate to open your mind before me." Hearing this Ganeshappa's happiness knew no bounds. He took Shri Gajanan Maharaj to his house and reverently worshipped him. Appa offered all his belongings at the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Many such Pujas were offered to Shri Gajanan Maharaj at Amravati and for every such puja one particular gentleman was present. He was a nephew of Shri Atmaram Bhikaji and a telegraphist in a post office at Bombay. His name was Balabhau and he had come to Amravati on a leave from his job, to see his maternal uncle. He felt great attachment to Shri Gajanan Maharaj because of that did not wish to leave Him. He started thinking that it is better to renounce the family life

as it was purely transient. This thinking made him desire to stay with Shri Gajanan Maharaj . He thought, “Who will reject the nectar and take to poison?” That is why he attended all the Pujas at Amravati with no other reason behind it. After some days Shri Gajanan Maharaj returned to Shegaon and went straight to Mote’s temple instead of the garden where he formerly stayed. To the east of this temple there was a vacant plot of land. Shri Gajanan Maharaj went and sat there. Krishna Patil got the news of the arrival of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and also of His having abandoned the former place in His garden. So he came rushing to Shri Gajanan Maharaj , prostrated at His feet and sat with bowed head before Him. Tears started coming from his eyes and the clothes on his chest got wet. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, “Why are you weeping? What is the grief? Tell me immediately.” Patil, with folded hands asked Him the reason for leaving the garden and said, “What is that unpardonable offence committed by me? O learned one! I am your child, tell me the reason; this land where You are sitting belongs to one Mali and he is of the Deshmukh group. Please do not stay here. If You like, come to my house, which I will vacate it for You. Let me tell You that I can sacrifice everything to get You.” All Patil brothers knew about this and they too came to request Shri Gajanan Maharaj to stay with any of them. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, “My coming to this place for stay is in your own interest, and you will realize it later on. So don’t ask Me any questions now. I assure you that the dispute between you two (Patil & Deshmukh) will be settled amicably. All the executive officers in the world have one defect in them, and that is, they fail to foresee the consequences of their actions. Go and ask Bankatlal. He was not angry at my leaving his house. You go and ask him why he was comfortable about the fact that I left his home. My Blessings are always with you and will always be so in the future. Later Bankatlal arrived at the scene and said, “Please don’t take Him back to the garden against His wish; remember that I did nothing to obstruct Him when He left my house. We are all His children and His love is the same for each and every one of us. Sakharam Asolkar is generous at heart and, I think, he will not hesitate to give this land to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Once he gives the land, our future planning will enable all of us to come together.”

Thus there was compromise and a Matth was built for Shri Gajanan Maharaj , with great efforts by Parashram Saoji. Shri Gajanan Maharaj had five deeply devoted devotees with him: Bhaskar, Balabhau, Pitambar, Ganesh Appa of Amravati and Ramchandra Gurav. They were like five Pandavas and Shri Gajanan Maharaj was Shri Hari amongst them. Balabhau felt completely detached from the worldly life and cared least about being late to report for his job. He frequently received letters from his work asking him to return immediately, but he paid no heed to them. Bhaskar finally had a talk with Maharaj and said to him, “Gurudeo, this Balabhau is not leaving us simply because he gets a lot of Pedhas (Sweets) to eat here. I am afraid that he will leave this place only when he receives a good beating at your hands. Monkey’s are tamed with a stick and big mountains are afraid of thunderbolts.” Once Balabhau was driven out against his wish, but he returned back to Maharaj having resigned from his service. At that time Bhaskar said to him in an agitated tone, “Why are you troubling us by frequently visiting this place like a shameless bullock who keeps returning to the green pastures? Only those who have renounced everything in life can rightly visit this place so frequently.” Shri Gajanan Maharaj did not like this egotistic talk of Bhaskar and so decided to remove his ignorance by doing the following:

There was a big umbrella in the hands of a gentleman sitting nearby. Shri Gajanan Maharaj got a hold of that umbrella and beat Balabhau with it till it broke. He continued the beating by the

means of a cane. The people who were around got scared and some of them even ran away, but Balabhau was lying still before Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Many thought that he must have died owing to such a beating and even Bhaskar now got worried about what was happening, but he did not dare to say anything to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . That cane also broke by the merciless beating. Then Maharaj started trampling Balabhau with both His feet like a potter trampling the mud. While this was going on, some of the disciples went to call the devotees whom Shri Gajanan Maharaj loved the most. Bankatlal and Krishnaji came running to the temple, but they too could not dare restrict Shri Gajanan Maharaj from what he was doing. At last Bankatlal, most hesitantly, requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to stop beating Balabhau, saying that he too was His devotee. At that Shri Gajanan Maharaj laughed and said, “You are speaking something irrelevant; I have not beaten nor trampled Balabhau. You can see for yourself and examine his body. O My dear Balabhau, get up and show your body to these people!” Balabhau got up and people examined his body carefully. There was no trace of beating on it. He was as happy as ever. With this incident Shri Gajanan Maharaj proved the authority and greatness of Balabhau’s devotion. Bhaskar, thereafter, treated Balabhau with due respect. Gold has to go through an acid test to be accepted as an object of value.

There was a man named Sukhlal Agarwal at Balapur who owned a wicked cow. She used to wander in the town trampling and hurting people by the means of her horns. She would enter any shop, eat grains to her heart’s content and then push and spilled the remaining on road. She even kicked oil and ghee containers thereby spilling the contents everywhere. If tied down at home, she snapped the ropes and broke the chains. She behaved like a tiger and the people of Balapur got fed up with her nuisance. She was not getting pregnant and never remained indoors. Many folks advised Sukhlal to hand her over to a butcher or get her shot down by a bullet. He permitted them to do whatever they liked to her. One Muslim man once tried to kill her by gun, but somehow she came to know about it and attacked and threw him away by her horns. Sukhlal then took her and abandoned her in another village, but she returned back to Balapur again. Somebody then, remembering the fact that it was Shri Gajanan Maharaj who had tamed Govindbua’s horse, advised Sukhlal to take her to Shegaon and offer her to Shri Gajanan Maharaj , thereby serving dual purpose of getting rid of her and obtain Punya for giving a gift of a cow to a saint. All liked the idea, but their attempts to catch her failed every time. Then they kept a heap of green grass and some cotton seeds on an open ground. As the cow rushed to eat it, 10 to 15 people surrounded and trapped her by ropes. Then she was lifted and tied on a bullock-cart with iron chains and brought to Shegaon as an offering to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . As Shegaon was approaching, there appeared to be a significant change in her behavior, and when brought before Shri Gajanan Maharaj , she appeared to be an extremely tame creature. With tears in her eyes, she looked at Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Thereupon Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, “It is foolish of you all to have tied and tortured a poor cow like this. Her neck, horns and legs are tied with rope and chains. Such type of ‘Bandobast’ is all right for a tiger, but not for a poor cow like this. You fools! You should know that this is a cow, a mother of all, and by tying her like this you have committed a sin. Release her at once, she will not trouble anybody.” Even with Maharaj’s assurance, no one dared to go close to her. So Maharaj, with His sacred hands, released her of all the restraining chains and ropes. As soon as she was free, the cow came down, went round Shri Gajanan Maharaj three times, folded her forelegs and with a bowed head and started rubbing His feet by her tongue. All the people saw this miracle and were surprised. Shri

Gajanan Maharaj said to the cow, “O cow! Do not trouble anybody hereafter and don’t leave this place at all.”

When this happened all the people present raised cheers in praise of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Since then, she was never tied by any rope and became a wise cow. Even today, her progeny exists in Shegaon. This incidence shows that whatever is said by the saints always comes true.

Now read the story of Laxman Ghude. He was a rich Brahmin of Karanja who had some disease of the stomach for which he had taken lot of treatment, spending much money to no effect. Hearing the fame of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, he came to Shegaon with his wife. The ailment was so acute that he could not even walk and so 2 to 3 persons had to lift him and bring him to the Matth. He was not even able to bend his body to bow before Shri Gajanan Maharaj . His wife bowed and begged for the health of her husband. She said, “O Maharaj, I am like a daughter to you and request you to cure my husband from the agonies of the disease. When nectar is present, death must go away; kindly save my husband.” At that time, Shri Gajanan Maharaj was eating a mango and he threw the same at Laxman's wife saying, “Now go and feed this mango to your husband. It will cure him of the disease; you are a good, devoted wife to him.” Then he kept quiet and started smoking his pipe. Since the lady was still sitting there Bhaskar said, “O Lady! Now do not sit here. Take your husband back to Karanja and feed him the Prasad of mango given to you by Shri Gajanan Maharaj ; as soon as he eats the mango it will cure his ailment.”

Upon hearing this from Bhaskar, she returned to Karanja with her husband and fed that mango to Laxman. When this she reached Karanja, people began asking her as to what had happened at Shegaon. She told all the details and also about the prasad mango, which she had fed to Laxman. There upon the doctors said that it was wrong for Laxman to eat the mango as it would aggravate the ailment of the stomach. They pointed out that the great Vaidyas like Mahaonid, Sushrut, Nighant and Sharangdhar clearly stated in their writings that the mango is a prohibited fruit for stomach ailment. They further said that if she had eaten the Prasad, instead of her husband, her Punya would have been useful for curing Laxman. Everybody started criticizing her for what she had done, but a miracle happened. Laxman suddenly excreted stools and his stomach became soft. Gradually, he recovered completely. His ailment passed away through the stools. Doctors can’t help when things are beyond nature; at such times only the blessings of God and the saints are useful. When Laxman was fully recovered, he went to Shegaon and respectfully invited Shri Gajanan Maharaj to his house, while saying “Please purify my house by the touch of Your feet.” Shri Gajanan Maharaj was reluctant, but with Laxman’s fervent requests agreed. Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to Karanja along with Shankar, Bhau and Pitambar. Laxman very warmly received Shri Gajanan Maharaj at his house and performed the detailed Puja. As for Dakshina (offering) he said, “Maharaj, every thing that belongs to me is Your’s, so who am I to give you anything?” Saying so, he placed some money in a plate and offered it to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Looking at that Maharaj said, “When you say that you possess nothing, then wherefrom have you brought these rupees? Laxman don’t try to trick me by your hypocrisy. Since you have given me everything of yours, open all the doors and throw away all the locks.” Laxman kept quiet, but Shri Gajanan Maharaj insisted upon his opening the safe. Hesitatingly, Laxman opened the locks of his safe, sat at its door and asked Shri Gajanan Maharaj to take whatever he liked from it. Though he said this, he was not that honest or sincere from his mind. Shri Gajanan Maharaj could understand his hypocrisy. An actor cannot keep up his disguise for long. A bitter fruit

appears fine from outside but inside of it there is nothing but bitterness. Saints are never happy at the house of hypocrites, so Shri Gajanan Maharaj left Laxman's house without eating anything. He did not care for Laxman's house or his money as He was the ocean of renunciation himself. He only wanted to find the truth in what Laxman had said, and when found his falsehood, He just left the place and while leaving said, "You are most selfish, trying to own everything. Now get ready to face its consequences. I had come to bless you and give you double of what you have, but it appears that you are not destined to get it." It proved true and within six months of the above mentioned incident, Laxman lost everything and was reduced to a beggar's state. By this incident, Shri Gajanan Maharaj wanted to show that one should not be insincere and dishonest in the Parmarth. Shri Gajanan Maharaj was Chintamani i.e. capable of getting anything and as such did not care for the pebbles of Laxman. Can aluminium decorate the God?

May all devotees listen to this Gajanan Vijay Katha for their own good.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"

Here ends Chapter Ten

|| Adhyay 11 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmah! O Pashupati! O Bhavanipati! You have as many forms as the number of people in the universe. Your formless form occupies the entire universe and it is also the manifestation of maya in its original form. O Dear God! It is impossible to apprehend Your form and so You have been kind enough to manifest Yourself in forms with different attributes. Devotees name you as they like, and these names do not make any difference for You. Shaiva call You Shiva, Vedantis call You Brahma, Ramanujas call You Sitapati and You are Vishnu of Vaishnavas. Various methods of worshipping have given You these names, but You are the same everywhere. You are Vishveshwar at Somnath, Kedar in Himalaya, Mahankal on the bank of Kshipra, Naganath, Vaijanath, Ghrushneswar at Verul and Tryambak on the bank of Godavari. You are Bhimashankar, Mallikarjuna and Rameshwar. You are Shankar in the form of Gokarna and Mahadeo at Shinganapur. I bow before them all. O Benevolent God! Please rid me of the troublesome elements of nature. O Girijapate! it is You who made Kubera wealthy in a moment; then why this hesitation for me?

Next year Shri Samartha came to Balapur for Das Navami. At that place there were His two most devoted devotees: Sukhlal and Balkrishna. Bhaskar Patil, Balabhau, Pitambar, Ganu, Jagdeo and Dindokar accompanied Shri Gajanan Maharaj . The celebration of Das Navami was most satisfying, but fate had something else in store for Bhaskar. A rabid dog bit him and people were afraid that he would soon go rabid. All the possible treatment was given to him, and it was also suggested that he be taken to some doctor, but Bhaskar said that he did not need any doctor as Shri Gajanan Maharaj was his real doctor, whom he wanted to be taken to soon. Accordingly, Bhaskar was brought before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and Balabhau narrated everything about the dog bite to Him. Shri Gajanan Maharaj heard the incident and smilingly said, "Nobody can escape the effects of murder, enmity and debt. This Bhaskar removed the wickedness of Shukhlal's cow at Shegaon, but that wickedness has now come in the form of the dog to bite him. Bhaskar is so selfish that he had requested me to remove that wickedness from the cow so that he could get her milk for himself. You enjoyed drinking her milk, and now feel sorry for the dog bite? Do you really want me to save you? Be frank. This dog bite is only an excuse to end your life. Your life is now over and soon you will have to leave this material world. If you wish to live more, I can save you, but that will be a sort of a give and take affair in this illusive world. So be quick and let me know your mind. You will not get such a chance again."

Bhaskar said, "I am an ignorant child of Yours. You do whatever is good for me. Shri Tukaram, in his Abhang, has said that only a mother understands everything that is good for her child; I am your child, so why should I request You? You are the ocean of all knowledge!"

Hearing this, Shri Gajanan Maharaj felt very happy, as truth always satisfies people who are themselves truthful. Some devotees requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to save Bhaskar as he was one of the most dedicated disciples.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Gentlemen, it is your ignorance that makes you say so. Know that, this life and death themselves are unreal. Nobody is born and nobody dies. The intellectuals have advised the knowledge of the Supreme self to understand this illusion. You cannot be liberated from the present life, without suffering the effects of the deeds of your previous life. You do

something in your past life and take birth to suffer the effects of those deeds and then you again take birth for the deeds of the present life and so on the cycle goes on. How long will you continue this chain? Bhaskar has finished suffering the effects of the deeds of his past life and now is liberated to attain Moksha (to merge with the Brahma). So please do not come in his way; let him go. It is difficult to get a devotee like Bhaskar. Know that, this dog was his enemy in the previous life and so it has bitten him in this life at Balapur. The revenge is now over. However, if this incident leaves any bitterness in the mind of Bhaskar, it will cause him to take another birth to avenge the bite. So understand that, as of today, the enmity of Bhaskar's previous life is over and he is cleansed of all effects of that life. He is left with two more months of life, and I will save him from the effects of that dog bite for two months. If I do not do that, he will have to take birth again and live for two months."

Many people were unable to understand this supreme knowledge given out by Shri Gajanan Maharaj , but Balabhau could comprehend and so was happy. He praised Bhaskar again and again for his sincere devotion to the saint and thereby againing the ultimate liberation from the cycle of life and death.

Then all of them returned to Shegaon. Bhaskar narrated everything that happened at Balapur, to other devotees in the Math and with folded hands requested them as follows, "Shegaon is very fortunate to get Shri Gajanan Maharaj and so we, in the form of some permanent memorial, should retain this invaluable Trust. In fact He himself does not need any memorial, but it is necessary in the interest of the future generations. Like the monuments of Sant Dnyaneshwar at Alandi, Shri Ramdas Swami at Sajjangad and Shri Tukaram Maharaj at Dehu, we also should have a grand memorial of Shri Gajanan Maharaj at Shegaon."

Bhaskar went on telling this to everybody, but was doubtful about their conviction. So he, in the absence of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , called a meeting of all devotees at Shegaon. Bankatlal, Hari Patil, Maroti, Chandrabhan, Shripatrao Vavikar, Tarachand Saokar and many others attended. Bhaskar said to them, "Now my stay with you is for two months only and I wish that a grand memorial for Shri Gajanan Maharaj should come up at Shegaon. If you promise me this, I shall leave for "Vaikunth" with real happiness. Remember that service to a saint never goes waste. He will fulfill all your desires. The memorial should be such that it attracts praise from everybody. This is my last desire. Do you all vow to raise such monument for Shri Gajanan Maharaj ?"

All promised to fulfill his desire, so Bhaskar was satisfied.

Day by day, Bhaskar was getting gay as a child waiting for the gaiety of some ensuing festival. On Magh Vadya 13th Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Bhaskar, let us go to Trimbakeshwar for Shri Mahashivaratri; there resides on the bank of Godavari, Shri Shiva - the Bhavanivara. The Jyotirling at that place is most pleasant and capable of dispelling all sins. Don't delay. Let us go there and have a holy bath in the sacred Godavari. Moreover, there is a hill named Brahmagiri near Tryambakeshwar and on it are a lot of medicinal herbs. Gahininath, who knows all the medicinal herbs, also resides there. We can get some herbs for your anti-rabid treatment from him."

Bhaskar replied, "Why should I need any medicine now? Your blessings are more useful for me,

than any medicine. By Your grace I was freed of the poison at Balapur, and have to live for another two months only. So permit me to stay at Shegaon; for me, You are Trimbakeshwar, and Your feet the Godavari where I shall take bath. Thus I don't need to visit any other holy place.”

Thereupon Shri Gajanan Maharaj said that it was all true, but one should not ignore the importance of the holy and sacred places. He asked Bhaskar to get ready and also to take Pitambar and Balabhau with them.

They all went to Tryambakeshwar on Shivaratri day, took bath at sacred Kushavarth, had darshana of Shri Shiva at the temple, and then offered Pujas to Goutami at Gangadwara, Ma Nilambika, Nivrutti and Gahaninath. From there, they came to Nasik to meet Shri Gopaldas who was always sitting at the entrance of Kalaram Temple in Panchavati. In front of the temple was a pipal tree surrounded by a platform. Shri Gajanan Maharaj, along with his disciples, went and sat on it. Shri Gopaldas was very happy, and said to the people around him, "Today My brother has come from Vidarbha and His name is Gajanan. Go and have His darshan respectfully. Offer Him coconut and sugar as a present from Me, and put this garland around His neck. Though We have two bodies, still We are one.”

The disciples accordingly offered coconut, sugar and a garland to Shri Gajanan Maharaj and had his darshan. Looking to that Shri Gajanan Maharaj said to Bhaskar, "Bhaskar, distribute this prasada to all. In this Panchavati I have met My brother today. So our work over here is finished. Let us now go to Shri Dhumal Lawyer of Nasik." Shri Gajanan Maharaj, then, came to Nasik where many people took his darshan. After staying there for few days, He returned to Shegaon.

Zyam Singh came to Shegaon and requested Him to go with him to Adgaon. Shri Gajanan Maharaj was reluctant, but looking to the fervent request of Zyam Singh, said that he would go to Adgaon after Ramnavami. Zyam Singh went back to Adgaon and returned to Shegaon again after Ramnavami as per the wish of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. After the celebrations of Ramnavami, Zyam Singh brought Shri Gajanan Maharaj, alongwith other disciples, to Adgaon for the 'Hanuman Jayanti' celebrations. While at Adgaon, Shri Gajanan Maharaj performed many miracles. One afternoon, He pushed Bhaskar flat on ground, sat on his chest and started beating him. All people were looking at it, but nobody could go to rescue Bhaskar from that beating. Then Balabhau said, "Maharaj, kindly leave Bhaskar; he is getting scorched on hot earth below him."

Thereupon Bhaskar said, "Don't obstruct Him like that. Let Him do as He likes. He is my God. You think that He is beating me? Infact, He is playing with me. This experience can only be understood by those who know Him." Then Maharaj, along with Bhaskar and other disciples, came to Adgaon where they stayed.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Balabhau, now only two days are left for Bhaskar as he will leave this world on Panchami. You must have understood the reason for My beating him today. Do you remember that this Bhaskar had made Me beat you with an umbrella at Shegaon? To dispel the effect of that act, I beat Bhaskar today. There was no other intention."

Now listen to what happened after Hanuman Jayanti celebrations at Adgaon. The prasada of 'Kala'

was distributed and the day of Panchami dawned. On that day, in the morning, Shri Gajanan Maharaj said to Bhaskar, "Bhaskar, your departure is scheduled for today. Facing east, sit in the 'Padmasan' posture. Make your mind steady and concentrate on Almighty Hari. You are nearing the time of departure. Get prepared!" To others He said, "Keep on loudly chanting 'Vithal, Vithal, Narayan!' This brother of yours is going to Vaikunth today. Worship him by offering flowers and 'Bukka'."

Bhaskar sat in the Padmasan posture, concentrated both eyes on the tip of his nose and calmed his mind in a complete surrender to the Almighty. All the devotees were offering Puja to Bhaskar and Shri Gajanan Maharaj was happily looking at them. The chanting of holy verses and Bhajan continued till noon when Shri Gajanan Maharaj loudly said, "Har! Har!" and with those words, Bhaskar's soul left for Vaikunth. Only those who are blessed by saints go straight to Vaikunth. People asked Shri Gajanan Maharaj about the place for Shri Bhaskar's burial, and He advised them to bury him near the Shiva Parvati temple. Then they brought a palanquin and decorated it with leaves of the banana tree. Bhaskar's body was kept in it and carried in a procession with devotees singing Bhajan's in the front. They reached the Dwarkeshwar temple and all rites of Samadhi were performed, near the place of burial. People were weeping with grief, saying that the greatest disciple of Shri Gajanan Maharaj had left them forever.

