

Tukaram Gatha

तुकाराम गाथा

Original Marathi with English translation, a plain-language reading, and an explanation of what each abhanga means

Volume 1: Gatha 1-500 - 497 abhangas

About This Edition

This reading edition brings together four layers for every abhanga: the original Marathi, an English translation, a rendering in plain words, and a short explanation of its meaning.

The English layers are devotional reading aids. No translation can fully carry Tukaram's Marathi music, wordplay, cultural setting, or spiritual force. Readers are encouraged to return to the original and to consult Marathi teachers and established scholarly editions.

Marathi source: Tukaram Gatha on Marathi Wikisource. The source dataset identifies the Marathi text as public domain. English reading layers are from the Ananta Satsang online edition.

Editorial note: We ask forgiveness for any inaccuracies in rendering Tukaram Maharaj's original Marathi.

Contents

Gatha 1-50

50 abhangas

Gatha 51-100

50 abhangas

Gatha 101-150

50 abhangas

Gatha 151-200

50 abhangas

Gatha 201-250

50 abhangas

Gatha 251-303

50 abhangas

Gatha 304-353

50 abhangas

Gatha 354-403

50 abhangas

Gatha 404-453

50 abhangas

Gatha 454-500

47 abhangas

GATHA 0001

Devotion to Vitthal

Adoration, refusal of heavens

मराठी मूळ

समचरणदृष्टि विटेवरी साजिरी । तेथें माझी हरी वृत्ति राहो ॥१॥
 आणीक न लगे मायिक पदार्थ । तेथें माझें आर्त नको देवा ॥२॥
 ब्रम्हादिक पदें दुःखाची शिराणी । तेथें दुश्चित झणी जडों देसी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे त्याचें कळलें आम्हां वर्म । जे जे कर्मधर्म नाशवंत ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Beautiful is the sight of those even feet poised upon the brick. Let my awareness, O Hari, rest right there. I have no use for the illusory things of this world; do not let that anguish rise in me, O God. The stations of Brahma and the gods are but pillows of sorrow; never let my disturbed mind cling there. Tuka says: we have learned the crux of it. All karmic duties, all dharmic observances, every bit of it turns to dust.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let my mind rest on his feet, there on the brick, and stay. I want nothing else. The things of this world are not real; let me not ache for them. And I do not want the heavens either. Even the seat of Brahma, even the place of the gods, is only a soft place to lie down in sorrow. You can rise there, and you can fall from there. His feet do not pass away. Every duty, every rite, wears out in the end. I have learned the heart of it. Only this remains.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is praying for one thing and naming its price. He fixes his attention on Vitthal's feet, set level on the brick at Pandhari, and asks that it never move from there. Then he refuses everything else, downward and upward alike: not only worldly things, but the highest heavens a soul can earn. He calls them pillows of sorrow, because whatever you can rise to you can also fall from, so even heaven is only a comfortable place to keep on suffering. The feet on the brick are the one thing that never passes. He says he has understood this to the root: every duty and every ritual wears out in the end, and only that resting place remains.

GATHA 0002

Devotion to Vitthal

Adoration

मराठी मूळ

सुंदर तें ध्यान उभे विटेवरी । कर कटावरी ठेवूनियां ॥१॥
 तुळसीचे हार गळां कासे पीतांबर । आवडे निरंतर तें चि रूप ॥२॥
 मकरकुंडलें तळपती श्रवणीं । कंठीं कौस्तुभमणि विराजित ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे माझें हें चि सर्व सुख । पाहीन श्रीमुख आवडीनें ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Beautiful, that meditative vision: he stands upon the brick, hands placed on his hips. Garlands of tulsi around his neck, yellow silk at his waist; that form alone pleases me ceaselessly. Makara earrings flash at his ears, the Kaustubha gem shines at his throat. Tuka says, this is my entire happiness: to gaze with love upon that blessed face.

IN PLAIN WORDS

How beautiful he is to hold in the mind. He stands on the brick, his hands upon his hips. Tulsi garlands at his neck, yellow silk at his waist. I never tire of that form. The fish-shaped earrings catch the light. The Kaustubha gem shines at his throat. Tuka says: this is my whole happiness, to gaze on that dear face with love.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is the most loved of all Tukaram's abhangas, a still portrait of Vitthal as he stands in the temple at Pandhari. Tukaram is not describing a god in the abstract. He is looking at the actual image, feature by feature: the easy posture, hands on hips, as though the Lord has been waiting; the garlands, the silk, the earrings, the jewel. The point is in the last line. He asks the form for nothing. Simply to look at that face, with love, is already his entire happiness. The seeing is the reward.

GATHA 0003

Devotion to Vitthal

Adoration, one request

मराठी मूळ

सदा माझे डोळे जडो तुझे मूर्ती । रखुमाईच्या पती सोयरिया ॥१॥
 गोड तुझें रूप गोड तुझें नाम । देई मज प्रेम सर्व काळ ॥२॥
 विठो माउलिये हा चि वर देई । संचरोनि राहीं हृदयामाजी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे कांहीं न मागे आणीक । तुझे पायीं सुख सर्व आहे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let my eyes cling forever to Your form, O husband of Rakhumai, my dear one. Sweet is Your form, sweet is Your name; grant me love at all times. O Vitthal, my mother, give me only this boon: pervade and abide within my heart. Says Tuka, I ask for nothing more; all happiness lives at Your feet.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let my eyes never leave your form, husband of Rakhumai, my own. Sweet is your form, sweet is your name. Give me love for you, always. Vitthal, my mother, grant me only this: come and live inside my heart. Tuka says: I ask for nothing else. All happiness is there at your feet.

WHAT IT MEANS

A short prayer with a single request inside it, asked three ways: that his eyes stay fixed on Vitthal, that his love be kept steady, and that the Lord live inside his own heart. Notice that he calls Vitthal both husband, of Rakhumai, and mother in the same breath; the bond is closer than any one human relationship can hold. And he is careful to

want nothing beyond this. Not power, not release, only the presence and the love. That refusal of any further ask is the whole shape of his devotion.

GATHA 0004

Devotion to Vitthal

Adoration, the bridal voice

मराठी मूळ

राजस सुकुमार मदनाचा पुतळा । रविशशिकळा लोपलिया ॥१॥
 कस्तुरीमळवट चंदनाची उटी । रुळे माळ कंठीं वैजयंती ॥२॥
 मुगुट कुंडले श्रीमुख शोभलें । सुखाचें ओतलें सकळ ही ॥३॥
 कासे सोनसळा पांघरे पाटोळा । घननीळ सांवळा बाइयानो ॥४॥
 सकळ ही तुम्ही व्हा गे एकीसवा । तुका म्हणे जीवा धीर नाही ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He is radiant, tender-limbed, an idol of Love itself, eclipsing the splendor of sun and moon. A musk-mark on the brow, sandalwood paste upon the body, the Vaijayanti garland swaying at his throat. Crown and earrings adorn that luminous face; he is joy poured into form. A golden silk at the waist, a Paithani draped on the shoulders, and his complexion dark as a rain-filled cloud, O women. Come together now, all of you, says Tuka, for my heart has no steadiness left.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He is radiant and tender, beauty itself, putting the sun and the moon to shame. A musk mark on his brow, sandal paste on his body, the long Vaijayanti garland swaying at his neck. Crown and earrings, that shining face, joy poured into a shape. Golden silk at the waist, fine cloth across his shoulders, his skin dark as a rain cloud. Friends, come, all of you, together. Tuka says: my heart cannot hold still any longer.

WHAT IT MEANS

Here Tukaram speaks in the voice of a young woman calling her friends to come and look at the dark Lord. This is the bridal mood of bhakti, where the soul's love for God is sung as a girl's helpless love at the sight of her beloved. He piles up the beautiful details, not as a catalogue, but as someone who cannot look away and cannot keep the feeling to herself. The last line is the real subject: the heart has lost its composure. Devotion here is not calm. It is the loss of all steadiness before beauty.

GATHA 0005

Devotion to Vitthal

Longing, the ache of separation

मराठी मूळ

कर कटावरी तुळसीच्या माळा । ऐसें रूप डोळां दावीं हरी ॥१॥
 ठेविले चरण दोन्ही विटेवरी । ऐसें रूप हरी दावीं डोळां ॥२॥
 कटीं पीतांबर कास मिरवली । दाखवीं वहिली ऐसी मूर्ती ॥३॥
 गरुडपारावरी उभा राहिलासी । आठवें मानसीं तें चि रूप ॥४॥
 झुरोनी पांजरा होऊं पाहें आतां । येई पंढरीनाथा भेटावया ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे माझी पुरवावी आस । विनंती उदास करुं नये ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Hands resting on the waist, garlands of tulsi in hand: show me that form, O Hari. Both feet placed upon the brick: show that form to my eyes, O Hari. A yellow silk at the waist, its sash displayed in splendor: show me that image, and quickly. You stand at the Garuda pillar, and that very form dwells in my mind. I waste away, I become a cage of ribs from pining; come now, O Lord of Pandhari, come to meet me. Says Tuka, fulfill my longing; do not let this plea go desolate.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Hands on your hips, tulsi garlands in hand: show me that form, Hari. Both feet set on the brick: show me that form. Yellow silk at the waist, the sash bright: show me that shape, and quickly. You stand by the Garuda pillar, and that form lives in my mind. I am wasting away. I am becoming a cage of ribs from missing you. Come, Lord of Pandhari, come and meet me. Tuka says: give me what I long for. Do not let this prayer go unanswered.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is viraha, the ache of separation. Tukaram keeps asking to be shown the same form, over and over, the way someone in love keeps returning to the one thing they want. He already carries the image in his mind, and yet that is not enough; he wants the living presence. The middle of the poem turns physical: he is thinning to a cage of ribs with the wanting. This is not a calm meditation but a cry, and it ends as a plea: do not leave this asking empty.

GATHA 0006

Devotion to Vitthal

Adoration, the friend

मराठी मूळ

गरुडाचें वारिकें कासे पीतांबर । सांवळें मनोहर कें देखेन ॥१॥
 बरवया बरवंटा घनमेघ सांवळा । वैजयंतीमाळा गळां शोभे ॥२॥
 मुगुट माथां कोटि सूर्याचा झळाळ । कौस्तुभ निर्मळ शोभे कंठीं ॥३॥
 ओतींव श्रीमुख सुखाचें सकळ । वामांगीं वेल्हाळ रखुमादेवी ॥४॥
 उद्धव अक्रूर उभे दोहीकडे । वर्णिती पवाडे सनकादिक ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे नव्हे आणिकांसारखा । तो चि माझा सखा पांडुरंग ॥६॥
 विराण्या - अभंग २५

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Garuda as his mount, yellow silk at his waist, when shall I see that dark and lovely one? Most beautiful of all that is beautiful, dark as a monsoon cloud, the Vijayanti garland shines upon his neck. A crown upon his head with the radiance of ten million suns, the flawless Kaustubha jewel shines at his throat. His blessed face, molded entirely from bliss; at his left side, tender Rakhumadevi. Uddhava and Akrura stand on either side; the Sanakas sing his heroic ballads. Tuka says, he is like no other; he alone is my friend, Panduranga.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Garuda for his mount, yellow silk at his waist: when will I see that dark and lovely one? Most beautiful of the beautiful, dark as a heavy cloud, the Vijayanti garland bright on his neck. A crown on his head with the light of ten million suns, the clear Kaustubha jewel at his throat. That blessed face, shaped wholly out of bliss, and tender Rakhumadevi at his left side. Uddhava and Akrura stand on either side; the sages sing his great deeds. Tuka says: he is like no one else. He alone is my friend, Panduranga.

WHAT IT MEANS

Again a vision of Vitthal in full glory, but framed by a single question: when will I see him? Tukaram builds the whole court around the Lord, his mount, his jewels, his queen, his companions, the sages singing him, and then sets himself apart from all of it as the one still waiting for the sight. The last line is the point of the whole catalogue. Out of all that majesty, this dark Lord is not a distant king to him but a friend. The grandeur is real, and the relationship is still intimate.

GATHA 0007

Devotion to Vitthal

Bridal defiance

मराठी मूळ

वाळो जन मज म्हणोत शिंदळी । परि हा वनमाळी न विसंबें ॥१॥
 सांडूनि लौकिक जालियें उदास । नाहीं भय आस जीवित्वाची ॥२॥
 नाइकें वचन बोलतां या लोकां । म्हणे जालों तुका हरिरता ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let people excommunicate me, call me fallen. I will not release my grip on Vanamali. Casting off worldly regard, I have become a renunciant. Neither fear nor hope for life remains. I do not hear the words these people speak. Tuka says: I am dyed in Hari.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let people cast me out. Let them call me a loose woman. I will not let go of Vanamali. I have dropped my good name and stopped caring. I no longer fear for my life, and I no longer hope for it. I do not even hear what these people are saying. Tuka says: I have been dyed through with Hari.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram sings as a woman whose love for God has broken every rule of respectability, and who no longer cares. To the world she looks shameless; to herself she is simply unable to release her beloved, Vanamali, the garlanded Lord. The poem is about what happens when love for God outgrows the fear of being judged: the names people throw stop landing, because she can no longer even hear them. The closing image is dyed cloth. The color has soaked all the way through, and there is no washing it out.

GATHA 0008

Devotion to Vitthal

Bridal mysticism

मराठी मूळ

आधिल्या भ्रतारें काम नव्हे पुरा । म्हणोनि व्यभिचारा टेकलियें ॥१॥
 रात्रंदिस मज पाहिजे जवळी । क्षण त्यानिराळी न गमे घडी ॥२॥
 नाम गोष्टी माझी सोय सांडा आतां । रातलें अनंता तुका म्हणे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

My first husband never fulfilled my desire, so I have taken to adultery. Day and night I need him near me; not one moment apart from him can I bear. Abandon my name, my stories, all concern for me now. Tuka says: I am dyed through in Ananta.

IN PLAIN WORDS

My first husband never satisfied my heart, so I have turned to another. Day and night I need this one beside me. I cannot bear even a moment away from him. Forget my name. Forget my story. Stop worrying over me. Tuka says: I am dyed through with Ananta, the endless one.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is one of Tukaram's boldest images. The soul's old attachments, the whole settled life of the world, are the first husband who never satisfied the heart. God is the new love she has run to. By calling it adultery he names exactly how it looks from outside: a scandal, a betrayal of duty. But the poem is told from inside the love, where the only unbearable thing is a moment apart. He tells the world to drop his name and his story, because the person they knew is gone, soaked through with the endless one.

GATHA 0009

Devotion to Vitthal

Union, arrival

मराठी मूळ

हाचि नेम आतां न फिरें माघारी । बैसलें शेजारीं गोविंदाचे ॥१॥
 घररिघी जालें पट्टराणी बळें । वरिलें सांवळें परब्रम्ह ॥२॥
 बळियाचा अंगसंग जाला आतां । नाहीं भय चिंता तुका म्हणे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

This is my vow now: I will not turn back. I have sat down right beside Govinda. I barged into his house and became chief queen by sheer force. I have wed the dark-skinned Parabrahman. The strong one holds me in bodily embrace now. No fear, no worry remains, says Tuka.

IN PLAIN WORDS

This is my vow now: I will not turn back. I have come and sat down beside Govinda. I walked straight into his house and made myself his chief queen by force. I have married the dark one, the Absolute himself. Now the mighty one holds me close. No fear is left, no worry, says Tuka.

WHAT IT MEANS

If the earlier poems were longing, this one is arrival. The soul has stopped pleading and simply taken her place beside God, even forcing her way in. Tukaram calls the dark Lord Parabrahman, the Absolute, and in the same breath marries him and is held by him: the highest reality of the philosophers is also the husband in the embrace. The vow not to turn back, and the fearlessness at the end, mark the difference between wanting God and being at rest in God. The striving is over.

GATHA 0010

Devotion to Vitthal

Bridal mysticism, gone mad for God

मराठी मूळ

नाहीं काम माझें काज तुम्हांसवें । होतें गुप्त ठावें केलें आतां ॥१॥
 व्यभिचार माझा पडिला ठाउका । न सर ती लोकांमाजी जालें ॥२॥
 न धरावा लोभ कांहीं मजविशीं । जालें देवपिशी तुका म्हणे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I have no desire, no business left with you. What was hidden has now been made known. My adultery stands exposed. I have become worthless among people. Do not hold any greed toward me, says Tuka. I have gone mad for God.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I have nothing left to do with you. What was hidden is out in the open now. Everyone knows what I have done. Among people I am worth nothing anymore. So do not set your hopes on me. Tuka says: I have gone mad for God.

WHAT IT MEANS

The secret love has become public, and Tukaram does not flinch. He addresses the world, the old life, and tells it plainly that the bond is finished and that he has no standing left to lose. Where the world sees ruin, a woman who has thrown her reputation away, he sees freedom: there is nothing left for anyone to bargain over. The last line names it without apology. What looks like madness from outside is, from inside, the whole point. He has been taken over by God.

GATHA 0011

Devotion to Vitthal

Abandon

मराठी मूळ

विसरले कुळ आपुला आचार । पती भावे दीर घर सोय ॥१॥
 सांडिला लौकिक लाज भय चिंता । रातलें अनंता चित्त माझें ॥२॥
 मज आतां कोणी आळवाल झणी । तुका म्हणे कानीं बहिरी जालें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I have forgotten my clan, my prescribed conduct. Husband, brother-in-law, household duties: all forgotten. I have cast off social standing, shame, fear, and worry. My mind is dyed through with Ananta. Let no one try to call me back now. Tuka says: I have gone deaf.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I have forgotten my family and the rules I was raised to keep. Husband, his brothers, the running of the house: all gone from my mind. I have thrown off my standing, my shame, my fear, my worry. My mind is dyed through with Ananta, the endless one. Let no one try to call me back now. Tuka says: I have gone deaf to all of it.

WHAT IT MEANS

A list of everything the soul has let fall: clan, custom, the whole web of household roles, and then the inner holds too, shame and fear and worry. This is not carelessness. It is what happens when one love grows large enough to crowd out every other claim. The closing image answers the obvious objection. Surely someone will call her back to her duties? She cannot be called back, because she has gone deaf. The voice of the old life simply no longer reaches her.

GATHA 0012

Devotion to Vitthal

Absorption

मराठी मूळ

न देखें न बोलें नाइकें आणीक । बैसला हा एक हरि चित्तीं ॥१॥
 सासुरें माहेर मज नाही कोणी । एक केलें दोन्ही मिळोनियां ॥२॥
 आळ आला होता आम्ही भांडखोरी । तुका म्हणे खरी केली मात ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I see nothing else, speak nothing else, hear nothing else. Hari alone is seated in my awareness. In-laws' home or mother's home, I belong to no one. I have merged both and made them one. They accused me of being quarrelsome. Tuka says: I made that charge true.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I see nothing else. I say nothing else. I hear nothing else. Hari alone is seated in my mind. I have no home now, not my in-laws' and not my mother's. I have folded the two into one. People charged me with being a troublemaker. Tuka says: I have made their charge come true.

WHAT IT MEANS

The senses have narrowed to a single object. Seeing, speaking, hearing, all of them rest on Hari and nothing besides. Tukaram uses a married woman's two homes, her in-laws' and her mother's, the two places a life is supposed to belong to, and says he belongs to neither, having merged them into one in God. The last couplet has a flash of humor. People called him a quarreler with the world's expectations. Rather than deny it, he agrees: yes, and I have made it completely true. The break with the world is total now, and he owns it.

GATHA 0013

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, the strength of the surrendered

मराठी मूळ

दुजा ऐंसा कोण बळी आहे आतां । हरि या अनंता पासूनिया ॥१॥
 बळियाच्या आम्ही जालों बळिवंता । करुं सर्व सत्ता सर्वावरी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे आम्ही जिवाच्या उदारा । जालों प्रीतिकरा गोविंदासी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Who else is so mighty, apart from Hari, from Ananta? We who belong to the mighty one have ourselves become mighty. We hold dominion over all. Tuka says: we are lavish with our very lives. We have become lovers of Govinda.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Who is mighty now, except Hari, except the endless one? We belong to the mighty one, and so we have become mighty ourselves. We hold sway over everything. Tuka says: we give our very lives without counting the cost. We have become lovers of Govinda.

WHAT IT MEANS

A turn from longing to strength. Having given himself to God, Tukaram finds he has taken on God's own power: the one who belongs to the mighty becomes mighty too. This is not pride. It is the confidence of someone who has nothing of his own left to protect, and so can be reckless with his life. Here the strength and the love are one thing. To be a lover of Govinda is to share in his sway over all things.

GATHA 0014

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, the end of coming and going

मराठी मूळ

क्षणभरी आम्ही सोसिलें वाईट । साधिलें अवीट निजसुख ॥१॥
 सांडी मांडी मागें केल्या भरोवरी । अधिक चि परी दुःखाचिया ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे येणें जाणें नाहीं आतां । राहिलों अनंताचिये पायीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

For a brief moment we endured what was difficult, and gained the Self's own unfading joy. All that giving up and starting over, again and again, only multiplied the sorrows. Tuka says: no more coming, no more going. I remain at Ananta's feet.

IN PLAIN WORDS

We bore something hard for a moment, and won a joy that never goes stale, the joy that is our own true nature. All that letting go and beginning again, over and over, only added to the sorrow. Tuka says: now there is no more coming and going. I have come to rest at the feet of the endless one.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram weighs two paths against each other. One is the endless round of renouncing a thing, then grasping a new thing, then renouncing again, which only multiplies grief. The other is a brief, sharp difficulty that buys a joy which does not fade, the happiness that is the Self's own nature. Coming and going is his name for rebirth, the soul moving from body to body. To rest at God's feet is to step out of that traffic for good.

