



Positive Impact of Saint Tukaram's Spirituality on Modern Life and Lifestyle

RESEARCH SCHOLAR

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Abstract:

Spirituality means different things to different people. For some, it is primarily a belief in God and for some way to salvation. Great saint of Maharashtra Saint Tukaram played the major role to guide the people to this noble ideal of spirituality. Saint Tukaram belonged to Warkari credo. Kirtan (spiritual discourse) was his means to make the people why to surrender to the ethics of god. He was the great devotee of Lord Vitthala of Pandharpur. He realised the ultimate goal of human life is not only acquiring wealth or being engaged in physical world. Getting free from the circle of rebirth one need to surrender everything and should be a true and selfless devotee of Lord Vittala. To make the simple and straight minded folks of Maharashtra, he composed holy songs and collected them in 'Tukaram Gatha (Holi songs of Saint Tukaram.) He adopted Kirtan (spiritual discourse) as a means to generate awareness among people. Being made the people aware with the real nature of God and how to reach him the so-called scrupulous and hypocrites accused him of ruining the religion. So Saint Tukaram had to suffer terribly. While practicing spirituality Saint Tukaram quarrels with God. During the severe drought, people were dying due to scarcity of food. Saint Tukaram quarrelled with God if they are children of God why he was treating them so severally. Saint Tukaram strongly believed in Vedas, Bhagavad Gita and Puranas. Lord Vitthal, his temple at Pandharpur, his prayer was his life motto. One need to follow the strict and rigid rules to reach the spiritual height.

Keywords: spirituality, materialism, devotion to god, inner happiness, development of soul.

Introduction:

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore says "Spirituality is the quest for a trans-individual and trans worldly reality that fills in as the ontological ground for an ethic of sympathy and admiration." According to Fullan (2000) "Spirituality includes distinguishing an ethical reason for our lives that will associates principal conduct to something that is more noteworthy than we are." Mitroff and Denton (1999) considers, "Spirituality as one's push to experience an incorporated, as opposed to compartmentalized presence." Houston and Sokolow (2006) believes that, spirituality requires a man to endeavor to go outside of the self to find that piece of the person that is more than material and that discovered gives an association with the unending. For William Wordsworth spirituality is a piece of humankind's on-going quest for importance and reason.

Spirituality does not mean any particular practice. It is a certain way of being. To get there, there are many things to do. Spirituality involves the recognition of a feeling or sense or belief that there is something greater than myself, something more to being human than sensory experience, and that the greater whole of

which we are part is cosmic or divine in nature. An opening of the heart is an essential aspect of true spirituality. In earlier times, spirituality was closely connected to organised religion. Over time, the meaning of spirituality has changed. It has become less about religion and more about personal development, being connected to other and to something greater than ourselves and finding peace. Today unfortunately, in his materialistic world everybody is running after collecting things of physical pleasure. But having many things doesn't mean having maximum satisfaction. These things give only external pleasure. Inner happiness, mental health, satisfaction are different things which cannot be bought with having cash only. Spirituality in the poetry of Sant Tukaram is the best way to obtain and enjoy this inside true happiness. Through his devotional songs (abhangas) and spiritual discourses (kirtans) he incorporated the real meaning of life and how to attain real happiness in life. His poetry is the best remedy to overcome all the problems in modern life and lifestyle.

The sayings and teachings of the sants of the Varkari tradition of Maharashtra in western India were passed down through the generations, primarily in an oral culture using the local Marathi language, from Jnaneshwara and Namdev in the thirteenth century to Ramdas and Tukaram in the seventeenth century.

Tukaram was born in the Indian state of Maharashtra, close to Pune, in the years 1598 or 1608 in the village of Dehu. Sant Tukaram was a child of Bolhoba and Kanakai Ambile.. The family of Tukaram was involved in trading, agriculture, retail, and money lending businesses. His parents were Vaishnavas who worshipped the Hindu deity Vishnu in the form of Vithoba. When Tukaram was a teenager, both of his parents passed away. Sant Tukaram had a son named Santu with his first wife, Rakhama Bai. But the famine of 1630–1632 caused both his son and wife to perish from starvation. Tukaram's attention moved inward towards the spiritual life as a result of these tragedies. Tukaram used his kirtans and abhangs to highlight the wrongdoings of society, the social system, and Maharajas. Because of this, he encountered some hostility in society. He was frequently tormented by a man by the name of Mambaji, who was in charge of a matha (religious seat) in Dehu and had some adherents. He referred to Tukaram in derogatory terms. Later, Mambaji started to admire Tukaram as well. The Maratha Empire was formed by Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who is said to have met Tukaram and had a significant influence on him. Tukaram frequently mentions the four other Bhakti Sants Namdev, Dnyaneshwar, Kabir, and Eknath in his work of Abhangas as having had a significant impact on his spiritual growth. Bhandarkar notes that Abhanga 300, 1992 and 2482 attributed to Tukaram are in style and philosophy of Adi Shankara.

*When salt is dissolved in water, what is it that remains distinct?
I have thus become one in joy with thee [Vithoba, God] and have lost myself in thee.
When fire and camphor are brought together, is there any black remnant left?
Tuka says, thou and I are one light.*

(Tukaram Gatha, 2482, Translated by RG Bhandarkar)

Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, and Balchandra Nemade are a few of the contemporary Marathi poets and authors who have written English translations of the life and teachings of Sant Tukaram. Also translations in English and French by the French Jesuit priest, G.A.Deleury. According to Tukaram, the greatest benefit of kirtan is that it not only serves as a spiritual route for the devotee but also contributes to the creation of other people's spiritual paths.