From the next day the feeding of poor people in memory of Bhaskar was started. This Shri Krishna-Shankar-Parvati temple is about a mile to the north of Adgaon. The surroundings of this Shri Krishna temple were very lively with the greenery of trees like Neem, Ashwath, Mandar, Audumbur and many flower plants. The place is between Akola and Adgaon. The feeding of people, called 'Sant Bhandara' continued for ten days. People sat under the tamarind tree for their food, but the crows started to trouble them by continuously cawing, lifting away food from their plates, and even dropping dirt on them. All this annoyed the people very much and they called the Bhil to shoot arrows at them. Seeing that, Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Don't shoot at the crows. They have done nothing wrong, as they have come here to get the Prasad of the Bhandara, just like you. Bhaskar's soul has ascended straight to Vaikunth without any break on Pitru lok. Normally the soul of a dead person keeps on wandering in the sky for ten days. On eleventh day, a ball of rice (Pind) is offered to crows, on whose touching it only, the soul goes ahead. In Bhaskar's case, his soul went straight to Vaikunth and so there was no need of offering the rice ball (Pind) to the crows. That is why the crows are angry. His soul has been liberated immediately and by this time, has reached Vaikunth. While on earth, he had attained detachment and so needs no offering of rice (Pind). Rice ball offering is given those persons who are not favored with direct ascent to the heaven. Now knowing that Bhaskar's soul has gone straight to heaven, the crows are angry and by such behavior, they only want to say that they too be given the Prasad of Bhaskar as was given to other people. So don't shoot at them. I will tell them. Crows listen to what I say; don't come to this place from tomorrow, as it may lower the prestige of My Bhaskar. Eat the prasad today to your heart content and don't come here from tomorrow."

All the devotees were pleased to hear Shri Gajanan Maharaj, but a few nonbelievers were sarcastic and said that it was all nonsense. "How can birds obey the orders of human beings?" said they to each other. Next day, they even went to that place to see effect of what Shri Gajanan Maharaj had said. There was not single crow there. They were surprised and then surrendered to Shri Gajanan Maharaj. The crows did not visit that place for twelve years. After 14 days Shri

Gajanan Maharaj returned to Shegaon with his remaining disciples.

Now listen to another story.

It was a year of famine and so the work of digging a well was going on. Digging of about 10 feet was done and then came up a hard black rock making it impossible to dig further. So four holes were made for dynamites, and putting the end of string inside, gunpowder was packed in them. The other ends of the strings were taken up and through them were passed small burning wooden pipes, so that they would slide down and ignite the gunpowder. Somehow, however, the wooden pipes got stuck on the string knots in between; they were not sliding down and the water in the well was about to enter the gunpowder holes, thereby making it ineffective to explode. Somebody had to go down & push the pipe down to save the situation, but nobody was ready to take such a risk. The contractor asked Ganu Lavarya to go down the well immediately. Because of his poverty, Ganu had to obey. It is always seen that a poor sheep is killed as an offering to God. Ganu had great faith in Shri Gajanan Maharaj and so, remembering Him, he went down the well and pulled one obstructed pipe, which immediately slid down and touched the gunpowder. Before he could pull another one, the first one exploded. Ganu Lavarya was caught inside the well. He fervently prayed to Shri Gajanan Maharaj to save him. The whole well got filled with smoke and before the next dynamite exploded, Ganu got hold of one rock on the side below which there was a cavern. Ganu immediately slid into that cavern. One after the other, all the remaining dynamites exploded and a lot of stones were thrown out. People thought that Ganu must have been split into pieces and thrown out. The contractor asked other workers to search for the body around. Ganu heard him and shouted from inside the well, "O mistry! Ganu is not dead! He is perfectly alive in the well. By the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, I am safe in a cavern here, but there is a big rock obstructing me from coming out."

People were rejoiced to hear the voice of Ganu and went down the well. They, removing the stones by spades, brought him up. Ganu at once went running to Shri Gajanan Maharaj and prostrated at His feet. Shri Gajanan Maharaj smilingly said, "Ganu, hiding inside the cavern, how many stones have you thrown out? It is the big stone, which obstructed you from coming out, that intact saved you. Don't repeat such feats again in the future and never touch an ignited pipe once it has slid down a string. Now go! You have been saved from a great disaster today."

When people came to know about Ganu, he said "O Maharaj! When the dynamite exploded, it was you who, holding my hand, put me inside that safe cavern and saved me from death." Such is the greatness of Maharaj for which I have no words to express

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"

Here ends Chapter Eleven

|| Adhyay 12 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmah! O Ganapati! Mayureshwar! Come, sit in my heart and help me complete this book. You are the giver of knowledge and intelligence and the only one to fulfill the desires of His devotees by removing all the obstacles. Puranas also say so. O Ekdanta! Lambodara! Parvatisuta! Bhalchandra! Sindura! Please rid me of all anxieties.

There was one Bachchulal Agrawal at Akola - a rich and generous person. He had heard about the episode of Laxman Ghude of Karanja which had created some doubts in his mind. As he was thinking to find the real fact behind it, Shri Gajana Maharaj, himself, came to Akola and reached his house. Bachchulal was immensely happy and expressed to Maharaj the desire to worship Him. Shri Gajanan Maharaj gave his consent. Shri Bachchulal made elaborate arrangements for the Puja; first Shri Gajanan Maharaj was given a bath with scented water and then offered a fine silken pitambar, a Kashmiri shal and a silken pheta. A gold chain was placed around His neck and gold rings on all His fingers. A bracelet of diamonds was put on his left arm and perfumes were sprinkled on the body. Then, meals with jalebi and other sweets were given to him. Thereafter a golden thali full of rupees and moharas was offered to Shri Gajanan Maharaj as Dakshina - which amounted to about Rs. Ten thousands - and on it was put a coconut. Then, with folded hands, Bachchulal said, "Maharaj, I wish to construct a Shri Ram temple as the space in my courtyard is insufficient for the annual celebration of Ram Navami. Kindly fulfill my desire." Saying so he, most reverently, put his head on the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj .

Then upon Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "I bless you that God Shri Ramchandra will fulfill your desire. But what have you done this by putting so many ornaments on my body? You have made me look like a bullock of the 'Pola' festival. You see, I am neither a bullock of Pola nor a horse of Dasherra. These ornaments are of no use to me, or rather they are poison for me and I should not have even a touch of them. Don't try to tempt me by all these material attachments or Bachchulal have you done all this exhibit your wealth? You should offer only those things which can be liked by the receiver. I am a mad, wandering, naked saint. Let these things be with you only. It is useful for people leading a family life like you. My lord standing on a brick on the bank of Bhima can give me any wealth I want."

Saying so, He removed all the ornaments and clothes and threw them away and took only a piece of sweet and went away. Many people of Akola witnessed this and were unhappy to see Shri Gajanan Maharaj leaving like that. Amongst them, some were from Karanja, who felt sorry for Lakshman Ghude who worshipped Maharaj like Bachchulal, but was not sincere while offering Dakshina. It was not difficult for Shri Gajanan Maharaj to understand his hypocrisy, how talk, and false modest. Ghude's Puja was of only words. Such people while worshipping say - "O God! Accept this Mahavastra" and actually may offer some grains of rice only, or "O God! Accept these sweets", may put before Him some grains of groundnut. Such dishonest and hypocritical worship gives the same type of fruit to the worshipper. Laxman was a victim of such behavior unlike Bachchulal, whose actions and words were the same. So Bachchulal's prosperity never receded; he, who gets blessings of saint, ever remains happy. Bachchulal thereaft searched for Shri Gajanan Maharaj in whole of Akola, but could not get him.

At Shegaon, in the Matth of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , there was one devotee named Pitambar, a Shimpi by caste. He rendered most sincere service to Shri Gajanan Maharaj whereby his devotion bore fruit.

Once, it so happened, that he was wearing a dhoti which was in tattered condition. Looking to that Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, “Eh, your name is Pitambar and you don't have even a good dhoti to wear! Atleast try to cover your buttocks which are being seen by others. It is just like woman by the name Sonubai going without even aluminium bangles, or a lady by the name Gangabai dying for want of water. Same is the case with you. This dhoti is useful only for making a duster. By wearing such clothes, you are exposing your buttocks. Take this Dupatta, which I am giving you, and wear it without hesitation. Never remove it at anybody's asking you to do so.”

Pitambar obeyed and wore the Dupatta, but the others could not tolerate it. It is the way of the world that, in the wake of selfishness, your own brothers become your enemies. There is no use talking over this subject as by opening the drainage you get bad smell only. There were many people claiming to be the disciples of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , but real devotees were very few who could be counted on finger tips. It was like a few sandalwood trees in the midst of scores of other trees in the forest. Same was the case with people around Shri Gajanan Maharaj.

Seeing that a Dupatta was given to Pitambar by Shri Gajanan Maharaj , the other disciples started teasing Pitambar out of jealousy; they said that he should not wear the Dupatta which in fact was meant for Shri Gajanan Maharaj . In reply Pitambar said that he only obeyed the orders of Shri Gajanan Maharaj who had specifically told him to wear it. Thus, the incident created rift among the disciples of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , who to overcome it, said to Pitambar, “Pitambar, now you go away from here, as a grown up and wise child is kept aloof by his mother. My blessings are with you. Go and save the fallen ones. With tears in his eyes, Pitambar prostrated before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and with lingering eyes, looking back again and again, left the Matth. He reached Kondholi and sat under a tree meditating with the name of Shri Gajanan Maharaj on his lips. He was sitting there for the whole night; as ants started climbing his body in the morning, he went up the tree and sat on a branch. There too he had to face the menace of ants, and so went from branch to branch, small or big, to find out a safer place to sit, but could not get any. There were some cowherds nearby who were surprised to see Pitambar moving like that on the tree. They could not understand the reasons for his such going from branch to branch like a monkey, and were more surprised to see that he did not fall down even by going on smallest of the branches. One of them said that disciples of Shri Gajanan Maharaj do perform miracles like this, and so he thought that this man must be a disciple of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Then they went back to the village and told other people about what they had seen near that mango tree. Hearing the story from the cowherds, the people of Kondholi came to the mango tree to find out who this person was. Seeing Pitambar, they thought that he must be hypocrite doing all these tricks to make them believe that he was a disciple of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. There was one Bhaskar Patil, a real disciple of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, but recently he had passed away. Some said, disciples of Shri Gajanan Maharaj are not likely to come here, leaving the sweets they get at Shegaon. Ultimately they thought it better to ask Pitambar himself about him before forming any opinion. So one of them asked Pitambar as to who he was, why he had come there and who his Guru was.

Pitambar said, "I am resident of Shegaon named Shimpi Pitambar, and a disciple of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. I have come here as per my Guru's orders. I first sat under the mango tree, but due to a lot of ants climbing my body, went up the tree and sat on the branches."

The people assembled there got angry at this reply and warned him not to fool them by using the name of a great saint. They further taunted that it was like saying he was a queen of a king and had come there to do a laborer's job for livelihood.

Shamrao Deshmukh of that village said, "You impostor! Listen to me, Shri Gajanan Maharaj is God himself and you are tarnishing His name. You fool! Do you know that once Shri Gajanan Maharaj created mangoes on a mango tree out of season? He created mangoes and now we challenge you to create atleast leaves on this dried up tree of Baliram Patil. Do it or get prepared for a beating from us. If you do so you will get all the respect from us. It is generally seen that disciples of great saints, to some extent, attain the heights of their Guru. So don't delay! Make this tree green with leaves."

Pitambar got frightened and said, "Please don't corner me like this. Listen to what I say. You see, diamonds and pebbles are found in the same mine. I told you the truth about me. You can very well treat me a pebble amongst the disciples of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and ignore. What I said is not a lie at all. A pebble does not lower the importance of the mine. I cannot hide the name of my Guru."

Thereupon Shamrao said, "Don't talk nonsense! Whenever a disciple is in difficulty, he prays for the favor of his Guru, who does come to the rescue of the disciple even if he has not attained the real height required for a disciple."

Thus Pitambar was caught between the devil and the sea; he got worried and felt helpless. All the people gathered around the mango tree to see what would happen further. Helplessly Pitambar folded his hands and started praying Shri Gajanan Maharaj , "O Swami Gajanan! My Narayana! Come running for my rescue. Because of me they are blaming You. Make this tree green with leaves for the sake of Your greatness. I am entirely depending on You. Come for my sake, else I will have to face death here. Narhari appeared in a pillar to uphold the worlds of Pralhad and the pointed pillar on which Jananbai had to be killed, turned into water. Janabai depended on God and I entrust myself to You. There is no difference between God and saint. God is saint and saint is God. I am recognized as a disciple of Gajanan Maharaj and have no individual existence. So it is You whose honor is at stake. Thread gets importance because of the flowers in the garland. You are the flowers and I am the thread. You are musk (kasturi) and I am mere dust. I am caught in this calamity because of You. Please don't test me any more, and come running to create fine green leaves on this tree."

Praying thus, he called upon the people to chant, in chorus, the name of Shri Gajanan Maharaj of Shegaon. So the bhajan started saying "Jai Gajanan" – "Jai Gajanan". This continued for some time, and there was the miracle! Delicate green leaves started shooting out on the tree and soon it was all green. People looked at it in wonder. Some of them thought that it could be a dream, so they just pinched each other and were satisfied that it was not a dream. Others thought it to be

some sort of an illusion. However, that doubt too was removed as white liquid drops came out on plucking the leaves. Then they were convinced that the leaves came on the tree because of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. This made them accept the greatness of Pitambar; they took him to Kondholi with hope that some day, like a cow going to its calf, Shri Gajanan Maharaj may too come to Kondholi to see His disciple. Shri Ramdas Swami had sent His disciple Kalyan to Domgaon for the spiritual upliftment of the people there, likewise this Pitambar was sent to Kondholi by Shri Gajanan Maharaj. It was the good luck of Kondholi. That mango tree is still there at Kondholi and bears more mangoes than any other in the vicinity. People of Kondholi started respecting Pitambar. He established a Matth at Kondholi and also died there.

At Shegaon, once, Shri Gajanan Maharaj was found to be restless, so His disciples asked him the reason for it.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj replied, "Krishna Patil, who used to give me a nut (supari) daily, is gone and today I am remembering him. His son, Ram, is now very young, and as such there is nobody to give me a supari. Ram may render me his services when he grows up. So I do not wish to stay in this Matth hereafter."

These words created anxiety in the minds of people as it was a clear indication of His intention to leave the place. They decided to catch His feet and desist Him from leaving Shegaon. Shripatrao, Bankatlal, Tarachand, Maroti and others came and touching the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, said, "Maharaj, please don't leave us by going away from here. You may stay wherever you like, but don't leave Shegaon." Shri Gajanan Maharaj replied that since the people of Shegaon were divided amongst themselves, he did not wish to stay in anybody's house. He, however, added that He might stay in Shegaon if given a place not owned by anybody. This demand put the people in a very awkward position. He is not ready to stay in anybody's place, so the only alternative is to get land from the government. But how could a foreign government have respect for our saint? So Bankatlal requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to not put them in such a difficulty as there was no guarantee of this alien government donating land for the religious purpose. They again requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to ask for anybody's place from amongst them. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "You are ignorant people. Know that the land is fully owned by Almighty. Many Kings came and vanished, but this land always belonged to Pandurang. Kings own land by the way of tradition and nothing more than that. Go and try at the hands of Hari Patil. You will succeed in getting the land from the government."

People came to Hari Patil and, after consultation with him, applied to the government for land. Mr. Kari was the District Collector at Buldana. He agreed and gave one acre of land on that application. In his order he had said that initially he had sanctioned only one acre of land, but if they used and developed it properly, within year, more land would be sanctioned. That decision of the Collector is still there on record. This was all due to the 'word' of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Then Hari Patil and Bankatlal started the collection of funds and the required amount was soon collected. Thereafter, the construction was started. Subsequent story will be narrated in the next chapter.

God is always ready to fulfill the wishes of saints. Vithu Patil of Dongargaon, Laxman Patil of Wadegaon and Jagu Aba of Shegaon were the leaders in the collection of donations.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Twelve

|| Adhyay 13 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmah! O Shri Hari! You are the supreme saint, the ocean of kindness and an intimate friend of the Gopa and Gopis. O Shri Hari! Please manifest Yourself to me. Brahmadeo had to steal cows and calves in Gokul to see the Godliness in You. At that time You Yourself became cows of calves and manifested the Godliness in You to Brahmadeo. You crushed Kaliya Cobra in Yamuna and sent him to Ramanakdwep to free the Gopas of his menace. Likewise, I request You to trample my misfortune and to rid me of all fears. O Hari! I am the most ignorant devotee of Yours: undeserving and not suitable for Your blessings, but, even then, I request You to please oblige me by Your favor to free me from all worries immediately.

Now listen. Bankat, Hari, Laxman Vithu and Jagdeo together went around collecting donations for the Matth of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Believers readily subscribed while some mischievous people taunted them saying, "Why should your saint need donations? You always say that Shri Gajanan Maharaj is a great saint capable of performing any miracle, then why should He need money for His Matth? Kuber is his banker - Just draw a Hundi in the name of Kuber instead of going from door to door for money." At this Jagdeo laughed and said, "This begging for donations is for your good. There is no need to build Matth or temple for Shri Gajanan Maharaj. All this exercise is meant for bringing happiness to you. This whole universe is a Matth for Shri Gajanan Maharaj . All these forests are gardens and the earth a cot for him. Eight Siddhis serve him like maids. He does not care for you, as his glory is entirely different from what you imagine it to be. How can a candle help the sun in diffusing darkness? The sun is, itself, light and does not need a candle at all. How can a watchman bring grandeur to an emperor? Human beings desire material pleasure and that can be fulfilled by this good deed. Remember that the medicine is required to cure the disease of the body and not of soul. Body is susceptible to disease and not the soul. What of that, even birth and death does not affect the soul. Thus this medicine of Punya (good deeds) is required to protect your material pleasures, which are in your body, and sin is its disease. This medicine of Punya will destroy the sin. Therefore, increase, your Punya and stop all this perverse thinking sow the wealth of good deeds to reap the crop of happiness. Grains sown on rocks get wasted and they never germinate. Bad desires and acts are like rocks and grains thrown on them will be consumed by birds and insects only. There is no better Punya than rendering service to saints. At present, Shri Gajanan Maharaj is a gem amongst saints. A single grain sown gives out a bunch of grains; likewise - anything given for cause of a saint adds to your Punya countless times. One grain gives back multiple of grains - same is the case with Punya."

Hearing this, the slanderers kept quiet, as truth puts an end to all arguments. Donations can be collected only with the help of men having prestige in this society. Ordinary persons are of no use for such work. People, then, started the work of constructing a compound wall around the plot acquired for Shri Gajanan Maharaj .

Everybody in Shegaon extended help for this work. The material like stone, lime and sand for the work was carried in bullock carts. At that time Shri Gajanan Maharaj was sitting in the old Matth. He thought that unless He, Himself, went and sat in the new place, the work of the construction would not be expedited. Thinking so, he climbed a bullock cart carrying sand to the new place of Matth. The cartman, being a Mahar by caste, immediately moved away from the

cart. Shri Gajanan Maharaj asked him the reason for his behavior and added that He being a saint-a Paramhansa-was not affected by the contact of untouchables. There upon the Mahar said, "It is true, but even then that is not proper for me to sit beside You on the cart. Maroti became one with Shri Ram, but never sat by His side. He always stood before Him with folded hands."

Shri Gajanan Maharaj agreed and asked the bullocks to follow the cartman. They really behaved well, and brought the cart, without the cartman, to the desired place.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj got down and sat in the center of the plot where the temple stands at present. This place is in two survey numbers: 43/45. The spot where Shri Gajanan Maharaj sat was treated as the centre for construction and for doing so they had to take land from both the survey numbers. In fact they were sanctioned only one acre of land, but due to the centre already being fixed as above, an encroachment of eleven gunthas of land was done for the construction of the Matth. They dared do this because the Collector had promised to allot more land after looking to the progress of construction. However, some mischeuous elements reported the matter to the Government. The devotees were disturbed at the news and informed Shri Gajanan Maharaj that an Officer by name Joshi was coming to enquire the matter of encroachment. Shri Gajanan Maharaj laughed and said that the fine imposed on the encroachment would be exempted. It proved true. Shri Joshi on going through the enquiry passed orders exempting the fine imposed on Shri Gajanan Maharaj Trust. When this order was received, Hari Patil remembered the episode when he had beaten a Mahar. At that time also Shri Gajanan Maharaj had promised him protection and had ultimately saved Hari Patil from prosecution. Thus whatever Shri Gajanan Maharaj had said proved true.

Now I will narrate the miracles performed by Shri Gajanan Maharaj after coming to the new Matth.

A man named Gangabharti came to Shegaon from a village Savadad near Mehkar. He was suffering from leprosy and his whole body had become rotten with cracks on his both legs. The disease had eaten away his finger tips, reddened all skin and had produced an itching sensation all over his body. Gangabharati was tired of the suffering and so when he heard of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, came to Shegaon. The devotees there did not allow him to go near Shri Gajanan Maharaj as the disease was contageous. They advised him to get the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj from a distance. Despite this advise one day Gangabharati took an opportunity, rushed and took direct Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj by prostrating and putting his head on Maharaj's feet. At this, Shri Gajanan Maharaj gave him a big slap on his head; as he got up to look at Shri Gajanan Maharaj , he again got slaps on both his cheeks. Thereafter Shri Gajanan Maharaj kicked him by His feet and spat on him. The spittle that fell on Gangabharti's body was treated by him as a gift (Prasad) and, like an ointment, massaged all his body by that spittle. Looking to that a person, standing nearby, criticised him fo applying the spittle to his already rotten body. He advised to wash it away by soap and to keep away from such actions of blind faith. He even went to the extent of saying that Gangabharati should better take some medicine instead of coming to such mad men like Shri Gajanan Maharaj.