GATHA 0015

Ecstasy and Joy

Union, no second

मराठी मूळ

आम्हां आम्ही आतां वडील धाकुटीं । नाहीं पाठीं पोटीं कोणी दुजें ॥१॥
 फावला एकांत एकविध भाव । हरि आम्हांसर्वें सर्व भोगी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे अंगसंग एके ठायीं । असों जेथें नाहीं दुजें कोणी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

We are now elder and younger to each other. There is no one behind us, no one before us, no second anywhere. Solitude has ripened. One unwavering feeling. Hari savors all things alongside us. Tuka says: bodily togetherness, in one place, where no second exists.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Now we are everything to each other, the older and the younger both. There is no one behind us and no one ahead, no second anywhere. The solitude has ripened, and the feeling is single and steady. Hari shares in everything with us. Tuka says: we are together, body close to body, in one place where no second exists.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is the language of union pushed almost to nonduality. God is no longer only the beloved but every relation at once, elder and younger, the whole family folded into one. The repeated no second is the key: where there were two, lover and beloved, there is now no gap left to cross. Tukaram keeps the warmth of the bridal image, body close to body, but what it points to is a oneness in which separateness has simply dropped away.

GATHA 0016

Ecstasy and Joy

Bridal mysticism, the barren union

मराठी मूळ

सर्व सुख आम्ही भोगूं सर्व काळ । तोडियेलें जाळ मोहपाश ॥१॥
 याचसाठी सांडियेले भरतार । रातलों या परपुरुषाशीं ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे आतां गर्भ नये धरूं । औषध जें करूं फळ नव्हे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

We savor every joy for all time. The snare of delusion is cut away. For this alone we abandoned our husband. We are dyed through with the Other Man. Tuka says: now no conception need be carried. The medicine we have compounded bears no fruit.

IN PLAIN WORDS

We taste every joy, and for all time. The net of delusion is cut. This is why we left the husband and gave ourselves wholly to the Other Man. Tuka says: now no child need ever be conceived. The medicine we have taken bears no further fruit.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram returns to the daring image of the soul who leaves her lawful husband, the old worldly life, for the Other Man who is God. The closing couplet is a startling figure: this union produces no child, bears no fruit. He means it as freedom. The fruit of ordinary action is more birth, more becoming; this love is barren in the best sense, it sets no new round of consequences turning. The net of delusion is cut, and nothing further is conceived.

GATHA 0017

Ecstasy and Joy

Union, time and death finished

मराठी मूळ

एका जिवें आतां जिणें जालें दोहीं । वेगळीक कांहीं नव्हे आतां ॥१॥
 नारायणा आम्हां नाहीं वेगळीक । पुरविली हे भाक सांभाळिली ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे जालें सायासाचें फळ । सरली ते वेळ काळ दोन्ही ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

With one soul, living now sustains two. No separation remains. O Narayana, between us there is no distance. This promise You have kept, You have honored it. Tuka says: the fruit of striving has come. Both time and death are finished.

IN PLAIN WORDS

One soul now, and that one life carries us both. No separation is left. Narayana, there is no distance between us; you made that promise, and you have kept it. Tuka says: the reward of all the striving has come. Time and death, both of them, are over.

WHAT IT MEANS

The two have become one soul, so fully that a single life now holds both. Tukaram reminds God of a promise made and kept: no distance between them. Then he names the result in the largest terms he has. The long effort of the spiritual life has borne its fruit, and both time and death are finished, because what is now joined to the deathless can no longer be touched by either.

GATHA 0018

Ecstasy and Joy

Intimacy after union

मराठी मूळ

हासों रुसों आतां वाढवूं आवडी । अंतरींची गोडी अवीट ते ॥१॥
 सेवासुखें करुं विनोदवचन । आम्ही नारायण एकाएकीं ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे आम्ही जालों उदासीन । आपुल्या आधीन केला पति ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Now we laugh and sulk and deepen our delight; the sweetness within is inexhaustible. In the joy of service we exchange playful words, just Narayana and ourselves, alone together. Tuka says: we have become dispassionate. We have brought our husband under our control.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Now we laugh, we sulk, we let the delight grow; the sweetness inside never runs dry. In the joy of serving him we trade playful words, just Narayana and me, alone together. Tuka says: we have grown free of craving, and we have brought our husband under our own sway.

WHAT IT MEANS

After union comes intimacy, the easy play of two who are sure of each other: laughing, sulking, teasing. Tukaram makes a fine point at the end. He calls himself free of craving and in the same breath says he has brought God, the husband, under his control. There is no contradiction. It is precisely the lover who wants nothing for herself who holds the beloved completely. Detachment here is not coldness; it is what makes the closeness safe and total.

GATHA 0019

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, a warning to the half-hearted

मराठी मूळ

मजसवें आतां येऊं नका कोणी । सासुरवासिनी बाइयानो ॥१॥
 न साहवे तुम्हां या जनाची कूट । बोलती वाईट ओखटें तें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे जालों उदास मोकळ्या । विचरों गोवळ्यासवें आम्ही ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Do not come with me now, any of you, O women bound to your in-laws' houses. You cannot endure the cunning cruelty of these people; they speak bitter, painful words. Tuka says: I have become detached and liberated. I wander with the Cowherd.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Do not come with me now, none of you, you women still tied to your in-laws' houses. You could not bear the sly cruelty of these people, the bitter and ugly things they say. Tuka says: I have become free and unbound. I wander now with the Cowherd.

WHAT IT MEANS

Here the voice turns to warn, not to invite. Tukaram, still in the woman's persona, tells the other women not to follow his path lightly. The road he has taken means enduring the world's mockery and spite, and only someone already loosed from worldly ties can bear it. This is the honest underside of his ecstasy: the love that frees you also exposes you. He does not pretend the cost is small. He says only that he is now free enough to pay it, and walks off with the Cowherd.

GATHA 0020

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, past the reach of advice

मराठी मूळ

शिकविलें तुम्हीं तें राहे तोंवरी । मज आणि हरी वियोग तों ॥१॥
 प्रसंगीं या नाहीं देहाची भावना । तेथें या वचना कोण मानी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे चित्तीं बैसला अनंत । दिसों नेदी नित्य अनित्य तें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

What you taught held only so long as there was separation between me and Hari. In that moment, there is no awareness of the body. Who then would heed such words? Tuka says: Ananta is seated in my awareness. He does not let the impermanent appear as permanent.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The advice you gave me worked only while there was still a gap between me and Hari. Once that gap closes, the body is not even felt; who would listen to such counsel then? Tuka says: the endless one is seated in my awareness. He no longer lets me mistake what passes for what lasts.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram answers the well-meaning people who keep urging him to be sensible. Their advice was useful, he allows, but only at a stage he has now passed: the stage of separation, when one is still managing a self and a body. Once God is fully present, the body drops out of awareness and the old counsel has nothing left to grip. The last line names the real change: with God seated in his mind, he can no longer be fooled into treating the passing world as though it were permanent.

GATHA 0021

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, against imitation

मराठी मूळ

सांगतों तें तुम्हीं अइकावें कानीं । आमुचे नाचणीं नाचूं नका ॥१॥
जोंवरी या तुम्हां मागिलांची आस । तोंवरी उदास होऊं नका ॥२॥
तुका म्हणे काय वायांविण धिंद । पति ना गोविंद दोन्ही नाहीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Listen to what I say, hear it well. Do not dance as we dance. So long as you hold desire for former things, do not pretend to be detached. Tuka says: why this pointless commotion? Neither husband nor Govinda. Both, gone.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Hear me well: do not try to dance the way we dance. As long as you still want your old life, do not put on the show of being detached. Tuka says: what is the use of all this empty noise? You end with neither: not the husband, and not Govinda. Both are lost to you.

WHAT IT MEANS

A sharp warning against imitation. It is easy to copy the outward signs of the renunciant, the ecstatic dance, the talk of detachment, while the heart still clings to the old life. Tukaram says that half-measure is the worst of both worlds. The one who only pretends loses the husband, the ordinary life given up for show, and never truly gains Govinda either, because the wanting was never real. You must actually let go, or you fall between the two and hold nothing.

GATHA 0022

Autobiography

Autobiography, the irresistible pull

मराठी मूळ

आजिवरी तुम्हां आम्हां नेणपण । कौतुकें खेळणें संग होता ॥१॥
 आतां अनावर जालें अगुणाची । करूं नये तें चि करीं सुखें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे आतां बुडविलीं दोन्ही । कुळें एक मनीं नारायण ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Until today, between you and me, there was innocence. In wonder we played, while togetherness lasted. Now the pull of the Attributeless has become irresistible. What ought not be done, that very thing I do with joy. Tuka says: both lineages are drowned now. In single-pointed mind, only Narayana.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Until now there was an innocence between us; we played together in wonder while the closeness lasted. But now the pull of the Formless one has grown too strong to resist. The very thing I should not do, I now do gladly. Tuka says: both family lines are drowned now. In a single-pointed mind, there is only Narayana.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram marks a threshold. There was a sweet early stage, playful and innocent, but the pull of God, here the formless absolute, has grown past all restraint. He admits plainly that he now does, and gladly, what convention forbids. Both lineages drowned means he has let sink the honor of both families a person carries, his own and his spouse's. What is left is a mind fixed on one thing only. The scandal he names is the price of that single-mindedness.

GATHA 0023

Autobiography

Autobiography, the dreaded disgrace arrives

मराठी मूळ

सासुरियां वीट आला भरतारा । इकडे माहेरा स्वभावे चि ॥१॥
 सांडवर कोणी न धरिती हातीं । प्रारब्धाची गति भोगूं आतां ॥२॥
 न व्हावी ते जाली आमुची भंडाई । तुका म्हणे काई लाजों आतां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

My husband's house grew disgusted with me, and my mother's home naturally the same. No mediator will take this matter in hand. Let me now endure the course of prarabdha. The disgrace I dreaded has come upon me. Tuka says: what is there to be ashamed of now?

IN PLAIN WORDS

My husband's house is sick of me, and my mother's home, just as naturally, the same. No go-between will take up my case. So let me bear out the course of my destiny. The disgrace I had dreaded has come upon me. Tuka says: and now, what is there left to be ashamed of?

WHAT IT MEANS

This is the lowest, most human point of the sequence: rejection by both homes, with no one willing to mediate. Tukaram, in the woman's voice, stops resisting and accepts the working out of prarabdha, the destiny already set in motion by past action. The turn comes in the last line. The very thing she feared most, public disgrace, has now actually arrived, and with it a strange relief: once the worst has happened, shame loses its grip. There is nothing left to protect.

GATHA 0024

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, dying before death

मराठी मूळ

मरणाही आधीं राहिलों मरोनी । मग केलें मनीं होतें तैसैं ॥१॥
 आतां तुम्ही पाहा आमुचें नवल । नका वेचूं बोल वायांविण ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे तुम्ही भयाभीत नारी । कैसे संग सरी तुम्हां आम्हां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I died before death itself. Then I did as was in the mind. Now you see this marvel of ours. Do not spend words for nothing. Tuka says: you are fear-stricken women. How can there be equal company between you and us?

IN PLAIN WORDS

I died before death came for me. After that, I did whatever was in my heart. Now look at this wonder of ours, and do not waste your words on it. Tuka says: you are women still ruled by fear. How can there be equal company between you and us?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram names the secret behind everything in this sequence: he died before dying. The self that fears disgrace and clings to its homes was let go while the body still lived. Once that death is done, nothing remains to lose, and he simply acts from the heart. So he tells the cautious women not to waste breath judging him; they are still governed by fear, and he is not. Between the fearful and the free there can be company, but not equality. They are no longer standing on the same ground.

GATHA 0025

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, the moth and the flame

मराठी मूळ

परपुरुषाचें सुख भोगे तरी । उतरोनि करीं घ्यावें सीस ॥१॥
 संवसारा आगी आपुलेनि हातें । लावूनि मागुतें पाहूं नये ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे व्हावें तयापरी धीट । पतंग हा नीट दीपासोई ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

If you would taste the joy of the Other Man, cut off your head and take it in your hands. Set fire to worldly existence with your own hands, and once lit, never look back. Tuka says: be that fearless, as the moth goes straight to the lamp.

IN PLAIN WORDS

If you want the joy of the Other Man, then cut off your head and carry it in your own hands. Set fire to your worldly life with your own hand, and once it is lit, never look back. Tuka says: be that fearless. Be like the moth that flies straight into the lamp.

WHAT IT MEANS

A hard saying about the cost of loving God. The Other Man is God, the one the soul runs to; the joy of that love is real, but Tukaram refuses to make it cheap. To have it you must offer your own head, the proud separate self, and burn the old life down by your own choice, with no looking back. The moth flying into the flame is his image for the only attitude that works: not careful, not hedged, but willing to be consumed. Half-courage will not reach it.

GATHA 0026

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, the knots are your own

मराठी मूळ

अडकाल परी ऐसें नव्हे बाई । न संडा या सोई भ्रताराची ॥१॥
 नव्हे आराणुक लौकिकापासून । आपुल्या आपण गोविलें तें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे मन कराल कठीण । त्या या निवडोन मजपार्शी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Listen, but it is not so easy, dear one. Do not abandon the care of your husband. This is no mere withdrawal from social reputation. You have entangled yourself, by yourself. Tuka says: if you will make your mind firm, then come to me, having disentangled yourself.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Listen, but it is not as easy as that, dear one. Do not just walk out on your husband and your duties. This is not only a matter of giving up your good name; you tied these knots yourself, with your own hands. Tuka says: if you can truly make your mind firm, then untangle yourself first, and come to me.

WHAT IT MEANS

A correction to anyone who heard the earlier poems as simple permission to abandon their responsibilities. Tukaram, still in the woman's frame, says the path is harder than it looks. The bonds of an ordinary life were not tied by others; you made them yourself, and you must actually loosen them, not merely shrug off your reputation. The invitation stands, but with a condition: come only when the mind is genuinely firm and the knots are genuinely undone. Otherwise the gesture is empty.

GATHA 0027

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, inner and outer as one

मराठी मूळ

आहांच वाहांच आंत वरी दोन्ही । न लगा गडणी आम्हां तैशा ॥१॥
 भेऊं नये तेथें भेडसावूं कोणा । आवरुनि मना बंद द्यावा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे कांहीं अभ्यासावांचुनी । नव्हे हे करणी भलतीची ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

As one is within, so one should flow outward, both the same. We have no need for false mixing. Where there is nothing to fear, why frighten anyone? Rein in the mind and lock it shut. Tuka says: without practice, this work cannot be done by just anyone.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let what is inside you and what shows outside be the same, both alike. We have no use for a false blend of the two. Where there is nothing to be afraid of, why go about frightening others? Hold the mind in and keep it shut. Tuka says: without practice, this is not work that just anyone can do.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram's standard for an honest life: no gap between the inner state and the outer show. The false mixing he rejects is the hypocrite's, one thing within and another without. He adds a quiet ethic: do not use fear on people when there is nothing to fear; govern your own mind instead. And he ends with realism. This integrity is not a mood you can summon; it takes practice, steady work, and not everyone is willing to do it.

GATHA 0028

The Necessity of Experience

Experience, beyond the debates

मराठी मूळ

बहुतांच्या आम्ही न मिळो मतासी । कोणी कैसी कैसी भावनेच्या ॥१॥
 विचार करितां वायां जाय काळ । लटिकें तें मूळ फजितीचें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे तुम्ही करा घटापटा । नका जाऊं वाटा आमुचिया ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

We do not agree with the opinions of many. Each has fancies of their own. In deliberating, time goes to waste. What is false is the root of disgrace. Tuka says: you do your wrangling. Do not walk our paths.

IN PLAIN WORDS

We do not fall in with the opinions of the crowd; everyone has fancies of their own. Endless arguing only wastes the time you have. What is false is the root of every disgrace. Tuka says: go on with your wrangling if you must. Only do not try to walk our road.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram sets the path of direct devotion against the endless debate of opinions and schools. People hold a thousand views, and arguing among them burns up a life without arriving anywhere. He names the real danger: falsehood, which is where disgrace begins. So he declines the debate entirely. Others may keep wrangling; he simply asks them not to mistake that for his road, which is walked, not argued.

GATHA 0029

The Necessity of Experience

Experience, before and after the joy

मराठी मूळ

त्याचें सुख नाहीं आलें अनुभवा । कठिण हें जिवा तोंचिवरी ॥१॥
 मागिलांचे दुःख लागों नेदी अंगा । अंतर हें संगी नेदी पुढें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे सर्वविशीं हा संपन्न । जाणती महिमान श्रुति ऐसें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

His joy has not yet come into experience. It is hard on the soul until then. He does not let the sorrows of the past touch the body. This distance he does not let grow further. Tuka says: in all respects, he is complete. The Vedas alone know such greatness.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Until his joy has actually been tasted, it is hard on the soul, this waiting. But once he is near, he does not let the old sorrows touch you, and he does not let the gap between you widen again. Tuka says: in every way he is complete. Even the Vedas only just manage to know a greatness like his.

WHAT IT MEANS

Two stages, named plainly. Before God's joy is felt, the soul has a hard time of it; the waiting is real and is not glossed over. But once that joy arrives, God himself does the guarding: he keeps the sorrows of the past from reaching you, and will not let the distance between you grow again. The closing line sets God beyond full measure. He is complete in every respect, so great that even the Vedas, the highest authority Tukaram can name, only barely take it in.

GATHA 0030

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, singleness without argument

मराठी मूळ

न राहे रसना बोलतां आवडी । पायीं दिली बुडी माझ्या मनें ॥१॥
 मानेल त्या तुम्ही अडका स्वभावे । मी तों माझ्याभावे अनुसरलें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे तुम्हीं फिरावे बहुती । माझी तों हे गती जाली आतां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

My tongue will not stop speaking of him with love. My mind has taken the plunge at his feet. Those who find it agreeable, listen naturally. I have followed my own devotion. Tuka says: you may wander among many. This is now my condition.

IN PLAIN WORDS

My tongue will not stop speaking of him with love. My mind has thrown itself down at his feet. Listen if it sits well with you; I have simply followed my own love. Tuka says: you are free to wander among many gods and many ways. This is what has become of me.

WHAT IT MEANS

A statement of singleness with no wish to argue. Tukaram cannot stop praising God; his mind has already taken the plunge at God's feet, and there is no calling it back. He does not insist that others agree; he only reports that he followed his own love where it led. The generous last line lets everyone else keep their wandering among many paths. He is not converting anyone. He is just telling them, plainly, what he himself has become.

GATHA 0031

Autobiography

Autobiography, shame set aside

मराठी मूळ

न बोलतां तुम्हां कळों न ये गुज । म्हणउनी लाज सांडियेली ॥१॥
 आतां तुम्हां पुढें जोडीतसें हात । नका कोणी अंत पाहों माझा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे आम्ही बैसलों शेजारीं । करील तें हरी पाहों आतां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Without speaking, you cannot know this secret. That is why I have set aside all shame. Now, before you, I join my hands. Let no one seek my end. Tuka says: I have sat down beside Hari. Now let us see what He does.

IN PLAIN WORDS

You cannot know this secret unless I speak it, so I have set my shame aside to tell you. Now I fold my hands before you all: let no one test how far I can be pushed. Tuka says: I have gone and sat down beside Hari. Now let us see what he chooses to do.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram explains why he says such exposing things in public. The secret of his love cannot be known unless he speaks it, so he gives up his shame in order to be honest. Then a plea and a surrender: he folds his hands and asks not to be provoked past his limit, and he hands the outcome over. He has taken his place beside Hari and will simply wait to see what God does. The boldness and the helplessness are held together. He has said everything and now controls nothing.

GATHA 0032

True Worship

True worship, no fine voice needed

मराठी मूळ

नये जरी तुज मधुर उत्तर । दिधला सुस्वर नाही देवे ॥१॥
 नाही तयाविण भुकेला विठ्ठल । येइल तैसा बोल रामकृष्ण ॥२॥
 देवापाशीं मागे आवडीची भक्ति । विश्वासंशीं प्रीति भावबळें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे मना सांगतों विचार । धरावा निर्धार दिसेंदिस ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

If a sweet reply does not come to you, if God has not given you a fine voice, Vitthal is not hungry without that. Let the words Rama, Krishna come as they may. Ask God for the devotion born of love, for love accompanied by trust, empowered by feeling. Says Tuka, I tell the mind this thought: hold firm your resolve, day by day.

IN PLAIN WORDS

If no sweet words come to you, if God did not give you a fine voice, do not worry: Vitthal is not hungry for any of that. Let the names Rama and Krishna come however they come. Ask God only for the devotion that is born of love, for love joined to trust and carried by real feeling. Tuka says: I keep telling my own mind, hold your resolve firm, day after day.

WHAT IT MEANS

Reassurance for the ordinary devotee. You do not need eloquence or a beautiful singing voice; God is not waiting to be impressed by your skill. Simply let the holy names come as they will. What to ask for is not talent but the right inwardness: devotion that grows from love, love that rests on trust, the whole thing carried by genuine feeling rather than performance. And the practical close, addressed to his own mind: this is not a one-time decision but a resolve to be renewed every single day.

GATHA 0033

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, the night vigil

मराठी मूळ

सावध जालों सावध जालों । हरिच्या आलों जागरणा ॥१॥
 तेथें वैष्णवांचे भार । जयजयकार गर्जतसे ॥ध्रु॥
 पळोनियां गेली झोप । होतें पाप आड तें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे त्या ठाया । ओल छाया कृपेची ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I have become vigilant, I have become vigilant. I have come to Hari's night-vigil. There, multitudes of Vaishnavas, roaring in victory. Sleep has fled. The sin that stood obstructing is gone. Tuka says: in that place, the moist shade of grace.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I have woken up, I have woken up. I have come to Hari's night of keeping watch. Crowds of his people are here, their cry of victory thundering. Sleep has run away from me, and the sin that was blocking the path is gone. Tuka says: in that place there is a cool, moist shade, the shade of grace.

