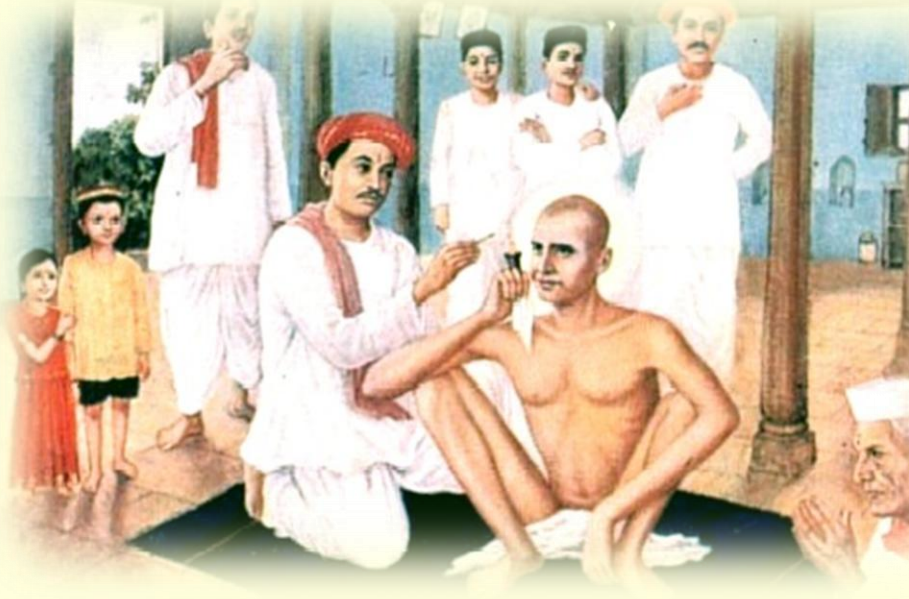



* CHAPTER FOUR *



Shri Ganeshay Namaha ! O Almighty, all Powerful God, Nilkantha, Gangadhara, Mahakal Trimbakeshwara, Shri Omkara manifest yourself to me. You and Vishnu are the same as water and aqua. Same is the case with you. People worship you either of the forms as per their liking. One who sincerely loves you gets your affection as child from his mother. I am your innocent child craving for your love, you are all powerful, a kalpataru. Kindly fulfill my all desires.


Swami Gajanan was staying at the house of Bankatlal. On Third of Vaishakh Suddha people give offering of earthen pitcher full of water to their dead forefathers. In Vidarbha this day Akshay Tritiya is celebrated on large scale. On this day Shri Maharaj was sitting with some boys, probably to reveal some of this super natural power. He told the boys to fill up his pipe with tobacco and light it for smoking. Boys prepared the pipe and started searching for fire. They could not get it. So Bankatlal suggested them to go to Jankiram goldsmith for fire, as all goldsmiths first ignite fire in the morning and then attend to other works. They went to Janakiram and asked for ignited piece of coal for the pipe of Shir Gajanan Maharaj. Janakiram got angry and refused, saying that he does not like giving fire to anybody on Akshay Tritiya day. The boys told him not to be superstitious as the fire was required for the pipe of Shri Gajanan, the God of Gods.



Janakiram turned down their request and said, "I don't accept Shri Gajanan as Saint. He has not caste, eats from anybody's hand, smokes tobacco and Ganja, remains naked, drinks sewage water and behaves like a mad man. Bankatlal is a food to do 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 Jalandar. So, get out." The boys, disappointed went back to Bankatlal's house and narrated everything to Shri Maharaj. Shri Gajanan Maharaj smiled and took the pipe in his hand. 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 Janakiram by this incident. Neem leaves have a special significance on the new years day (Gudi Padwa), so has the tamarind curry on Akshay 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 and the people left Jankiram's house without taking any food the gold smith felt very sorry and it suddenly occurred to him that because of his fault of refusing the fire for the pipe of Shri Gajanan, his all food was wasted. "Shri Gajanan is the pure water of Janhavi, the king of Kings and I treated him like a beggar. He is the knower of past, present and future and I thought him to be a mad person. A Kalpavriksha was thought by me to be a thorny bush. He is 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 blessings from a great Saint. I am a mere burden to the earth, an animal of two legs."