Gangabharati smiled and said, "You are wrong. There is nothing unclean with saints. Kasturi (Musk) will never emit bad smell. What appeared like spittle to you was infact a medicinal

ointment and it smells like musk. If you doubt it, just touch my body and smell; you will find that there is no trace of spittle in it. It is all medicine. I am not a fool to treat this spittle as an ointment. Since it was not meant for you, it looked like a spittle to you. You do not know the greatness Shri Gajanan Maharaj ! To prove my statement, let us go to the place where Shri Gajanan Maharaj takes his daily bath and wherefrom I will take the mud and apply it to my body.”

Both of them went to that bathing place; Gangabharati took the mud from the place and it turned in to ointment in his hand. The critic did the same thing but it remained only mud in his hand. This made him realize the real thing and made him surrendered to Shri Gajanan Maharaj.

Nobody allowed Gangabharati to go near Shri Gajanan Maharaj , so he used to sing bhajans sitting away from Him. He had a melodious voice and was a good singer too. This continued for a fortnight and then there was a miracle. The redness on his body disappeared, the earlaps regained normal luster and shape, cracks on the feet closed and the stinking from body vanished. Gangabharati continued singing bhajans in his sweet voice, It pleased everybody.

Anasuya, Gangabharati’s wife, alongwith her son, Santosh Bharati, came to Shegaon to take her husband back home. They with folded hands, said, “Your disease is now cured by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , so we request you to take permission from Him to go home with us.” Gangabharati replied, “Please don't pray to me. I don’t belong to you anymore. Shri Gajanan Maharaj slapped me and brought me to senses, saying that I should not defame the saffron robes I wear. My eyes are opened now and so wish to keep away from family life. Santoshbharati, now you better go home with your mother; be obedient to her and keep her happy. Follow the ideal of Pundalika for rendering service to the mother. That will bring you blessings from Vasudeo. If I return to Savdad, the disease will catch me again. So do not force me. Till now I belonged to you, but hereater I will devote myself to almighty God to free me from the cycle of life and death. This change in my thinking has come by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Please don't tempt me anymore.”

Saying so, he sent them back to Savdad and himself stayed at Shegaon. Daily evening, sitting before Shri Gajanan Maharaj he used to sing Bhajans, which enchanted every one. He was completely cured of the disease and then went to Malkapur as per the orders of Shri Gajanan Maharaj .

Once, in the month of Poush, Zyam Singh came to Shegaon and requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to come with him to his village. He reminded Shri Gajanan Maharaj that when he had come some time back with the same invitation, he was told to come later on. Accordingly he had come now to take Shri Gajanan Maharaj to Mundgaon. Shri Gajanan Maharaj went with him. Many People gathered at Mundgaon and took His Darshan. Zyam Singh arranged a grand feast to celebrate the visit and Mundgaon became second Paithan. At Paithan there was saint Eknath, as Shri Gajanan Maharaj was at Mundgaon. Many singers’ groups reached there to sing Bhajans in praise of God. Cooks started preparation of food on large scale, and when it was halfway through, Shri Gajanan Maharaj said to Zyam Singh, "Today is Chathurdashi which by nature is an empty Tithi, so it is better to arrange feeding the people tomorrow which is Pornima."

Whereupon Zyam Singh said that the food was nearly ready and people had gathered to take prasad.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj replied, "What you say is correct in your own way, but it is not acceptable to Almighty God. Zyam Singh, this food has to go to waste. You, men of family, always wish things to happen as per your desires, but it is not possible." Even then, people sat in rows to take food. Suddenly clouds gathered in the sky and it started raining heavily with a thunderstorm. The roaring lightening and the storm uprooted many trees and in a short time, the downpour spread water everywhere; even in the food. All food was wasted.

Zyam Singh then said to Shri Gajanan Maharaj , "O Maharaj! All people are greatly disappointed by these rains. Now tomorrow, atleast, it should not happen like this. It is not rainy season to rain. So it appears to have come just to destroy our preparations. Such untimely rains may rain the crops and the people will taunt me saying this to be the fruit of Zyam Singh's Punya."

Thereupon Shri Gajanan Maharaj assured him that it will not happen like this the next day, and then he just looked up towards the clouds and in a moment they all vanished and clear sunlight came out. Such was the will power of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . The next day, Zyam Singh held a 'bhandara' and fed all the people of the village. This tradition of feeding the people on this particular day still continues at Mundgaon. Zyam Singh surrendered all his estate at the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj.

On this occasion of the visit of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , many people of Mundgaon became his shishyas (disciples), among who was a young boy by name Pundalik Bhokre. He was the only son of Ukirda - a Kunbi by caste. It is customary in Berar to name a child as Ukirda when the survival of such children was doubtful. Similarly Pentayya in Telengana and Kerpunja in Maharashtra are the names given to children to ensure their survival.

This Pundalik was visiting Shegaon regularly on every Vadya Ekadashi, like a Varkari going regularly to Pundharpur, Dehu and Alandi. So was the routine of Pundalik to go to Shegaon every month for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj .

Once there was a spread of plague epidemic in Berar. In this disease the patient first gets shivering and then temperature. Eyes become blood red followed by eruption of tumours on some of the joints of the body. Then the patient loses his senses and dies. This disease was never seen in India in the past. It was rampant in Europe from where it came to India and had spread all over the country. It made people to leave their houses and reside in open fields to protect themselves. This terrible killer disease came to Mundgaon also. It was the day of Vadya Ekadashi and Pundalik had to go to Shegaon as per his routine. He was feeling feverish but even then left for Shegaon with his father. After walking about ten miles he was hot with fever and could not walk a step ahead. A tumour also erupted in his armpit and felt completely exhausted. Looking to his condition, his father anxiously enquired about his health. Pundalik said that he had a high fever, a tumour in the armpit and the feeling of extreme weakness.

Pundalik, with folded hands said, "O Gajana! Please see that my Vari (routine of coming to you on Vadya Ekadashi) is not disturbed. Let me reach at your feet today. Once I reach Shegaon

I won't mid death thereafter. Please protect me from this plague enemy till I reach Shegaon. Visit to shrines is possible only if you are in good health.” Looking to the condition of Pundalik, his father felt sorry and tears rolled from his eyes. He prayed to God to save his only sons from this calamity. He offered Pundalik to get a bullock cart for his journey to Shegaon. Pundalik replied, “No, I must go to Shegaon on foot only. Slowly I will walk and reach Shegaon. If I die on way, please carry my body to Shegaon and don't worry.” Saying so, Pundalik started walking slowly and with great difficulty reached Shegaon. He saw Shri Gajanan Maharaj and prostrated at his feet. Looking to Pundalik Shri Gajanan Maharaj pressed His own armpit by another hand and said, “Pundalik, your danger is averted, so do not worry at all.”

When Shri Gajanan Maharaj said so, the tumour in the armpit of Pundalik suddenly vanished. He was, however, feeling a bit of weakness, but that too disappeared when Shri Gajanan Maharaj ate two morsels of Naivedya offered by Pundalika's mother. Pundalik began feeling normal. This was the result of Gurubhakti, and an example to be noted by disbelievers. It shows that devotion to proper Guru never goes waste. Real Guru is like having a Kamdhenu at home, to fulfil all your desires.

After completing his rituals of the Vari, Pundalik returned to Mundgaon. If you read this Chaitra, all the dangers to you will be averted. It is a biography of a great saint and not any imaginary story. Everything given in this book is real and actually happened. Nobody should show any disbelief in this story of the great saint.

May this Gajanan Vijay Granth, written by Dasganu, bring happiness to all! Thus prays Dasganu. May good come to you all.

My obeisance to both Har and Hari.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Thirteen

|| Adhyay 14 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmah! O Kausalya's son Rama! O Gem of Raghu Dynesty! O Sitapati! Have compassion for this child of Yours. You have liberated Tratika and given life to Ahilya, who was lying in the form of a stone. You have fulfilled the desire of Shabari by visiting her. O son of Dasharatha! You renounced the throne to protect your devotee, and by your grace, the monkeys gained strength. O Killer of Ravana! Your mere name made stones float on the sea and it is you, who installed on the throne your devotee, Vibhishan. Whosoever surrendered at your feet got rid of poverty, sorrow and calamities. Please remember it and protect this Dasganu. How can a child go away from its mother? You are my mother, father and Guru (Preceptor). You are the Kalpataru - the tree that meets every desire of devotees. O Rama! you are the ship to float in this ocean of life.

There was a brahmin named Bandu Tatya at Mehkar. He was most pious and liberal at heart. In family life one comes across many calamities, but even then he does not leave the attachment for life and its pleasures. Many guests used to come to this Bandu Tatya and he personally looked after their comforts. This continued for long and he spent all his money. He even borrowed money from money lenders by mortgaging his house. Due to mounting debts, he was ashamed to face people. He even sold the utensils in the house and there remained nothing more to sell. He was completely bankrupt and the creditors were after him to get the money back. He could not afford even two times meals and had to bear insult from wife and children. Thus losing all his credit nobody would lend him any money. He got frustrated with life and started thinking of committing suicide. Without money one has no value in this world, and the sweet home becomes a place of sorrow. This is the way of the world. He thought that if he jumps in the well, somebody may see it and bring him out, under which circumstances, instead of death, he would be required to face prosecution for committing suicide. So he decided to go to the Himalayas to kill himself and get absolved of the sin of suicide. Thinking thus, he finally left the house with only lioncloth and ash applied all over the body to hide his identity. It is a well known fact that people of respectful families are always afraid of public condemnation. In his mind Bandu Tatya prayed, "O God! Why are You so displeased with me? I lived with full faith in You, and Puranas say that even a beggar becomes rich by Your grace. But my present experience proves it to be false and makes me think that the poets have wrongly described You to be the benefactor of the poor. O Shri Hari! Now I lay down my life and you will be blamed for my death. So I request you to save yourself from this blame."

Saying thus to himself Bandu Tatya went to the Railway Booking Office to purchase a ticket. A brahmin approached him and said, "Don't purchase ticket for Haridwar. First go and take the darshan of a saint and then go to Haridwar. There is a great saint - Shri Gajanan Maharaj - at Shegaon. Go and meet Him first. Don't take hasty steps by monetary frustration. Know that the darshan of saint is never wasted."

At that Bandu Tatya got confused, fearing that the Brahmin might have recognised him. But he felt shy to ask him about his identity, nor could he know as to who He was. He, however, decided to go to Shegaon and pay respects to Shri Gajanan Maharaj. When he reached there and bowed before Shri Gajanan Maharaj, Shri Gajanan Maharaj laughed and said, "Bandu Tatya, why are you going to Himalayas to commit suicide? O boy! One should not kill himself! Never

lose hope and don't stop trying to get the desired things. If you now commit suicide due to the calamities in family life, you will be required to take birth again to undergo the sufferings which you may avoid by suicide in this birth. Now don't go to Himalayas to end your life in the holy Ganga. Instead, go home immediately. Did you recognize the brahmin who met you at the Railway Station? Go home, and don't stay here anymore. There is an idol of Mhasoba in your garden. Go there at midnight alone, and dig three feet deep near the Babul tree - which is to the east of the Mhasoba idol. You will get some money there. Give some of it to your creditors and keep the rest for you. Don't leave your wife and children, and forget this false renunciation.”

Hearing thus, the brahmin returned to his village Kherda and, as per advice of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , started digging near that Babul tree at midnight. He dug three feet deep, and inside found a copper pitcher with a covered mouth. He opened it and saw that there were about 400 Moharas (gold coins) in it. He lifted it and started dancing with happiness saying, “Jai Gajanan! Jai Gajanan!” He then paid his creditors and got released his mortgaged garden. By the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, he set his affairs right and was very happy once again. It was just like getting nectar at the time of death, or like seeing a life saving boat while drowning in the sea. So was the state of Bandu Tatya; gone were the bad days for him. Then he came to Shegaon and spent lot on charity. He prostrated at the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , Who said to him, “Why do you bow before Me? Instead, go and bow before Him, who gave you all this wealth. Now take a lesson and be judicious in spending money hereafter; it is useless to be over liberal. People come to you only in your good days, but Almighty Narayan is always with you in bad times also. Always pray to Him and He will never neglect you.”

Hearing this advice, Bandu Tatya again prostrated at the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and happily returned to his village.

Once there was an auspicious occasion of Somavati (when there is coincidence of Monday and Amavasya). Puranas describe its importance at great length. it is said that one must take a bath in the holy Narmada river on this day. So People of Shegaon planned a trip to Narmada for Somavati. Amongst them were Martand Patil, Bankatlal, Maruti, Chandrabhan and Bajaranglal who decided to go to Omkareshwar. Bankatlal thought that it would be better if Shri Gajanan Maharaj also accompanied them for a holy dip in the Narmada. So all four of them approached Shri Gajanan Maharaj and requested His company to Omkareshwar. They said that His presence would fully protect them from evil and so again and again requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to oblige them by conceding to their request. Thereupon Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, “Holy Narmada is already with me and as such there is no need for me to go and trouble her. I will have the Narmada bath here, but you all go to Omkareshwar. In the ancient days, there ruled a brave and famous king named Mandhata at that place. Shri Shankaracharya took His first vow of renunciation at Omkareshwar only, and then started on His mission of liberating people from their worldly bonds. So, you go to that place and meet my Narmada, but do not force me to go with You. Now there is no need for me to undergo such rituals.”

But they won't listen to him, and firmly caught hold of his feet and again requested their request.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, “You people appear to be hypocrite! This well here contains the water of Narmada, and if I go to Omkareshwar, leaving her here, My dear Narmada will be

angry. So, in your own interest, I again advise you to go, leaving Me here. Believe Me it is for your good.”

But Maroti and Chandrabhan said that they won't go without Him. Thereupon Shri Gajanan Maharaj warned them, that they should not blame Him if something bad happened by His accompanying them. They all came to Omkareshwar with Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Lot of people had gathered here on that auspicious occasion of Somavati, and all the men and women were spread on both the banks of the river. Some were taking holy dip, some were chanting holy hymns, while others were going to the temple with flowers in their hands. Many people were seen eating sweets and ‘Bhajan Dindis’ were coming in scores. During that auspicious period, the temple was full of devotees offering ‘Abhishek’ to Shri Omkareshwar. At that pleasant place of Omkareshwar, Shri Gajanan Maharaj sat in Padmasan posture on the bank of the holy Narmada. His four devotees took Darshan and came back to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . They suggested that it was not safe to travel back by road, as there was lot of traffic, and the bullocks of their cart were not dependable. So they thought it would be better to go back by river in a small boat. Shri Gajanan Maharaj , instead of giving any opinion, asked them to do as they liked. Saying so Shri Gajanan Maharaj sat in the boat with them and the journey to Khedighat started by river. On their way, the boat dashed against a rock and a plank at the bottom of the boat was washed away. The water started rushing in through that hole and looking to it, the boatmen jumped out in the river for the safety of their lives. But Shri Gajanan Maharaj was sitting quietly and started chanting, “Gan Gan Ganat Bote” continuously. Maroti, Bajarang, Martand and Bankatlal got scared and their hearts began throbbing with fright. They, with folded hands, said, “O kind hearted Maharaj! We are guilty of disobeying You at Shegaon, as a result of which this holy Narmada is punishing by drowning us. O swami! We shall hereafter obey every word of Yours as if it were a directive from the Vedas. So kindly save us from this danger by taking us safely back to Shegaon.”

As they were praying so, half of the boat had already gone under water. Onlookers were saying that these five persons would soon be drowned.

Thereupon Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, “Don't get panicky! This holy Narmada will not hurt you at all.”

Saying so, Shri Gajanan Maharaj started reciting the following in the praise of Narmada, “O Sacred Narmada Devi! Destroyer of everything that is inauspicious! Pardon their fault by your kindness.”

As He was reciting the above prayer, the water went away from the boat, and the hole was closed by the hand of Narmada. The Boat came up floating on the water as before and alongwith it was seen Narmada herself in human form. She, in the dress of a fisher woman, and with curly hair, was wet upto her waist. The boat reached the shore and all of them looked surprisingly at the bottom of the boat and said, “O lady! You have saved us. Kindly tell us who You are. Please change Your wet clothes. We have dry clothing to offer You.”

Holy Narmada said, “I am the daughter of Omkar fisherman. My name is Narmada and it is my habit to be in wet clothes. I always remain wet as my form is water.” Saying so, she bowed

before Shri Gajanan Maharaj, and suddenly disappeared like a lightening in the sky.

Looking to that, all the four were overjoyed to see the authority wielded by Shri Gajanan Maharaj , as the holy Narmada, herself, had come for his Darshan.

Even then Bankatlal asked Shri Gajanan Maharaj to tell them as to who the lady was. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, “What you are asking has already been told by Narmada to you. The fisherman Omkar, is this Omkareshwar. When She said that the water is Her form, She means that she, herself, is the Narmada river. Do not have any doubt in your mind. She always extends Her helping hand to Her devotees in the times of danger. So, say loudly "Jai!" to Her with a prayer requesting you to save us in times of danger.” Hearing this, Bankatlal and the three others again and again prostrated before Shri Gajanan Maharaj . They returned to Shegaon and, with great happiness, narrated the incident to the people there.

Once Sadashiv Ranganath Wanawale, alongwith his friend, came to Shegaon for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. This Sadashiv, nicknamed as Tatya, was the disciple of Shri Madhaonath Maharaj of Chitrakut, who had mastered the art of yoga and had a large following in Malwa. When Sadashiv came for the darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, Maharaj was taking His meals. At the sight of Sadashiv, Shri Gajanan Maharaj remembered Shri Madhaonath Maharaj. Saints know each other even without meeting.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, “Bring those disciples of Shri Nath before Me. Their Guru just went away after taking meals with Me. Had they come a bit earlier, they would have met their Guru here only. Now they have come after their Guru went away without taking the Paan. Being the children of a brother, Shri Gajanan Maharaj embraced Wanawale and gave him the traditional reception. Then He gave him two leaves of betel for giving to Shri Nath and asked to convey the message as follows without a change of word, “We had meals together but You forgot your Paan here. We have now brought it for You.”

Wanawale heard this message and returned with those two leaves of betel. He narrated the detailed talk at Shegaon to Shri Nath and asked if He had really gone to Shegaon that day.

Shri Nath said, "What Shri Gajanan said is true. His remembering Me at the time of meals is Our meeting. We meet each other like that quite frequently. Don't have any doubt about it. Remembering each other is Our meeting. Though We have different bodies, Our life breath is the same. This is a deep knowledge and you may require some time to understand it. It is good that you brought the Paan, which I had forgotten at Shegaon.”

Then Shri Nath took the betel leaves, crushed and ate it. He also gave some to Wanawale as Prasad. Shri Dyaneshwar Maharaj, in his ‘Changdeo Pasasti’, has described in great detail the way saints meet each other. One should read that to understand their manner of meeting. It is interesting to know that Yogis meet each other from any distance without leaving their places. Sheik Mohamed was in Shri Gonda and Shri Tukaram at Dehu, but when the pendal at Dehu where Shri Tukaram was doing Kirtan caught fire, Sheik Mohamed extinguished it from Shri Gonda. This has been narrated by Mahipal in the ‘Bhaktivijay’. Shri Manik Prabhu saved Patil's son from drowning in a well, by reaching Hali village. Only true yogis can perform such

|| SHRI GAJANAN VIJAY GRANTH ||

miracles. Yoga is more powerful than anything else. So learn Yoga to make the nation strong.

May the affectionate devotees with full faith, listen to this Gajanan Vijay epic! Let Joy be to all!

Obeisance to Har and Hari.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Fourteen

|| Adhyay 15 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmah! O Kashyapa's son Wamana! O little Narayana! You have obliged Bali Raja by accepting an offering from him. You took away his kingdom of this earth, but gave him that of the other world (Patala). You, by this action, took an Amla from him and in return gave a coconut to that saintly Bali Raja. Moreover, due to his extreme devotion, You accepted to remain as guard at his doors. By your blessing, Bali Raja is to become the King of Gods at the end of this epoch. O Ananta! You learnt all the Vedas in a moment. Amongst all your incarnations, this is, Shri Hari, the most pious, as You killed nobody and have pleased both, friends and foes. That is why You are respected both by the Gods and the Demons. You have, in this incarnation, given happiness to the Gods, protected the Demons and thus justified your Godliness. O Wamana! I again bow before You. Kindly put Your blessing hand on the head of this Dasganu.

Shri Bal Gangadhar Tilak - the Kohinoor of Maharashtra - had keen foresight and excelled in politics. He was brave and worked hard for the independence of our country. Stubborn like Bhishma, looking to the plight of our country, he took a vow for its liberation from foreign rule, and being true to his cause, was fearless. Orator like Brihaspati, he created panic in the minds of Britishers by his fiery writings. Tilak was such a brave man that he earned the title of 'Lokmanya' by his deeds and not by anybody's offering. Once, he came to Akola to deliver a speech on the occasion of Shivaji Jayanti by public request. Many learned people extended their helping hand for this celebration. Among them were Damle, Kolhatkar, Khaparde and many others who reached Akola especially for Shiv Jayanti. People of Berar were happy to know that Shri Tilak was invited to preside over this function. In fact the birth anniversary of Shivaji should have been celebrated in Berar much before this, for the reason that the mother of Shivaji - Jijabai - was born and brought up at Sindkhed in Berar. She gave birth to brave Shivaji and united Berar and Maharashtra by dint of her ability. Mother from Berar and father from Maharashtra was an excellent and incomparable couple. The celebration for Shivaji Jayanti was a great occasion for Maharashtra and its greatness was enhanced manifold by Tilak presiding over it. The preparations for the celebrations started one month in advance and everybody was happily participating in it. President and Vice President of the Reception committee were elected and volunteers selected. To make the function more majestic, many people expressed their desire to invite Gajanan Maharaj for the celebrations. They said that Shivaji's service to the nation succeeded due to the blessings of Shri Ramdas Swami, so the political fight of Shri Tilak should have the blessings of Shri Gajanan Maharaj for its success. Some people did not like the idea and said that the 'Avliya' of Shegaon may come naked and even beat Lokmanya, but others did not agree and insisted that the sacred feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj must touch that place. They argued that He might behave like a mad man amongst the mad people, but not among the learned people gathering there. One of them said that if Tilak was really a great leader, then Shri Gajanan Maharaj would definitely come for the function. So, most of them supported the suggestion to invite Shri Gajanan Maharaj for the function. Thereupon, the group of leaders of the function

went to Shegaon to extend the invitation to Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Looking at them, Shri Gajanan Maharaj looked towards Shri Khaparde and said, “I will come and attend the birthday celebrations of Shri Shivaji and behave well to the entire satisfaction of the social reformers coming over there. Tilak is the most able national leader working for the liberation of the country and will remain unparalleled in the future also. I will come to Akola to see Tilak and Anna Patwardhan, who is disciple of Shri Narsima Saraswati of Alandi.”