WHAT IT MEANS

The vigil here is both literal and inward. Tukaram has come to the all-night singing of God's name and finds himself truly awake at last. The roar of the gathered devotees, the fleeing of sleep, the lifting of the sin that stood in the way, all of it describes a soul coming to attention. The final image is the reward: where God's name is kept through the night, there is a cool, moist shade, relief from the heat of the world, and he names that shade grace.

GATHA 0034

The Saints

Saints, the quietly good

मराठी मूळ

आपुलिया हिता जो असे जागता । धन्य माता पिता तयाचिया ॥१॥
 कुळीं कन्यापुत्र होतीं जीं सात्त्विक । तयाचा हरिख वाटे देवा ॥ध्रु॥
 गीता भागवत करिती श्रवण । आणीक चिंतन विठोबाचें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे मज घडो त्याची सेवा । तरी माझ्या दैवा पार नाहीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One who stays awake to one's own good, blessed are the mother and father of such a one. When daughters and sons born in the family are sattvic, even God feels joy. They listen to the Gita and the Bhagavata, and contemplate upon Vithoba. Tuka says: may it come to pass that I serve such souls; my fortune would be without limit.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Blessed are the mother and father of the one who stays awake to his own true good. When the daughters and sons born into a family are pure-hearted, even God feels glad. They sit and listen to the Gita and the Bhagavata, and they keep their thoughts on Vithoba. Tuka says: if I am granted the chance to serve such people, then my good fortune has no limit.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram praises not the famous or the powerful but the quietly good: the person awake to his own real welfare, and the family whose children grow up pure-hearted, listening to scripture and keeping God in mind. Such a household, he says, gladdens even God. And he places himself below them, asking for nothing grander than the chance to serve such people. To him that service would be the height of good fortune. Holiness here is ordinary and domestic, and he honors it.

GATHA 0035

The Nature of God

Nature of God, kin of the lowly

मराठी मूळ

अंतरींची घेतो गोडी । पाहे जोडी भावाची ॥१॥
 देव सोयरा देव सोयरा । देव सोयरा दीनाचा ॥२॥
 आपुल्या वैभवं । शृंगारावं निर्मळ ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे जेवी सवं । प्रेम द्यावं प्रीतीचें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He savors the sweetness within and seeks the companionship of devotion. God is kinsman, God is kinsman, God is kinsman of the lowly. With His own splendor He adorns the pure. Tuka says: He dines alongside them. One should give the love of affection.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He tastes the sweetness that is inside you, and looks for the bond of real devotion. God is your kin. God is your kin. God is the kin of the lowliest. With his own splendor he dresses and adorns the pure of heart. Tuka says: he sits and eats beside them. So give him the love that comes from real affection.

WHAT IT MEANS

The heart of Tukaram's picture of God: not a distant judge but a kinsman, and above all the kinsman of the lowly, the people the world overlooks. God is not impressed by show; he tastes the sweetness within and wants only true devotion. He clothes the pure-hearted in his own glory and sits down to eat at their side, the most intimate, domestic sign of belonging. The instruction that follows is simple: since God comes this close, meet him with real affection, the love of family, not formal worship.

GATHA 0036

Longing and Separation

Social satire, the household

मराठी मूळ

सुखें वोळंब दावी गोहा । माझें दुःख नेणा पाहा ॥१॥
 आवडीचा मारिला वेडा । होय होय कैसा म्हणे भिडा ॥२॥
 निपट मज न चले अन्न । पायली गहू सांजा तीन ॥३॥
 गेले वारीं तुम्हीं आणिली साकर । सातदी गेली साडेदहा शेर ॥४॥
 अखंड मज पोटाची व्यथा । दुधभात साकर तूप पथ्या ॥५॥
 दो पाहरा मज लहरी येती । शुद्ध नाही पडे सुपती ॥६॥
 नीज नये घाली फुलें । जवळीं न साहती मुलें ॥७॥
 अंगी चंदन लावितें भाळीं । सदा शूळ माझे कपाळीं ॥८॥
 हाड गळोनि आलें मास । माझें दुःख तुम्हां नेणवे कैसें ॥९॥
 तुका म्हणे जिता गाढव केला । मेलियावरि नरका नेला ॥१॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

With relish she stages a performance of desperate craving. "Look, no one sees my suffering!" She has driven the poor man mad with her demands. "Yes, yes," he says, cornered by shame. "I simply cannot eat a morsel." Yet she needs a full measure of wheat for three meals a day. Last time you brought sugar, ten and a half seers vanished in seven days. "My stomach torments me without end." The only remedy: milk, rice, sugar, and ghee. "At the second watch, fits seize me. I lose all sense and cannot sleep." "I cannot sleep unless flowers are strewn about me. And keep the children away." "I rub sandalwood on my body and forehead, yet a constant pain pierces my skull." "My flesh is falling from the bone. How can you not see my suffering?" Tuka says: she made him a donkey while alive, and hauled him to hell after death.

IN PLAIN WORDS

With great relish she puts on a show of suffering. Look, she cries, no one sees how much I suffer. She has driven the poor man out of his mind with her demands, and he, cornered and ashamed, can only say yes, yes. I cannot eat a bite, she says, yet she needs a full measure of wheat for three meals a day. The sugar you brought last time, ten and a half seers, was gone in seven days. My stomach torments me without end, she says, and the only thing that helps is milk, rice, sugar, and ghee. At midday the fits seize me, I lose all sense, I cannot sleep. I cannot sleep unless flowers are strewn around me, and keep the children away. I rub sandalwood on my forehead, yet my head splits with constant pain. My flesh is falling from my bones; how can you not see my suffering? Tuka says: she made the man a donkey while he lived, and dragged him to hell after he died.

WHAT IT MEANS

A piece of pure social satire, and proof that Tukaram's plain speech could turn comic and merciless. The scene is a household ruined by a manipulative spouse who performs illness to control her husband: she claims she cannot eat while devouring the stores, demands delicacies, stages fits, banishes the children, and insists no one

understands her suffering. Tukaram is not mocking sickness. He is mocking the using of sickness as a weapon, the false performance of need. The brutal last line is his verdict: such a partner turns a living man into a beaten donkey and damns him after death. The same eye that adored Vitthal saw domestic cruelty exactly as it was.

GATHA 0037

*Surrender and Acceptance**Surrender, footprints everywhere*

मराठी मूळ

पावलें पावलें तुझें आम्हां सर्व । दुजा नको भाव होऊं देऊं ॥१॥
 जेथें तेथें तुझीं च पाउलें । त्रिभुवन संचलें विठ्ठला गा ॥२॥
 भेदाभेदमतें भ्रमाचे संवाद । आम्हां नको वाद त्यांशीं देऊं ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे अणु तुजविण नाही । नभाहूनि पाहीं वाढ आहे ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Step by step, all of Yours has reached us. Do not let a second sentiment arise in us. Wherever one looks, Your footsteps alone. You have pervaded the three worlds, O Vitthala. The doctrines of difference and non-difference are conversations of delusion. Do not give us debate with them. Tuka says: not an atom exists without You, yet see, You are vaster than the sky.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Step by step, everything of yours has reached us. Do not let any second feeling rise in us. Wherever I look, your footprints, and only yours. You have filled the three worlds, Vitthal. The doctrines that argue whether the world is different from you or one with you are only the chatter of delusion. Do not drag us into that debate. Tuka says: not a single atom exists without you, and yet, look, you are larger than the sky.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram reports an arrival: God has come to him completely, and he asks only that no second loyalty ever divide him again. He sees God's footprints everywhere, the whole of the three worlds full of him. Then he waves away the great philosophical quarrel of his age, whether the world is different from God or identical with him, calling it delusion's chatter and refusing to be pulled in. The closing paradox holds his whole vision: God is in the smallest atom and at the same time vaster than the sky. Present everywhere, and beyond all measure.

GATHA 0038

The Saints

Saints, the pilgrim's call

मराठी मूळ

वंदूं चरणरज सेवूं उष्टावळी । पूर्वकर्मा होळी करुनी सांडूं ॥१॥
 अमुप हे गांठीं बांधूं भांडवल । अनाथा विठ्ठल आम्हां जोगा ॥२॥
 अवघे होती लाभ एका या चिंतनें । नामसंकीर्तनें गोविंदाच्या ॥३॥
 जन्ममरणाच्या खुंटतील खेपा । होईल हा सोपा सिद्ध पंथ ॥४॥
 गेले पुढें त्यांचा शोधित मारग । चला जाऊं माग घेत आम्ही ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे घालूं जीवपणा चिरा । जाऊं त्या माहेरा निजाचिया ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let us bow to the dust of holy feet and eat their leftover scraps; let us make a bonfire of all past karma and leave it behind. This priceless capital we tie in the knot of our cloth; Vitthal of the destitute is the God who befits us. All gains come from this one contemplation, from singing the name of Govinda. The rounds of birth and death will cease, and the proven path will become easy. Those who went before us blazed the trail; come, let us follow their tracks. Says Tuka, let us rend the cloth of jiva-hood and go to the mother's home of our own true nature.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let us bow to the dust of the saints' feet and gladly eat the scraps they leave; let us make a bonfire of all our past deeds and walk away from it. This is priceless wealth, and we tie it in the knot of our cloth: Vitthal, God of the destitute, is the Lord who suits us. Every gain comes from this one thing, holding him in mind and singing the name of Govinda. The journeys of birth and death will stop, and the proven path will turn easy. Those who went ahead have marked the trail; come, let us follow their footprints. Tuka says: let us tear off this sense of being a separate self and go home, to the mother-home of our own true nature.

WHAT IT MEANS

A pilgrim's call to the road. Tukaram gathers the whole method into a few moves: revere the saints, even to eating their leftovers; burn off the past; carry the one real treasure, God's name, tied close like a trader's purse. He names his God deliberately, Vitthal of the destitute, the Lord fit for the poor and the lowly. The promise is the end of the round of birth and death, and the reassurance is that the path is not untried; the saints ahead have already blazed it. The last image is homecoming: to drop the feeling of being a separate self is to return to one's own true nature, like a married woman going home to her mother.

GATHA 0039

Confession and Sin

Confession, the leftover scraps

मराठी मूळ

जेविले ते संत मागें उष्टावळी । अवध्या पत्रावळी करुनी झाडा ॥१॥
 सोवळ्या ओंवळ्या राहिलों निराळा । पासूनि सकळां अवध्यां दुरीं ॥२॥
 परें परतें मज न लागे सांगावें । हें तों देवें बरें शिकविलें ॥३॥
 दुसऱ्यातें आम्ही नाहीं आतळत । जाणोनि संकेत उभा असे ॥४॥
 येथें कोणीं कांहीं न धरावी शंका । मज चाड एका भोजनाची ॥५॥
 लांचावला तुका मारितसे झड । पुरविलें कोड नारायणें ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The saints have eaten and gone; I remain behind with the leftover scraps and the leaf-plates to clean. I stayed apart from both the ritually pure and the ritually impure, separate from all. No one needs to teach me the rules of high and low; God himself has taught me well. I do not touch another's portion; I stand knowing my appointed place. Let no one harbor any doubt; I care only for the meal of devotion. Tuka says: I have taken the bribe from Narayana, and now I rush about eagerly. The desire is fulfilled.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The saints have eaten and gone, and I am left behind with the scraps and the used leaf-plates to clear away. I have stayed apart, off to one side, away from both the ritually pure and the ritually impure. No one needs to teach me what is high and what is low; God himself has taught me well. I do not reach for anyone else's portion; I stand in the place that is mine. Let no one here have any doubt about me: the only thing I hunger for is the meal of devotion. Tuka says: I have taken Narayana's bribe, and now I rush about eagerly, my one craving satisfied.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns the language of caste-purity inside out with quiet irony. He casts himself as the lowly one left to clear the saints' used leaf-plates, and says he keeps apart from the whole pure-and-impure system, not because he is shut out but because God has taught him to see past it. He wants no one else's share and no rank; his only hunger is for devotion, the meal that matters. The closing image is playful: God has bribed him with love, and now he scurries about happily, a man owned by the one craving he is glad to have.

GATHA 0040

The Saints

Saints, the open feast

मराठी मूळ

देवाच्या प्रसादेन करा रे भोजन । व्हाल कोण कोण अधिकारी ते ॥१॥
 ब्रम्हादिकांसि हें दुर्लभ उच्छिष्ट । नका मानूं वीट ब्रम्हरसीं ॥२॥
 अवधियां पुरतें वोसंडलें पात्र । अधिकार सर्वत्र आहे येथें ॥३॥
 इच्छादानी येथें वळला समर्थ । अवघें चि आर्त पुरवितो ॥४॥
 सरे येथें ऐसें नाहीं कदाकाळीं । पुढती वाटे कवळीं घ्यावें ऐसें ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे पाक लक्ष्मीच्या हातें । कामारीसांगातें निरुपम ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Partake of this feast by the grace of God; see who among you has the fitness for it. Even Brahma and the gods find these leavings hard to obtain; do not feel aversion to the savor of Brahman. The vessel overflows and is enough for all; everyone here has the right. The wish-fulfilling Lord has turned toward us; he fulfills every longing. This feast never runs short; each morsel makes you want another. Says Tuka, the cooking is by Lakshmi's own hand, with Kamari alongside, beyond compare.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Sit and eat this feast by the grace of God, and see who among you is fit for it. Even Brahma and the gods can scarcely get these leavings; so do not turn up your nose at the taste of Brahman. The dish overflows, enough for everyone; here every single person has the right to eat. The wish-granting Lord has turned toward us, and he satisfies every longing. This feast never runs out; each mouthful only makes you want the next. Tuka says: it is cooked by Lakshmi's own hand, and it is beyond compare.

WHAT IT MEANS

The feast is Tukaram's image for the joy of God's name, and the point is who is invited: everyone. He inverts the ordinary purity rules. What looks like mere leftovers is something even the gods can barely obtain, so no one should feel it beneath them, and no one is too low to be served. The dish overflows, the right to eat belongs to all, and the supply never fails. By saying it is cooked in Lakshmi's own kitchen he marks it as the richest fare there is, set freely before the lowly. This is his open table, the opposite of a guarded one.

GATHA 0041

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the worthless vessel

मराठी मूळ

अवगुणांचे हातीं । आहे अवघी फजीती ॥१॥
 नाही पात्रासवें चाड । प्रमाण तें फिकें गोड ॥२॥
 विष तांब्या वाटी । भरली लावूं नये होटीं ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे भाव । शुद्ध बरा सोंग वाव ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When faults hold the reins, all ends in disgrace. Where the vessel has no worth, even sweetness turns insipid by that measure. Poison filled in a copper cup: do not let it touch the lips. Tuka says: let feeling be pure. Pretense is empty wind.

IN PLAIN WORDS

When your faults hold the reins, everything ends in disgrace. If the vessel itself is worthless, even sweet food tastes flat, judged by that. Poison poured into a fine copper cup is still poison: do not bring it to your lips. Tuka says: let the feeling inside be pure. Show and pretense are only empty wind.

WHAT IT MEANS

A short teaching on inner worth over outward form. If your character is faulty, no amount of appearance will save you from disgrace; a worthless vessel spoils even sweet food. The copper cup is the sharp image: a beautiful container does not make poison safe to drink. So the test is never the container but the contents, never the show but the heart. Tukaram's standard, here as everywhere, is purity of feeling. Everything done for effect is just wind.

GATHA 0042

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, count the profit

मराठी मूळ

हरीच्या जागरणा । जातां कां रे नये मना ॥१॥
 कोठें पाहासील तुटी । आयुष्य वेचे फुकासाठीं ॥२॥
 ज्यांची तुज गुंती । ते तों मोकळिती अंतीं ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे बरा । लाभ काय तो विचारा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

To Hari's night-vigil, why, O mind, do you not go? Where will you find any loss? Life is spent for nothing. Those with whom you are entangled will let you go in the end. Tuka says: consider well, what is the profit?

IN PLAIN WORDS

Why, mind, will you not go to Hari's night of singing? Where do you see any loss in it? Your life is being spent for nothing. The people you are tangled up with will let go of you in the end. Tuka says: think it over carefully. Where is your real profit?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram argues with his own mind in plain merchant's terms, the language of profit and loss he knew from his trading years. Going to the all-night singing of God's name costs you nothing and risks nothing, he says, while the life you are spending on worldly attachments is simply being wasted. The hard truth in the middle: the people you cling to will let go of you at the end anyway. So he asks the only sensible question. When you add it all up, where is the actual gain?

GATHA 0043

Prayers

Prayer, free me from karma

मराठी मूळ

धर्माची तूं मूर्ती । पाप पुण्य तुझे हातीं ॥१॥
 मज सोडवीं दातारा । कर्मापासूनि दुस्तरा ॥२॥
 करिसी अंगीकार । तरी काय माझा भार ॥३॥
 जिवींच्या जीवना । तुका म्हणे नारायणा ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

You are the very form of dharma. Sin and merit rest in Your hands. Free me, O Giver, from karma so hard to cross. If You accept me as Your own, what burden remains mine? Tuka says: O Narayana, life of the life within.

IN PLAIN WORDS

You are dharma itself, made visible. Sin and merit both rest in your hands. Set me free, O giver, from karma that is so hard to cross. If you take me as your own, then what burden is left for me to carry? Tuka says: Narayana, you are the life within my life.

WHAT IT MEANS

A prayer of handing over. Tukaram places the whole weight of right and wrong, sin and merit, in God's hands rather than his own, and asks to be freed from karma, the chain of consequence too hard for a person to cross alone. The pivot is the third line: if God accepts him, the burden is no longer his to carry. This is the logic of surrender. What you cannot lift yourself, you give to the one who can. The last words name how close that one is: the very life inside his life.

GATHA 0044

Surrender and Acceptance

Surrender, the greater strength

मराठी मूळ

ब्रम्हादिक जया लाभासि ठेंगणे । बळिये आम्ही भले शरणागत ॥१॥
 कामनेच्या त्यागें भजनाचा लाभ । जाला पद्मनाभ सेवाऋणी ॥२॥
 कामधेनूचिया क्षीरा पार नाही । इच्छेचिये वाही वरुषावे ॥३॥
 बैसलिये ठायीं लागलें भरतें । त्रिपुटीवरतें भेदी ऐसें ॥४॥
 हरि नाही आम्हां विष्णुदासां जगीं । नारायण अंगीं विसावला ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे बहु लाटे हें भोजन । नाही रिता कोण राहत राहों ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Even Brahma and the gods fall short of this treasure, yet we who surrender are mightier still. By renouncing desire, the gain of devotion appears, and Padmanabha becomes indebted through service. The milk of the wish-fulfilling cow has no limit; it rains at the mere stream of longing. Sitting in one place, the tide rises and pierces beyond the triputi. For us servants of Vishnu there is no separation from Hari; Narayana has come to rest within our very being. Tuka says, this feast is lavish; no one who stays can remain unfed.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Even Brahma and the gods come up short of this treasure, yet we who surrender are stronger than they are. When you let go of desire, the gain of devotion appears, and Padmanabha himself becomes the debtor, bound by the service you offer. The milk of the wish-granting cow has no end; it rains down at the first trickle of longing. Sitting still in one place, the tide rises in you and breaks past the knower, the known, and the knowing. For us, the servants of Vishnu, there is no being parted from Hari; Narayana has come to rest inside us. Tuka says: this feast is lavish. No one who stays at the table goes away unfed.

WHAT IT MEANS

Surrender, Tukaram insists, is not weakness but the greater strength: the one who gives himself up outranks even the gods who strive. He flips the usual account of debt too, when you serve God by letting go of desire, God becomes the one in your debt. The images pile up abundance: the wish-cow's endless milk, the rising inner tide that breaks past the threefold split of knower, known, and knowing into pure oneness. And the conclusion is hospitable, his favorite note: the table is loaded, and anyone who simply stays is fed.

GATHA 0045

The Necessity of Experience

Experience, wake up, you already are

मराठी मूळ

दुजें खंडे तरी । उरला तो अवघा हरि ॥ आपणाबाहेरी । न लगे ठाव धुंडावा ॥१॥
 इतुलें जाणावया जाणा । कोंडें तरी मनं मना ॥ पारधीच्या खुणा । जाणतें चि साधावे ॥२॥
 देह आधीं काय खरा । देहसंबंधपसारा ॥ बुजगावणें चोरा । रक्षणसैं भासतें ॥३॥
 तुका करी जागा । नको चाचपूं वाउगा ॥ आहेंसि तूं आगा । अंगीं डोळे उघडी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When duality is broken, what remains is all Hari. Outside yourself, no place need be searched. Know this much: still the mind with the mind. The hunter's signals must be learned by the one who knows them. Was the body ever real to begin with? The sprawl of body-relations is a scarecrow that only appears to protect. Tuka says: wake up! Do not grope uselessly. You ARE, O dear one. Open the eyes on the body.

IN PLAIN WORDS

When the sense of two is broken, what is left is all Hari. You need not search for him anywhere outside yourself. Know just this much: still the mind by means of the mind. Like a hunter, you must learn to read the signs, and only the one who knows them can. Was the body ever real to begin with? The whole sprawl of body and its relations is a scarecrow, something that only looks as if it guards anything. Tuka says: wake up. Do not grope about in the dark for nothing. You already are. Open your eyes, right here in this body.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is Tukaram at his most directly nondual. The whole search ends when the sense of being separate from God dissolves; then nothing remains but Hari, and there is nowhere outside to look. He gives a method, stilling the mind by the mind itself, and warns that it takes a trained eye, like a hunter reading tracks. Then the sharp question: was the body, and the whole tangle of relations built on it, ever truly real, or only a scarecrow that frightens and seems to protect while guarding nothing? The poem ends as a shout to wake up. You already are what you are seeking. Open your eyes where you stand.