Saying so he condemned himself again and again. At last he decided to go and surrender at the feet of Shri 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. I refused this morning fire for the pipe of Shri Maharaj and this is the result." Bankatlal said that the tamarind used by him might be worms infested. Janakiram



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". Janakiram 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 but I did not recognize you. Now I am free of 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 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 Maharaj.

Now listen to the story of Chandu Mukin, a devotee of Shri Maharaj. In the month of Jeshtha in Summer all the devotees were sitting around Shri Maharaj. They were offering Him fruits, sugar balls, garlands, applying sandalwood paste to his body and some of them were cooling air by hand fans. At that time Shri Maharaj said that he does not want mangoes or fruits but two "Kanhole" kept in the earthen pitcher at Chandus House. Chandu, with folded hands said that there were no Kanhole at his house, but would get prepared fresh if necessary. Maharaj replied that he does not want fresh Kanhole, but only those stale ones lying in the earthen pitcher at his house. Chandu went home and told his wife what Shri Maharaj had said. His wife said that the "Kanhole" were prepared a month back on Akshaya Tritiya day and all were 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 "Kanhole" for Shri Maharaj. But Chandu replied that Maharaj wanted only the stale ones and not the fresh. He asked her to remember as Swamiji cannot tell a lie. She paused and tried to remember and in a flash said that what Swamiji had said was correct. She remembered that two Kanhole were really kept by her in the earthen pitcher. She took out the Kanhole and gave to Chandu, and 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 "kanhole" to Shri Maharaj. All were surprised at the divine power of Shri Maharaj. Shri Gajanan happily ate the "Kanhole" as fruits offered by Shabari to Shri Ram.



At Chincholi, near Shegaon, there was a Brahmin by name Madhao. He was over sixty and very weak. He passed his youth in 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. He lost all interest in his life, sold out all his possessions and regretted that while in material pursuits he never remembered 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 full one 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 being a bachelor in youth. Everything should be done in its proper time. Otherwise the action bears no fruits. It 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 for things that were transient and forgot what it eternal. As a consequence you have now got to bear the results from which there is no escape. So, do not be obstinate and be reasonable."

Other people also tried to persuade him but he ignored all and kept up his fast and chanting of Narayan, Narayan. At mid night when it was pitch dark, and nobody near about, Shri Gajanan played a trick with Madhao. He changed himself into a fearfully form of 'Yama', the God of death, and with big open jaw rushed to Madhao, as if to eat him. Madhao dumb scared and with throbbing heart started running away. Looking to his condition, Shri 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 said, "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 the 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 to be at your feet, probably because of some good deeds to my credit and one, who meets a saint,

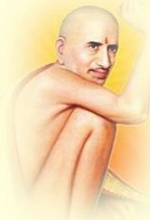
cannot go to Yamalok". Shri Maharaj said, "Keep on chanting the name of Narayan, as your death is quite near now. If you still want to live, tell me and I will extend you life span." Madhao said, "I do not want to live any more. It is all unreal and so kindly do not involve me any more in it."

Shri 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 and looking to his behaviour, 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 Maharaj wished to listen to Vedas and asked the devotees to get some learned Brahmins for reciting of Vedas. Devotees said that learned Brahmins able to recite Vedas, were not available there days. Swamiji however, asked them to go ahead with preparations saying that the Brahmins would come the next day. The devotees were happy, they started preparations and collected Rupees One Hundred for the purpose. Next day, at noon time, a team of learned Brahmins really arrived at Shegaon and they recited 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 saints. Bankatlal, and now his descendants continued this recitation of Vedas on that particular day every year.

"Shubham Bhavatu"
"Shri Hari Hararpanamastu"

Here is the End of Chapter Four.



Compiled by : Shravan Pande, Shegaon, India.