Shri Khaparde was glad that Shri Gajanan Maharaj had accepted the invitation. He said to Kolhatkar that Shri Gajanan Maharaj, the gem of Berar, could know everything that had happened at Akola, and the acceptance of the invitation by Shri Gajanan Maharaj was a good omen for the function. They bowed before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and went back to Akola.

Eight days were left for the great celebration of Shivaji Jayanti, and people were very eagerly waiting for the arrival of Tilak to Akola. The function was to take place in the month of Vaisakh of Saka 1830, and for that a huge pandal was erected. In spite of the fact that the day of the function was Akshya Tritia, an important religious festival for the people of Vidarbha, a lot of people from distant places gathered at Akola to see Shri Tilak. They also knew that Shri Gajanan Maharaj too was to come for the function, and it added to their happiness. Shri Gajanan Maharaj reached in the time as promised, and sat on the dais along with Lokmanya Tilak, Anna Patwardhan, Khaparde, Damle, Kolhatkar, Bhave, Venkatrao Desai and the other leaders of the function. The meeting was called to order and after an introductory speech, Shri Lokmanya Tilak, the lion orator, stood up to speak. He said, “Today is the most auspicious day, as the great Shivaji, who spent his life in the service of the nation, was born on this day. The blessings of Shri Ramdas Swamy helped spread the fame of Shivaji all over the country, so will be the blessings of Shri Gajanan Maharaj for this meeting. I wish that today's meeting should be successful like the great Shivaji's life and work. The nation today needs such meetings and functions. The sun of independence has set and all around there is darkness of slavery. Any nation without independence is lifeless. It is, therefore, necessary to impart such training to the people, which will enhance their love for independence. But can the present rulers give us such training?” Hearing these taunting words, directed towards the rulers of the country, Shri Gajanan Maharaj got up and smilingly said, “No, No, No. Don't say that. It can invite your arrest by the Government.” Saying so, Shri Gajanan Maharaj started chanting his usual bhajan, “Gan Gan Ganat Bote!”

The function concluded successfully and people cheered and praised the Lokmanya, but the prophecy of Shri Gajanan Maharaj came true the same year; Shri Tilak was arrested under section 124. In the face of the Government's strength everybody was helpless. Renowned lawyers rushed to defend Tilak on the legal side, while other devotees wanted to try the spiritual way to save him from the punishment.

Shri Dadasaheb Khaparde was a great man; he went to Bombay from Amravati to attend the trial of Lokmanya Tilak. On the way, at Akola, he said to Kolhatkar, “You should go to Shegaon and request Shri Gajanan Maharaj to save Tilak from this calamity. In fact, I wish to go to Shegaon myself, but have to attend this trial at Bombay. So go and request Shri Gajanan Maharaj .”

Kolhatkar, a devotee of Tilak, immediately went to Shegaon, but upon reaching there came to know that Shri Gajanan Maharaj was sleeping. Shri Gajanan Maharaj did not get up for three days. Kolhatkar, being very sincere man, did not move from there for all of those three days. His love, affection and reverence for Tilak were really great. It is said in Marathi that there cannot be a boiling without fire, and grief without affection. On the fourth day, Shri Gajanan Maharaj woke up and said, “Your all efforts will be fruitless. Remember that, despite the blessing from Shri Ramdas Swami, Shivaji was arrested by Moguls. There can be no Liberation unless good people suffer. Remember the history of Kansa, and you will understand what I say. I will give you a piece of bread, take it and let Tilak eat it at the earliest. With the Prasad of this bread, he will do some great work. Though going far away, it cannot be avoided.”

Hearing all this, Kolhatkar got confused. He bowed before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and went away with the bread given to him for Tilak. At Bombay, he narrated everything at gave the Prasad of bread to Shri Tilak. Hearing it from Kolhatkar, Tilak said, “Shri Gajanan Maharaj is a great saint and whatever He said must be true. You will definitely not succeed, as the Government will follow the law to defend itself. It is a universal truth that the law is strictly adhered to, when self interest is not involved. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said that I will do some great work, which I am not able to understand. Saints know all the past, present and the future. We are ordinary men, so let us see what happens in the future.”

As he had not teeth, Tilak powdered the Prasad of bread and ate it. Thereafter, he was sentenced to imprisonment and sent to Mandalay where was born the memorable treatise on the Geeta by the Lokmanya. This was the great work done by him and earned the respect like ‘Jagat Guru’. Many treatises were written on the Geeta and every intellectual interpreted it, on the background of the era he lived in, to aid with the liberation of the common man. Some of them interpreted it on ‘Adwait’ and others on ‘Dwait’ philosophy, while some thought that it preached ‘Karma’. The treatise on Geeta by Shri Tilak was itself a great work done by him, incomparable with anything else. It made Tilak immortal and spread his fame far and wide. Even achieving the independence would not have been so great a work as this treatise on Geeta. Achieving independence is something material and transient in nature, but Geeta can achieve liberation of human beings from material bondage and also help keep up the social discipline. By this work, the fame and name of BaI Gangadhar Tilak will last as long as the sun and moon shine.

A poor Chitpavan Brahmin boy, named Shridhar Govind Kale from Karvi, Kolhapur, joined English school and passed metric. Then he joined college, but failed in Inter. While reading the

'Kesari' newspaper, he came across the biography of Oyama Togo. Inspired by it, he wished to go abroad for some technical education. Oyama Togo had done it, and brought prosperity to Japan by their knowledge. Shridhar wished to do the same thing for his motherland, but felt helpless due to poverty. Nobody helps the poor. He then went to Bhandara to meet his friend who was teacher at the Monro High School there. He told his friend everything that came to his mind, and he too appreciated the idea. But what about the money? Nothing is possible in this world without money and the poor people have to build castles in the air only.

Due to hot summer of Vidarbha, they decided to go to Kolhapur. Having heard much about the great saint, Shri Gajanan Maharaj, they, on their way, got down at Shegaon to see the saint. They kept their luggage at the post office and went to the Matth of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, and prostrating before Him, sat with folded hands. By His divine powers, Shri Gajanan Maharaj knew the desire of Shridhar, and said, "Don't think of going abroad. You can get everything here only. These physical sciences is useless, and so try to get some spiritual knowledge that can bring satisfaction to you."

By this advice, Shridhar experienced a sudden change in his thinking and was reminded of one saint of Kolhapur who used to talk just like Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Sensing the confusion in his mind, Shri Gajanan Maharaj further said, "Don't think of leaving Hindustan, as one gets birth here, only after doing a lot of good deeds. Yogashastra is superior to any other material science, and one who knows Yogashastra will not care for any other science. The knowledge of the self (Adhyatma) is further superior to Yogashastra. Try to learn that and don't go anywhere."

Hearing these words, Shridhar felt very happy and thought that the sun of thinking that had set in the west had risen again in the east. Only saints can bring about such transformation of thoughts, because they know the Truth.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj further said, "You will prosper here only. Now go to Kolhapur with your friend as your wife is waiting for you."

The prophecy proved true and Shridhar prospered well. He passed the B.A. and M.A. Examinations and became the Principal of the College at Shivpuri in the Kingdom of Scindias. Saints are God incarnate on this earth and those, who get their blessings, always prosper. The change in Shridhar's thinking was due to the blessings of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . This crop of Saints can grow only in our holy land. Trees of heaven will not root elsewhere.

May this Gajanan Vijay Granth, composed by Dasganu, always show right path to the devotees.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Fifteen

|| Adhyay 16 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmah! O Parshudhara! O Son of Jamdagni! Jai to You. Please do not ignore me. Not bearing the insult to Brahmins, You killed Sahasrarjun and protected Your Brahmins. But now, You seem to have closed Your eyes to their plight. Are You asleep? Please open Your eyes as it is most necessary in the present emergent situation. All actions are useless without Your support. This Aryan culture cannot be preserved without Your help.

Mysterious are the actions of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and nobody can predict them. There was one devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj at Mundgaon. His name was Pundalik. He used to go to Shegaon regularly on a fixed day every month, and was very much devoted to Shri Gajanan Maharaj, who was a prime deity for him. There was one Bhagabai of the same village, who had a wavering mind and, thus, could not concentrate on anything. In a way she was a great hypocrite and her only business was to befool people. She once said to Pundalik, "Your life is wasted as you could not get any Guru so far. You go to Shegaon frequently and treat Shri Gajanan Maharaj as your Guru. But tell me, has He given you any Guru Mantra (i.e. secret incantation which is whispered in the ear of the devotee by the Guru)? Mind you, one does not become a Guru without proper rituals. In fact this Gajanan of Shegaon is a mad person and you are accepting Him as Guru only because you got relief from fever; it was a mere coincidence and you should not be a victim to that. His chanting of "Gan Gan Ganat Bote", mad-like behavior, and eating food from anybody's hands, all this confirm that he is a fallen person. So I have come to tell you that we shall all go to Anjangaon and make Kekaji's disciple as our Guru. Early morning tomorrow, we will go to attend his Kirtan at Anjangaon. Guru should be well read, learned, wise, an expert in all shastras, of high caliber and a guide to help you attain self realization. None of these qualities are visible in your Gajanan, so let us go to Anjangaon." This talk of Bhagabai disturbed Pundalik, who a pious man. He gave his consent to her for going to Anjangaon the next morning. Pundalik, having decided as above, slept well. In the latter half of the night, he saw a person like Shri Gajanan Maharaj in his dream who said, "Pundalik, you seem to have decided to go to Anjangaon with that Bhagabai for getting a Guru. You may go if you like. His name is Kashinath, and I tell you that you will be completely disappointed on going there. Can a person become Guru by whispering something in someone's ear? Many people whisper in one another's ears, does that mean that they became Guru of each other? Pundalik, don't go after hypocrites. Come, listen to me. I will chant a Mantra in your ear."

Saying so, He whispered, "Gan Gan" and kept quiet. He further told Pundalik to ask for anything and it would be done. At these words, Pundalik felt very happy. He minutely observed the person in the dream and was glad to confirm that He was Shri Gajanan Maharaj of Shegaon. Thereupon Pundalik asked for His 'Padukas' to worship and nothing else. Shri Gajanan Maharaj, thereupon, said, "Take these Padukas and worship them tomorrow afternoon."

As Pundalik got up to take the Padukas, he woke up. He looked around and realized that there was nobody and no Padukas. He felt confused, but at the same time knew that the words of Shri Gajanan Maharaj can never go waste. He remembered all that Shri Gajanan Maharaj had said about Bhagabai, and also the instructions to worship the Padukas the next day's afternoon. If he has to follow the instructions of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, the Padukas were necessary for worship, but he did not have them. He also thought of getting new Padukas prepared for worship, but again remembered that Shri Gajanan Maharaj had given him, His own Padukas in the dream. Then why to prepare new ones? While Pundalik was thinking like that, he heard Bhagabai calling him for going to Anjangaon. He refused to go with her saying that he would not accept anybody other than Shri Gajanan Maharaj as his Guru. So Bhagabai went to Anjangaon alone.

Now listen to what happened at Shegaon. Just two days prior to this incident, Zyam Singh Rajput had gone to Shegaon for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. When he was about to leave for Mundgaon, Shri Gajanan Maharaj called Balabhau and told him to send His (of Shri Gajanan Maharaj) Padukas with Zyam Singh for handing over the same to Pundalik at Mundgaon. Balabhau did so. Zyam Singh took the Padukas and went. At Mundgaon, Zyam Singh met Pundalik at the entrance of the village. He asked Zyam Singh if Shri Gajanan Maharaj sent any Prasad for him. Zyam Singh was surprised. He took him home and asked the reason for his enquiring like that. Pundalik frankly told about his dream, which cleared all the doubts in the mind of Zyam Singh. He immediately handed over the Padukas to Pundalik, and the same are still there with him, at Mundgaon. Pundalik, with great devotion, worshipped those gifted Padukas in the afternoon.

From this story it was seen that saints will never allow their devotees to go the wrong way.

Now listen to a story which shows as to how Shri Gajanan Maharaj fulfills the desires of His devotees.

There was one Rajaram Kavar, a Brahmin at Akola, who was a dealer in gold and silver ornaments. This Rajaram had great faith in Shri Gajanan Maharaj, and so his sons also respected Maharaj. He had two sons named Gopal and Trimbak. Trimbak, the younger, nicknamed as Bhau, was a student of the Medical College at Hyderabad. He was a great believer, right from his childhood, and so in times of any difficulty used to remember Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Thus, he was a devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. He once came home during vacations and wished to offer meals of His liking to Shri Gajanan Maharaj. But how to do it? His mother had died when he was a child, and his brother's wife, named Nani, was hot tempered. So, he prayed to Shri Gajanan Maharaj, "O Maharaj! I wish to offer you the food of your liking: bread, onion, curry of Ambadi and green chilies. But how can I tell my sister-in-law to prepare all this? Only a mother can do everything for her son."

When he was thinking like that, his sister-in-law, Nani, happened to come there, and, looking to his depressed mood, asked him the reason for his worry. When he hesitated to tell, she said that he should treat his elder brother's wife as a mother and open his mind. These words encouraged him, and he told her that he wanted to go to Shegaon and offer Shri Gajanan Maharaj the food of His liking. She smiled and asked the menu to be prepared. Bhau told her what he wished to offer to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . She happily went to kitchen, prepared the food and came back with a tiffin containing three breads, with butter on, three onions and Besan. She gave it to Bhau and asked him to hurry to the station and catch the train in time. Bhau then took permission from his father and went to the railway station, but unfortunately missed the 12 O'clock train. He was greatly disappointed and tears began to come from his eyes. He said, "O Maharaj! Why have you disappointed me? I am a small orphan always missing the pleasure of doing punya (Good deed). I am like a crow who cannot reach Maansarovar. Tell me, what is the unpardonable mistake committed by me that made me miss the 12 O'clock train? This is my ill luck and nothing else. But I vow that if this food is not served to You today, I will not eat anything, myself. O Gurudev! Please do not ignore this child of Yours, and come running to accept this food which is especially prepared for You only. You are all powerful, You can reach Kedareshwar in a moment; then why this hesitation to come here? I am not ordering You, but calling You with love, so it does not mean any disrespect to You. There are still three hours for the next train to come, and I think that by that time you would have finished Your lunch."

Bhau stayed at the station without eating anything and went to Shegaon by the 3 O'clock train. On reaching Shegaon, Bhau saw that Shri Gajanan Maharaj also had not taken His meals. A lot of thalis (plates) full of all sorts of food were put before him as offerings. They included sweets like jalebi, gheever, motichur, kheer, shrikhand and puri. Balabhau brought and put these plates before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and requested Him to take the food so that the devotees would get the prasad, but He did not touch any of them. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said that He would take His food in the evening and the persons offering this food to Him, may, if they like, wait or go away. Bhau reached there and was immensely happy to see Shri Gajanan Maharaj like a child seeing a long lost mother. Bhau prostrated before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and stood up with folded hands awaiting further orders from his Guru.

Looking at Bhau, Maharaj smiled and said , "What sort of invitation is this? Is this the time for taking food? As I was bound by your invitation, I am still without food. Now give it to Me immediately."

Bhau was overjoyed at these words and said that the delay in reaching Shegaon was due to his missing the 12 O'clock train. Balabhau then asked Bhau to serve the food to Shri Gajanan Maharaj quickly, without feeling sorry for whatever had happened.

Then Balabhau took out, the breads, besan, onions and chilies and offered them to Shri Gajanan Maharaj , who ate two breads and gave one as prasad to all devotees. Looking at this, all were surprised to see the love and affection Shri Gajanan Maharaj had for His devotees; it was just like Shri Krishna, who preferred to stay with Vidur and accept the poor food at his place instead of sweets of the Kauravas. Similarly Shri Gajanan Maharaj waited for the bread of Bhau Kavar, declining all the rich food and sweets brought by other devotees.

Bhau also took the prasad from Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Wherever there is sincere devotion, such things do happen. Shri Gajanan Maharaj asked Bhau to go back to Akola and blessed that he would pass the medical examination. Bhau replied that he had come only for Maharaj's blessings, and not to asking anything else. He further said that his wealth were the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , which he would ever cherish in his mind. Saying so, Bhau Kavar went back to Akola.

There was a pious person named Tukaram Shegokar at Shegaon. He was a poor agriculturist. After working the whole day on his fields, he used to go to Matth for the darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , and serve Him by filling up His pipe with tobacco and other sundry work. This routine of his, continued for many days. Destiny spares nobody, and destined things do happen.

As usual, one day, Tukaram went to his fields. There came a hunter, with a gun in his hand, in search for rabbits. It was the morning time and Tukaram was sitting in his fields warming himself near a fire. The hunter noticed that there was a white rabbit sitting near a bush behind Tukaram. He took up his gun, aimed at the rabbit and fired. The rabbit was killed, but a small shot hit Tukaram behind the ear and entered his head. Doctors tried, but failed to take it out. As a result of this, he had continuous pain in the head and was not able to get sleep. He then offered vows to God, but did not get any relief. He continued to go the Matth in this condition also. One of the devotees in the Matth advised him to stop taking medicine and start offering sincere service to Shri Gajanan Maharaj , like sweeping the floors of the Matth, to get His blessings, which only would cure him of the ailment. Tukaram agreed and started sweeping the floors daily and kept the Matth clean like mirror. This service of his continued for 14 years; one fine day, while sweeping the floor, the shot which had entered his head, slipped out from his ear and fell down. Suddenly the pain in his head also vanished. This was certainly the result of the service he rendered to Shri Gajanan Maharaj for those 14 years. He continued his service of sweeping the floors of Matth throughout his life. Spiritual belief generally generates from self experience and then it remains firm. The service offered to the saints never go waste.

May this Gajanan Vijay Granth prove to be a savior to the devotees in this ocean of life.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"

Here ends Chapter Sixteen

|| Adhyay 17 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmah! Jai to you, the most auspicious one! Jai to you the protector of devotees. Jai to you to recoverer or darkness. O Saviour of the fallen. O God.

Hiranyakashyap was very cruel and an enemy of good people. You killed him by emerging out of pillar to protect Pralhad. That time you had a peerless form with fearful teeth and jaws, mane flowing on the neck and your fire red eyes looked as if they were going to burn the entire universe. But this horrible appearance did not scare the devotees, like cubs playing in the laps of tiger. Looking to your appearance even Lakshmi dared not go near you, but the devotee touched your feet.

O Lakshmikant, you are lover of your devotees and saints say that you fulfill all their desires and never say "no" to them. Now Dasganu prostrates before you and prays to keep up this fame of yours by making me fearless.

There were many devotees of Shri Gajanan Maharaj at Akola to whom he frequently used to go to. Some of them were Bapukrishna of Chapadgaon, Khatauseth, Bacchulal son of Gondulal and Jijibai Pandit. Once Shri Gajanan Maharaj came to Akola and stayed at Khatau mills. Vishnusa, a devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj wished to take Shri Gajanan Maharaj to Malkapur, and requested Bhaskar to arrange it. This was the same Bhaskar who had later attained Nirvan at Adgaon. He was with Shri Gajanan Maharaj to look after his needs and comfort. Vishnusa depended on him for getting the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Bhaskar requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to Visit Malkapur as Vishnusa had come to invite him.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Bhaskara, I don't wish to go to Malkapur so don't force me. I tell you that if you force me, it will make you regret. If a rope is stretched too much, it breaks. I don't wish to move from here, so do not bother me at all."

Bhaskara said, "Whatever you may say. I still request you to visit Malkapur for the sake of Vishnusa. I, your most beloved devotee, have promised Vishnusa that you will go to him at Malkapur. Your refusal is shocking to me. Please honor my promise and let us go to Malkapur."

Forcing like this, Bhaskar brought Shri Gajanan Maharaj to Railway station for going to Malkapur. On Bhaskara's request the station master got one compartment vacated for Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Shri Gajanan Maharaj did not move, nor said anything till the departure of the train. When the bell rang for the train to start, he moves unnoticed and instead of entering the vacant compartment, entered the ladies compartment. The sight of the naked saint scared the ladies and they immediately informed the police. The Officer of the police came and started dragging him out of the compartment saying, "You naked man, don't you have any sense. How did you enter ladies compartment?" With a jerk Shri Gajanan Maharaj freed his hand and continued to sit there without fear of that officer. Then the police Officer went to the Station Master and brought him to the ladies compartment. When he saw "Yogiraj" sitting in the ladies compartment, the station master requested the police officer that Shri Gajanan Maharaj be permitted to travel in that compartment, as he was a great saint, unlikely to commit any offence. Thereupon the police officer said that he had already sent a telegram to his higher officer and

nothing was left in his hands, so he may do whatever he liked. Thereupon the station officer, as a mark of respect, took out his cap, and most humbly requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to come out of the compartment to respect the law. Subsequently a case was filed against Shri Gajanan Maharaj as per law. It was put for hearing in the court of Shri Jathar, who fixed the date for proceeding at Shegaon. He came to Shegaon and stayed at the rest house for the hearing of the case. Venkatrao Desai of Akola also happened to come to Shegaon on that day for some other work. Hearing the announcement of the case, a lot of people gathered at the rest house. Shri Desai enquired from Shri Jathar about the case which made so many people to gather there. Shri Jathar was surprised at his ignorance and told that the case was against Shri Gajanan Maharaj for his moving out naked in public. Shri Desai felt sorry and with folded hands said, "This case is not proper. Shri Gajanan Maharaj is a great saint - the God incarnate, a divine person. He is a holy man having no bondage, a yogi of yogis respected by all. The police have committed a mistake by prosecuting him and now should correct it by withdrawing their prosecution."