GATHA 0046

The Nature of God

Nature of God, limbs of one body

मराठी मूळ

विष्णुमय जग वैष्णवांचा धर्म । भेदाभेदभ्रम अमंगळ ॥१॥
 अडका जी तुम्ही भक्त भागवत । कराल तें हित सत्य करा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे एका देहाचे अवयव । सुख दुःख जीव भोग पावे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The world is Vishnu-constituted. This is the dharma of Vaishnavas. The delusion of difference and non-difference is inauspicious. Listen, O devotees, O Bhagavatas: whatever serves your good, do that truly. Tuka says: the limbs belong to one body. Whatever pleasure or pain comes, the one being experiences it.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The whole world is made of Vishnu. This is the dharma of his devotees. The delusion that argues over difference and non-difference is an unholy thing. Listen, devotees, lovers of God: whatever truly serves your good, do that, and do it in truth. Tuka says: we are all limbs of one body. Whatever pleasure or pain comes to any, it is the one being who feels it.

WHAT IT MEANS

One of Tukaram's most quoted teachings, and the ground of his ethics. If the whole world is made of God, then the quarrel over whether things are different from God or identical with him is not merely useless but unholy; it divides what is one. From this he draws a practical command to the devotees: do what genuinely serves the good, and do it honestly. And he gives the reason in an image that needs no philosophy: all beings are limbs of a single body, so another's pain and another's joy are, in truth, felt by the one being we all are. To wound another is to wound yourself.

GATHA 0047

Renunciation

Renunciation, no regret

मराठी मूळ

आम्ही जरी आस । जालों टाकोनि उदास ॥१॥
 आतां कोण भय धरी । पुढें मरणाचें हरी ॥२॥
 भलते ठायीं पडों । देह तुरंगीं हा चढो ॥३॥
 तुमचें तुम्हांपासीं । आम्ही आहों जैसीं तैसीं ॥४॥
 गेले मानामान । सुखदुःखाचें खंडन ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे चितीं । नाहीं वागवीत खंती ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

We have cast off desire and become dispassionate. Who now fears what lies ahead, even death, O Hari? Let this body fall wherever it may; let it mount whatever steed it will. What is yours remains with you. We are as we have always been. Gone are honor and dishonor. The hold of pleasure and pain is broken. Tuka says: in my consciousness, I carry no regret.

IN PLAIN WORDS

We have thrown off desire and grown calm. Who now is afraid of anything ahead, even of death, O Hari? Let this body fall wherever it falls. Let it ride whatever it rides. What is yours stays with you; we are just as we have always been. Honor and dishonor are gone now. The grip of pleasure and pain is broken. Tuka says: in my mind I carry no regret at all.

WHAT IT MEANS

The peace that comes after desire is set down. Once a person wants nothing, fear loses its handle, even the fear of death. Tukaram grows indifferent to what becomes of the body, where it falls, what happens to it, because he no longer identifies with its fortunes. He tells the world, in effect, keep what is yours; I am unchanged. With desire gone, the pairs that rule ordinary life, honor and dishonor, pleasure and pain, lose their hold. And the proof of it is the last line: a mind that carries no regret. Nothing is left clung to or undone.

GATHA 0048

Renunciation

Renunciation, beyond praise and blame

मराठी मूळ

निंदी कोणी मारी । वंदी कोणी पूजा करी ॥१॥
मज हें ही नाही तें ही नाही । वेगळा दोही पासुनी ॥२॥
देहभोग भोगें घडे । जें जें जोडे तें बरें ॥२॥
अवघें पावे नारायणीं । जनार्दनीं तुक्याचें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Someone slanders, someone strikes. Someone bows, someone worships. To me, this is nothing, that is nothing; I am separate from both. What the body experiences through its nature, whatever is gained, that is well. Everything of Tuka's reaches Narayana, in Janardana.

IN PLAIN WORDS

One person slanders me, another strikes me. One bows to me, another worships me. To me, this is nothing and that is nothing; I stand apart from both. Whatever the body undergoes by its own nature, and whatever it gains, that is fine. Tuka says: everything that is mine reaches Narayana, who is Janardana.

WHAT IT MEANS

The evenness of one who has stepped out of the self's accounting. Praise and blame, a worshipper's bow and an attacker's blow, are treated exactly alike, because Tukaram no longer takes any of them personally; he stands apart from both. He lets the body undergo whatever its nature brings and counts whatever comes as fine, neither chased nor refused. The final line gives the reason it can all be let go: everything he is and has flows to Narayana, the Lord he calls Janardana. Held by God, he has nothing of his own left to defend.

GATHA 0049

The Necessity of Experience

Experience, every place is enough

मराठी मूळ

जन विजन जालें आम्हां । विठ्ठलनामा प्रमाणें ॥१॥
 पाहें तिकडे बापमाय । विठ्ठल आहे रखुमाई ॥२॥
 वन पट्टण एकभाव । अवघा ठाव सरता जाला ॥२॥
 आठव नाहीं सुखदुःखा । नाचे तुका कौतुकें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Populated or solitary, it is the same to us, for the name of Vitthal is the measure of all. Wherever I look, the Father and Mother are there: Vitthal is there, Rakhumai is there. Forest and city hold one feeling; every place has become sufficient. No memory remains of pleasure or pain. Tuka dances in wonder.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Crowded street or empty forest, it is all the same to me now, because the name of Vitthal is the measure of every place. Wherever I look, my father and mother are there: Vitthal is there, and Rakhumai. Forest or city, the feeling is one; every place has become enough. No memory of pleasure or pain stays with me. Tuka dances, lost in wonder.

WHAT IT MEANS

For Tukaram the name of God has leveled every difference between places. A busy town and a lonely forest are equal, because God fills both, and wherever he turns he meets the divine parents, Vitthal and Rakhumai. When the whole world has become God's presence, no place is better or worse, and the swings of pleasure and pain leave no mark. What remains is the simplest sign of that freedom: he dances, carried away in wonder, at home everywhere.

GATHA 0050

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the diamond on the anvil

मराठी मूळ

हिरा ठेवितां ऐरणीं । वांचे मारितां जो घणीं ॥१॥
 तोचि मोल पावे खरा । करणीचा होय चुरा ॥२॥
 मोहरा होय तोचि अंगें । सूत न जळे ज्याचे संगें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे तोचि संत । सोसी जगाचे आघात ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A diamond placed upon the anvil survives the blows of the hammer. That alone fetches its true worth; the imitation is crushed to dust. That alone becomes the touchstone: the thread does not burn in its company. Tuka says: that alone is a saint who endures the blows of the world.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A diamond laid on the anvil takes the hammer's blows and survives. That alone proves its true worth, while the fake is pounded to dust. That alone is the touchstone, the gold beside which the thread does not burn.

Tuka says: just so, only that one is a saint who bears the blows of the world.

WHAT IT MEANS

A test made of metaphors. A real diamond survives the hammer that shatters an imitation; true gold does not catch fire. Tukaram uses these to define a saint not by serenity in comfort but by what survives pressure. The mark of the real one is endurance: he takes the world's blows, its scorn and cruelty, and is neither destroyed nor coarsened by them. Saintliness, here, is proven on the anvil, not in the showcase.

GATHA 0051

The Saints

Saints, the nearest door

मराठी मूळ

आलिंगनें घडे । मोक्ष सायुज्यता जोडे ॥१॥
 ऐसा संताचा महिमा । जाली बोलायाची सीमा ॥२॥
 तीर्थे पर्वकाळ । अवधी पायांपें सकळ ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे देवा । त्यांची केली पावे सेवा ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

By their embrace, liberation as sayujya-union is attained. Such is the greatness of the saints; the limit of speech has been reached. All sacred places and auspicious times rest at their feet. Tuka says: service done to them reaches God.

IN PLAIN WORDS

One embrace from them, and the union with God that is final freedom is yours. Such is the greatness of the saints, and here speech reaches its limit and stops. Every holy river, every sacred day, all of it rests at their feet. Tuka says: any service done to them reaches God himself.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram exalts the company of the saints above all pilgrimage. Their mere embrace, he says, grants sayujya, the soul's union with God, which is liberation; words simply run out trying to praise them. All the sacred rivers and auspicious days that people travel to find are already gathered at the saints' feet. And the practical heart of it: you do not need to reach God past them, for service rendered to the saints reaches God directly. The holy person is the nearest door.

GATHA 0052

Surrender and Acceptance

Surrender, the I-ness emptied

मराठी मूळ

माझिया मीपणा । जाला यावरी उगाणा ॥१॥
 भोगी त्यागी पांडुरंग । त्यानें वसविलें अंग ॥२॥
 टाळिलें निमित्त । फार थोडें घात हित ॥३॥
 यावें कामावरी । तुका म्हणे नाहीं उरी ॥४॥
 सकळ चिंतामणी शरीर । जरी जाय अहंकार आशा समूळ ॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A dawning has come upon my I-ness. The one who enjoys and the one who renounces is Panduranga. He has taken up residence in this body. The occasion has been set aside; how little separates ruin from well-being. Tuka says: whatever comes to bear upon action, nothing of me remains. The whole body becomes a chintamani once ego and desire are pulled out from the root.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A reckoning has come for my sense of being I. Now it is Panduranga who enjoys and Panduranga who renounces; he has come to live in this body. The occasion for it is set aside; how thin the line is between ruin and good. Tuka says: whatever falls to be done, nothing of a separate me is left. The whole body turns into a wish-granting jewel once pride and craving are pulled out by the root.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes the dissolving of the ego. His I-ness has been called to account and emptied; now it is God, Panduranga, who acts through him, both the enjoying and the renouncing. With the separate self gone, action still happens, but no one is left to claim it. The closing line names the transformation plainly: when pride and desire are torn out at the root, the very body becomes a chintamani, a wish-granting jewel, because what lives in it now is God. Surrender is not loss but this exchange.

GATHA 0053

The Saints

Saints, the living pilgrimage

मराठी मूळ

निंदा हिंसा नाही कपट देहबुद्धि । निर्मळ स्फटिक जैसा ॥१॥
 मोक्षाचें तीर्थ न लगे वाराणसी । येती तयापासीं अवघीं जनें॥
 तीर्थासी तीर्थ जाला तो चि एक । मोक्ष तेणें दर्शनें ॥२॥
 मन शुद्ध तया काय करिसी माळा । मंडित सकळा भूषणांसी ॥
 हरिच्या गुणें गर्जताती सदा । आनंद तया मानसीं ॥३॥
 तन मन धन दिलें पुरुषोत्तमा । आशा नाही कवणाची ॥
 तुका म्हणे तो परिसाहूनि आगळा । काय महिमा वर्णू त्याची ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Where there is no malice, no violence, no deceit, no body-consciousness, and the soul is pure as crystal, there all people come. That one is the pilgrimage-place of liberation; moksha flows from a single glimpse. What need has a pure mind for rosary beads? Such a one adorns all ornaments. The praises of Hari thunder from that mouth forever, and joy dwells in that awareness. Body, mind, and wealth have been given to Purushottama; no expectation remains. Says Tuka, such a one surpasses even the touchstone; how can I describe that glory?

IN PLAIN WORDS

Where there is no malice, no cruelty, no deceit, no clinging to the body, where the heart is clear as crystal, there everyone comes. That person is the holy place where liberation is found; one look at him, and freedom flows. What use are rosary beads to a mind already pure? Such a one is the ornament of all ornaments. The praises of Hari thunder always from that mouth, and joy fills that mind. Body, mind, and wealth, all given to Purushottama, with no expectation of anything back. Tuka says: such a one outshines even the touchstone. How could I ever describe that glory?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram paints the living saint as a place of pilgrimage in human form. The marks are inward: no malice or cruelty or deceit, no clinging to the body, a heart clear as crystal. To such a person all people come, and a single sight of him grants the liberation that pilgrims seek at sacred sites. He needs no prayer beads, for his purity is already complete; God's praise pours from him and his mind is full of joy. He has given everything, body, mind, and wealth, to God and expects nothing in return. The touchstone turns iron to gold, but this one, Tukaram says, surpasses even that, and beggars description.

GATHA 0054

The Nature of God

Nature of God, mine and mine

मराठी मूळ

आहे तें सकळ कृष्णा चि अर्पण । न कळतां मन दुजें भावी ॥१॥
 म्हणउनी पाठी लागतील भूतें । येती गवसीत पांचजणें ॥२॥
 ज्याचे त्या वंचलें आठव न होतां । दंड या निमित्ताकारणें हा ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे काळें चेंपियेला गळा । मी मी वेळोवेळा करीतसे ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

All that exists is already offered to Krishna alone. Not knowing this, the mind takes it to be its own. Therefore the five elements come seeking you, ghosts on your trail. You have cheated the true Owner of what is his; this forgetfulness itself draws punishment. Tuka says: Death has squeezed the throat, and still, mine, mine, again and again.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Everything there is has already been offered to Krishna alone. Not knowing this, the mind takes it to be its own. So the five elements come hunting you, like ghosts on your trail. You have cheated the rightful Owner of what is his, and that very forgetting is what brings the punishment. Tuka says: Death already has its grip on your throat, and still you keep saying, mine, mine, again and again.

WHAT IT MEANS

A sharp warning about ownership. Everything belongs to God and was always his; the mind's error is to forget this and call things its own. Tukaram pictures the consequences as creditors: the five elements that make up the body come to reclaim what was borrowed, like ghosts dogging a debtor. To treat God's property as your own is theft, and the forgetting is the crime that draws the penalty. The closing image is unforgettable: even with Death's hand already closing on the throat, the unawakened person is still clutching and crying mine, mine. Possessiveness outlasts almost everything.

GATHA 0055

Social Criticism

Social criticism, where defilement lives

मराठी मूळ

महारासि सिवे । कोपे ब्राम्हण तो नव्हे ॥१॥
 तया प्रायश्चित्त कांहीं । देहत्याग करितां नाहीं ॥२॥
 नातळे चांडाळ । त्याचा अंतरीं विटाळ ॥३॥
 ज्याचा संग चित्तीं । तुका म्हणे तो त्या याती ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A Brahmin who rages at the touch of a Mahar is no Brahmin at all. For that, no atonement exists, not even giving up the body. He will not touch one the world despises, yet the defilement lives inside him. Tuka says: whoever you keep company with in consciousness, you belong to that jati.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A Brahmin who flares up in anger when a Mahar touches him is no Brahmin at all. For that fault there is no atonement, not even by giving up his life. He will not touch the one the world calls untouchable, yet the real defilement is sitting inside him. Tuka says: whatever you keep company with in your heart, that is the caste you truly belong to.

WHAT IT MEANS

One of Tukaram's most direct attacks on caste pride. He grants the Brahmin his rank and then dismantles it: the man who reacts with rage and disgust at a Mahar's touch has, by that very rage, forfeited his Brahminhood, and no penance can buy it back. The twist is the relocation of defilement. The pollution is not in the body of the so-called untouchable but in the heart of the one full of contempt. And the closing rule reaches everyone: your real caste is set by what your heart keeps company with, not by your birth.

GATHA 0056

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the harm of spite

मराठी मूळ

तेलनीशीं रुसला वेडा । रागें कोरडें खातो भिडा ॥१॥
 आपुलें हित आपण पाही । संकोच तो न धरी कांहीं ॥२॥
 नावडे लोकां टाकिला गोहो । बोडिले डोकें सांडिला मोहो ॥३॥
 शेजारणीच्या गेली रागें । कुत्र्यांनी घर भरिलें मागें ॥४॥
 पिसारागें भाजिलें घर । नागविलें तें नेणे फार ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे वांच्या रागें । फेडिलें सावलें देखिलें जगें ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The fool sulks at the oil-seller woman and in his spite eats his food dry. Look to your own good; do not hold back out of false shame. Out of dislike for people she casts off her husband, shaves her head, and gives up all attachment; in a rage she runs off to the neighbour woman's house, and behind her the dogs fill the empty house. In a mad fit she burns down her own house and never sees how much she has lost. Says Tuka: acting out of spite, she has bared her own shame for the whole world to see.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The fool sulks at the oil-seller woman, and in his spite he eats his food dry. Look to your own good yourself; do not hold back out of false shame. Out of dislike for people, she throws away her husband, shaves her head, and casts off her ties. She storms off to the neighbor woman's house in a rage, and behind her the dogs fill the empty house. In a mad fit she burns her own house down, and never sees how much she has lost. Tuka says: acting out of spite, she bared her own shame for the whole world to see.

WHAT IT MEANS

A string of comic vignettes about self-defeating anger. Each figure injures only himself: the man who, sulking at the oil-seller, eats his food dry rather than ask; the woman who in pique abandons husband and home, shaves her head, storms off, and lets the house go to the dogs and the fire. The thread running through them is the line in the middle: look to your own good, and do not let spite or false shame govern you. Anger, Tukaram shows, does not strike the one it is aimed at; it strips and exposes the angry person.

GATHA 0057

Prayers

Prayer, servant of the servants

मराठी मूळ

मज दास करी त्यांचा । संतदासांच्या दासांचा ॥१॥
 मग होत कल्पवरी । सुखें गर्भवास हरी ॥२॥
 नीचवृत्तिकाम । परी मुखीं तुझें नाम ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे सेवे । माझे संकल्प वेचावे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Make me the servant of your saints, the servant of the servants of their servants. Then, O Hari, I will gladly endure the womb and birth again, age after age. Let my work be the lowliest there is, only let your name stay in my mouth. Says Tuka: let every resolve of mine be spent in that service.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Make me the servant of your saints. No, lower: the servant of the servants of their servants. Then I will gladly take birth again, age after age, O Hari. Let my work be the lowliest there is, only let your name stay in my mouth. Tuka says: let every plan and wish I have be spent in that service.

WHAT IT MEANS

A prayer of radical humility. Tukaram does not ask to be a saint, or even a servant of saints, but the servant of their servants' servants, placing himself as low as language allows. From that low place he asks for something most seekers flee: he will accept rebirth itself, life after life, without complaint, on one condition, that God's name stay on his lips even in the meanest labor. The closing line gives his whole will away: let every intention he forms be used up in service. To be the lowest servant with the Name is, to him, the highest thing he can want.

GATHA 0058

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, the bitter heart

मराठी मूळ

सदा तळमळ । चित्ताचिये हळहळ ॥१॥
 त्याचें दर्शन न व्हावें । शव असतां तो जिवे ॥२॥
 कुशब्दाची घाणी । अमंगळविली वाणी ॥३॥
 नेणे शब्द पर । तुका म्हणे परउपकार ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Constant burning, constant anguish in the consciousness. Avoid even the sight of such a one; though a corpse, he walks among the living. The stench of harsh words has defiled his speech. Tuka says: such a one knows nothing of kind words, nothing of doing good for others.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Always seething, always some grievance gnawing at the heart. Do not even let yourself see such a person: though he breathes, he is a walking corpse. The stench of harsh words has fouled his speech. Tuka says: he knows nothing of a kind word, nothing of doing good for anyone.

WHAT IT MEANS

A portrait of the bitter person, and a warning. The one consumed by constant resentment is, for Tukaram, already dead while living; better not even to be in his sight, because the poison spreads. His speech is fouled by the habit of harsh words, and he has lost the very capacity for kindness or for doing good to others. Set beside Tukaram's pictures of the saint, this is the photographic negative: where the saint's heart is soft as butter and his mouth full of God's praise, the bitter man's heart burns and his mouth gives off a stench.

GATHA 0059

True Worship

True worship, the signs of a living house

मराठी मूळ

जया नाहीं नेम एकादशीव्रत । जाणावें तें प्रेत शव लोकीं ॥१॥
 त्याचें वय नित्य काळ लेखीताहे । रागें दात खाय कराकरा ॥२॥
 जयाचिये द्वारीं तुळसीवृंदावन । नाहीं तें स्मशान गृह जाणां ॥३॥
 जये कुळीं नाहीं एक ही वैष्णव । त्याचा बुडे भवनदीतापा ॥४॥
 विठोबाचें नाम नुच्चारि जें तोंड । प्रत्यक्ष तें कुंड रजकाचें ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे त्याचे काष्ठ हातपाय । कीर्तना नव जाय हरीचिया ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One who keeps no Ekadashi vow, know him for a walking corpse in this world; Time counts out his days, gnashing its teeth at him. The house with no tulsi at its door, know it for a cremation ground. The family without a single devotee of God drowns in the heat of the ocean of existence. The mouth that never utters Vithoba's name is, plainly, a washerman's filthy pit. Says Tuka: his hands and feet are dead wood, for they never carry him to the kirtan of Hari.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The one who keeps no Ekadashi vow, know him for a corpse walking in the world. Time is counting out his days, grinding its teeth at him in anger. The house with no tulsi plant at its door, know that house for a cremation ground. The family without a single devotee of God drowns in the heat of the river of existence. The mouth that never speaks Vithoba's name is, plainly, a washerman's filthy pit. Tuka says: his hands and feet are dead wood, for they never carry him to the singing of Hari's name.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram draws a hard line between a life turned toward God and one that is not, using the ordinary signs of Varkari devotion. No Ekadashi fast, no tulsi at the door, no devotee in the family, no Name on the lips, no feet that walk to the kirtan: each absence, he says, marks something already dead. The images are deliberately harsh, the walking corpse, the house that is a cremation ground, the mouth that is a washerman's dirty pit. He is not so much cursing such people as shocking them awake. A life without the Name, to him, is not neutral; it is a kind of death dressed up as living.