Modern Life, Lifestyle and Spirituality:

We all are the part of this physical world. With the advancement of facilities people are totally absorbed in materialism. With the advancement of mobile and technology, people have become mute or are using limited words and vocabulary. Communication gap has the reason of stress and depression. To those who have forgotten the power of words, Sant Tukaram says,

Words are the jewels

That our homes are filled with

The tools that we strive with

Are but of words

Words are the source
That sustains our life
Wealth of words we give
To one and all
Tuka says behold
Word is the Lord
Let us praise Him
Worship with words

To those who have forgotten the power of Lord Vithhala, he says,

Vithhala pervades all beings,
He fills the seven subterranean worlds,
Vithhala is spread over the three worlds
Vithhala dwells in the heart of the saints.
Vithhala is the very essence of our life,
Vithhala became young to give us His grace.
Vithhala assumed a form for our love,
Vithhala puts the world in motion.

Tuka says:

Vithhala is our father, mother and uncle,
Vithhala is our brother and sister,
We have no affection for our family apart from Him.
Now, there is no one else.

Mahatma Gandhi read and translated Tukaram's poetry, as well as the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and poems by other Bhakti movement poet-saints, early in the 20th century while being held at Yerwada Central Jail by the British colonial authority for his non-violent movement. According to him, Merit consists in doing good to others, sin in doing harm to others. There is no other pair comparable to this. Truth is the only freedom; untruth is bondage, there is no secret like this. God's name on one's lips is itself salvation, disregarding the name is perdition. Companionship of the good is the only heaven, indifference is hell. Tuka says: It is thus clear what is good and what is injurious, let people choose what they will. (Sant Tukaram, Translated by Mahatma Gandhi)

Tuka says: It is a life's bargain, and if you will not give your life to possess it, better is silent.

Sant Tukaram also had a profound influence on Dr. K.B. Hedgewar as the former's quotes often found their way on the latter's letterhead. One such letter dated April 6, 1940 bore the quote "Daya tiche nanwa bhutanche palan, aanik nirdalan kantkache", meaning compassion is not only the welfare of all living beings, but also includes protecting them from harm's way."

In the name of development, we have forgotten importance of environment
Trees, creepers are our | Kindred, also wild beasts, And birds singing | Melodiously

Dilip Chitre has translated Saint Tukaram's verses in English. The book is named as '*Says Tuka.*' Saint Tukaram in his lifetime experienced many hardships. His transformation to the status of Saint it was a gradual process. On his spiritual journey he was very cautious. He was careful that he does not fall prey to temptations of the world. Desire and temptations did not block him reaching spiritual heights. He clarified that he wouldn't be tempted by magical powers and bribes:

"...when other seekers sought you, you
tricked them by giving
Gift a magical powers has bribe:

Let us get the record straight,
I am not that sort of beggar....”

“Says Tuka, from the outset I expected nothing from you So that my desire should not become the last barrier between us.”

The poetic output of Saint Tukaram is huge. The depth of thought and its philosophical import too is great. His life was a quest to become one with his beloved deity. His different realizations are presented in his poems. So his poems are not just poems but they provide us with great spiritual advice to. Finally he reached his spiritual destination. He says, “my ordeal is over.” He was contented with his new self. This thankfulness is expressed as:

“...My prayers answered
my longing vanished
Now I am truly strong
It’s long since I died...” (Says Tuka- I - page 221)

The event of death of Saint Tukaram was also metaphorical. Ego vanished and he reached to his spiritual destination. Death became a celebration to him:

“I have seen my death with my own eyes
O what an incomparable festival it was” (Tuka Says - page 223.)

Conclusion:

Healthy spirituality gives a sense peace, wholeness and balance among the physical, emotional, social and spiritual aspect of our life. Higher levels of spirituality have also been linked to increased compassion, strengthened relationships and improved self-esteem.

Today in the 21st century space is reduced by the use of technological advancement. Even though the people are so busy that they don’t have time even to spend with their family members. Decorum has become the lifestyle. Event managers are at the foot of their clients. Everything is available in the global market. In terms of physical wealth there are billianoire and millionaire. People have enough facilities which are the symbol of their highest lifestyle. But unfortunately those people are not free from tension, depression, nervousness, failure, fear. They are short of inner happiness. Though They are highly educated, performing at different posts but seriously have forgotten the purpose of life. Unity between body, mind and soul is rarely seen. Whenever such a person attend a spiritual discourse, it proves a life changing moment in his life. Leading a spiritual life Sant Tukaram also went through internal emotional trauma, faced the criticism of external world. But he did not give up his devotion and faith in God. His spiritual power was so strong that he continued his quest to realise the divine power in him. At the time of going to Vaikuntha (Heaven) in the Chariot from heaven he was fully satisfied. He experienced his meeting with God many a time. Through his kirtans, he made the simple folk aware that anybody can attend this height with honest efforts. He explained, how is your spirituality can help you to meet God and to attain salvation. His abhangas (holy poems) are perfectly applicable still in the modern life. If one want to learn the purpose of life, reading and understanding his poems is just enough. Any person of any culture, country and religion can resolve his emotional trauma and any other problem he/she is suffering from if he try to understand the teaching of Saint Tukaram. His teaching and message is still applicable in the modern life to realise the secret of real happiness and getting the solution of any problem in our life.

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