Shri Jathar said that the police should have thought over it before filing the case, and under such circumstances he was helpless as per the law. He then ordered his clerk to call Shri Gajanan Maharaj. The clerk thereupon sent one police constable to bring Him to the court. The constable went and asked Shri Gajanan Maharaj to accompany him and further threatened to take him forcibly if resisted. Shri Gajanan Maharaj refused to go and challenged the Javan to take him by force. Saying so Shri Gajanan Maharaj extended his hand and caught hold of the hand of the constable. The grip was so tight that the blood flow in the constable's hand was obstructed, making him uncomfortable with pain. As the Javan did not turn up, Shri Jathar sent Venkatrao Desai to bring Shri Gajanan Maharaj and ordered people around to disperse. Shri Desai got information about the plight of the constable on reaching there, and asked the devotees to put clothes on Shri Gajanan Maharaj. So Shri Gajanan Maharaj was made to wear dhoti, but he threw it away on way to Rest house and went naked to the court. Shri Jathar respectfully received Shri Gajanan Maharaj and offered him a chair to sit on. Then, Shri Jathar said to Shri Gajanan Maharaj, "It is not proper to move out naked in town as it is against the law. So I request you not to move out naked."

Shri Gajanan Maharaj smilingly replied, "How are you concerned with that? Fill up my pipe with tobacco and don't give any importance to such things."

Hearing this Shri Jathar just melted and realized that Shri Gajanan Maharaj was far above the ways of material world, a Vrushab Dev of Bhagwati, A Shukachrya or an incarnation of Namdeo. He saw Maharaj's blissful mental attitude and realized the state of liberation attained by Shri Gajanan Maharaj and as such, Shri Jathar thought, that "This saint cannot be charged of any offence. Fire cannot be void of its fiery element, so it has got to be kept in a safe bowl. Otherwise it can burn the entire house. In such case the fire cannot be blamed for what it does. Likewise the nakedness of Shri Gajanan Maharaj is similar to the fire and His disciples are guilty for keeping him in that state, guilty of not keeping Him in a bowl of clothes."

Thinking so Shri Jathar ordered as follows: "Shri Gajanan Maharaj is basically a liberated soul and his proper upkeep is the responsibility of Bhaskar, who has neglected it. So I order Bhaskar to pay a fine of five rupees."

Shri Gajanan Maharaj , hearing the order, asked Bhaskar to desist from doing anything against His will in the future. Bhaskar kept quiet, but all the devotees decided to avoid train journey for Shri Gajanan Maharaj thereafter, and accordingly a bullock car was used for His travel.

Once Shri Gajanan Maharaj came to Akola and stayed at the house of Bapurao. At the time there lived a Muslim saint named Mehtabshah at Kurum, a town near Murtizapur. He had told Bapurao to inform him when Shri Gajanan Maharaj came to Akola. Accordingly Bapurao sent a man to Kurum to inform Mehtabshah about this arrival of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, but it so happened that Shri Mehtabshah had already started for Akola and this messenger, sent by Bapurao, met Him on the way. Upon seeing that man Mehtabshah said, "Don't go to Kurum, come and sit in our cart. I am Mehtabshah."

Look, how one saint knows the movements of other saint! They are really omnipotent. Mehtabshah was accompanied by 3-4 Muslim devotees and all of them stayed at Bapurao's house. The next morning Shri Gajanan Maharaj came to the room where Shri Mehtabshah was staying and catching a hold of his hair, gave Mehtabshah a good beating. His intention in doing so was to convey to Mehtabshah that His birth in a Muslim community was being wasted as the roughness, peculiar to that community, still existed in Him and the same could come in His way of self-realization. Shri Gajanan Maharaj wanted Mehtabshah to justify His name by keeping away the darkness of malice. In beating him Shri Gajanan Maharaj hinted that Mehtabshah was not free from that malice. Saints understand each others mind. So, Shri Mehtabshah was happy to get the hint. When Shri Gajanan Maharaj was beating Mehtabshah, the Muslim devotees who accompanied Mehtabshah were agitated, but Shri Mehtabshah asked them to keep quiet and go back to Kurum in their own interest. Except Shk.Kadu all others left for Kurum. At that time Seth Bachchula came and invited Shri Gajanan Maharaj for meals at his place the next day.

The next day, Shri Gajanan Maharaj was taken in a "Tanga" to Bachchulal's house for meals. But on reaching there he did not get down and asked the Tanga to be taken back. All were surprised at His action, especially because he had accepted the invitation previous day. One intelligent man amongst them suggested that it might be, because Shri Mehtabshah was not invited along with Shri Gajanan Maharaj . So they went and invited Mehtabshah. Then, the both of them came in the same Tanga to Bachchulal's house. Shri Mehtabshah's stay was arranged at the nearby theatre and Shri Gajanan Maharaj 's in the Shri Ram Temple, but subsequently Shri Gajanan Maharaj also went to the theatre. All took their meals and then Shri Mehtabshah told his disciples to get him a train ticket for Punjab. Shk. Kadu requested Shri Mehtabshah to leave Kurum, only after completing the construction of the mosque, which was half built. Thereupon he said,"I got orders from Shri Gajanan Maharaj for going to Punjab, so I must go without any delay. To tell you the truth, the work of the construction of the mosque will be completed by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Saints do not believe in difference of religions and treat all the religions as equal. The fads of mosques and religions, if given undue importance, will ruin all of you. Both, temples and mosques, are built by the same material, and to fight because of their different shapes is foolish. Do you mean to say that only Muslims belong to God and Hindus to ghosts? Think wisely in the interest of all humanity. Remember that the same God creates both Hindus and Muslims. One should love his own religion, but also respect that of others. Without such thinking, happiness will be far away. Now go, the mosque will be completed by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj."

Shri Mehatabshah went away and never returned thereafter. Both Hindus and Muslims should give a thought to this advice. Look, even though Shri Gajanan Maharaj beat Shri Mehatabshah, His heart was full of love for him. There was no malice at all. Shri Gajanan Maharaj did not go to take meals without Mehatabshah. All should think over this aspect.

The wife of Shri Bapurao came under the spell of Bhanamati. In a moment she used to get Kunku on her forehead, next moment a rope round her neck and at times her clothes used to glow with fire. Some times she used to get black scars on her back and had her clothes spread for drying for catching fire. Such mysterious and maddening happenings had affected her health. She lost taste for food and consequently became very weak. Bapurao had spent a lot of money for her cure, but to no effect. At last, and as a last resort, he surrendered to Shri Gajanan Maharaj and with folded hands said, "Maharaj, my wife is suffering from Bhanamati, I tried my best to get her cured, but failed. I am completely fed up with the malady. How can Bhanamati enter the place of your abode? How dare a fox come and shout in the lion's den? How can a stink exist in the vicinity of the musk fragrance?"

Hearing this, Shri Gajanan Maharaj glanced at Bapurao's wife and her Bhanamati vanished.

Once in his wanderings Shri Gajanan Maharaj reached Akot to meet Shri Narsinghji-his brother saint. There was a well near His 'math'. Shri Gajanan Maharaj went and sat on its parapet with His legs hanging inside. He was constantly looking in the well. All were surprised to see him do like that and even Narsinghji asked Him the reason for doing so. Shri Gajanan Maharaj replied, "I see Godavari, Bhagirathi and Yamuna in the well, and want to find out which other holy rivers are there alongwith them. When you are daily getting their waters for you bath, why should I be denied that pleasure? These rivers must come out and give me a holy bath today, and I will not leave this place until they do so."

Hearing Him say so, people thought that he was really mad to expect such things to happen. However, a moment later, the well water came up gushing like fountain and poured on Shri Gajanan Maharaj . He called upon all people to join him and take a bath in the holy waters of Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari and all other rivers. Believers went and readily took the holy bath with Shri Gajanan Maharaj . God Almighty always fulfils the wishes of saints.

After the bath Shri Gajanan Maharaj went away, and the fountain of water withdrew, taking the water in the well to its original level. Shri Gajanan Maharaj met Shri Narsinghji and went away to Shegaon with mind's speed.

May this Gajanan Vijay epic, sung by Shri Dasganu, prove to be a savior to all devotees.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Seventeen

|| Adhyay 18 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmah! Jai to Chidvilasa. O Govinda, Shrinivisa, O Embodiment of Bliss, brother of the fallen, look to me. O Keshava - Keshimardana Madhava, Madhusudana, O killer of Putana, Panduranga, consort of Rukmin, you know what I want. Is it necessary to speak it out? Puranas say that you fulfill all the desires of your devotees. So I beseech you to fulfill the wishes of this Dasganu, who is entirely yours.

There was a devotee named Baijabai at Mundgaon, near Akot. She was born in the family of a Haldi Mali. Her father's name was Shivram and Bhulabai the mother's. She was married in her childhood only. Every thing happens as per one's destiny; having attained puberty, Baija was taken by her father to the son-in-law's place, but it was of no use as he was found to be a neuter. The fact hurt the parents Baija, but looking to her young age, Bhulabai suggested that she be remarried to somebody else. Shivram did not agree and said that the masculine nature, at times, gets active with the passage of time. So they decided to wait and keep Baija with her husband, expecting that proper medication might revive his masculine character. Both of them then returned to Mundgaon. Baija with her age of 15-16, and though wheatish in colour, had a youthful body. Her tall figure with beautiful eyes and a sharp nose had the power to attract any sexy person. Her husband's elder brother, enamored by her beauty, wanted to make love with her. He tried many ways to persuade her, saying that he be treated as a husband by her. He even promised to maintain her throughout the life. His all efforts to tempt her were wasted.

On the background of all of this, Baija prayed, "O God why are you troubling me like this? I worshipped your feet since my childhood, and is this the fruit I am getting for my devotion? The man married proved to be a "no-man" and I understood my fate. In a way it is good, as, now, I can fully devote myself at your feet. Now my only request is that no other man should touch me."

One night her husband's brother came to her to let her know his intention, but Baija declined his advances by calling him a shameless person. She pointed out that an elder brother of the husband is like a father and as such should behave accordingly. But ignoring her remarks, he tried to catch hold of her. When he did so, he heard his elder son falling down from the first floor, causing the child great wound on the head. Baija rushed and took the child on her lap and applied medicine. Then Baija told him to take that as a lesson that it was not good to have desire for other women. Looking to the wound of the child, he regretted his actions and did not trouble Baija thereafter. Shivram then took his daughter to Mundgaon. Bhulabai suggested her husband to go and ask Shri Gajanan Maharaj about the future of Baija. So both of them, along with daughter Baija went to Shegaon and prostrating before Shri Gajanan Maharaj, requested him to bless Baija with a child. Shri Gajanan Maharaj smiled and said, "She is not destined to get any children. All men in the world are like a father to her. It is better to forget about her marriage."

Shivram was sorry to hear this from Shri Gajanan Maharaj, but Baija was extremely happy to know her future and with this visit to Shegaon, became a firm devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj.

Baija started going to Shegaon regularly with Pundalik of Mundgaon. Parents did not object to it as they thought that these trips to Shegaon may help revive her married life. But her going to

Shegaon with Pundalik created doubt in the minds of people, and they even started spreading rumors that, in the guise of Shegaon trips, Pundalika and Baija were satisfying their lust for each other. They further objected to it saying that Pundalika was a Maratha and Baija belonged to the Mali community, and thus a great hue and cry was raised to break their association. But both of them were pure at heart. Bhulabai rebuked Baija for her frequently going to Pundalika, saying that young men and female came together only with physical attraction. She even advised Shivram arrange her remarriage to a suitable boy of their community.

Then she thought of taking Baija to Shri Gajanan Maharaj to find out the reason for her association with Pundalika. She believed that saints know everything and Shri Gajanan Maharaj was like sandalwood which can never emit bad smell.

Bhulabai, Shivram, Baija and Pundalik all went together to Shegaon and prostrated before Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Looking to Pundalika, Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Pundalika, Baija was your sister in the previous life, and so don't deny her affection, even if it becomes a matter of public criticism. Both of you together worship the Almighty God. Bhulabai, you also should not obstruct or blame your daughter for what she is doing. She is Pundalik's sister. Moreover, Baija is not destined to get a husband. She will remain a maid throughout her life, just like Janabai of Pandharpur. Janabai got Namdeo as Guru and Baija has surrendered to me. So nobody should trouble my Janabai."

Hearing these words, Shivram got overwhelmed with emotion and could not speak anything. Then they returned to Mundgaon with Baija and, thereafter, never obstructed her for going to Shegaon with Pundalik.

Now I will tell you a story about how Shri Gajanan Maharaj always protects his devotees.

There was one Dr. Bhau Kavar, in charge of the Govt. Hospital at Khamgaon. He got a nasty, boil, and eminent doctors were brought from Buldana, Akola and Amravati for its treatment. All attempts with medicines and even surgery failed to give him any relief. He was restlessly lying in bed due to the unbearable pain. His older brother was very much worried over the ailment of Bhau. Then there remained no other alternative, but to remember the holy feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. Thinking so, Bhau folded his hands and prayed to Shri Gajanan Maharaj to come to his rescue and cure him of the ailment.

It was about midnight with pitch darkness and foxes were howling nearby, when a bullock cart, with a hood above, and a fine pair of bullocks, came to doctor's door. The doctor could see the cart coming and stopping at his door from his bed. A Brahmin got down from the cart and knocked at the door of doctor's house. His brother opened the door and asked the person the purpose of his visit. The Brahmin said that his name was Gaja and had come from Shegaon with 'Tirtha' and 'Angara' for Bhau Kavar. He further advised him to apply the Angara to the painful boil of Bhau and to put the Tirtha in his mouth. Thus giving these two things to Bhau's brother, the Brahmin went away, saying that he had no time to stay.

Hearing all this, Bhau immediately sent a man to call that Brahmin back, but could not get any trace of him, nor of the bullock cart he came in. Then Bhau applied that Angara to the boil,

which immediately burst emitting out pus. In an hour all the pus passed away and Bhau slept soundly. Subsequently he was completely cured and went to Shegaon to pay his respects to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Looking at Bhau, Shri Gajanan Maharaj smilingly said, "That night you did not give even grass to my bullocks."

Bhau understood that the nocturnal visitor with the Tirtha and Angara was Shri Gajanan Maharaj himself. Bhau, then, as a token of thanks-giving, fed the people at Shegaon.

Once Shri Gajanan Maharaj left for Pandharpur to meet God Vithal on the bank of Chandrabhaga. There were many devotees with him. The government had arranged several special trains for going to Pandharpur as a lot of people were going there for the auspicious occasion of Ashadi Ekadasi. Jagu, Aba Patil, Bapuna and many others with Shri Gajanan Maharaj first went to visit Nagzari. There is an underground cave on a hillock at Nagzari. The place gets its name from the many natural water springs that are placed near that hillock. The great saint, Shri Gomaji Maharaj, had attained communion (Samadhi) with God in a cave at Nagzari. Shri Gomaji Maharaj was the first Guru of Mahadji Patil who got blessings at his hands for the welfare and prosperity of Patil dynasty. That is why the Patils of Shegaon, while going to Pandharpur, first visit Nagzari to pay their respects to Shri Gomaji and then go on ahead. With this tradition, they entrained at Nagzari for Pandharpur. Alongwith Shri Gajanan Maharaj was Hari Patil, Bapuna and about 50 other people. It was 9th day of Ashadh Shudha and thousands of Varikars (regular visitors) had started reaching Pandharpur. The sky was cloudy and it was lightly raining. Pandharpur appeared to be a Vaikunth (heaven) on the earth and was like a sea of humanity. All the space meant for going round the temple (Pradakshina) was full of devotees chanting "Jay Jay Ramkrishna Hari." The whole atmosphere was charged with joy. Palanquins of saints - Nath, Nivrutti, Dnyaneswar, Savata, Gora Kumbhar, Shri Tukoba Dehukar, Sopan Muktabai, and Janardan started reaching Pandharpur. The devotees threw 'Bukka' in the air to offer respects to them and the whole sky appeared to be full of 'Bukka', spreading its fragrance all around. People threw Tulsi and flowers also on the Palanquins. In such an atmosphere, Shri Gajanan Maharaj reached Pandharpur and stayed in the house of Kukaji Patil which is on the way of 'Pradakshina.' There was a big crowd around the temple and scores of police personnel were present to keep the crowd in order.

On the day of Ekadashi, all the Shegaon people, except Bapuna went to the temple with Hari Patil. Bapuna had gone to take bath and so he was left behind. On return from the bath he learnt that all had already gone to the temple. He too then hurried to follow them, but due to the big crowd around the temple that poor Bapuna could not get entry from anywhere. Helplessly Bapuna, in his mind prayed "O Vithala, Rushiksha, why are you so displeased with me? Why don't you allow me your Darshan ? You had gone all the way to "Aran" to give Darshan to Savata Mali; just like that, O Panduranga, come from the temple to meet me. Aran was 16 miles away, but I am here, just near the temple. People call you the helper of the helpless, then why are you ignoring me?"

He had such an intense desire to meet Vithal that his mind was continuously moving around the temple. All the people started laughing at Bapuna saying that he was the most unfortunate person. They assumed that he must have gone around visiting stalls instead of going to the temple. Some said that he was a hypocrite and unfortunate. Other's taunted him saying that

Bapuna knew all the Vedant and so had no need to go to the temple; Vedantis believe that the God is in their heart and not in the stones, only fools go to a temple. Bapuna had his God standing for him on the road. They said that Bapuna instead of coming to Pandharpur should have called Vithoba to Shegaon, these "Vedantis" advise others without any experience - preach without practice. They do not understand that self-realization is possible only after worshiping a visible God. Without childhood, how can one attain adulthood?

Such were the taunts and criticism directed at Bapuna. Nobody protected him in this attack. He was just sitting quietly without taking any food. Shri Gajanan Maharaj was looking at him and at everything that was happening there. God only comes to the rescue of the poor and the helpless people. Fortunate are those who get the association of saints.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, - "Bapuna, don't worry come on I will show you "Rukmin Ramana" just now."

Saying so, Shri Gajanan Maharaj stood up, positioned his feet like Vithoba and put out his hands on his waist. Bapuna saw him as Vithoba with garlands of tulsi and flowers around the neck. He prostrated at Vithoba's feet and looked up again, but now he saw Shri Gajanan Maharaj in the place of Vithoba. Bapuna was immensely happy for this darshan of Vithoba. When subsequently he went to temple he saw exactly the same idol as Shri Gajanan Maharaj had showed him at Kukaji's Wada. Other people learnt about this darshan to Bapuna and they requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to bless them also with the Darshan of Shri Vithoba.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj replied - "First develop your mind like - Bapuna and then I will show you Vithoba. This Darshan is not a commodity available in the market. It requires a pious mind to get such Darshan as Bapuna got."

Look, how Shri Gajanan Maharaj showed 'Vithoba' in reality to Bapuna at Pandharpur. It was because he was a real saint. There is no difference between God and a saint. It is just like sugar and its sweetness which cannot be separated from each other. After taking prasad all of them returned to Shegaon. With the blessings of Vithoba, Bapuna got a son who grew up to be a very intelligent boy. Service to saints never goes waste. Since Bapuna got the son due to the blessings of Vithoba, he was named him Namdeo.

A devotee of Kavathe Bahadur, being from Vidarbha, lodged at Kukaji's Wada. On "Dwadashi" day Pandharpur was gripped with Cholera. Scores of people were dying, and the police, on the advice of doctors, was asking the people to quit Pandharpur immediately. They were even driving the people away forcibly. This devotee from Kavate Bahadur got the Cholera infection, and was having vomitings and loose motions. All his strength was lost and, consequently, he had become very weak. Nobody came to nurse him or give him any medication, nor did anyone inform the doctors out of the fear of the police. All went away, leaving him the grip of death. People are your friends only in your prosperity, but in adversity they desert you. In such a situation, only God and saints come to your help.

Looking to this devotee from Kavate Bahadur lying in the verandah, Shri Gajanan Maharaj asked the people with him to help him out and take him with them, but the people replied, "He is nearly

dead and if we try to help him, we will also be in difficulty. We have got about fifty people with us and Cholera is spreading like wildfire in Pandharpur. Under such circumstances it is not advisable to stay here even for a moment. Let us quit immediately.”

Shri Gajanan Maharaj replied that it was foolish of them to leave a brother from their land in such a condition. Then Shri Gajanan Maharaj went, caught the hand of that devotee and helping him sit up, said, "Come on, get up and let us go to our Vidarbha."

The devotee replied, "How can I go to Vidarbha now? I am nearing the death have no relations by my side."

Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Don't get scared like this. The danger to your life is averted.” Saying so Shri Gajanan Maharaj put His hand on the head of that devotee. By that touch the devotee's motions and vomitings stopped immediately and he felt strength enough stand up. How can death take away a man who is in the hands of a saint? Within an hour he was fully recovered and returned home alongwith the other people.

Having been rescued from the grip of death, he was very happy and prostrated before Shri Gajanan Maharaj again and again. He repeatedly said, "Swamiji, you brought me back from the jaws of death." Looking to this miracle, the devotees cheered "Jai" for Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Thus all the people who had gone to Pandharpur with Shri Gajanan Maharaj returned to Shegaon safely.