GATHA 0060

Autobiography

Autobiography, contented poverty

मराठी मूळ

आम्ही सदैव सुडके । जवळीं येतां चोर धाके ॥ जाऊं पुडी भिकें । कुतरीं घर राखती ॥१॥
 नांदणूक ऐसी सांगा । नाही तरी वांयां भागा ॥ थोरपण अंगा । तरी ऐसें आणावें ॥२॥
 अक्षय साचार । केलें सायासांनी घर ॥ एरंडसिंवार । दुजा भार न साहती ॥३॥
 धन कण घरोघरीं । पोट भरे भिकेवरी ॥ जतन तीं करी । कोण गुरें वासरें ॥४॥
 जाली सकळ निश्चिंती । भांडवल शेण माती ॥ झळझळीत भिंती । वृंदावनें तुळसीचीं ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे देवा । अवघा निरविला हेवा ॥ कुटुंबाची सेवा । तो चि करी आमुच्या ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

We are forever in rags; a thief who comes near takes fright and flees, and only the street dogs guard our house. Is this any way to keep a household? And yet, if it is greatness you want, this is how to win it. Our house, built with great labour, is a flimsy thing of castor twigs that cannot bear a second load. Wealth and grain are in other people's houses; our belly is filled by begging; what cattle or calves have we to tend? All worry is gone now; our only capital is cow-dung and earth, the gleaming plastered walls and the tulsi at the door. Says Tuka: O God, I have handed over every longing to you; you yourself now keep our household.

IN PLAIN WORDS

We are forever in rags. A thief who comes near takes fright and flees, finding nothing. We go out to the front and beg, and our only watchmen are the street dogs. Is this any way to keep a house, tell me, or is all the effort wasted? And yet, if it is greatness you want, this is how to come by it. We built our house with great labor, and it is truly lasting: a flimsy thing of castor twigs that could not bear a second weight. Wealth and grain are in other people's houses; our belly is filled by begging. What cattle or calves do we have to tend and guard? All our worry is gone now. Our only capital is cow-dung and earth, the gleaming plastered walls and the tulsi at the door. Tuka says: O God, I have handed every craving over to you. You yourself keep our household now.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram's portrait of his own contented poverty, half rueful joke and half confession of freedom. He is so poor that burglars flee empty-handed and dogs are his only guards; he begs his food and owns no cattle to fret over. He turns it all into a strange boast: if you want true greatness, he says, this is the road. His lasting house is a hut of castor twigs; his only wealth is the dung and earth that plaster its clean walls, and the tulsi at the door. The point lands in the last lines. Having nothing has freed him from all worry, because he has handed every desire to God, and God himself now keeps his household. Poverty, surrendered, has become security.

GATHA 0061

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, what does it cost you

मराठी मूळ

पराविया नारी माउलीसमान । मानिलिया धन काय वेचे ॥१॥
 न करितां परनिंदा द्रव्य अभिलाष । काय तुमचें यास वेचे सांगा ॥२॥
 बैसलिये ठायी म्हणतां रामराम । काय होय श्रम ऐसें सांगा ॥३॥
 संताचे वचनीं मानितां विश्वास । काय तुमचें यास वेचे सांगा ॥४॥
 खरें बोलतां कोण लागती सायास । काय वेचे यास ऐसें सांगा ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे देव जोडे याचसाठीं । आणीक ते आटी न लगे कांहीं ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

If you regard another's woman as a mother, what does it cost you? If you refrain from slander and from coveting another's wealth, tell me, what does it cost you? Sitting in one place and repeating the name of Rama, tell me, what effort is there in that? If you trust the word of the saints, tell me, what does it cost you? Speaking the truth requires no effort; tell me, what is the expense? Says Tuka, God is won by just these things; no other contrivance is needed.

IN PLAIN WORDS

If you treat another man's wife as your own mother, what does it cost you? If you hold back from slander and from coveting other people's wealth, tell me, what does that cost you? To sit where you are and say the name of Rama, where is the hardship in that? To trust the word of the saints, what does it cost you? To speak the truth takes no special effort; tell me, what is the expense? Tuka says: God is won by just these things. No other elaborate scheme is needed.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram strips religion down to what anyone can do, and keeps asking the same disarming question: what does it cost you? Respect another's wife as a mother, refuse slander and envy, say God's name where you sit, trust the saints, tell the truth. None of these demands money, ritual, or special status; each is simply a choice. His point is that the whole path to God is built of such free and ordinary acts, and that the elaborate machinery people think they need is beside the point. Goodness is cheap; we only pretend it is hard.

GATHA 0062

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, the pure seed

मराठी मूळ

शुद्धबीजा पोटी । फळें रसाळ गोमटीं ॥१॥
 मुखीं अमृताची वाणी । देह वेचावा कारणीं ॥२॥
 सर्वांगीं निर्मळ । चित्त जैसें गंगाजळ ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे जाती । ताप दर्शनें विश्रांती ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

From a pure seed come fruits that are lush and beautiful. On the lips, nectar-words; the body should be spent for the cause. Pure in every limb, the chitta like Ganga-water. Says Tuka, the burning departs; by their very sight, repose.

IN PLAIN WORDS

From a pure seed come fruits that are sweet and lovely to look at. On such a person's lips are words like nectar, and the body itself is spent in good work. Pure through and through, the heart clear as the water of the Ganga. Tuka says: the fever leaves you; just the sight of such a one brings rest.

WHAT IT MEANS

A portrait of the good person as a fruit-bearing tree. The inner purity is the seed, and everything that grows from it is sweet: nectar-like speech, a life spent in service, a heart clear as Ganga-water. Tukaram is not listing rules but describing a quality of being, one so settled that it heals others without trying. The last line is the test and the gift together: in the presence of such a person the inner fever of craving and unrest simply leaves you, and you come to rest. Their very sight is medicine.

GATHA 0063

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, the mind decides

मराठी मूळ

चित्त समाधानें । तरी विष वाटे सोनें ॥१॥
 बहु खोटा अतिशय । जाणां भले सांगों काय ॥२॥
 मनाच्या तळमळें । चंदनें ही अंग पोळे ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे दुजा । उपचार पीडा पूजा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When chitta rests in contentment, even poison seems as gold. How very false is all of this, what shall I tell the good people? When chitta is in turmoil, even sandalwood scorches the body. Says Tuka, any other remedy is torment; even worship becomes affliction.

IN PLAIN WORDS

When the heart rests in contentment, even poison seems like gold. How utterly false everything looks then; what can I tell the good people? But when the mind is in turmoil, even sandalwood paste scorches the skin. Tuka says: to a mind like that, every other remedy is torment, and even worship becomes one more affliction.

WHAT IT MEANS

Everything depends on the state of the mind, Tukaram says, not on the thing itself. A contented heart can take even poison as gold, while a mind in turmoil is burned even by cooling sandalwood. The lesson is aimed at people who pile up remedies and rituals to fix their distress: if the inner unrest is not addressed, every cure becomes a new torment, and even worship turns into a burden. Peace is not something added from outside. It is the condition that makes everything else taste sweet or bitter.

GATHA 0064

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, do not crush the flower

मराठी मूळ

परिमळ म्हणूनी चोळूं नये फूल । खाऊं नये मूल आवडतें ॥१॥
 मोतियाचें पाणी चाखूं नये स्वाद । यंत्र भेदुनि नाद पाहूं नये ॥२॥
 कर्मफळ म्हणुनी इच्छूं नये काम । तुका म्हणे वर्म दावूं लोकां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One should not crush a flower for the sake of its fragrance, nor eat the root of a plant one loves. One should not taste the lustre of a pearl, nor break open an instrument to find the sound. One should not desire action for the sake of its fruit. Tuka says, this is the crux I would show the world.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Do not crush a flower just to get at its scent. Do not eat the root of the plant you love. Do not taste a pearl to sample its lustre. Do not break open the instrument to find where the sound lives. And do not perform an action only to seize its fruit. Tuka says: this is the secret I would show the world.

WHAT IT MEANS

A chain of images for a single teaching: do not destroy the living thing to grasp the quality you want from it. Crush the flower and the fragrance is gone; eat the root and the plant dies; break the instrument and the music is lost. Then he lands the point he has been circling: do not do an action merely to seize its fruit, for grasping at the result spoils the act, the way crushing spoils the flower. This is the Gita's teaching of desireless action, put in homely pictures, and he calls it the secret, the crux, he most wants the world to see.

GATHA 0065

The Nature of God

Nature of God, body and shadow

मराठी मूळ

माया तें चि ब्रम्ह ब्रम्ह तेंचि माया । अंग आणि छाया तया परी ॥१॥
 तोडितां न तुटे सारितां निराळी । लोटांगणांतळीं हारपते ॥२॥
 दुजें नाहीं तेथें बळ कोणासाठीं । आणि ते आटी विचाराची ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे उंच वाढे उंचपणें । ठेंगणीं लवणें जैसीं तैसीं ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Maya is Brahman, Brahman is Maya, as the body and its shadow. You cannot cut it, cannot push it aside; it vanishes beneath prostrations. Where there is no second, force for whom? The exertion of deliberation is futile. Tuka says: the tall grow taller by their tallness, and the short bow just as they are.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Maya is itself Brahman, and Brahman is itself Maya, the way a body and its shadow are not two things. You cannot cut it away, you cannot push it aside; it disappears the moment you fall flat in surrender. Where there is no second thing, against whom would you use force? The labor of reasoning it out is wasted. Tuka says: the tall grow taller by their own height, and the short bow low just as they are.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram refuses the long argument over whether maya, the world-appearance, is separate from Brahman. They are one, he says, like a body and the shadow it casts; you cannot split them. So you cannot fight maya or push it away by effort, and reasoning about it goes nowhere. What dissolves it is not force but surrender: it vanishes the moment you fall flat in prostration, because there was never a second thing to struggle against. The closing image is gentle: each is simply what it is, the tall tall and the low bowed low, and grace meets each as it is.

GATHA 0066

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, the company of the false

मराठी मूळ

दुर्जनासि करी साहे । तो ही दंड हे लाहे ॥१॥
 शिंदळीच्या कुंटणी वाटा । संग खोटा खोट्याचा ॥२॥
 येर येरा कांचणी भेटे । आगी उठे तेथूनी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे कापूं नाकें । पुढें आणिकें शिकविती ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He who tolerates a wicked person, he too earns the punishment. The lanes of the brothel belong to the faithless; the company of the false is with the false. When one trickster meets another, fire springs up between them. Says Tuka, cut off their noses, and they only teach others to do worse.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Whoever shields a wicked person shares in his punishment too. The brothel lanes belong to the faithless; the false keep company only with the false. When one cheat meets another, fire breaks out between them. Tuka says: cut off their noses to shame them, and they will only teach the next person to do worse.

WHAT IT MEANS

A hard-eyed look at complicity and bad company. To protect a wicked person, Tukaram says, is to earn a share of his guilt; the false naturally gather with the false, and when two cheats meet, the result is destruction. The grim final image is about the limits of punishment: shame a shameless person, even brutally, and he does not reform; he simply passes the cunning on. The teaching underneath is to be careful whose company you keep, inwardly and outwardly, because association is never neutral. You take on what you tolerate.

GATHA 0067

Social Criticism

Social criticism, religion for gain

मराठी मूळ

वृत्ति भूमि राज्य द्रव्य उपार्जिती । जाणा त्या निश्चितीं देव नाहीं ॥१॥
 भाडेकरी वाहे पाठीवरी भार । अंतरींचें सार लाभ नाहीं ॥२॥
 देवपूजेवरी ठेवूनियां मन । पाषाणा पाषाण पूजी लोभें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे फळ चिंतिते आदरें । लाघव हे चार शिंदळीचे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those who earn livelihood, land, kingdom, and wealth through religion, know for certain that God is not with them. A hired tenant carries the load on his back, but the inner essence yields him no gain. Setting their minds on worship of God, out of greed they worship stone with stone. Says Tuka, they fixate on material fruit with eagerness; these are the four deft arts of a temptress.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Those who use religion to earn a living, land, power, and wealth, know for certain that God is not with them. They are like a hired porter carrying a load on his back: the weight is borne, but none of the inner treasure becomes his. They fix their minds on worship, but out of greed it is only stone worshipping stone. Tuka says: they hunger eagerly for material rewards. These are the four practiced tricks of a temptress.

WHAT IT MEANS

A sharp attack on religion practiced for gain. The person who turns worship into a way to get money, land, or power, Tukaram says, has lost the very thing religion is for; God is simply not present in it. He is a paid porter who carries the sacred load but keeps none of its wealth. Worse, when the heart is greedy, the worshipper is just stone bowing to stone, lifeless before the lifeless. Chasing material fruit through devotion, he says, is no better than a temptress's calculated charm: an act put on to extract something, with nothing real behind it.

GATHA 0068

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the only purity

मराठी मूळ

पवित्र सोंवळीं । एक तीं च भूमंडळीं ॥१॥
 ज्यांचा आवडता देव । अखंडित प्रेमभाव ॥२॥
 तीं च भाग्यवंतें । सरतीं पुरतीं धनवित्तें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे देवा । त्यांची केल्या पावे सेवा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Ritually pure in all the earth are they alone whose beloved is God and whose love-feeling is unbroken. They alone are the fortunate ones, sufficient and complete in wealth. Tuka says: service done to them reaches God.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Truly pure, in all the wide earth, are only those whose beloved is God and whose love for him never breaks. They alone are the fortunate ones, rich and complete and wanting nothing. Tuka says: any service done to them reaches God himself.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram redefines purity and wealth at once. The only truly pure people, he says, are not the ritually clean but those who love God without a break; and the only truly rich are these same lovers, complete and lacking nothing because their wanting has been answered. The closing line, which he repeats elsewhere, gives the practical upshot: you reach God by serving such people, for service done to a true devotee arrives at God directly. Devotion, not status or money, is what makes a person both clean and full.

GATHA 0069

Worldly Life

Worldly life, food ruined by poison

मराठी मूळ

आशाबद्ध जन । काय जाणे नारायण ॥१॥
 करी इंद्रियांची सेवा । पाहे आवडीचा हेवा ॥२॥
 भ्रमलें चावळे । तैसें उचित न कळे ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे विषें । अन्न नाशियलें जैसें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A person bound by hope can never know Narayana. Such a one serves only the senses and covets what others possess. Bewildered and babbling, that person cannot discern what is proper. Says Tuka, it is like food destroyed by poison.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A person bound by craving can never know Narayana. He spends himself serving his senses and eyeing what others have. Bewildered, babbling, he cannot tell what is right to do. Tuka says: it is like good food that has been ruined by poison.

WHAT IT MEANS

Craving, for Tukaram, is the thing that blocks the knowing of God. The person tied to his wants lives as a servant of his own senses and a coveter of others' goods, and in that fever he loses the simple power to tell right from wrong. The closing image is exact: such a life is good food spoiled by poison. The capacity was there, the human life could have nourished, but desire has tainted the whole dish. It is not that the man is incapable; it is that craving has poisoned the meal.

GATHA 0070

The Necessity of Experience

Experience, the proof is the fullness

मराठी मूळ

ढेकरें जेवण दिसे साचें । नाही तरि काचें कुंथाकुंथी ॥१॥
 हे ही बोल ते ही बोल । कोरडे फोल रुचीविण ॥२॥
 गव्हांचिया होती परी । फके वरी खाऊं नये ॥३॥
 तुकां म्हणे असे हातींचें कांकण । तयासी दर्पण विल्हाळक ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

By the belch, the eating is seen to be genuine. Otherwise it is straining and straining, dry chaff without taste. It may look like wheat, but do not eat mere husks. Tuka says: when the bangle is on your wrist, a mirror is foolish indulgence.

IN PLAIN WORDS

You can tell a real meal by the satisfied belch that follows; without that, it is only straining and effort, dry chaff with no taste. A thing may look like wheat, but do not eat mere husks. Tuka says: when the bangle is already on your wrist, holding up a mirror to check is a foolish indulgence.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram insists on the proof of real experience over the appearance of it. A true meal leaves you satisfied; talk and effort without that fullness are just dry husks dressed up as grain. The wonderful last image makes it personal: if the bangle is on your wrist, you do not need a mirror to know it is there; you feel it directly. So with God. Once the inner experience is real, you no longer need outer confirmation or display. The husk-eaters and the mirror-checkers are those who have the form of devotion but have not tasted the thing itself.

GATHA 0071

True Worship

True worship, the heart God reads

मराठी मूळ

करावी ते पूजा मनें चि उत्तम । लौकिकाचें काम काय असे ॥१॥
 कळावें तयासि कळे अंतरींचें । कारण तें साचें साचा अंगीं ॥२॥
 अतिशया अंतीं लाभ किंवा घात । फळ देतें चित्त बीजा ऐसें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे जेणें राहे समाधान । ऐसें तें भजन पार पावी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Worship should be done with an excellent chitta; what is the use of work done for worldly show? What is to be known, that One knows what lies within; truth in the body is the cause that reaches the True One. Excess in the end brings either gain or ruin, for chitta yields fruit true to the seed. Says Tuka, the devotion by which contentment abides, that is the devotion that carries one across.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Worship should be done with a fine and willing heart; what is the worth of anything done for public show? The thing to understand is that the One sees what is inside you; only truth carried in the body reaches the True One. Pushed to an extreme, anything ends in gain or in ruin, for the heart yields a fruit exactly true to its seed. Tuka says: the devotion that leaves you in deep contentment, that is the devotion which carries you across.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram moves worship from the outside to the inside. What counts is not the performance others can see but the quality of the heart, because God reads the within, and only truth actually lived in the body reaches him. He adds a law of the inner life: the heart yields fruit true to its seed, so what you sow inwardly is what you reap. The test he offers is simple and usable: real devotion leaves you in settled contentment. If a practice does not bring that peace, it is not yet carrying you across; if it does, it is.

GATHA 0072

True Worship

True worship, who can tell their fate

मराठी मूळ

एकादशीव्रत सोमवार न करिती । कोण त्यांची गति होइल नेणों ॥१॥
 काय करुं बहु वाटे तळमळ । आंधळीं सकळ बहिर्मुख ॥२॥
 हरिहरां नाहीं बोटभरी वाती । कोण त्यांची गति होईल नेणों ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे नाहीं नारायणीं प्रीति । कोण त्यांची गति होइल नेणों ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those who do not keep the Ekadashi vow or observe the Monday fast, who can tell their fate? What can I do? The anguish is great, for all are blind and outward-facing. Those who will not light even a wick a finger's length for Hari and Hara, who can tell their fate? Says Tuka, those who have no love for Narayana, who can tell their fate?

IN PLAIN WORDS

Those who keep no Ekadashi vow, who do not observe the Monday fast, what will become of them? I cannot tell. What am I to do? My heart aches, for they are all blind, all turned the wrong way. Those who will not light even a finger-length wick for Hari and Hara, what will become of them? I cannot tell. Tuka says: those who have no love for Narayana, what will become of them? I cannot tell.

WHAT IT MEANS

An abhanga built on a single anguished refrain: who can tell their fate? Tukaram looks at people who keep none of the simple devotions, no Ekadashi fast, no Monday observance, not even a small lamp lit for God, and above all no love for Narayana, and he is genuinely distressed, not superior. He calls them blind and turned outward, away from the one thing that would save them. The repeated I cannot tell is not a threat but a grief; he does not know what becomes of a life with no love of God in it, and the not-knowing pains him.

GATHA 0073

Worldly Life

Worldly life, the crevice

मराठी मूळ

नव्हे आराणूक संवसारा हातीं । सर्वकाळ चितीं हा चि धंदा ॥१॥
 देवधर्म सांदीं पडिला सकळ । विषयीं गोंधळ गाजतसे ॥२॥
 रात्रि दीस न पुरे कुटुंबाचें समाधान । दुर्लभ दर्शन ईश्वराचें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे आत्महत्या रे घातकी । थोर होते चुकी नारायणीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

There is no ease once fallen into the crevice of worldly life; the chitta churns with this one hustle at all hours. Devotion and righteousness have fallen into a crack while the uproar of sense-objects thunders on. Day and night are not enough for the family; the darshan of God becomes rare. Tuka says: O killers of the Self, you commit a great error regarding Narayana.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Once you have slipped into the crevice of worldly life, there is no rest; the mind churns all day long with this one hustle. Devotion and right living get shoved into a corner while the racket of the senses thunders on. Day and night are never enough to satisfy the family, and the sight of God grows rare. Tuka says: this is to murder your own self, and it is a grave wrong against Narayana.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes the trap of a life swallowed by getting and spending. Once in it, the mind never rests; the endless business of provision drowns out devotion, and however hard one works the family's wants are never filled, while time for God simply runs out. His sharp last line is not against family or work as such, but against letting them consume the whole of a life: to live with no room left for God is, he says, a slow kind of self-murder, and a wrong done to the God within. The warning is meant to wake, not to condemn.

GATHA 0074

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, the village of corpses

मराठी मूळ

स्मशान ते भूमि प्रेतरूप जन । सेवाभक्तिहीन ग्रामवासी ॥१॥
 भरतील पोट श्वानाचिया परी । वस्ति दिली घरीं यमदूतां ॥२॥
 अपूज्य लिंग तेथें अतित न घे थारा । ऐसी वस्ती चोरां कंटकांची ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे नाहीं ठावी स्थिति मती । यमाची निश्चिती कुळवाडी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

That land is a cremation ground, its people corpse-formed, where no service or devotion is found among the inhabitants. They fill their bellies like dogs and have given Yama's messengers lodging in the house. The sacred image there is unhonored; no pilgrim takes shelter. Such a place is a den of thieves and thorns. Tuka says: those who have neither steadiness nor intelligence are the tenant-farmers of Yama.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A village where no one serves or loves God is a cremation ground, and its people are walking corpses. They fill their bellies like dogs, and they have given the messengers of Death a room in the house. The sacred image goes unhonored there, no wandering pilgrim finds shelter, and the place becomes a den of thieves and thorns. Tuka says: those with no steadiness and no sense are simply Death's tenant-farmers.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram measures a place not by its prosperity but by whether God is loved in it. Where devotion is absent, the living are as good as dead and the village is a burning-ground; people eat and survive like animals, and by their forgetting they have housed Death itself. He is not so much cursing these neighbors as showing them what their life amounts to: those who drift without steadiness or sense are, in his blunt image, tenant-farmers working land that belongs to Death. The harshness is a mirror held up to wake the sleeper.