A very strict orthodox Brahmin once came to Shegaon for the darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Having heard about the greatness of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , he had come from a very distant place. Being a strict orthodox he did not tolerate anybody touching him. And so after looking at Shri Gajanan Maharaj , he regretted for having come all that distance to acquire His darshan. He thought that Shri Gajanan Maharaj was a mad person behaving contrary to all the established - religious practice-and therefore, did not like people worshipping such a mad person. In the Math, he once saw a dead dog just on his way to the well, where he had to go to fetch water. He therefore could not go and so murmured - "Nobody is caring to remove this dead dog and they call this 'ganja smoker' a Maharaj. I am a fool to have come here for His darshan."

Shri Gajanan Maharaj heard this and so went to the Brahmin and said, "Don't have any doubts. The dog is not dead. Freely, go ahead with your Puja.” The Brahmin angrily replied, "I am not mad like you. The dog is dead and its body has been lying here since an hour, but nobody has cared to remove it."

Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "We are ignorant and spoult. We have no knowledge like you do, but don't worry. Take this pitcher and follow me to the well for water." Saying so Shri Gajanan Maharaj came to the dog and touched it with His feet. Suddenly the dog stood up; this miracle made the Brahmin dumb-founded. He realized the greatness of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and regretted for ever having criticized him. Prostrating at Maharaj's feet, the Brahmin begged to be pardoned for his misbehavior. The same day he served food to all people there, and with doubts removed, completely surrendered to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Then, after taking prasad, he returned, with firm conviction, that Shri Gajanan Maharaj was God himself.

May this Gajanan Vijay epic, written by Dasganu, guide the devotees to remain on the right path.
This is the only desire of Dasganu.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Eighteen

|| Adhyay 19 ||

Shri Ganeshayanamah! Jai to the giver of Joy! Jai to the Abheda! Let my head always bow before You. O Raghava! Raghupati! Please come to bless me without delay. It is not befitting for great ones to be harsh. O Ananta, please give a thought to what I say. O Jagannath, I call You most earnestly, don't disappoint this Dasganu.

When Shri Gajanan Maharaj was at Shegaon, one Brahmin by the name of Kashinath Khanderao Garde came for His "Darshan." He prostrated before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and was very happy to find in Him all the signs of a "Jeevan Mukta" as written by his father. He found himself to be very fortunate to have come from Khamgaon to see Shri Gajanan Maharaj . While he was thinking so, Shri Gajanan Maharaj gave him a push by an elbow and said, "Go, your desire is fulfilled. The postman is waiting for you with the telegram." Kashinath was confused, and could not understand the meaning of what Shri Gajanan Maharaj had said, as he had not come to ask for anything from Him. Neither could he dare to ask Shri Gajanan Maharaj the meaning of what He had said. With folded hands he bent before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and returned to Khamgaon. At Khamgaon a postman was really waiting at his door with a telegram. Hurriedly he took the telegram and saw that it contained the news of his promotion as Munsif and tht he was posted to Morshi. Then he understood the meaning of the elbow-push given to him by Shri Gajanan Maharaj and was surprised at the knowledge of the saint.

Upon receiving an invitation from Shri Buty, Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to Nagpur. Nagpur was once the capital of the Bhosle's kingdom, but now had lost all its grandeur. It was the result of losing independence, which had turned an owner into a beggar, and had bestowed greatness on to foreigners. Elephants, horses and palanquins had disappeared giving place to motors. Changing times do have such effects and nobody can be blamed for these. Shri Gopal Buty's residence was in Sitaburdi. Gopal kept Shri Gajanan Maharaj in that palatial building just like enclosing a tiger in a fort. Shri Buty desired Shri Gajanan Maharaj to stay with him forever. For the people of Shegaon, he appeared like Akrura taking away Shrikrishna to Mathura. Without Shri Gajanan Maharaj , Shegaon became a deserted place and so, all the devotees requested Hari Patil to bring Him back to Shegaon. Shegaon without Shri Gajanan Maharaj was like a body without life in it. The devotees reminded Hari Patil that he was the head of Shegaon and Buty a great "Savkar", and as such only an elephant can fight another elephant. Maruti was selected to fight Jambu Mali and Arjuna to fight Karna. Saying so, they requested Hari Patil to go to Nagpur to bring back Shi Maharaj to Shegaon. In fact Shri Gajanan Maharaj stayed unwillingly with Shri Buty just like Shrikrishna who stayed most unwillingly at Hastinapur. Shri Gajanan Maharaj repeatedly asked Buty to let him go to Shegaon, but he ignored this request and did not allow Shri Gajanan Maharaj to go to Shegaon. Though Buty was a pious and a good person, he was too proud of his wealth. Along with Shri Gajanan Maharaj he used to feed scores of people, and continued the singing of Bhajans throughout the day. However, people from Shegaon were not permitted to see

Shri Gajanan Maharaj Once some people from Shegaon went to bring back Shri Gajanan Maharaj , but they had to return empty handed. Now it was the great devotee, Hari Patil, who along with some friends, started for Nagpur to bring back Shri Gajanan Maharaj . As Patil was entering the train at Shegaon, Shri Gajanan Maharaj said to Buty, "O Gopal, Hari Patil is coming to Nagpur, so let me go from here before he comes. When he reaches here, all the peace will be lost. Mind that he is an executive officer. Your strength is your wealth but he will take me away by his physical strength."

Hari Patil arrived at Nagpur and entered Buty's house by force, pushing aside the watchman who tried to obstruct his entry. At that time a row of Brahmins was getting ready to have lunch at Gopal Buty's grand residence. All of them were served food in silver plates and bowls, and had sisam wood planks to sit on. Several dishes were served to them. At the centre of these people was a raised and decorated seat on which Shri Gajanan Maharaj was sitting. Such was the show of Buty's wealth; he was rightly called the Kubera of Nagpur. As Shri Gajanan Maharaj saw Hari Patil at the door He got up and rushed to meet him, like a cow rushing to meet its calf. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "O Hari, come, let us go back to Shegaon, I don't want to stay here. It is good that you have come."

As Shri Gajanan Maharaj was heading out, Gopal Buty rushed and, respectfully, caught a hold of Maharaj's feet and said, "O Maharaj, please do not reject me like this. Kindly take meals and then go wherever You like." Then he said to Hari Patil, "Please oblige me by taking Prasad with Shri Gajanan Maharaj and then go. I have understood that He won't stay here anymore. I request you to protect my prestige in the presence of these Brahmins. If Shri Gajanan Maharaj leaves now, without taking any food, all these Brahmins too will not eat and it will then, be a matter of great shame and condemnation for me in Nagpur." He agreed, and then Shri Gajanan Maharaj , along with all the Shegaon devotees stayed and took meals at Buty's residence. After the meals, while preparations were being made for the departure of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , a lot of people came to take His Darshan. Janakabai, wife of Gopal Buty was a very pious lady and the Lakshmi of Buty's house. She fell at the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and said that her wish had not been fulfilled. Shri Gajanan Maharaj understood and applying Kunku on her forehead said, "You will get one more son who will prove to be the most virtuous, and in the end you will attain Moksha in the life time of your husband."

Then Shri Gajanan Maharaj left Sitaburdi and went to the palace of Raghuji Raje. Raghuji was a liberal, noble and pious person and a devotee of Shri Ram. He lost his kingdom in this transient material world, but in Shri Gajanan Maharaj , got the kingdom of eternal nature. He most devotedly worshipped Shri Gajanan Maharaj , who then went to Ramtek and after taking the Darshan of Shri Ram returned to Shegaon along with Hari Patil.

Once Shri Ranganath, the great saint of Dhar Kalyan, came to meet Shri Gajanan Maharaj at Shegaon. They exchanged their views on Adhyatma in their own way, beyond the understanding of others. Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati, born at Mundgaon, and living on the bank of Krishna, was a believer in the ritualistic worship (Karma Marga). When he was to come to Shegaon, Shri Gajanan Maharaj said to Balabhau, "O Bala, one of my brothers is coming tomorrow to meet me. See that he is properly respected. He is most orthodox, so keep the surrounding clean and see that there should not be even a piece of cloth lying anywhere. If he sees any dirt, he will be annoyed, and angry like Jamdagni. These Karhade Brahmin, always clean, are amongst the most learned people and will never compromise on the discipline of religious rites." This is what Shri Gajanan Maharaj said to Balabhau a day prior to Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati's visit to Shegaon. The next morning the Swamiji arrived at Shegaon. Shri Gajanan Maharaj and Swamiji looked at each other and smiled. Both appeared immensely happy. One was a believer in Karma, while other the king of Yoga; One was the sweet fragrance of Mogra and the other that of Rose; One was the Ganga and other the other Godavari; One was the incarnation of Pashupati and the other Narayan resting on the bed of Cobra (Shesha). When Swamiji came to the Math, Shri Gajanan Maharaj was sitting on his cot and clapping his fingers. When Shri Swamiji arrived, the clapping stopped, the eyes met each other, and Swamiji sought permission, to go. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said "Very good" and bent His head in consent. The Swamiji went away.

Looking at this Balabhau got confused and requested Shri Gajanan Maharaj to remove his doubts. Bala said, "Both of You have got different spiritual ways, then how do You call him Your brother? Please enlighten me."

Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Bala you have asked a good question. There are three paths to reach God. All of them take you to the 'town' of self-realization. They appear to be different and so confuse the onlooker. Rituals of 'Karma Marga' are to keep clean, wear silk dhotis, not to touch anybody, offering of worship three times a day, fasting and observance of rituals in a strict, disciplined manner. One who observes these things is a real learned orthodox. Any deviation or omission in this discipline will deprive him of the 'Karma Marga'. He has got to be careful while treading this path; he should not hurt others even by words. For those pursuing the 'Bhakti Marga' their mind should be crystal clear. Even a shadow of an unclean thought will deprive them of all the Bhakti rahasya. Compassion, love and modesty must be thier accompaniments. They should have faith in listening to scriptures and worship, and must continuously chant the name of Hari (God). These are the requirements of the 'Bhakti Marga' and those, who practice it, will meet Shri Hari. In fact it is the easiest way of self-realization, but practising it is even more difficult than 'Karma Marga', like the sky which appears to be so close to our eyes. Now listen to the principles of the 'Yoga Marga'. The spread of the 'Yoga Marga' is far bigger than the former two, but it is within us. The person practising 'Yoga Marga' requires no paraphernalia from the outside. Whatever is in the universe can be found within ourselves, and with the help of those things, within us, we should follow the 'Yoga Marga'. For that purpose it is necessary to know the various Asanas namely 'Rechak', 'Kumbhak', the knowledge of 'Ida' and 'Pingala' veins,

Dhouti and Mudra Tratak. The follower of 'Yoga Marga' for his success should first have full knowledge of Kundalini and Sushamna. The ultimate fruit of all these paths lies in self-knowledge; but that 'knowing the self' should not be done without love for it. Any act without love for it is a waste. So it is necessary to protect the 'love aspect' in all these three paths to self-realization. Black, fair, short, tall ugly and beautiful are the attributes of the body, and they have no effect on the soul. Bodies are different but all have got the same soul. Likewise it is applicable to these three paths of Realization. Externally they have different appearances, but the ultimate goal is the same for all of them. Once the goal is reached, the different paths are forgotten. Whatever path one follows becomes important for him. Only those who fail to reach the goal fight for proving the greatness of a particular path. All the followers of these three paths, after reaching the goal become saints and then merge with each other. Vashistha, Vamdeo, Jamdagni, Atri, Parashtar and Shandilyamuni, reached their goal by the path of 'Karma yoga'. Vyas, Narad, Kayadhukumar, Maruti, Shabari, Akrura, Udhava, Sudama, Partha, and Vidur followed 'Bhakti Yoga'. Shri Shankaracharya Guruwar, Macchindra, Gorakh and Jalander climbed the great staircase of 'Yoga Marga'. Vashistha, Vidur and Macchindra got the same fruit. There was no difference in their ultimate gain. The same traditions continued thereafter, so, do not have any doubt about it. Shripad Vallabha protected the importance of 'Karma Marga'. The great saint, Shri Narsinha Saraswati of Gangapur, did the same. Nama, Savata, Dnyaneshwar, Sena, Kanhu, Chokha Mahar and Damajipant Thanedar followed 'Bhakti Marga'. Sheikh Mohammed of Shri Gonda, Anandiswami of Jalna, Devnath Maharaj of Surji, Anjangaon liked 'Yoga Marga'. Now, at present, Vasudeo follows 'Karma Marga'. Many others and I like 'Bhakti Marga'. Dhondibua of Palus, Nana of Songir, and Yashwantrao of Jalna are successful in 'Bhakti Marga'. Khalla Amma, Saibaba of Shirdi, and Gulabrao have also achieved the ultimate realisation of the self. Adkuji, the saint of Varkhed in Chandur Tahsil, saint Zingaji of Murha and Tajuddin Baba of Nagpur followed the 'Bhakti Marga'. All these saints had different behaviours, but attained the authority to become one with the God. It is not the path that matters, but the ultimate reaching of the goal is important. We, all brother saints, have come to this world to guide the pious men to the path leading to Moksha. They may follow the path of their liking and attain Moksha. Now don't ask me anything more, nor tell anything of this to others. Let me sit peacefully under the guise of madness. Only those, who have faith in me, and whom I love will get their desires fulfilled. I don't need the others. 'Brahma-gyan' (the knowledge of Supreme Reality) should be told to the repentants, and not to non-believers. To meet the God, we must be firm on our path."

Hearing this advice, Balabhau was overwhelmed by love; his eyes brimmed with tears of joy. All his body shivered with extreme bliss, beyond the power of words to describe. Balabhau quietly paid respect to the great saint of Shegaon whose incarnation was for the sole purpose of salvation of humanity.

Salubai was a sincere devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Once Shri Gajanan Maharaj said to her, "Salu, take flour and pulses and keep on cooking day and night. Go on feeding all those who

come here; by doing so you will be loved by Narayan." That Salubai of Vaizapur is still alive at Shegaon.

Pralhad Bua Joshi once had an opportunity of receiving the Blessings of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , but unfortunately lost it.

There was one Tulsiram at Jalamb near Khamgaon. His son, Atmaram, was very intelligent. He had a special liking for the Vedas, and so had gone to Kashi for their study. Daily bath in the Bhagirathi River, food of Madhukari (Alms) and going to a Guru for the studies of the Vedas was his daily routine. Contrary to this is the behaviour of the present day students, who waste their time in all types of entertainments instead of their studies. Can they gain any knowledge by such behaviour? Atmaram was not like that. He knew his responsibility well. After completing the studies, he returned home and first went to Shegaon to pay his respects to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Atmaram now knew Vedas but Shri Gajanan Maharaj was the sun of knowledge. He recited Vedas along with Atmaram, and corrected him whenever necessary. It was a surprise for all to see Shri Gajanan Maharaj reciting Vedas. Atmaram continued to stay with Shri Gajanan Maharaj . How can a honeybee leave the honey? Daily he used to come to Shegaon from Jalamb and offer his services. So much was his devotion that when Shri Gajanan Maharaj left the material world, Atmaram stayed at Shegaon only for the daily worship of the Samadhi. He did not accept any remuneration for this service, but on the contrary gave away his own property, which was a house and some land, to the trust of the temple. It is not the value of the offering one makes, but the devotion that counts. Shabari gained the grace of Shri Ram by offering jujube fruits only, the same thing happened here also.

Swami Dattatreya Kedar, Narayan Jamkar, and Dudhahari Bua who lived on milk only, had sincere devotion for Shri Gajanan Maharaj .

Now listen to the story of Marutipant Patwari of Morgaon Bhakre in Balapur Taluka. This Marutipant had Timaji Mali in his service for the protection of crops in the field. One night, while keeping a watch on the heap of grains in the field, he fell asleep. At that time some donkeys entered the field and started eating the grains. But since Maruti was a sincere devotee, Shri Gajanan Maharaj had to rush to the field and save the grains. He suddenly appeared in the field and called Timaji to wake up. Timaji woke up and Shri Gajanan Maharaj disappeared from the field. He saw the donkeys and drove them away, but then thought of his master's likely wrath due to this loss. He realised the betrayal of the trust of his master in failing to protect the grains. The donkeys had consumed nearly half the heap of grains, and he could not find any excuse for his negligence of duty. See, how the servants had a sense of responsibility in those days, as against the present day servants who never care for the interest of their masters, and over and above are arrogant and dishonest. Timaji was not like that. He was unhappy over the loss and could not find any reason to excuse himself. He decided to own up to the responsibility for the loss and beg for pardon from his master, who he was sure, would forgive him.

Timaji went to his master and touching his feet said, "O Sir, my sleep has put you to a great loss. The donkeys, while I was sleeping, consumed half the heap of grains. Kindly come to the field to assess the loss and then only I will feel relieved." Thereupon Maruti said that he had no time to go to the field, as he was to go to Shegaon for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. He however promised to visit the field on his return from there. Maruti reached Shegaon at about ten in the morning. Shri Gajanan Maharaj was sitting on the Asana and Jagu Patil and Balabhau were sitting near him. Seeing Maruti Shri Gajanan Maharaj smilingly said, "I had to go through a lot of trouble for you last night. You become my devotee and make me do the job of a watchman by employing lazy servants and yourself sleeping comfortably at home. Maruti, last night Timaji fell asleep and several donkeys entered your fields and started eating all your grains. So I woke Timaji and alerted him to protect the grains. Maruti understood, and touching Gajanan Maharaj's feet said, "You are our sole supporter. All responsibility of a child is on the mother, and You are our mother. Whatever we possess belongs to You, and everything is in Your hands. That heap of grains was Yours. Timaji is a servant for name's sake. You protect the whole universe from this place. A mother tolerates all the whims and fancies of her children. You, being my mother had to rush to Morgaon and save me from the incurring loss. Kindly let me receive such grace from You perpetually. Now I will go and relieve Timaji from the service." Upon hearing this, Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "No, No, don't remove Timaji from the service. I know that he is really honest and felt sorry to see the donkeys eating your grains. Had he not come to you in the morning to report the loss? He even requested you to visit the field and assess the loss, but you said that you were going to Shegaon and would visit the field on return from there." Maruti was overwhelmed by the unlimited benevolence of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Nobody had told Him about the donkeys entering his field, but knew it by His omnipotence.

Now listen to another story. In Shaka 1816 it happened at Balapur. Once, Shri Gajanan Maharaj was happily sitting in the Veranda of Sukhlal Bansilal's house. He was completely naked, without any clothes on the body. People passing thereby were paying their respects to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . It was the main road in the market area and a police constable happened to go that way. His name was Narayan Asraji. When he noticed Maharaj, he lost his temper and said, "This naked man is not a saint, but a hypocrite who is sitting here intentionally and so should not be ignored." Saying so, he started pouring abuses at Shri Gajanan Maharaj , and, not satisfied with that, started to whip Him with the cane in his hand. The cane-marks began to appear on the body of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Even so Asraji continued the whipping. Seeing this, one Shri Hundivala came forward and said, "It is not good to whip a saint, like this without any reason. God is the protector of all saints. Look at the cane-marks on His body and withdraw your hand. With this act you are bringing your end nearer. A sick man invites death when he over-looks the restrictions for good health. You have done the same thing today by whipping this pious man. It is still not late to beg for pardon from Shri Gajanan Maharaj . But the Havaldar said, "I see no reason to beg for pardon. I know that the curse of a crow won't kill animals. This naked mean man, sitting on the main road, is uttering filthy words, and if God finds me guilty for whipping such man then it is the height of injustice." The prophecy proved true. The Havaldar and his

relatives died within a fortnight as a result of beating a saint. Therefore everybody should be cautious in his behaviour towards the saints till the reality is known.

A small, but beautiful town of Sangamner is situated on the bank of Pravara river in Nagar district. The famous poet Anand Fandi hailed from this place only. Now listen to the story of Hari Jakhadya of that place. He was a Yajurvedi Brahmin who moved from place to place for livelihood. In his travels, he reached Shegaon and went for the darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . He saw thousands of people coming there for distributing prasad or the feeding of Brahmins for having gotten the fulfillment of their desires, by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Looking at this, he thought, “I am required to come from this great saint without getting anything. It is because of my bad luck which, like a rock, will not allow even the grass to grow on it. I get food for one day and don’t know my fate for the next. Such has been my life so far. I neither have money nor property. Who will offer me a bride? O Swami Gajanan! Abode of Happiness! I keenly desire to have the pleasure of family life. Indly fulfill it by giving me a virtuous wife from a good family and then children too.”

As he was thinking so, Shri Gajanan Maharaj , knowing his mind, spat on him and said to Himself, “I spat on him because he asked for a worthless thing from Me. People come to Me for liberation from the bonds of this material world, but this Hari has asked for worldly pleasure from Me. See, how the ways of the world are! All seek material pleasure and nobody wants to see the Almighty Hari.”

Then Shri Gajanan Maharaj looked at Hari and said, “You will get everything that you have presently desired in your mind. You will get wife, children and money too. Now go home and lead a happy married life, but don’t forget the Almighty God.”

With this advice, Shri Gajanan Maharaj gave him some money for his marriage. Thereafter, Hari Jakadia got married and was happy. How can the words of Shri Gajanan Maharaj go to waste?

Once, Shri Ramchandra Govind Nimonkar, an overseer, and Vasudeo Bende went to the Mukana River in the hills of Sahyadri in Igatpuri Tahsil of Nasik District. The forest over there was lush green with trees bending with the weight of fruits, and there were freely roaming wild animals. Near that Mukana River is a small stream in a narrow valley known as Kapildhara. It is believed to be a holy place and so people go there to take a bath on auspicious days. Shri Nimonkar also went there on one such auspicious day. He had some elementary knowledge of yoga and was very keen to develop it further, and as such was enquiring with every ascetic he met at that place. They all denied possessing the knowledge of Yoga that he sought after, which disappointed him very much. He, then, with folded hands, implored God to show him a person who could teach yoga to him. Suddenly, at Kapildhara, he saw a man with long arms reaching his knees, who appeared to be a sage. This tall man, with calm face, was sitting in meditation. Nimonkar prostrated before Him and waited till the evening to see Him open His eyes. But the yogi didn’t

open His eyes nor spoke anything. For the whole day Nimonkar sat there without eating any food. As the evening approached, all the other ascetics at Kapildhara were returning. So Shri Nimonkar, with folded hands, implored the sage to teach him yoga. The sage gave him a picture and said, "Your wish will be fulfilled by this picture on which is written a Mantra (hymn) of sixteen words. Keep on chanting it continuously and by its power you may learn some yoga. Yoga Marga is the most difficult amongst all yogas. A small insect cannot go around Himalayas, nor can a snail climb the Meru Mountain. You may try Yoga by remaining a strict bachelor and cleaning your inner body by 'Dhouti' and 'Nouti'. If you do it sincerely, you shall be able to perform some Asanas. Now don't ask me any more questions, and take this Prasad." Saying so, the ascetic gave Nimonkar a red pebble, and disappeared. The same yogi met Nimonkar again on the bank of Godavari at Nasik. Nimonkar went running to Him and touching His feet, said, "Sir, You seem to be fed up with me. Last time You went away without telling me Your name and whereabouts." The ascetic replied, "I told you my name by giving you a red pebble. God Ganesh from Narmada is always red, but you being dull could not understand it. I am from Shegaon, and my name is Gajanan. You come with me to the house of Shri Dhupal, where we shall meet again." Saying so, Shri Gajanan Maharaj disappeared and Nimonkar could not see Him. Then he went to Dhupal's house, where he was very happy to see Shri Gajanan Maharaj sitting there. Mentally he bowed to Shri Gajanan Maharaj and told Dhupal, everything that had happened from Kapildhara to Nasik. Shri Dhupal was very glad to hear all that, and then praised Shri Gajanan Maharaj again and again for all his divine powers. He advised Nimonkar to worship that red pebble devotedly every day and perform yogasanas before it. Thus Shri Nimonkar learnt yogasanas by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj.

Tukaram Kokate of Shegaon had the misfortune of his children dying in infancy. So he vowed that he would give away one child to Shri Gajanan Maharaj if his children survived. Thereupon Kokate got three children and all of them survived, but he had forgotten his vow, and one child, as promised, was not given to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . His elder child Narayan got ill and did not respond to any medication. His condition was getting grave everyday. Tukaram, then, suddenly remembered his vow, and said that as soon as Narayan was cured he would be given away to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Narayan really recovered soon, and then he was given to Shri Gajanan Maharaj , to serve Him, as per the vow. Narayan is still there at Shegaon, and advises the devotees, that any vow once made to Shri Gajanan Maharaj must be honoured.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj, along with Hari Patil, went to Pandharpur to meet God Vithal, who is the ultimate goal to reach, a Kalpataru, a Kamalnabh and all in all with the saints. He is the supporter of this universe, the virtues of whom are praised by all Vedas, Lord of Rukmini, and the One residing in the hearts of all Saints. He is full of compassion and kindness to the devotees. Shri Gajanan Maharaj reached Pandharpur, took a bath in the Holy Chandrabhaga River, and went to the temple for the Darshan of Shri Panduranga. Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "O God Pandharinatha, benefactor and protector of devotees, and all powerful Rukmini Kanta, listen to my request. As per your command, I have so far lived on this earth and fulfilled the desires of all

pious people. You know that my mission on the earth is now over. O Panduranga, permit me to go now. God, I wish to reach Vaikunth for a permanent stay at your feet, in the ensuing month of Bhadrapada."

Saying so, Shri Samarth folded his hands. Tears brimmed in his eyes at the thought of separation from Hari Patil. Hari Patil, with folded hands, said, "O Gurudeo, why these tears in Your eyes? Have I hurt You in any way? Kindly tell me immediately." Shri Gajanan Maharaj replied, "You may not understand it even if I tell you the reason. It is very deep knowledge, and you need not bother to know it at present I can only say that our association is coming to an end. Come on, let us go back to Shegaon. You and your descendants will never fall short of anything." After their return from Pandharpur, all the religious rituals (Mavanda) were performed, but Hari Patil was full of anxiety. He told other people about what Shri Gajanan Maharaj had said about their association coming to an end.

"Shravana" month passed and Shri Gajanan Maharaj was getting weak every day. The "Bhadrapada" came. Now listen to what happened. On Ganesh Chaturti day Shri Gajanan Maharaj said, "Now all of you should come to the Math for immersion of Ganapati. It is said in "Ganesh Purana", that an idol of earth Ganapati be made on Chaturti and after offering Puja and sweets, should be immersed in water the following day. That day has now dawned, and it should be celebrated by immersing my earthly body in water. Don't weep at all. Do not forget that I shall ever be here to protect and guide you. I can never forget you. Shrikrishna has told Arjuna in Geeta that, this body has to be changed like clothes. Remember that all the Brahmavetta (Saints) did the same thing, i.e. they only changed their body." Shri Gajanan Maharaj passed the whole day of Chaturti in a happy mood along with Balabhau. Next day he held Balabhau's hand and made him sit beside Him. Then He said, "Don't think that I have left you, keep up your Bhakti, and never forget me. I am always here."

Saying so, that great saint stopped His breath, and pulled it up to His head by Pranayam. It was the noon of Thursday, Bhadrapada Shudha Panchami, Sadharan-nam - Sanvatsar, shak 1832. While holding up His breath, He uttered the words "Jai Gajanan", and merged Himself with the Supreme Brahma at Shegaon.

All His movements stopped. Looking to the "Samadhi" of Shri Gajanan Maharaj all shed tears of sorrow. Then it was publicly announced in Shegaon that Shri Gajanan Maharaj had attained Samadhi. With the spread of this news, people started beating their chest with grief. They said, "Gone, Gone is our living God - Gone for ever. Gone is the saviour of the poor and the fallen. Gone is our nest of happiness. The wind of time has extinguished the flame of knowledge. O Gajanan, who will protect us now? Why have you left us so soon?" All the devotees of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, namely Martand Patil, Hari Patil, Vishnusa, Bankatlal, Tarachand, Shripatrao Kulkarni gathered in the Math. It was the day of Panchami, and all of them decided to close Shri Gajanan Maharaj in Samadhi the next day. Since Shri Gajanan Maharaj was now to disappear forever, they proposed to wait till evening for the devotees to come for the last Darshan. They

said that those who were fortunate would get the Darshan. So the message was sent to outside places about Shri Swamiji's Samadhi.

Shri Govind Shastri Dongaonkar, a learned person, said that Shri Gajanan Maharaj could keep the life flame in his forehead alive till all of His affectionate devotees got Darshan; to prove what he said, Shastriji put some butter on the head of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . The butter melted with the warmth of the head. It was the effect of "Yogashastra" acquired by Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Shri Govind Shastri said that Shri Gajanan Maharaj could live in that trance even for a year, but nevertheless, it was advisable to close him in Samadhi pit after all the devotees got His last Darshan.

Bhajan was started before Shri Gajanan Maharaj and about thousand people participated in it. Shri Gajanan Maharaj Himself gave the message to many people about His Samadhi through dreams. On that Rushi Panchami day innumerable people gathered at Shegaon for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . A Chariot was prepared for his last journey. Many Bhajan singers reached Shegaon in the procession. Ladies sprinkled cow dung mixed water on the roads, and beautiful designs of Rangoli were drawn on it. All the houses on way and the roads were illuminated. The body of Shri Gajanan Maharaj was put on the decorated chariot, and the procession of the last journey of Shri Gajanan Maharaj started. It was going round the town throughout the night. Various music instruments were playing ahead of the procession followed by Dindis singing Bhajans and people chanting the pious name of Vithala. Tulsi, Bukka, Gulal and flowers were showered on Shri Gajanan Maharaj , and prasad of sweets was distributed. Some people even showered rupees and coins on the chariot carrying Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Thus the procession moved on all the streets of Shegaon and returned to the Math in the morning.

The body was carried to the place of Samadhi and the last Rudrabhisheka was performed. Final Puja was offered with full rituals, and honours and the devotees raised their voice saying,

“Jai Gajanan! Jai to Narayan in the form of man! Jai to the giver of indestructible happiness! Jai to the Lord of this world!”

Saying so, the body with His face to the North was put in the Samadhi pit. All devotees took the last Darshan shouting, "Jai Gajanan!!!"

Then the pit was filled with salt, Argaja and Abir, and with heavy hearts, devotees closed the Samadhi with a big flat stone. Shri Gajanan Maharaj is still there.

For ten days all were offered food daily as the prasad of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Innumerable people got that prasad. The greatness and the authority of a saint is really supreme, and even an emperor is insignificant before Him.

So let this Gajanan Vijay epic, narrated by Shri Dasganu, show the right path to the devotees and help them develop Hari Bhakti.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Nineteen

|| Adhyay 20 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmah! O Rukminivara Jai to you. O God, residing on the bank of Chandrabhaga, please blesses this Dasganu. You are the king of kings. Everything is in your hands. Then why are you ignoring me? Let your kind grace destroy all my sins and worries, and make the mind cheerful to sing in your praise. If it is not done, unnecessary blame will come to you. Greatmen should avoid such blame. Therefore, O Shyamsundara, O Lord of Rukmini, O generous Panduranga, fulfill my desire.

After the "Nirvan" of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, people started saying that there was nothing left at Shegaon, except some dust. A sea without water and a flower tree without flowers lose their importance. So some people thought it to be useless to visit Shegaon as it is meaningless to offer flowers at the temple without God in it. So said many people, but they were wrong. The invisible divine life flame of Shri Gajanan Maharaj is still there at Shegaon. Though Shri Dayaneshwar Maharaj attained Samadhi long ago on the bank of Indrayani, he did meet many of his devotees at that place. Similarly, Shri Gajanan Maharaj gives Darshan to those, who believe in his existence at Shegaon.

The following incident will prove it. There was one Shri Ganpat Kothade, a great devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . He was an agent of the Shegaon branch of the Rayali Company. It was his daily routine to go to the Samadhi of Shri Gajanan Maharaj in the evening, and sit there in meditation for some time. Once, while sitting there, a desire formed in his mind to perform Abhisheka to Shri Gajanan Maharaj and feed some Brahmins on Vijay Dashami Day (Dashera Day). Accordingly, he made all arrangements and sent sufficient ration and grocery to the Math. His wife did not like it and said, "O Sir, why are you doing this? It is a waste of money. Tomorrow being Vijay Dashami day, you should, in fact, purchase some new clothes for our children. All this spending on Abhisheka and Brahmins is not good. We have got our own children to feed, and I don't have a gram of ornament to wear. Does it befit a family man? You are supposed to save some money for the family and our future also." Ganapatrao did not like this sort of advice from his wife and told her that he treated divine truth (Parmarth) to be superior to domestic life.

The same night Shri Gajanan Maharaj appeared in the dream of his wife and told her, "Don't harass your husband any more. Let him do what he likes, and you are not going to be at a loss by that. Don't have love and attachment for the transient things. At the end all this money and clothes will stay here and only the good and bad deeds will accompany you. Abhisheka and feeding of Brahmins is a good deed as it involves sacrifice, and is something that is done for others. Money spent on it is never wasted. It is like a seed sowed in the earth. So I tell you not to obstruct him."

Next morning, she told about this dream to her husband who was very happy to know it. He then advised her to have full faith about the continuing existence of Shri Gajanan Maharaj in Shegaon, and also to believe that all these children, money and everything belonged to Shri Gajanan Maharaj and therefore, to stop worrying about them. Then Ganpatrao very happily offered the Puja to Shri Gajanan Maharaj on the Dashera day and spent generously on it. Since

then Shri Ganpatrao's faith in Shri Gajanan Maharaj became more firm.

Now listen to the experience of Shri Laxman Hari Janjal.

Laxman was a devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and had gone to Bombay for some work in connection with his business. He was in disturbed mood due to certain domestic problems. When he went to Boribunder railway station for his return journey, he saw a tall sage with arms reaching his knees, eyes concentrated at the tip of nose and lips chanting the name of God. He said to Laxman, "Being a devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, why are you looking frustrated? Remember what happened when you had made preparations to celebrate "Punya Thithi" (Death anniversary) at Amravati and had got food cooked for about 400 people; at that time Bapat had lost his son and, even then, he had come to you with Shri Pethkar to take prasad. It was due to the fact that Shri Gajanan Maharaj had appeared in their dream, and had advised them to go to you for prasad. Have you forgotten all this?" All these references by the sage confused Laxman and he was wondering as to who this man could be. Laxman respectfully bowed before the sage, who suddenly disappeared then and there. He returned home, resumed his normal behavior, and started celebrating "Punya Thithi" every year.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj also met Avadhoot Jairam Khedkar at Rohit village in the dress of a sage.

Madhao Martand Joshi, a Government Revenue Officer, once came to Kalamb Kasur village for land survey. It was Thursday, and being a devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, he felt like going to Shegaon in the evening for Maharaj's Darshan. He, therefore, told his peon, Kutubuddin, to get the bullock cart ready for going to Shegaon. Kutubuddin most humbly told him that the weather was cloudy and the 'Maan' river was getting flooded with muddy water. Ignoring his request, Joshi got in the cart and asked Kutubuddin to drive to Shegaon. The cart entered the river and suddenly the water rushed in it before they could cross over. A storm accompanied by lightening started and the 'Maan' river got flooded. Pouring of heavy rains uprooted the farmer's huts. Kutubuddin got frightened and said that in such conditions their death was certain. Joshi too got scared and started praying to Shri Gajanan Maharaj to save them from the calamity. With folded hands Joshi prayed, "O Gajanan! Kindly save us. Nobody, except you, can save us now. It is said in Puranas that a sage had saved a sinking ship by his hand; you too are a great saint, kindly come and save us from this flood." When water entered the cart, the bullocks too got frightened. Joshi told the peon to leave the reins and pray Shri Gajanan Maharaj for help. Then he said to Shri Gajanan Maharaj, "O All Powerful Maharaj! Our lives are in your hands; do as you like." Saying so the reins of the bullocks were thrown away and both of them closed their eyes.

Then a miracle happened; the cart safely crossed the river and was seen standing on the other side of it. Looking to that, both were happy to experience the authority of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. They were thus saved from the flooded river. Joshi reached Shegaon at night, prostrated before the Samadhi of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and attended the evening procession. Next day Joshi offered a lot in charity and gave some money to Shri Balabhau for the feeding of Brahmins, as per his vow. Since Joshi had some urgent work to attend, he left Shegaon soon.

Yadao Ganesh Subhedar was a Cotton-broker at Hingni. Once he suffered a loss of Rs.10, 000 in his business which affected his health very much. He tried his best to re-establish his business

and recover the loss, but failed. During that period he went to his friend Asarkar at Wardha. At that time a beggar came to Asarkar's house for some alms. He was dressed like a Marathi man with a big stick in his hand and a dirty cap on the head. He was trembling like an old man. Looking to him, Asirkar got annoyed and asked him to go and beg at the door of the house. The beggar ignoring his words entered the house and sat beside Yadao Subhedar. "Give me some alms." saying so the beggar held a bowl before Yadao. He wondered at the obstinacy of the beggar and looked at him minutely. He appeared like Shri Gajanan Maharaj of Shegaon, with the same luster in in His eyes and the same speaking style. The only difference was that, this man was continuously shaking due to some disease. The face too was like Shri Gajanan Maharaj ; then, Subhedar thought, "How can he be Shri Gajanan Maharaj who has taken Samadhi long ago? Whatever it may be, I should give Him some money treating him to be Shri Gajanan Maharaj." The beggar took the money and asked for more. He further told him to distribute jaggery as per his vow to Shri Gajanan Maharaj, and said that the loss in the business was the result of the non-fulfillment of his vow. Yadao gave him some more money but the beggar again asked for more. So he gave him more money. At that time Asirkar went inside the house for some work and Yadao was left alone with the beggar, who said, "Why do you have doubts about Shri Gajanan Maharaj? Remove your clothes and let me see your entire body so that all your ailments will vanish. As you are like a son to me, don't feel shy."

Saying so, Shri Gajanan Maharaj moved his hand all over the body of Yadao. At that time Asirkar returned and the beggar also went away. Yadao, thereafter, searched for that beggar in the town, but could not find him anywhere. He thought that if the beggar was really Shri Gajanan Maharaj , he would certainly gain substantial profit in his business. Same day his carts of cotton were brought to Wardha for sale and he got recieved a very high price for them. Then Yadao believed that Shri Gajanan Maharaj had come to him in the guise of a beggar to give him advice.

Shri Gajanan Maharaj always protects his devotees. Now listen to the experience of Bhau Kavar. Bhau Rajaram Kavar was doctor at Khamgaon, and was transferred to Telhara. Before joining his duty at Telhara, he, along with his family, came to Shegaon for Maharaj's Darshan. At Shegaon he hired one bullock cart for going to Telhara, and when he was about to start in the evening, Balabhau said to him, "It is my request that you should leave Shegaon only after taking prasad tomorrow. Before this, you never went from here without taking any food. Why are you behaving like this today? Moreover today is 'Vyatipat', an inauspicious day for travel."

Kavar agreed partially. He said that he would start immediately after taking meals at night. Accordingly he left with his family after eating dinner. It was a pitch-dark night. It so happened that, in the darkness, he missed the road to Telhara and strayed on a narrow path with jungle all around and a big lake in front. The cart stopped. There was nobody nearabout from whom they could enquire their location. The cartman said that they were on the wrong path. Kavar was surprised. He got down and saw that they had really missed the road to Telhara. Kavar abused the cartman for his mistake. Thereupon the cart man said, "Why are you abusing me? I frequently take the passengers to Telhara and, as far as I think, I followed the right path, the bullocks too walked straight without turning anywhere. They stopped only when they saw this lake. This is surely is not the road to Telhara." Then Kavar understood the reason of all that was happening. He thought it to be the act of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , as he had left Shegaon without taking prasad in the morning and, that too, by ignoring the request of Balabhau. With folded

hands he implored Shri Gajanan Maharaj to protect him in that forest. Immediately thereafter he heard the ringing of bells of bullocks. That made him regain his courage; he asked the cartman to drive towards the direction of that sound. The cartman did accordingly and reached a big road. On enquiring there, it was learnt that they were still within the field boundaries of Shegaon. Then Kavar asked the cart-man to drive them back to Shegaon. They reached Shegaon in the early hours of the morning, and narrated everything to Balabhau.

Balabhau said, "It was good that Shri Gajanan Maharaj did not allow you to go on Vyatipat day. Now take Prasad today and go to Telhara tomorrow. One should never refuse the Prasad of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . It is He who brought you back safe. One should not expect fulfillment of all of our desires. Whatever the saints wish will happen. So with full faith in Him we should keep quiet." Next day Doctor Kavar went to Telhara after taking Prasad.

Now listen to another story.

There was a man named Ratansa, a Bhavsar by caste. His one year old son, Dinkar was afflicted by some disease which made him pale and weak. Many doctors were consulted and medicines given, but he got no relief. He did not take any milk, and the continuous high fever made him cry. Doctors told Ratansa that the case was beyond any cure. Ratansa was very grieved. The child was nearing death with hands and feet getting cold, eyes becoming dull and pulse missing. With such state of the health, Ratansa brought the child to the doors of Shri Gajanan Maharaj Samadhi and putting him there, said, "Maharaj, please cure my child. If he survives, I will distribute sweets worth Rs. 5. You have blessed so many devotees, and now I too want to experience that grace of yours. I am also your devotee, so please do not ignore me. If my child dies at your doors, it will bring disgrace to you. People say that touch of your feet is like nectar, so please oblige me by your blessings. If my son dies, I will break my head at your doors. O Gajanan the Great! Look at me by your nectar like glance and save this child."

A little later on, the child moved and started crying. All were surprised and happy to see this miracle. It was all by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . What can darkness do before the sun? In few days, Dinkar was fully normal, hale and hearty. It was the result of the vow which was taken with full faith.

Similarly by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, Dada Kolhatkar got a son whose name is Raja. The grace of saints has no limits.

Sixteen year old Chandrabhaga, daughter of Shri Ramchandra Patil, had a difficult delivery. Generally delivery is a very painful affair in womanhood. As per tradition, she came from Ladegaon to her mother's place for the delivery. After the delivery, she was running a high fever for some days. It was declared to be the case of typhoid. Many doctors treated her fever, but it did not come down. She was, therefore, taken to Akola for better treatment. Every doctor diagnosed her illness differently and there was no unanimity in their opinion. Tired of all the treatment without any result, Patil decided to surrender to Shri Gajanan Maharaj for her treatment. He started giving her Udi and Tirtha every day and implored Shri Gajanan Maharaj to cure her. With his great faith in Shri Gajanan Maharaj , Chandrabhaga showed signs of recovery.

The lady, who once could not move from her bed, was now able to go to the Samadhi of Shri Gajanan Maharaj for Darshan. That was the effect of the Udi and Tirtha of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . God always blesses them, who have real faith in him. The devotee, therefore, should have full and unshakable faith in the subject of his worship.

Janakabai, wife of Ramchandra, could not escape the sufferings destined for her. Due to gastric trouble, she used to have continuous stomach ache. The medicines used to give her only temporary relief. At last the ailment affected her brain and she started behaving like a lunatic. She lost control on what she said and at times lost sense of hunger also. Some said that evil spirits haunted her, while others diagnosed it as some sort of a disease. They said that Patil, being an executive officer of the village, had created many enemies and the weaker ones, unable to retaliate, must have tried a magic spell on his wife. Medicines and all the other types of remedies were tried, and Patil, being a rich man, was fully exploited by unscrupulous people. In the process, he spent lot of money, but his wife did not get any relief. Tired of all these efforts, he said, "Now Shri Gajanan Maharaj will be our doctor, saint, God and everything. My wife is his daughter-in-law. That is my belief and so she needs no other remedies hereafter." Then he asked his wife to take a bath early in the morning, go to the Math and perform Pradakshina of the Samadhi of Shri Gajanan Maharaj every day. She obeyed her husband and started doing as advised. The Pradakshinas were not wasted and she was cured of her ailment. Sincere service to a real saint is never wasted, but it should be done with full and unshakable faith.