GATHA 0075

Worldly Life

Worldly life, the hardened heart

मराठी मूळ

आहाकटा त्याचे करिती पितर । वंशीं दुराचार पुत्र जाला ॥१॥
 गळे चि ना गर्भ नव्हे चि कां वांज । माता त्याची लाजलावा पापी ॥२॥
 परपीडें परद्वारीं सावधान । सादर चि मन अभाग्याचें ॥३॥
 न मळितां निंदा चाहडी उपवास । संग्रहाचे दोष सकळ ही ॥४॥
 परउपकार पुण्य त्या वावडें । विषाचें तें कीडें दुग्धीं मरे ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे विटाळाचीच तो मूर्ति । दया क्षमा शांति नातळे त्या ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Alas for the ancestors of that family in which a wicked son is born. Would the pregnancy not have miscarried? Why was the mother not barren? She is disgraced, that sinful one. He is ever alert to tormenting others and haunting others' doorsteps, with a mind always ready for mischief. Without even trying, slander, gossip, and fasting from virtue come to him; he hoards every fault. Merit and kindness are alien to him; a worm of poison, he dies when placed in milk. Tuka says: he is a murti of defilement itself; compassion, forgiveness, and peace will not touch him.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Pity the ancestors of a family in which a wicked son is born. Better the pregnancy had failed, or the mother been barren; she is left disgraced. He is always alert to hurt others and to haunt their doorways, his mind forever set on mischief. Without any effort, slander and gossip and a starving of all virtue come naturally to him; he hoards every fault there is. Kindness and merit blow away from him; he is a worm bred in poison that dies the moment it is dropped in milk. Tuka says: he is defilement given a body, and compassion, forgiveness, and peace will not come near him.

WHAT IT MEANS

One of Tukaram's harshest portraits, of a person so given over to malice that goodness cannot take root in him. The poison-worm is the key image: a creature so adapted to corruption that pure milk kills it. Tukaram is not gloating; he is drawing the full negative of his saint, the heart in which compassion, forgiveness, and peace can find no place. The point for the listener is self-examination, not contempt for a stranger. He is naming a pattern, the hardening of a heart around its own faults, as the thing to fear becoming, in oneself first of all.

GATHA 0076

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the angry dog

मराठी मूळ

श्वान शीघ्रकोपी । आपणा घातकर पापी ॥१॥
 नाहीं भीड आणि धीर । उपदेश न जिरे क्षीर ॥ध्रु॥
 माणसांसि भुंके । विजातीनें द्यावे थुंके ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे चित्त । मळिण करा तें फजित ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The dog is quick to anger. The sinful creature strikes itself. It has no sense of shame, no patience. The milk of instruction it cannot digest. It barks at human beings. Those of a different species spit upon it. Says Tuka, one whose chitta is soiled brings disgrace upon himself.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The dog is quick to anger, a wretched thing that harms itself. It has no shame and no patience; the milk of good advice it cannot keep down. It barks at people, and creatures of another kind only spit on it. Tuka says: in the same way, whoever lets his heart grow soiled brings disgrace on himself.

WHAT IT MEANS

A small, sharp parable. The bad-tempered dog is the image of an unrestrained, soiled mind: quick to rage, shameless, unable to absorb good counsel the way a sick stomach cannot keep down milk, snapping at everyone and earning only contempt in return. Tukaram's point lands in the last line, and it turns the gaze inward: a mind let go to bitterness disgraces no one but its owner. The animal is not the target; it is a warning picture of what an ungoverned heart becomes.

GATHA 0077

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the ruined son

मराठी मूळ

देखोनि हरखली अंड । पुत्र जाला म्हणे रांड ॥ तंव तो जाला भांड । चाहाड चोर शिंदळ ॥१॥
 जाय तिकडे पीडी लोकां । जोडी भांडवल थुंका ॥ थोर जाला चुका । वर कां नाहीं घातली ॥ध्रु॥
 भूमि कांपे त्याच्या भारें । कुंभपाकाचीं शरीरें ॥ निष्ठुर उत्तरें । पापदृष्टी मळिणचित्त ॥२॥
 दुराचारी तो चांडाळ । पाप सांगातें विटाळ ॥ तुका म्हणे खळ । म्हणोनियां निषद्धि तो ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

At the birth, the mother rejoiced: a son is born! But the son turned out a wretch, a buffoon, a betrayer, dissolute. Wherever he goes he torments people and earns nothing but spit. What a dire blunder; why was a noose not placed at birth? The earth groans under his weight; his body is fit for Kumbhipaka. His words are cruel, his

gaze sinful, his chitta soiled. Says Tuka, such a vile one is truly fallen; sin and defilement walk at his side. He is forbidden.

IN PLAIN WORDS

At his birth the mother rejoiced, a son is born. But the son grew up a wretch and a clown, a betrayer, a debauchee. Wherever he goes he torments people and earns nothing but their spit. What a ruinous mistake, the family thinks; why was a noose not put at his birth? The earth groans under his weight; his body is fit only for the hell of boiling cauldrons. His words are cruel, his look is sinful, his heart is soiled. Tuka says: a vile man like this is truly fallen, sin and defilement walk beside him, and he is to be shunned.

WHAT IT MEANS

Another full portrait of corruption, deliberately unsparing. Tukaram traces the arc from a mother's joy at a birth to the grief of a family wishing the child had never lived, because the man became a source of harm to everyone around him. The violent images, the noose, the boiling hell, the groaning earth, are the felt weight of a life spent injuring others. As with his other dark portraits, the function is moral warning, not relish: he is mapping where cruelty and a soiled heart finally lead, so the listener will not walk that road. The sin is the target, never a person to be enjoyed.

GATHA 0078

Confession and Sin

Confession, no voice, only the heart

मराठी मूळ

नेणें गाणें कंठ नाहीं हा सुस्वर । घालूं तुज भार पांडुरंगा ॥१॥
नेणें राग वेळ काळ घात मात । तुझे पायीं चित्त ठेवीं देवा ॥२॥
तुका म्हणे मज चाड नाहीं जना । तुज नारायणा वांचूनिया ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I do not know how to sing, and my voice is not sweet. I place the whole burden upon You, O Panduranga. I do not know ragas, timing, rhythmic cycles, or techniques of melody. I simply place my chitta at Your feet, O God. Says Tuka, I have no concern for people; I care for no one but You, O Narayana.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I do not know how to sing, and my voice has no sweetness. So I lay the whole burden on you, Panduranga. I know nothing of ragas, of timing, of rhythm or the arts of melody. I only set my heart down at your feet, God. Tuka says: I have no use for the approval of people. I care for no one but you, Narayana.

WHAT IT MEANS

A confession that doubles as a teaching, close kin to his earlier word that Vitthal is not hungry for a fine voice. Here he makes it personal: he lacks the singer's skill entirely, so he simply hands the whole performance over to God and lays his heart at God's feet. The freedom is in the last line. Because he is singing for God and not for people, he is released from needing anyone's approval. Devotion without craft is enough, once you stop performing for the crowd and sing only for the One.

GATHA 0079

Autobiography

Autobiography, the peddlers of my verses

मराठी मूळ

माझी पाठ करा कवी । उट लावी दारोदार ॥१॥
 तंव तया पारखी सिव । लाजे ठाव सांडितां ॥२॥
 उष्टावळी करुनि जमा । कुंथुनि प्रेमा आणितसे ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे बाहेरमुदी । आहा च गोविंदीं न सरती ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Some memorize my verses and peddle them door to door. But when an assayer touches the work, the pretender is shamed and abandons the very place. He gathers defiled remnants and strains to produce feeling from them. Tuka says: these outwardly sealed frauds will never be accepted by Govinda.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Some people memorize my verses and hawk them door to door. But the moment a true judge tests the work, the pretender is shamed and slinks away from the spot. He scrapes together leftover scraps and strains and grunts to fake real feeling. Tuka says: these frauds, sealed shut on the outside and empty within, will never be accepted by Govinda.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns on those who use his poems as a trade, reciting them for gain or repute without the love that made them. The assayer is his test: bring such a performer before someone who can tell real from counterfeit, and the act collapses. The cutting image is of a man straining to manufacture devotional emotion out of borrowed scraps. His verdict is that God is not fooled by polish; the outwardly impressive but inwardly empty will not be received. What cannot be faked is the feeling, and only the feeling counts.

GATHA 0080

Renunciation

Renunciation, dropping the trappings

मराठी मूळ

उपाधीच्या नांवें घेतला सिंतोडा । नेदूं आतां पीडा आतळों ते ॥१॥
 काशासाठीं हात भरुनि धुवावे । चालतिया गोवे मारगासि ॥२॥
 काय नाही देवें करुनि ठेविलें । असें तें आपुलें ते ते ठायीं ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे जेव्हां गेला अहंकार । तेव्हां आपपर बोळविले ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Against upadhi I have taken a hardened resolve; I will not let its torment touch me. Why soil your hands only to have to wash them? Why lay traps across a clear road? Has God not already provided what is needed? What is ours awaits us in its place. Tuka says: when the ego departed, self and other were sent away.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I have set a firm resolve against all the false trappings of identity; I will not let their torment touch me again. Why dirty your hands only to have to wash them? Why lay obstacles across a road that is already clear? Has God not already arranged whatever is needed? What is truly yours is waiting for you in its own place. Tuka says: when the ego left, the whole division of self and other was shown the door along with it.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram resolves to be done with upadhi, the false add-ons and conditionings the self mistakes for itself. Two homely questions carry the argument: why create a mess just to clean it up, why block a road that is already open? Anxious striving and self-importance are exactly such needless mess-making, since God has already provided, and what is genuinely ours will reach us in its time. The release comes in the last line: when the ego finally departed, it took with it the very split between self and other. Drop the I, and there is no other left to manage.

GATHA 0081

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, grace and effort

मराठी मूळ

योगाचें तें भाग्य क्षमा । आधीं दमा इंद्रियें ॥१॥
 अवधीं भाग्यें येती घरा । देव सोयरा जालिया ॥२॥
 मिरासीचें म्हण सेत । नाहीं देत पीक उगें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे उचित जाणां । उगीं सिणा काशाला ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The fortune of yoga is forbearance; first subdue the senses. When God becomes your kinsman, all blessings come to your door of their own accord. Just because a field is inherited does not mean the harvest springs up effortlessly. Says Tuka, know what is fitting and do not exhaust yourself for nothing.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The real fortune of yoga is forbearance; but first you must master the senses. Once God has become your kinsman, every blessing comes to your door on its own. Yet an inherited field does not yield a harvest just because you own it; you still have to work it. Tuka says: understand what is fitting to do, and do not wear yourself out for nothing.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram balances grace and effort. The crown of yoga, he says, is patient forbearance, and it rests on first reining in the senses; and when God has become your own kin, blessings simply arrive. But he guards against the laziness that grace can excuse. Owning an ancestral field does not make the crop grow by itself; the ground must still be tilled. Devotion is no excuse for idleness. Know what is genuinely yours to do, do that, and do not exhaust yourself in pointless striving over the rest. Effort and surrender each have their place.

GATHA 0082

The Necessity of Experience

Experience, until sight meets sight

मराठी मूळ

न ये नेत्रां जळ । नाहीं अंतरीं कळवळ ॥१॥
 तों हे चावटीचे बोल । जन रंजवणें फोल ॥२॥
 न फळे उत्तर । नाहीं स्वामी जों सादर ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे भेटी । जंव नाहीं दृष्टादृष्टी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When tears do not come to the eyes and there is no deep churning of compassion within, then these are vulgar, cheap words, chaff thrown to amuse the crowd. Words bear no fruit so long as the Lord is not attentive. Says Tuka, there is no true meeting until sight meets sight.

IN PLAIN WORDS

When no tears come to the eyes and no compassion churns inside, then all these are just vulgar, cheap words, chaff thrown out to amuse the crowd. Words bear no fruit as long as the Lord is not attentive to them. Tuka says: there is no true meeting until sight has actually met sight.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram tests devotional speech by what it does to the body and the heart. If the words bring no tears, no inner stirring of compassion, they are mere entertainment, husks tossed to please listeners. And no words bear fruit unless God himself is turned toward them. The closing standard is uncompromising: there is no real meeting with God until sight meets sight, until the encounter is direct and mutual. Eloquence about God is nothing; being seen by God, and undone by it, is everything.

GATHA 0083

Social Criticism

Social criticism, a life through the sieve

मराठी मूळ

बाईल सवासिण आई । आपण पितरांचे ठायीं ॥१॥
 थोर वेच जाला नष्टा । अवघ्या अपसव्य चेष्टा ॥२॥
 विषयांचे चरवणीं । केली आयुष्याची गाळणी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे लंडा । नाहीं दया देव धोंडा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

His wife, once a woman of auspicious fortune, becomes a widow; his mother joins the ancestors; he himself heads for hell. What a great expenditure this wretch has made; all his deeds have been perverse. He has strained his lifespan through the sieve of sense-pleasures, grazing in their field. Says Tuka, such a shameless one has no compassion; to him God is a stone.

IN PLAIN WORDS

His wife is widowed, his mother joins the ancestors, and he himself is bound for hell. What a ruinous spending of a life this wretch has made; every one of his deeds has gone crosswise. He has strained his whole lifespan through the sieve of sense-pleasure, grazing that field till nothing is left. Tuka says: such a shameless man has no compassion in him, and to him God is just a stone.

WHAT IT MEANS

A portrait of a life poured out on the senses until everyone around it suffers and the man himself is ruined. The grim opening lists the wreckage left in his wake. The sieve is the central image: he has let his entire allotted life run out through the holes of sense-pleasure, keeping nothing. The mark of his condition is the closing line: with no compassion left, even God is to him no more than a lump of stone, an idol he cannot feel. Tukaram names the waste so the listener will not make it. The pleasure-grazing, not the man, is the thing condemned.

GATHA 0084

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the boasting miser

मराठी मूळ

दानें कांपे हात । नाव तेविशीं मात ॥१॥
 कथी चावटीचे बोल । हिंग क्षीरीं मिथ्या फोल ॥२॥
 न वजती पाप । तीर्था म्हणे वेचूं काय ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे मनीं नाहीं । न ये आकारातें कांहीं ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

His hand trembles from giving, yet he boasts on that very subject. In holy gatherings he speaks loose words; asafoetida mixed into milk, a false froth. His sins do not depart, yet he says of pilgrimage, "Why should I spend?" Says Tuka, when there is nothing in the mind, nothing comes to form.

IN PLAIN WORDS

His hand shakes when it comes to giving, yet on that very subject he boasts the loudest. In holy gatherings he spouts loose talk, asafoetida stirred into milk, a false froth. His sins do not leave him, and still he says of pilgrimage, why should I spend the money? Tuka says: when there is nothing in the heart, nothing takes shape in the act.

WHAT IT MEANS

A quick, exact sketch of the stingy hypocrite. He cannot bear to give, yet talks endlessly about generosity; he pollutes holy company with empty chatter, like a pinch of asafoetida ruining good milk. He will not spend on anything that might actually cleanse him, and so his faults stay with him. Tukaram's closing line is the principle behind the portrait: action follows the heart, and where the heart is empty, no real deed can take form. The outer meanness is only the shape of an inner emptiness.

GATHA 0085

True Worship

True worship, the willing cow

मराठी मूळ

वळितें जें गाई । त्यासि फार लागे काई ॥१॥
 निवे भावाच्या उत्तरीं । भलते एके धणी वरी ॥२॥
 न लगती प्रकार । कांहीं मानाचा आदर ॥२॥
 सांडी थोरपणा । तुका म्हणे सर्वे दीना ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A cow that turns of her own accord needs very little coaxing. God is satisfied by the response born of bhava; one heartfelt offering is enough. No ceremony of rank is needed. Says Tuka, God casts off greatness and walks alongside the lowly.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A cow that comes to be milked of her own accord needs hardly any coaxing. Just so, God is satisfied by an answer that comes from real feeling; one heartfelt offering is enough for him. No ceremony of rank or status is needed. Tuka says: God sets his own greatness aside and walks beside the lowly.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram measures worship by willingness, not by grandeur. The cow that gives milk freely needs no forcing, and God is content the same way, with a response that rises from genuine feeling; a single offering made in love is enough. None of the apparatus of status matters to him. The closing image is the whole of Tukaram's God: not a king demanding ceremony, but one who lays his greatness down and comes to walk at the side of the poor and lowly. The feeling is the only coin he accepts.

GATHA 0086

The Power of the Name

The Name, the only provision

मराठी मूळ

मैत्र केले महा बळी । कामा न येती अंतकाळीं ॥१॥
 आधीं घे रे रामनाम । सामा भरीं हा उत्तम ॥२॥
 नाही तरी यम । दांत खातो करकरा ॥२॥
 धन मेळविलें कोडी । काळ घेतल्या न सोडी ॥३॥
 कामा न ये हा परिवार । सैन्य लोक बहु फार ॥४॥
 तंववरि मिरविसी बळ । जंव आला नाही काळ ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे बापा । चुकवीं चौऱ्याशींच्या खेपा ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

You made friends with the mighty, but they are of no use at the hour of death. Take the name of Rama now; fill your store with this best of provisions. Otherwise Yama grinds his teeth, waiting. You amassed millions in wealth, but Kala will not release what it has seized. Your retinue and armies are of no help at that moment. You parade your strength only until Kala arrives. Says Tuka, O father, escape the rounds of eighty-four lakh births.

IN PLAIN WORDS

You made friends with the powerful, but they are no use at the hour of death. Take the name of Rama now; fill your stores with that, the best of all provisions. Otherwise Death stands grinding his teeth, waiting. You piled up millions, but Time will not give back what it has seized. Your retinue and your armies are no help in that moment. You can parade your strength only until Death arrives. Tuka says: my friend, slip free of the eighty-four lakh rounds of birth.

WHAT IT MEANS

A plain reckoning with death. All the things a person banks on, powerful friends, amassed wealth, retinue, armies, strength, are worthless at the one moment that matters, the hour of dying, when Death takes and does not return. Against that, Tukaram urges the one provision that travels: the name of Rama, gathered now, while there is time. He calls the listener affectionately, my friend, not to frighten but to rouse. The aim is to escape the vast wheel of rebirths, and the ticket, he says, is the Name laid up in advance.

GATHA 0087

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the mismatched marriage

मराठी मूळ

कानडीने केला मन्हाटा भ्रतार । एकाचें उत्तर एका न ये ॥१॥
 तैसें मज नको करुं कमळापति । देई या संगति सज्जनांची ॥२॥
 तिनें पाचारिलें इल बा म्हणोन । येरु पळे आण जाली आतां ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे येर येरा जें विच्छिन्न । तेथें वाढे सीण सुखा पोटी ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A Kannada woman took a Marathi husband; neither one can grasp the other's words. Do not let my fate be like theirs, O Kamalapati; give me the company of the saints. She called to him tenderly, "il ba," and he fled, certain she had cursed him. Says Tuka, where one is estranged from the other, sorrow grows in the very belly of happiness.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A Kannada woman married a Marathi husband, and neither could understand a word the other said. Do not let my life be like that, Lord of Lakshmi; give me instead the company of the saints. She called to him tenderly, il ba, and he ran off, certain she had cursed him. Tuka says: where two are strangers to each other, sorrow grows in the very belly of their happiness.

WHAT IT MEANS

A homely, almost comic parable about estrangement. A husband and wife who do not share a language cannot reach each other; her word of endearment sounds to him like a curse, and he flees. Tukaram prays not to live like that, cut off and misunderstanding, and asks instead for the company of the saints, where hearts actually meet. The closing line is the teaching: where there is no real understanding between people, sorrow breeds inside the very thing that should be joy. He wants company that speaks his soul's own language.

GATHA 0088

Worldly Life

Worldly life, a grain of pleasure

मराठी मूळ

सुख पाहतां जवापाडें । दुःख पर्वता एवढें ॥१॥
 धरीं धरीं आठवण । मानीं संताचें वचन ॥२॥
 नेलें रात्रीनें तें अर्धें । बाळपण जराव्याधें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे पुढा । घाणा जुंती जसी मूढा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Pleasure is the size of a barley grain; suffering is as vast as a mountain. Hold this remembrance firmly; trust the word of the saints. Half of life is stolen by the night; childhood and old-age-disease claim the rest. Says Tuka, ahead, the fool is yoked to the oil-press and driven round and round.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Weigh it honestly: the pleasure is the size of a barley grain, the suffering as big as a mountain. Hold this firmly in memory; trust what the saints have told you. Half of your life is carried off by the night and sleep, and childhood at one end and old age and sickness at the other take most of the rest. Tuka says: and ahead, the fool is yoked like an ox to the oil-press, driven round and round.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram does the arithmetic of a human life and finds the balance grim. Set against a mountain of suffering, the pleasure amounts to a single barley grain. And the time itself is mostly spent before you notice: half lost to sleep, the rest eaten by helpless childhood and by the decay of age and illness. What is left, for the person who never wakes up, is the oil-press: the ox walking in endless circles, blindfolded, going nowhere. He lays it out this starkly so the listener will value the little waking time he has and turn it toward God.

GATHA 0089

The Saints

Saints, guard your company

मराठी मूळ

बोलायाचा त्यासीं । नको संबंध मानसीं ॥१॥
 जया घडली संतनिंदा । तुज विसरुनि गोविंदा ॥ध्रु॥
 जळो त्याचें तोंड । नको दृष्टीपुढें भांड ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे देवा । तया दुरी मज ठेवा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Do not keep any connection, even in the mind, with one who has slandered the saints and forgotten You, O Govinda. Let his mouth burn. Keep that quarrelsome wretch out of my sight. Says Tuka, O God, keep me far from such a one.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Do not keep any tie, even in your mind, with someone who slanders the saints and has forgotten you, Govinda. Let such a mouth burn. Keep that quarrelsome wretch out of my sight. Tuka says: O God, keep me far away from a person like that.

WHAT IT MEANS

A blunt prayer about company. For Tukaram, contempt for the saints and forgetfulness of God are a contagion, so he asks not merely to avoid such a person in the flesh but to keep no connection with him even inwardly, in the mind. The harsh words, let his mouth burn, are aimed at the slander itself, and the prayer is protective rather than vengeful: keep me far from this, lest it touch me. He guards the heart's company as carefully as the body's, knowing we slowly become what we keep near.

GATHA 0090

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, religion for the ego

मराठी मूळ

तीळ जाळिले तांदुळ । काम क्रोधे तैसे चि खळ ॥१॥
 कां रे सिणलासी वाउगा । न भजतां पांडुरंगा ॥ध्रु॥
 मानदंभासाठीं । केली अक्षरांची आटी ॥२॥
 तप करुनि तीर्थाटन । वाढविला अभिमान ॥३॥
 वांटिलें तें धन । केली अहंता जतन ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे चुकलें वर्म । केला अवघा चि अधर्म ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Sesame and rice are scorched; by lust and anger, just so, the wicked are ruined. Why do you exhaust yourself in vain, not worshipping Panduranga? For the sake of pride and pretense you toiled over letters and learning. You performed austerities and pilgrimages, but only swelled your self-importance. You gave away wealth, yet carefully nurtured your ego-sense. Says Tuka, you have missed the crux entirely; all you have done is adharma.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Sesame and rice can be scorched in the roasting; lust and anger scorch the foolish in just the same way. Why wear yourself out for nothing, never worshipping Panduranga? For the sake of pride and show you slaved over learning and letters. You did austerities and made pilgrimages, and only swelled your self-importance. You gave wealth away, and carefully nursed your ego the whole time. Tuka says: you have missed the crux entirely, and turned all of it into adharma.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram attacks religion practiced for the ego. Learning, austerity, pilgrimage, even charity, all the things that look pious, become worthless, even adharma, when they are done to feed pride and self-importance rather than to love God. The roasted grain is his image: lust and anger burn the foolish the way fire scorches sesame and rice. The sharp point is that effort itself is not enough; effort aimed at the self only enlarges the self. To miss God in the middle of all that religious labor is to miss the entire crux, and to turn worship into its opposite.

GATHA 0091

Prayers

Prayer, scorched by the world

मराठी मूळ

संवसारतापें तापलों मी देवा । करितां या सेवा कुटुंबाची ॥१॥
 म्हणऊनी तुझे आठविले पाय । ये वो माझे माय पांडुरंगे ॥२॥
 बहुतां जन्मींचा जालों भारवाही । सुटिजे हें नाहीं वर्म ठावें ॥३॥
 वेढियेलों चोरीं अंतर्बाह्यात्कारीं । कणव न करी कोणी माझी ॥४॥
 बहु पांगविलों बहु नागविलों । बहु दिवस जालों कासाविस ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे आतां धांव घाली वेगीं । ब्रीद तुझें जगीं दीननाथा ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I am scorched, O God, by the fire of worldly life, worn out from serving this household. And so I have remembered Your feet; come to me, O my mother Panduranga. Through countless births I have been a beast of burden, yet the crux of release remains unknown to me. Thieves have surrounded me inside and out, and no one shows me any mercy. I have been scattered in every direction, stripped naked, writhing in agony for so many days. Says Tuka, rush to me now, O Lord of the lowly; Your renown in the world is the refuge of the destitute.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I am scorched, O God, by the fire of worldly life, worn out from serving this household. So I have remembered your feet at last; come to me, my mother Panduranga. For many births I have been a beast of burden, and I still do not know the secret of how to be set free. Thieves have surrounded me, inside and out, and not one person shows me any mercy. I have been scattered, stripped bare, writhing for days on end. Tuka says: come running now, quickly, Lord of the lowly; your very name in the world is the refuge of the destitute.

WHAT IT MEANS

One of Tukaram's most heartfelt cries, the prayer of a man at the end of his strength. Burned out by the demands of household life and lost through many births like a yoked animal, he confesses he does not even know how release is found. The thieves inside and out are his own passions and the world's pressures, and no human help comes. So he throws himself entirely on God, whom he calls mother and Lord of the lowly, and reminds God of his own reputation: if you are known in the world as the refuge of the destitute, then here is a destitute man, come quickly. It is surrender born of exhaustion, and it is complete.

GATHA 0092

Faith and Trust

Faith, God the debtor

मराठी मूळ

भक्तऋणी देव बोलती पुराणें । निर्धार वचनें साच करीं ॥१॥
 मार्गे काय जाणों अडकिली वार्ता । कबिर सातें जातां घडिया वांटी ॥२॥
 माघारिया धन आणिलें घरासि । न घे केला त्यासि त्याग तेणें ॥३॥
 नामदेवाचिया घरासि आणिलें । तेणें लुटविलें द्विजां हातीं ॥४॥
 प्रत्यक्षासि काय द्यावें हें प्रमाण । व्यंकोबाचें ऋण फेडियेलें ॥५॥
 बीज दळोनियां केली आराधना । लागे नारायणा पेरणें तें ॥६॥
 तुका म्हणे नाहीं जयासि निर्धार । नाडला साचार तो चि एक ॥७॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The scriptures declare that God is a cosmic debtor to his devotees; make those words come true with unwavering resolve. I have heard the old story of how Kabir was given a gold coin each step of the way. When someone brought the gold to Kabir's house, he refused it, having renounced all wealth. When it was brought to Namdev's house, he had it plundered at the hands of the Brahmins. Need any proof be given of what is obvious? The Lord repaid even Vyankatesh's debt. When the seed was ground to flour as an offering, Narayana himself had to sow it again. Says Tuka, the one who lacks such unwavering resolve is the only one who is truly deceived and ruined.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The old scriptures say that God makes himself a debtor to his devotees; hold those words as true with unshaken resolve. Remember the stories: Kabir was given a gold coin at every step; when someone carried the gold to his house he refused it, having renounced all wealth, and when it was brought to Namdev's house he had it given away to the Brahmins. What proof does the obvious need? The Lord even paid off Vyankatesh's debt. When the seed-grain was ground up for an offering, Narayana himself had to come and sow the field again. Tuka says: the only one who is truly cheated is the one who lacks this firm faith.

WHAT IT MEANS

An abhanga in praise of faith, built on the saints' stories. Scripture promises that God becomes a debtor to those who love him, and Tukaram says: take that literally, with full resolve. He stacks up the evidence, Kabir and Namdev and the gold, the Lord settling a devotee's debt, God himself re-sowing a field whose seed had been given away in worship, to show that the promise has always held. His conclusion turns it around: God never fails the devotee, so the only person ever deceived is the one whose faith was not firm enough to trust him. The lack is never on God's side.

GATHA 0093

Worldly Life

Worldly life, adharma inside dharma

मराठी मूळ

भोगें घडे त्याग । त्यागें अंगा येती भोग ॥१॥
 ऐसैं उफराटें वर्म । धर्मा अंगीं च अधर्म ॥२॥
 देव अंतरे तें पाप । खोटे उगवा संकल्प ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे भीड खोटी । लाभ विचारावा पोटीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Through indulgence comes renunciation; through renunciation, pleasures return. The workings run contrary: adharma dwells in the very body of dharma. Whatever distances God, that is sin; abandon all false resolutions. Says Tuka, false shame is worthless; examine the profit in your own gut.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Through indulgence comes the urge to renounce; and through renunciation the pleasures creep back again. The mechanism runs backwards like that, and adharma can hide inside the very body of dharma. Whatever pushes God further away, that is sin; give up your false resolutions. Tuka says: false shame is worthless. Work out, honestly, in your own gut, where the real profit lies.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram warns that the inner life is tricky, full of reversals. Indulgence can breed a reaction of renunciation, and renunciation can quietly invite the old pleasures back; even apparent dharma can carry adharma hidden inside it. So he gives one clear measuring stick that cuts through the confusion: whatever distances you from God is sin, whatever its label. Drop the false resolves and the false shame that keep you performing, and instead reckon honestly, in your own gut, what truly profits the soul. The test is not the outward form but the direction: toward God, or away.

GATHA 0094

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the fraud, and myself

मराठी मूळ

भोरप्यानं सोंग पालटिलें वरी । ध्यान धरी मत्स्या जैसं ॥१॥
 टिळे माळा मेंद मुद्रा लावी अंगीं । देखों नेदि जगीं फांसे जैसे ॥२॥
 ढीवर या मत्स्या चारा घाली जैसा । भीतरील फांसा कळों नेदी ॥३॥
 खाटिक हा स्नेहवादे पशु पाळी । कापावया नळी तया साठीं ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे तैसा भला मी लोकांत । परी तूं कृपावंत पांडुरंगा ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The charlatan changes his outward form while keeping his dhyana fixed on the fish. He wears tilak, rosaries, insignia, and sacred marks, hiding his snares from the world. As the fisherman baits the hook and conceals the barb, the butcher lovingly raises the animal only to cut its throat. Says Tuka, I am just such a one among the people, yet You, O Panduranga, are gracious.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The fraud changes his outward costume while his attention stays fixed on the catch, the way a heron stands still eyeing the fish. He puts on the tilak, the rosaries, the holy marks and insignia, and hides his snares from everyone. As the fisherman baits the hook and keeps the barb out of sight, as the butcher fattens the animal with kindness only to cut its throat, so does he. Tuka says: I am just such a counterfeit among people, and yet you, Panduranga, are gracious to me anyway.

WHAT IT MEANS

A merciless picture of the false holy man, the one who wears every outward sign of devotion while his mind is fixed, like a hunting heron, on what he can take. The fisherman's hidden barb and the butcher's affectionate fattening are images of betrayal dressed as care. Then Tukaram does something striking: he turns the accusation on himself, confessing that he too is such a counterfeit among people. It is not false modesty but the saint's habit of self-suspicion, and it opens into grace: knowing his own fraudulence, he can only marvel that Panduranga is kind to him regardless. The harshest light, turned inward, becomes humility.

GATHA 0095

Worldly Life

Worldly life, and the age of kirtan

मराठी मूळ

गेली वीरसरी । मग त्यासि रांड मारी ॥१॥
 मग नये तैसी सत्ता । गेली मागील आणितां ॥२॥
 भंगलिया चित्ता । न ये काशानें सांदितां ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे धीर । भंगलिया पाठीं कीर ॥४॥
 कलियुगामाजी करावें कीर्तन । तेणें नारायण देइल भेटी ॥५॥
 न लगे हा लौकिक सांडावा वेव्हार । घ्यावें वनांतर भस्म दंड ॥६॥
 तुका म्हणे मज आणि उपाव । दिसती ते वाव नामाविण ॥७॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When valor departs, even a woman can beat you. Once gone, that former strength cannot be recovered. A chitta once shattered cannot be mended by any means. Says Tuka, once fortitude breaks, ruin follows close behind. In this age of Kali, one should practice kirtan; through it Narayana will grant his presence. There is no need to abandon worldly duties, retire to the forest, or take up ash and staff. Says Tuka, all other remedies are hollow beside the Name.

IN PLAIN WORDS

When valor leaves a man, even a woman can beat him; and once that strength is gone, it cannot be brought back. A heart once shattered cannot be pieced together again by any means. Tuka says: once fortitude breaks, ruin follows close behind. In this age of Kali, the practice to keep is kirtan, the singing of God's name, and through it Narayana will grant his presence. There is no need to give up your worldly duties, or flee to the forest, or take up ashes and a staff. Tuka says: beside the Name, every other remedy I can see is hollow.

WHAT IT MEANS

Two short teachings stand together here. The first is sober: some things, once broken, do not return, lost courage, a shattered heart, so guard your fortitude, because its loss opens the door to ruin. The second is Tukaram's great good news for ordinary people, and one of his best-known teachings: in this fallen age, the whole of religion can be carried by kirtan, the communal singing of God's name. You do not have to renounce your work, abandon your family for the forest, or take up the ascetic's ash and staff. Stay where you are and sing. Beside the living Name, he says, every other elaborate method is empty.

GATHA 0096

True Worship

True worship, the marks of an empty life

मराठी मूळ

कंठीं कृष्णमणी । नाहीं अशुभ ते वाणी ॥१॥
 हो का नर अथवा नारी । रांड तयें नावें खरी ॥२॥
 नाहीं हातीं दान । शूरपणाचें कांकण ॥३॥
 वाळियेली संतीं । केली बोडोनि फजिती ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे ताळा । नाहीं त्याची अवकळा ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

No Krishna-mani at the throat, no auspicious word on the tongue. Whether man or woman, such a one is truly a wretch by name. No generosity in the hand, no bangle of heroism. The saints have cast such a one out, shaved bald in disgrace. Says Tuka, one who has no balance within, his is only degradation.

IN PLAIN WORDS

No Krishna-bead at the throat, no auspicious word on the tongue: whether the person is a man or a woman, the only true name for such a one is wretch. No giving in the hand, no bangle of courage on the wrist. The saints have cast such a person out and shamed him. Tuka says: one who has no inner balance has nothing but degradation.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram lists the marks of a life with no devotion in it: no sign of God worn or remembered, no good word on the lips, no generosity, no courage. Man or woman, he says, such a person has earned only a hard name. The harshness is his usual shock-treatment, but the real point is in the last line: the missing thing is inner balance, the steadiness that comes from a life oriented toward God. Without it, whatever the outward circumstances, the result is only degradation. The ornaments he names, bead, word, gift, courage, are all the outward signs of an inward orientation that is simply not there.

GATHA 0097

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the glib nondualist

मराठी मूळ

माया ब्रम्ह ऐसें म्हणती धर्मठक । आपणासरिसे लोक नागविले ॥१॥
 विषयीं लंपट शिकवी कुविद्या । मनामार्गे नांघा होऊनि फिरे ॥२॥
 करुनी खातां पाक जिरे सुरण राई । करितां अतित्याई दुःख पावे ॥३॥
 औषध द्यावया चाळविलें बाळा । दावूनियां गुळा दृष्टीपुढें ॥४॥
 तरावया आधीं शोधा वेदवाणी । वांजट बोलणीं वारा त्यांचीं ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे जयां पिंडाचें पाळण । न घडे नारायणभेट तयां ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those religious impostors who say "Maya is Brahman" have led others astray along with themselves. Wallowing in sensual pleasures, they teach corrupted knowledge, becoming like the drummer trailing behind the mind's procession. They cook and eat elephant yam and mustard freely enough, but when called upon to be generous, they suffer greatly. To give medicine to a child, one coaxes him by holding a lump of sugar before his eyes. If you wish to cross, first examine the words of the Vedas; put a stop to barren speech. Says Tuka, for those whose life is the nurturing of the body-lump, meeting with Narayana will never come to pass.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Those religious frauds who go about saying Maya is Brahman have led others to ruin along with themselves. Steeped in their own pleasures, they teach corrupted knowledge, trailing behind the mind like a drummer behind a procession. They will happily cook and eat rich food, but the moment they are asked to give, they are in agony. To get a child to take medicine, you hold a lump of sugar before his eyes. If you truly want to cross over, first search the words of the Vedas, and put a stop to all this barren talk. Tuka says: for those whose whole life is the feeding of this lump of flesh, the meeting with Narayana will never come.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram attacks the glib nondualist who recites Maya is Brahman while living for his own appetites. Their fine philosophy, he says, is corrupted knowledge dressed as wisdom; the proof is in their conduct, generous at the table, stingy when asked to give. He grants that hard truth must sometimes be sweetened, the way a child is coaxed to swallow medicine with a sugar lump, but the medicine itself must be real. The test is not the slogan but the life: anyone whose whole existence is spent pampering the body will never actually meet God, however impressive his talk.

GATHA 0098

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, the mirage

मराठी मूळ

मृगजळ दिसे साचपणा ऐसें । खोटियाचें पिसें ऊर फोडी ॥१॥
जाणोन कां करा आपुलाले घात । विचारा रे हित लवलाहीं ॥ध्रु॥
संचित सांगातीं बोळवणें सवें । आचरलें द्यावें फळ तेणें ॥२॥
तुका म्हणे शेखी श्मशान तोंवरी । संबंध गोवरी अंगीं सवें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A mirage appears as genuineness itself; the mania of the false breaks its own heart in pursuit. Knowing all this, why do you still destroy yourself? Think about your welfare right now, without delay. Only stored merit accompanies you as escort; your conduct alone gives its fruit. Says Tuka, in the end the procession goes only as far as the cremation ground, and the consequences of your deeds cling to you like measles erupting on the skin.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A mirage looks exactly like real water, and the deluded man bursts his own heart chasing it. Knowing all this, why do you keep destroying yourself? Think about your real welfare now, without losing a moment. Only your stored-up merit goes with you as escort, and only what you actually did bears fruit. Tuka says: in the end the procession carries you no further than the cremation ground, while the results of your deeds cling to you like measles breaking out on the skin.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram presses the urgency of waking up. The world's goods are a mirage that looks like water and breaks the heart of whoever runs after it. He asks the listener to stop the self-destruction and reckon, right now, what truly profits the soul. Two sober facts frame the choice: at death only one's accumulated merit and deeds travel on, and the funeral procession itself goes only as far as the burning-ground. What you cannot leave behind is the fruit of your actions, which clings like an eruption on the skin. So choose your deeds while there is still time.

GATHA 0099

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, love over qualification

मराठी मूळ

गौळीयाची ताकपिरें । कोण पोरें चांगलीं ॥१॥
येवढा त्यांचा छंद देवा । काय सेवा भक्ती ते ॥ध्रु॥
काय उपास पडिले होते । कण्याभोंवते विदुराच्या ॥२॥
तुका म्हणे कुब्जा दासी । रूपरासी हीनकळा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

What were the milkmaids but women with buttermilk vessels, and what were their children but ordinary ones? Yet what an obsessive passion they had for God; what great devotion did they perform? What feast had Vidura prepared? Just coarse grain and husks. Says Tuka, and Kubja was a hunchbacked maidservant, devoid of beauty or art, yet the Lord gave himself to her.

IN PLAIN WORDS

What were the cowherd women but ordinary milkmaids with their pots of buttermilk, and their children but ordinary children? Yet what a wild passion for God they had; and what formal worship did they ever perform? What feast did Vidura set before the Lord? Only coarse grain and husks. Tuka says: and Kubja was a hunchbacked servant girl, plain and without grace, yet the Lord gave himself to her.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram piles up examples to make one point: God is won by love, not by qualification. The cowherd women were unlettered milkmaids, Vidura offered the Lord nothing but coarse grain, Kubja was a deformed servant with neither beauty nor accomplishment, and yet each received God fully. None of them had status, learning, or correct ritual; all of them had overwhelming devotion. The lesson is aimed straight at anyone who feels too low or too unqualified to approach God. The only credential that has ever mattered is the heart's passion.

GATHA 0100

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, do not waste your life

मराठी मूळ

आतां तरी पुढें हाचि उपदेश । नका करुं नाश आयुष्याचा ॥१॥
 सकळांच्या पायां माझें दंडवत । आपुलालें चित्त शुद्ध करा ॥२॥
 हित तें करावे देवाचें चिंतन । करुनियां मन एकविध ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे लाभ होय तो व्यापार । करा काय फार शिकवावें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let this at least be my counsel going forward: do not waste your lifespan. I fall in full prostration at the feet of all; purify your chitta. The best thing you can do is contemplate God, making the mind undivided. Says Tuka, pursue the trade that is profitable. How much more should I teach?

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let this much, at least, be my counsel from here on: do not throw your life away. I bow in full prostration at everyone's feet, only purify your own heart. The best thing you can do is to keep your thoughts on God, with the mind made single. Tuka says: take up the trade that actually turns a profit. How much more do I need to teach you?

WHAT IT MEANS

One of Tukaram's gentlest and most quoted exhortations, offered with humility rather than rebuke. He bows to all, claims no authority over anyone, and asks only one thing: do not waste the life you have. The whole of his advice fits in a line, purify the heart, keep the mind single on God, and he frames it, as he so often does, in the

merchant's language of profit and loss: this is simply the trade that pays. The closing question is almost tender. The path is so plain that there is really nothing more to explain.

GATHA 0101

The Saints

Saints, God and devotee adorn each other

मराठी मूळ

भक्ताविण देवा । कैचें रूप घडे सेवा ॥१॥
 शोभविलें येर येरां । सोनें एके ठायीं हिरा ॥२॥
 देवाविण भक्ता । कोण देता निष्कामता ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे बाळ । माता जैसें स्नेहजाळ ॥४॥
 ऐसा भक्तांचा अंकित । लागे तैसी लावी प्रीत ॥५॥
 निष्काम निराळा । गोपी लावियेल्या चाळा ॥६॥
 तुका म्हणे आलें । रूपा अव्यक्त चांगलें ॥७॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Without a devotee, how can God's form take shape, and how can service be rendered? They adorn each other, like gold set with a diamond. Without God, who can grant the devotee desirelessness? Says Tuka, the bond between mother and child is a net of affection. God is so branded by His devotees that He loves them in whatever way they need. Desireless and separate, He yet drew the gopis into His antics. Says Tuka, the unmanifest has come to beautiful form.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Without a devotee, how would God's form even take shape, and who would there be to serve him? The two set each other off, like gold mounted with a diamond. And without God, who could ever give the devotee his freedom from desire? Tuka says: it is like the bond between mother and child, a whole net woven of affection. God is so claimed by his devotees that he loves each one exactly as that one needs. Desireless and apart, he still let himself be drawn into the gopis' games. Tuka says: the unmanifest has come into beautiful form.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes the love between God and devotee as a true mutuality, each completing the other. Without devotees there would be no one for God to take form before or to be served by; without God the devotee could never reach desirelessness. Like gold and the diamond set in it, each makes the other shine. The astonishing claim is that God lets himself be owned by his lovers, loving each in the very shape that one needs, and that the formless Absolute, who needs nothing, allowed himself to be pulled into the play of the cowherd girls. Love draws the unmanifest into form.