After Shri Gajanan Maharaj, Balabhau took his place and performed somw miracles. He attained Vaikunth at Shegaon on Vaisakh Vadya Shashty, and Narayan then took his place.

When Balabhau attained Vaikunth, Shri Gajanan Maharaj appeared in Narayan's dream at Nandura and told him to go to Shegaon and protect to devotees going there. Narayan held the authority for some days and, then, went into Samadhi on Chaitra Sudha Shashty. Service to a real saint is great Punya, but it is not possible without past good deeds to your credit. Like the stars in the sky, the legends of Shri Gajanan Maharaj are uncountable. I am an ignorant man and so am unable to describe the ocean like life of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. I have said only that much, which has been told by him to say. The pen writes, but it recieves no credit for the writing. In fact, the one who holds the pen writes. A pen is only a means to do that writing. Some is the case here; I have become a pen and the writer is Shri Gajanan Maharaj. It is by His grace, that I have written this Holy Book. O listeners, I own no credit for this at all.

So, this Gajanan Vijay Granth, composed by Dasganu, is nearing the end and now the final chapter is ahead.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Twenty

|| Adhyay 21 ||

Shri Ganeshayanmaha! O Anantvesha Jai to you. O Avinasha Jai to you. Brahmindadhisha I bow before you. O God, remember that you always call yourself 'Patit-pavan' i.e. the saviour of the fallen. You really have more affection for the sinners, and, O graceful one, it is they who have brought importance to you. So, kindly don't look at my sins. Dirty clothes come to water for getting clean. O God, so don't ignore the fallen. Has the earth ever discarded a thorny plant? You are the Savior of both, the sinners and the righteous, and are still away from their touch. The sun needs no efforts to destroy darkness. Sun's arrival, itself, vanishes the darkness. The conceptions sins and righteousness are your creations, and you create sinners to maintain your greatness. Whatever it may be, I have to request you to free me from all worries by your blessings. O Panduranga, you are all powerful, and I have nobody else I support me other than you.

O devotees, now listen to the climax chapter. You are really most fortunate to hear this biography of a great saint. Those who have full faith in Shri Gajanan Maharaj are saved from all the pain and miseries of life. While building the temple, there was one laborer working at the top with the mason. As he was passing stones to the mason, he lost the balance and fell down from the height of 30 feet down onto a heap of stones. People saw him falling and presumed his death as certain. But No, a miracle happened, and he was unhurt like a ball safely caught in hands, or like one coming down a staircase. The laborer said that, when he lost the balance, somebody held his arm firmly, and left it when his feet touched the ground. But nobody was seen around him. People rejoiced to hear and know that it was Shri Gajanan Maharaj who saved the laborer. Shri Gajanan Maharaj would not let anybody be hurt in the construction of His temple. The laborer was very lucky to get the touch of Shri Gajanan Maharaj by this incident.

A Rajput lady, afflicted by an evil spirit had come to Shegaon from Jaipur. God Dattatraya had inspired her to go to Shegaon on Ramnavami day to get rid of that spirit by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. She accordingly came to Shegaon on Ramnavami day. The celebrations of Ramnavami had started there from first day, i.e. Pratipada of Chaitra, and on the Navami a huge crowd had gathered to celebrate the birth of God Rama. At that time the construction work of the Sabhamandapam was in progress and huge stone pillars, measuring 5 feet by 11/2 feet were kept there without any proper support, as the work was suspended temporarily for Shri Ramnavami celebrations. After the birth of Shri Ram was celebrated, the crowd rushed for Prasad. The lady, with her two children, went to one of the pillars for safety. However, that pillar itself fell on her and her two children. People feared that she must have died by the weight of the pillar. Nobody knew her whereabouts; they lifted the pillar, took her out and gave her some water to drink. She was then taken to Dr. Lobo, a devotee of Jesus Christ, and a very good surgeon. She examined that lady and was surprised to see her unhurt after the stone pillar had fallen on her. The falling of that pillar on her had a different significance. Shri Gajanan Maharaj, by letting that pillar fall on her, had liberated the evil spirit from her body. Then having gotten completely rid of that spirit, the lady went back to Jaipur.

Similarly on the occasion of another festival at the temple of Shri Gajanan Maharaj a huge wooden beam had fallen on the head of Shri Naik Nawara, who had, miraculously, escaped

unhurt by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj.

Ramchandra, son of Krisnaji Patil, was a sincere devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . At one noon time, Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to him in the garb of an ascetic, and calling Ramchandra Patil out, asked for some food to eat. Ramchandra, being a pious man, came to the door at that call of the ascetic and noticed that He looked like Shri Gajanan Maharaj. He, respectfully, holding the hand of that ascetic brought him into the house and gave a 'Pata' to sit on. Then Ramchandra offered Puja at his feet and stood before him with folded hands. Thereupon the ascetic said, "O boy, I have especially come here today to tell you something. Listen carefully; don't worry about your debts. They will be repaid soon. Remember that the river Godavari dries up a bit in the summer. But with the rain of blessings from Shri Hari, there will be a flood of prosperity for you. Wherever I take food, that house will never be short of anything. Therefore, bring a dish full of delicious food for me to eat. If you like, give me some clothing also. Worship, food and monetary offering given to one, who asks for it, undoubtedly reaches God, provided He is really a pious person." Ramchandra brought a Thali full of delicious food and the ascetic happily ate it. Then Patil offered him Rs. Five as Dakshina. Thereupon the ascetic said, "I don't want this Dakshina. I have come today to ask you to take up the management of Shri Gajanan Maharaj Temple. I shall be happy if you give me the Dakshina of 'Service to Shri Gajanan Maharaj '. At present, I don't see anybody more suitable than you for this work. Your ailing wife will regain her health by giving me this Dakshina. Call your son, and I will tie a holy 'talisman' around his neck, so that the evil spirits will keep away from him. This executive job of yours is a difficult one, as your own people, at times, turn against you; it is like a covering of tiger's skin. Use it carefully, don't have jealous mind and stick to honesty. Never do anything that goes against the interest of the king. Give proper respect to sages and saints and keep away from the hypocrites. If you observe these principles, God will always bless you. Keep your expenditure within the limits of your income and never feign to be what you are not. Sages and saints should not be allowed to go empty handed from your doors. The insult of a real saint angers God. So always love the real saints. Never think of harming your blood relations and give other relatives traditional respects as per established practice. If at all you get angry, it should only be superficial, with full love inside like a jack fruit. Remember, that I am always with you."

After tying the talisman round his neck, the ascetic went out and suddenly disappeared. Patil thought over what happened the whole day and came to the conclusion that the ascetic was none other than Shri Gajanan Maharaj, who had, himself, come in the garb of an ascetic to advise him. The same night, Shri Gajanan Maharaj appeared in his dream and removed all the doubts. Shri Gajanan Maharaj has great attachment for his devotees. This biography of Shri Gajanan Maharaj is most pious and a savior for humanity, but it requires unshakable faith to experience it.

Now, without wasting anytime, I give below brief summary of all the chapters in this Holy Book. Be attentive to it.

Chapter 1: Starts with obeisance to Lord Ganesh, then to the other Gods and the Guru; narrates the life style of Shri Gajanan Maharaj. He first appeared and was seen on Magh Vadya Saptami near the house of Devidas. Bankatlal and Damodar, the two wise persons, recognized the greatness in Him.

Chapter 2: Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to the kirtan of Govindbhua; showed a miracle to Pitambar Shimpi and, at last, went to the house of Bankatlal.

Chapter 3: An ascetic made a vow to offer 'Ganja' to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . His desire was fulfilled and, since then, Shri Gajanan Maharaj started smoking Ganja at Shegaon. Holy water, touched by the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj , saved the life of Janrao Deshmukh. Explained the classification of the types of deaths and gave a beating to Vithoba for his hypocrisy.

Chapter 4: Jankiram did not give the burning coal required for the pipe of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . As a result, the curry prepared at his place for feeding people got infected with insects and, therefore, all the food was wasted. Jankiram, with folded hands, surrendered and begged for pardon. Shri Gajanan Maharaj pardoned him and the insects in the curry disappeared. Since then Jankiram became a sincere devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Shri Gajanan Maharaj asked for two stale 'Kanholes' from Chandu Mukind. Showed the life after death to Madhao and liberated him. Vasant Puja was performed at the hands of disciples.

Chapter 5: Shri Gajanan Maharaj sat in Samadhi at the Mahadeo temple. Cowherds worshipped him. People took Him to Pimpalgaon. Bankatlal went and brought him back. After some days He went to Akoli to liberate Bhaskar. At Akoli, Shri Gajanan Maharaj created water in a dry well, freed Bhaskar of all doubts and brought Him to Shegaon.

Chapter 6: Bankatlal took Shri Gajanan Maharaj to his farm for eating maize. Honey bees attacked them and all the people, except Bankatlal, ran away. The bee bites did not affect Shri Gajanan Maharaj . The incident tested Bankatlal's devotion to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to Akot to meet Narsinghji, who was a disciple of Kotasha Ali. Stayed there for some days and had brotherly chat with Shri Narsinghji. Went to Shiver village on the bank of Chandrabhaga River and blessed Vrajabhushan. Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to Shri Hanuman temple to stay there for the Shravan month's celebration.

Chapter 7: All the Patil boys, being rough in behaviour, used to speak arrogantly to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Shri Gajanan Maharaj had a wrestling bout with Hari Patil and proved his superiority in strength. By the miracle of sugarcanes, the ego of the Patil boys was smashed. Blessed Khandu Patil with a son, and named him Bhikya; asked him to feed people with mango juice every year. All Patil boys started respecting Shri Gajanan Maharaj .

Chapter 8: Taking advantage of the dispute between Patil and Deshmukh, a Mahar Choukidar lodged a complaint against Khandu Patil. Offence was registered, but Patil was exonerated by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Recited Veda hymns before Talangana Brahmins and, thus, conveyed His authority. Maharaj went and stayed in a shed near Shiva temple at the garden of Krishna Patil. He removed the ego of Brahmagiri ascetic by explaining him the meaning of a couplet from the Holy Geeta. Shri Gajanan Maharaj sat, unhurt, on a burning cot thereby conveying that fire cannot harm a real saint.

Chapter 9: A naughty horse was calmed. A person was reminded of his vow of offering Ganja. Shri Gajanan Maharaj , along with his disciples went to Balapur to Shri Balkrishna's house on 'Das Navami' day. Balkrishna was shown a glimpse of saint Ramdas, and his mind was freed

from all doubts.

Chapter 10: Happenings at Amravati and the realization achieved by Balabhau. Ganesh Appa and Chandrabai devotedly surrendered all their worldly belongings at the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Blessed Ganesh Dada Khaparde; tested Balabhau by beating him with umbrella. Naughty cow of Sukhlal was calmed and exposed the hypocrisy of Ghude.

Chapter 11: Bhaskar had a dog bite; took him to Trimbakeshwar. Met Gopaldas at Nasik. Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to Adgaon at the request of Zamsingh. Bhaskar expired and his body was interned near Dwardeshwar by the side of Satibai. Crows were ordered to keep away from that place. Saved Ganu Javare from the explosion in the well.

Chapter 12: Story of Seth Bachchulal. Pitambar Shimpi put on clothes given by Shri Gajanan Maharaj ; he came to Kondoli and created leaves on a dry barren tree. Pitambar stayed in Kondoli till end. New temple was built at Shegaon. Shri Gajanan Maharaj came to the new temple from the old one in a bullock cart carrying sand. Zamsing, then, took Shri Gajanan Maharaj to Mundgaon; the rain disrupted the feeding programme there. Zamsingh gave away all his property to Shri Gajanan Maharaj .

Chapter 13: Gangabharati was cured of leprosy by Shri Gajanan Maharaj and Pundalik was saved from a Plague infection.

Chapter 14: Bandu Tatyas luck favored. Found underground wealth and got free from debts by the grace of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . On Somavati Amavasya day, went for a bath on Narmada River. The boat carrying them got a hole at the bottom. Narmada closed it by her hand. Panvidaa was sent to saint Madhaonath at the hands of His disciples.

Chapter 15: Tilak came to Akola for Shiva Jayanti. Bhakari, as prasad, was sent to Tilak. Shridar Kale was not allowed to go abroad.

Chapter 16: Pundalik was restrained from going to Anjangaon. Maharaj sent Padukas to Pundaik with Zamsingh. He enjoyed the food, 'Bhaji-Bhakar', brought by Kavar. Tukaram was relieved of a small gun shot which had accidentally entered his head.

Chapter 17: Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to a railway station for going to Vishnusa at Malkapur. The Police prosecuted him for remaining nude. Shri Mehetabshah was sent to Punjab; advised him to create a better understanding between the Hindus and the Muslims. Effects of an evil spirit were removed from Bapurao's wife. Ganga, Bhagirathi and Yamuna river water was brought into a well at Akot

Chapter 18: The Story of Baija.

- Dr. Kavar's boil cured.
- Shri Gajanan Maharaj , with disciples, goes to Pandharpur
- Bapuna Kale was given Darshan of God Vithoba.

- A devotee from Kavathe Bahadur suffers from Cholera. Shri Gajanan Maharaj cured him in minutes.
- A dead dog was brought back to life, thereby removed the ego of an orthodox Brahmin.

Chapter 19: Blessings to kashinathpant.

- Gopal Buty takes Shri Gajanan Maharaj to his house at Nagpur.
- Hari Patil brings Shri Gajanan Maharaj back to Shegaon.
- Meeting with Shri Wasudevanand Saraswati.
- Balabhau had his doubts about that meeting. Shri Gajanan Maharaj removed those doubts.
- Protected a heap of grains from donkeys.
- Narayan dies for beating Shri Gajanan Maharaj at Balapur.
- Jakhadya gets married with the blessing of Shri Gajanan Maharaj .
- Gave darshan to Nimonkar at Kapildhara.
- Tukaram presented his son, Narayan, for the service to Shri Gajanan Maharaj .
- Shri Gajanan Maharaj went to Pandharpur.
- Took permission from God Vithoba and returned to Shegaon.
- On the holy day of Rushipanchami, in the month of Bhadrapad this great sage of the modern era took Samadhi.

Chapter 20: Miracles that happened after the Samadhi of Shri Mahara are narrated. All those who have faith, still get the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and also get the fulfillment of their desires.

Chapter 21: The twenty first chapter is the climax of the whole biography and also its summary. The listeners are the essence of this biography.

In fact several incidents still occur to remember Shri Gajanan Maharaj that is why this Chapter is only called the essence of His biography.

The construction work of the Temple was completed by collecting donations. It is a majestic structure, unparalleled anywhere in the world. Resting places for the devotees are built all around the Main Temple. Many people extended help for building this temple. The full list of the donors

will be too long, so I give below some of the important names from amongst them: Hari Kukaji Patil, Banaji of Sangwi, Ganaji of Umari, Mesaji of Watvadi, Gangaram of Ladegaon, Bhai Gangu, Gujabai Banabai of Akola, Mother of Sukdeo Path. These devotees donated in thousands.

Other donors are Ramchandra Krishnaji Patil, Dattu Bhikaji, Sukhdeoji of Palaskhed, Martand Ganapati of Shegaon, Ratanlal Balchand, Dattulal and Bisanlal of Panchgavan, Ambarsingh of Takali, Kisan Belmandalekar, Vithoba Patil Chavarekar, Gangaram of Hansanapur. They donated big amounts and helped in the construction of the monument of Shri Gajanan Maharaj.

All around the Samadhi are beautifully built sitting halls, office rooms and kitchens. All the money, collected from donors, was spent on the construction work, but some items, still, remained incomplete for the want of funds. So a novel idea was floated for collecting money. The land owners were asked to pay a sort of religious cess of one anna on every Rupee they pay towards land revenue. Similarly, every bullock cart, coming to Shegaon for sale of cotton or grain was asked to pay half anna per cart. People very happily paid this cess as they had great faith and respect for Shri Gajanan Maharaj .

Many Yagnyas were performed before the Samadhi, but four of them were performed on a large scale. Kisanlal Shethji, very respectfully, performed the Shatchandi Yagnya at the hands of Brahmins. This yagnya is rather difficult to perform as Jagadamba Kalika won't tolerate any irregularity in the rituals. A small mistake immediately invites punishment, while faultless performance of the rituals brings Her blessings. So this yagnya is always performed under great tension. Bankatlal, the father of Kisanlal, was a devotee of Shri Gajanan Maharaj . On the final day of the Yagnya this Bankatlal got such an ailment, that he was at the point of death. All got very much upset, and wondered why such thing should happen at all, especially when the Shatchandi Yagnya was in progress

Bankatlal said to his son, "My son, don't be anxious. My Savior is sitting here in the Samadhi and He will set the matters right. So go ahead with performance of the yagnya as per rituals, My Swami, Shri Gajanan, is sitting here only for the protection of the devotees and as such will remove all the obstacles."

It proved true and Bankatlal was soon well. During this yagnya one lady was relieved of the effects of evil spirit on her.

Banaji Tidke Sangwikar, Gujabai of Kasura and Waman of Chapadgaon also performed Yagnas before Samadhi. Thus many religious functions were held before Shri Gajanan Maharaj . He is really a great saint.

So long as the people were pious, Berar was very happy. With the decrease in faith, the downfall of Berar started, and the output of land also diminished. Shri Gajanan Maharaj could not bear to see the misery of Berar and probably for that reason, got Himself enclosed under water. In fact the foundation of the Samadhi Shrine was built in mortar right from the depth of thirty feet and as such there was no reason for any water seepage. Therefore it was felt that Shri Gajanan Maharaj got angry at the attitude of the Berar People and so created water around him. If the

people of Berar wish to regain their lost glory, they should start worshipping Shri Gajanan Maharaj with full faith; otherwise they would be required to face more miseries.

Whatever is sowed in this land of Gajanan, will come back in multiples. Remember that grains sowed on rocks are totally wasted. So whenever the service to saints is neglected, the result is famine in that area. Faith in religion is like a tiger, and if it leaves the cave of mind, the jackals of evil thinking enter it. Bhakti (devotion) is like a clean, pious lady and Abhakti (non-devotion) is like a concubine and any association with her brings disgrace. Don't deviate from the righteous path and don't leave the religious faith. Don't be enemies of each other, as then only, your strength will increase. Behavior on these lines will ensure a bright future for you. Go to Shegaon, at-least once a year for the Darshan of Shri Gajanan Maharaj and also read this Gajanan Vijay once a year. The reading of these twenty one chapters of the Gajanan Vijay Granth will be like offering twenty one Modakas to Shri Gajanan Maharaj . Do it, or treat these chapters as twenty one Durvankur, and keep on offering them to Shri Gajanan Maharaj , by repeated recitations of the Gajanan Vijay.

Pious thinking of a man is Chaturthi and from it should rise the moon of love. This is a Holy Book describing 'Shri Gajanan Leela', and not a novel. One, who does not believe this, will be a great loser. One, who regularly reads this biography of Shri Gajanan Maharaj with faith, will have all his desires fulfilled by His grace.

This Holy Book of Shri Gajanan Maharaj is like the holy Bhagirathi River with stories in it as water and the stanzas as waves. This biography is a Kalpavriskha with its Chapters as branches and the stanzas as leaves. One who keeps faith in this Holy Book, will have blessings from Shri Gajanan Maharaj, and be always protected by him in difficult times. This book is a Chintamani that gives you everything you wish, provided you have full faith. Every house, wherein this holy Gajanan Vijay is read daily, will get perpetual prosperity. The reciting of this book will bring wealth to the poor, health to the sick, children to childless pious ladies, son to one without a son, selfless friend, and will remove all his anxieties. One who recites this Holy Book in full on Dashmi, Ekadashi and Dwadashi will be bestowed with great prosperity by Shri Gajanan Maharaj . The one who completes its full recitation in one sitting, in the auspicious period of Gurupushya Yoga, will get all his desires fulfilled and cure all his ailments.

This book, by its mere presence in the house will keep away all sorts of evil spirits. Such is the importance of this Granth, but this can be experienced only by the believers. The famous lake of Manas is meant for Rajhansa birds, and similarly, this biography of Shri Gajanan Maharaj is for saints and pious people.

As the great saints of past like Dnyaneshwar, Mira, Mehta, Kabir, Nama, Savat, Chokha Mahar, Gora, Bodhala, Damaji, Ainath at Umarched, Sakharam at Amalner, Deo Mamaledar, Yashwant or Manik Prabhu at Humanabad, so is Shri Gajanan Maharaj at Shegaon. There is no difference amongst them. Now my only request to all the devotees is that you should pour all your love at the feet of Shri Gajanan Maharaj to enable yourself to get liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

|| SHRI GAJANAN VIJAY GRANTH ||

Now I request Shri Gajanan Maharaj to free this Dagan from all the miseries. I have become your spokesman. Show me the right path. I hate everything that is evil. Let me keep up the ritual of visiting your shrine regularly till my death. Let my love for saints be maintained, and give me the pleasure of permanent stay on the bank of the Godavari River. Let there be no occasion for me to beg for anything from others. O Maharaj! Kindly see that you will always be proud of me. I am dust at the feet of all saints, and beg for protection from you.

O Swami Gajanan, whatever I have said here, is entirely as per your inspiration. While writing this book, Ratansa showed me some papers from the Math at Shegaon, and that has been the base of my writings here. No scope was given for imaginations, and so I am not responsible for omissions or commissions in it. And even then, if there are any mistakes, I beg Shri Gajanan Maharaj to pardon me.

Let this Gajanan Vijay Granth be a savior to devotees in this material world. Obeisance to Pundalik, Hair Vital, Sitaram, Parvati and Mahadeo.

"SHUBHAM BHAVATU"
Here ends Chapter Twenty One