GATHA 0102

Autobiography

Autobiography, the reluctant saint

मराठी मूळ

काय दिनकरा । केला कोंबड्यानें खरा ॥१॥
 कां हो ऐसा संत ठेवा । भार माझे माथां देवा ॥ध्रु॥
 आडविलें दासीं । तरि कां मरती उपवासी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे हातीं । कळा सकळ अनंतीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Was the sun made genuine by the rooster's crow? Why then, O God, place this precious treasure of sainthood as a weight upon my head? If maidservants could obstruct You, then why would people die of fasting? Says Tuka, all arts and skills rest in the hands of Ananta.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Was the sun made real by the rooster's crowing? Then why, O God, do you lay this heavy treasure of sainthood on my head? If a few maidservants could really block your will, then why would anyone die of fasting and penance? Tuka says: every power and every skill rests in the hands of Ananta, the endless one.

WHAT IT MEANS

A wry protest from a reluctant saint. The rooster crows at dawn, but the sun rises by its own power, not because the rooster called it; so too, Tukaram says, his own reputation for holiness adds nothing to God and only burdens him. He waves off the idea that any human effort, a servant's interference, a faster's austerity, controls divine outcomes. Everything is already in God's hands. Underneath the humility is a deep trust: he refuses the weight of being thought a saint because he knows all the doing is God's, never his own.

GATHA 0103

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, no discrimination

मराठी मूळ

जेवितां ही घरी । नाक हागतिया परी ॥१॥
 ऐसियाचा करी चाळा । आपुली च अवकळा ॥ध्रु॥
 सांडावें मांडावें । काय ऐसें नाहीं ठावें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे करी । ताका दुधा एक सरी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He dines in the house, yet defecates right where he eats. One who carries on like this brings only degradation upon himself. What to discard and what to keep, does he not even know this much? Says Tuka, he treats buttermilk and milk as one and the same.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He eats his meal in the house and then fouls the very spot where he ate. Anyone who behaves like that brings disgrace only on himself. What should be kept and what thrown away, does he not know even this much? Tuka says: he treats buttermilk and milk as if they were one and the same.

WHAT IT MEANS

A blunt little satire on the person who has no power of discrimination, who cannot tell the worthy from the worthless and so spoils his own life. Fouling the place where you eat is Tukaram's crude, memorable image for ruining the good that sustains you. The failure is basic: not knowing what to hold onto and what to discard, treating milk and buttermilk as equal. The point underneath is that the spiritual life depends on this power of discernment, the ability to value rightly, and that without it a person degrades himself no matter what else he does.

GATHA 0104

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, cut the treacherous tie

मराठी मूळ

हो का पुत्र पत्नी बंधु । त्यांचा तोडावा संबंध ॥१॥
 कळों आलें खट्याळसें । शिवों नये लिंपों दोषें ॥२॥
 फोडावें मडकें । मेलें लेखीं घायें एकें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे त्यागें । विण चुकीजेना भोगें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Be it son, wife, or brother, sever ties with those who are treacherous. Once their scheming is clear, do not touch them, lest their sins smear you. Shatter that pot. Count it dead with a single blow. Says Tuka, without renunciation, suffering cannot be escaped.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Be it your son, your wife, or your brother, cut your ties with anyone who proves truly treacherous. Once their scheming is plain, do not even touch them, or their wrongs will smear off onto you. Shatter that pot; count it dead, and finish it with a single blow. Tuka says: without renunciation, there is no escaping the suffering such a tie brings.

WHAT IT MEANS

A hard teaching about poisonous relationships, and Tukaram does not soften it. Even the closest kin, he says, must be let go if they are genuinely treacherous, because corruption rubs off; staying close means sharing in the harm. The image of shattering a cracked pot with one clean blow is deliberately decisive: no lingering, no half-measures. This is not cruelty but protection of the soul. Where a bond reliably drags you toward ruin, only renouncing that bond ends the suffering. He places the welfare of the spiritual life above even family loyalty when the two genuinely collide.

GATHA 0105

Social Criticism

Social criticism, premature display

मराठी मूळ

व्याल्याविण करी शोभनतांतडी । चार ते गधडी करीतसे ॥१॥
 कासया पाल्हाळ आणिकांचे देखी । सांगतां नव्हे सुखी साखरेसि ॥ध्रु॥
 कुंथाच्या ढेकरें न देवेल पुष्टी । रूप दावी कष्टी मळिण वरी ॥२॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Without having delivered, the she-donkey rushes through the naming ceremony. Why all this fuss, looking at what others do? Sugar cannot be made happy by telling it so. A belch from straining gives no nourishment; it only leaves the face looking grimy.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The she-donkey rushes to hold the naming ceremony before she has even given birth. Why all this fuss, just from watching what others do? You cannot make sugar sweet by announcing that it is sweet. A belch forced out by straining brings no real nourishment; it only leaves the face looking grubby.

WHAT IT MEANS

A string of mocking images aimed at empty show and premature claiming. Holding the baby's naming feast before the birth, declaring sugar sweet as if the word added anything, forcing a satisfied belch with no meal behind it, each is a picture of pretending to a result you have not actually reached. Tukaram's target is the person who imitates the outward signs of attainment, often just from copying others, while the substance is missing. The real thing announces itself; it does not need to be performed. Forced display only exposes the emptiness it tries to hide.

GATHA 0106

Renunciation

Renunciation, God before all ties

मराठी मूळ

जेणें घडे नारायणीं अंतराय । होत बाप माय वर्जवीं तीं ॥१॥
 येर प्रिया पुत्र धना कोण लेखा । करिती तीं दुःखा पात्र शत्रु ॥ध्रु॥
 प्रल्हादें जनक बिभीषणें बंधु । राज्य माता निंदु भरतें केली ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे सर्व धर्म हरिचे पाय । आणीक उपाय दुःखमूळ ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Whatever creates a barrier between you and Narayana must be shunned, even if it be your own father or mother. Beloved, children, wealth: these become the very vessels of enmity that make you a receptacle of sorrow. Prahlad renounced his father, Vibhishana his brother, and Bharata rejected the kingdom and condemned his own mother. Says Tuka, all dharma is Hari's feet; all other remedies are the root of suffering.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Whatever comes between you and Narayana must be shunned, even if it is your own father or mother. Spouse, children, wealth, what are they worth, when they so easily become the very vessels of enmity that fill you with sorrow? Prahlad set aside his father, Vibhishana his brother, and Bharata refused the kingdom and even condemned his own mother's deed. Tuka says: the whole of dharma is the feet of Hari; every other remedy is the root of suffering.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram states the absolute priority of God over every other tie. Anything that blocks the way to God, even parents, even spouse and children and wealth, must be set aside, because these attachments so readily turn into sources of conflict and grief. He summons the great scriptural examples of devotees who chose God over family: Prahlad against his demon father, Vibhishana leaving his brother Ravana, Bharata rejecting the throne and his mother's scheme. The conclusion is his creed in one line: the whole of religion is simply the feet of Hari, and every substitute for that is where suffering begins.

GATHA 0107

Renunciation

Renunciation, honor and insult bundled away

मराठी मूळ

मान अपमान गोवे । अवघे गुंडूनी ठेवावे ॥१॥
 हें चि देवाचें दर्शन । सदा राहे समाधान ॥२॥
 शांतीची वसती । तेथें खुंटे काळगती ॥३॥
 आली ऊर्मी साहे । तुका म्हणे थोडें आहे ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Bundle up all honor and insult together and set them aside. This itself is the darshan of God: that contentment may abide. Where peace dwells, the march of Kala is halted. Says Tuka, whatever wave arises, bear it; only a little remains.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Take honor and insult, bundle them up together, and set the whole bundle aside. This itself is the sight of God: that contentment stays with you, always. Where peace has made its home, the march of Death itself comes to a halt. Tuka says: whatever wave rises up in you, just bear it. Only a little is left now.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram makes equanimity the very form of seeing God. Honor and insult, the two things that most toss the heart about, are to be tied up together and dropped, treated as one and the same. When that is done, an unbroken contentment remains, and that contentment, he says, is itself the darshan of God. Where such peace dwells, even Time and Death lose their power to hurry you along. His closing encouragement is practical and warm: when a wave of feeling rises, simply endure it without acting on it. You are nearly through; only a little remains.

GATHA 0108

Surrender and Acceptance

Surrender, only a little remains

मराठी मूळ

थोडें आहे थोडें आहे । चित्त साहे जालिया ॥१॥
 हर्षामर्ष नाहीं अंगीं । पांडुरंगीं सरलें तें ॥२॥
 अवघ्या साधनांचें सार । न लगे फार शोधावें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे लटिकें पाहें । सांडीं देह अभिमान ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Only a little remains, only a little, once the chitta endures. When neither elation nor resentment touch you, you are finished in Panduranga. This is the essence of all sadhana; no great search is needed. Says Tuka, see the world as unreal and abandon body-pride.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Only a little remains, only a little, once the mind has learned to endure. When neither elation nor resentment can touch you any longer, you are complete in Panduranga. This is the essence of all spiritual practice; there is no need to go searching far and wide. Tuka says: see the passing world for the unreal thing it is, and let go of pride in the body.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram distills the whole of sadhana into one quiet instruction. Once the mind can simply bear what comes, the journey is almost over; and the sign of arrival is that the great pair, elation and resentment, no longer move you. To be untouched by both is to be complete in God. He insists there is no need for elaborate seeking after that: the essence is this evenness, plus two things to release, the belief that the changing world is finally real, and pride in the body. Drop those, steady the mind, and the little that remains takes care of itself.

GATHA 0109

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, the boat is waiting

मराठी मूळ

आतां उघडीं डोळे । जरी अद्यापि न कळे ॥ तरी मातेचिये खोळे । दगड आला पोटासि ॥१॥
 मनुष्यदेहा ऐसा निध । साधिली ते साधे सिद्ध ॥ करुनि प्रबोध । संत पार उतरले ॥२॥
 नाव चंद्रभागे तीरीं । उभी पुंडलीकाचे द्वारीं ॥ कट धरुनियां करीं । उभाउभी पालवी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे फुकासाठीं । पायीं घातली या मिठी ॥ होतो उठाउठी । लवकरी च उतार ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Open your eyes now; if you still do not understand, then a stone came wrapped in your mother's membrane. A treasure like this human body can fulfill all attainments; the saints, having awakened, crossed to the other shore. The boat stands at the bank of the Chandrabhaga, at Pundalik's door; with hands on His hips, He calls

out urgently: come! Says Tuka, for nothing at all, clasp His feet; the crossing happens instantly, right then and there.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Open your eyes now. If you still do not understand, then it was a stone that came wrapped in your mother's womb, not a child. A human body like this is a treasure that can win every attainment; the saints, once awakened, used it to cross to the far shore. The boat is waiting on the bank of the Chandrabhaga, right at Pundalik's door, and God stands there, hands on his hips, calling out, come, come quickly. Tuka says: for no price at all, throw your arms around his feet. The crossing happens at once, right then and there.

WHAT IT MEANS

An urgent call to wake up while the chance is here. The harsh opening, that a person who still will not see is a stone and not a child, is meant to jolt. Tukaram prizes the human birth as a rare treasure, the one form in which liberation can actually be won, and the proof is the saints who used it to cross over. Then he paints Pandharpur as the waiting boat: God himself stands at the river, hands on hips, urgently waving the soul aboard. And the fare is nothing. Simply cling to his feet, and the crossing is not delayed for some future life; it is instant, here and now.

GATHA 0110

Renunciation

Renunciation, advaita that is lived

मराठी मूळ

न करीं रे संग राहें रे निश्चळ । लागों नेदीं मळ ममतेचा ॥१॥
 या नांवें अद्वैत खरें ब्रम्हज्ञान । अनुभवावांचून बडबड ते ॥२॥
 इंद्रियांचा जय वासनेचा क्षय । संकल्पा ही न ये वरी मन ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे न ये जाणीव अंतरा । अंतरीं या थारा आनंदाचा ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Do not cling; remain steady and still. Do not let the stain of mine-ness touch you. This is what is called true advaita, true knowledge of Brahman; without anubhava, all talk is mere babbling. Conquer the senses, destroy the vasanas, and let not even a sankalpa rise in the mind. Says Tuka, let no sense of separateness enter within; within, let there be the dwelling-place of bliss.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Do not cling. Stay steady and still. Do not let the stain of mine-ness touch you. This, and only this, is true advaita, the real knowledge of Brahman; without direct experience, all the rest is just babbling. Win mastery over the senses, let the deep cravings wear away, and do not let even a single wish rise up in the mind. Tuka says: let no sense of being separate enter the heart, and within, let bliss itself take up residence.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram defines genuine nonduality, and the definition is lived, not spoken. Real advaita is not a doctrine you can recite; it is non-clinging, stillness, and freedom from mine-ness, verified in direct experience. Without that experience, he says flatly, the grandest philosophy is mere babbling. He lists what it actually takes: mastery of the

senses, the wearing-away of deep-seated cravings, a mind so quiet that not even a wish stirs in it. The goal is a heart with no trace of separateness left, in which bliss has simply moved in to stay. Knowledge that does not change the heart is only noise.

GATHA 0111

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, Vaikuntha on earth

मराठी मूळ

पंढरीचा महिमा । देतां आणीक उपमा ॥१॥
 ऐसा ठाव नाही कोठें । देव उभाउभी भेटे ॥ध्रु॥
 आहेति सकळ । तीर्थे काळें देती फळ ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे पेठ । भूमिवरी हे वैकुंठ ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The glory of Pandhari is beyond all comparison. There is no place like it, where God meets you standing face to face. All other sacred places yield their fruit through time. Says Tuka, this is the marketplace of Vaikuntha, here upon the earth.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The glory of Pandhari is beyond anything you could compare it to. There is no other place like it, where God meets you standing right there, face to face. Every other holy place yields its fruit only slowly, over time. Tuka says: this is the marketplace of Vaikuntha, set down here on the earth.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram exalts Pandharpur above every other sacred place. Elsewhere the holy sites grant their blessings slowly, made to wait on time and merit; but here, he says, God stands openly and meets the devotee face to face, with nothing in between. His final image is characteristically down-to-earth: Pandhari is Vaikuntha, God's own heaven, set up as a marketplace on the ground, where the highest thing is available in the open, to anyone who comes. Heaven is not far off; it has set up shop where the poor can reach it.

GATHA 0112

The Saints

Saints, God in ready cash

मराठी मूळ

तिर्थी धोंडा पाणी । देव रोकडा सज्जनीं ॥१॥
 मिळालिया संतसंग । समर्पितां भलें अंग ॥ध्रु॥
 तिर्थी भाव फळे । येथें आनाड तें वळे ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे पाप । गेलें गेल्या कळे ताप ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

At pilgrimage sites, stone and water. Among the saintly, God is ready cash. When you find the company of saints, offer your body to them wholly. At sacred places, faith alone bears fruit. Here, even the wayward is turned back to the path. Says Tuka, when sin departs, only then is the fever known.

IN PLAIN WORDS

At the pilgrimage places there is only stone and water. Among the saints, God is ready cash, here in your hand. When you find the company of the holy, give your whole self over to them. At the sacred sites, faith bears fruit only slowly; here, even the wayward person is turned back to the path. Tuka says: only once your sin has actually left you do you realize the fever it had been.

WHAT IT MEANS

One of Tukaram's most famous lines, and a quiet revolution in where God is found. The river-shrines, he says, hold only stone and water; the living God is found among the saints, and there he is not a distant promise but cash in hand, immediately spendable. So when you find such company, hold nothing back; give your whole self. Unlike the pilgrimage sites, where blessing comes slowly and only to the faithful, the company of the saints can turn even a wayward person around on the spot. And the proof is felt afterward: only when the fever of sin has lifted do you understand how sick you had been.

GATHA 0113

The Nature of God

Nature of God, he becomes what you need

मराठी मूळ

घेऊनियां चक्र गदा । हा चि धंदा करी तो ॥१॥
 भक्ता राखे पायापासीं । दुर्जनासी संहारी ॥२॥
 अव्यक्त तें आकारलें । रूपा आलें गुणवंत ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे पुरवी इच्छा । जया तैसा विठ्ठल ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Wielding discus and mace, this alone is His hustle. He keeps His devotees close to His feet; the wicked He annihilates. The unmanifest took form, endowed with qualities. Says Tuka, to each as they are, Vitthal becomes.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Discus and mace in hand, this is the work he keeps busy with: he holds his devotees close at his feet, and he destroys the wicked. The unmanifest took on a shape, came into form with qualities you could see. Tuka says: to each person, just as they are, Vitthal becomes whatever they need.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes God as both protector and destroyer, and above all as endlessly adaptable to the devotee. Armed with discus and mace, the Lord's whole occupation is to shelter those who love him and to put down the cruel. The deeper wonder is that the formless Absolute consented to take a visible form, with attributes one could

love and serve. And the closing line is the heart of it: Vitthal meets each person exactly where they are, becoming for each devotee whatever that devotee needs him to be. God is not a fixed remoteness but a presence shaped by love.

GATHA 0114

Social Criticism

Social criticism, tears for a goat

मराठी मूळ

देखोनि पुराणिकांची दाढी । रडे स्फुंदे नाक ओढी ॥१॥
 प्रेम खरें दिसे जना । भिन्न अंतरीं भावना ॥२॥
 आवरितां नावरे । खुर आठवी नेवरे ॥३॥
 बोलों नयें मुखावाटां । म्हणे होतां ब्यांचा तोटा ॥४॥
 दोन्ही सिंगें चारी पाय । खुणा दावी म्हणे होय ॥५॥
 मना आणितां बोकड । मेला त्याची चरफड ॥६॥
 होता भाव पोटी । मुखा आलासे शेवटीं ॥७॥
 तुका म्हणे कुडें । कळों येतें तें रोकडें ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Seeing the preacher's beard, she weeps and sobs and wipes her nose. Her devotion seems genuine to onlookers, yet her inner feelings are entirely different. She cannot restrain herself; her mind keeps recalling the goat's hooves like anklets. What she cannot speak aloud: she fears a shortage of goats. Two horns, four legs: these are the signs she knows, nodding eagerly. When the goat comes to mind, she dies of restless craving. What was hidden in the heart has come to the lips at last. Says Tuka, crookedness always shows up plain as day.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Seeing the preacher's beard, she weeps and sobs and wipes her nose, and to everyone watching her devotion looks completely genuine. But inside, her feeling is something else entirely. She cannot help herself; the beard keeps reminding her of a goat's hooves. What she dare not say aloud is that she is worried there will be a shortage of goats to eat. Two horns, four legs, those are the signs she knows, and she nods along eagerly. The moment the goat comes to mind she is half-dead with craving. What was hidden in the heart has come out at the lips in the end. Tuka says: crookedness always shows itself plainly, sooner or later.

WHAT IT MEANS

A comic, merciless satire on counterfeit devotion. A woman at a religious discourse weeps so convincingly that everyone takes her for a great devotee, but the preacher's beard has only set her thinking of a goat, and the goat of dinner. Her tears are real; their cause is appetite, not love. Tukaram's point lands in the final line, one of his favorite themes: what is truly in the heart will eventually surface at the lips, and crookedness, however well performed, gives itself away in the end. He laughs, but the warning is serious. Display is no proof; only the heart's real object counts.

GATHA 0115

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, keep far from the wicked

मराठी मूळ

दुर्जनाची गंधी विष्टेचिया परी । देखोनियां दुरी व्हावें तया ॥१॥
 अडका हो तुम्ही मात हे सज्जन । करुं संघष्टन नये बोलों ॥२॥
 दुर्जनाचे अंगीं अखंड विटाळ । वाणी रजस्वला स्रवे तैशी ॥३॥
 दुर्जनाचें भय धरावें त्यापरी । पिसाळलेवरी धांवे श्वान ॥४॥
 दुर्जनाचा भला नव्हे अंगसंग । बोलिलासे त्याग देशाचा त्या ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे किती सांगावें पृथक । अंग कुंभीपाक दुर्जनाचें ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The stench of the wicked is like excrement; seeing them, keep far away. Listen, O good people: do not engage or quarrel with them. The wicked carry permanent ritual defilement; their speech flows like menstrual discharge. Fear the wicked as you would a rabid dog that lunges at anyone in sight. Keeping company with the wicked brings no good; exile from the very land is prescribed. Says Tuka, how much more can be said? The wicked person's very body is Kumbhipaka.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The stench of a wicked person is like the stench of excrement; the moment you see such a one, keep your distance. Listen, good people: do not get drawn into argument or quarrel with them. A constant defilement hangs about the wicked, and a ceaseless foulness pours out in their speech. Fear them the way you would fear a rabid dog that lunges at anyone in its path. No good ever comes of keeping their company; the old rule even prescribed banishing them from the land. Tuka says: what more is there to say? The very body of a wicked person is a hell.

WHAT IT MEANS

A strong warning about toxic company. Tukaram heaps up images of contamination, stench, foulness, a hell carried in the body, to make a single practical point: stay away. He is especially wary of argument; do not even engage, because the quarrel itself drags you down to their level. The rabid dog is the operative comparison: the danger is not that the wicked are evil in the abstract but that they lunge and infect indiscriminately, so distance is the only safety. The harshness is protective, aimed at the corrupting pattern. Guard your company, he says, as you would guard your health.

GATHA 0116

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the true outcaste

मराठी मूळ

अतिवादी नव्हे शुद्ध या बीजाचा । ओळखा जातीचा अंत्यज तो ॥१॥
 वेद श्रुति नाहीं ग्रंथ ज्या प्रमाण । श्रेष्ठाचें वचन न मानी जो ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे मद्यपानाचें मिष्टान्न । तैसा तो दुर्जन शिवों नये ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He is no pure seed, that loud-mouth; know him as one cast out in spirit. The Vedas, the scriptures, the words of the wise, he holds none as authority. Says Tuka, like a sweet dish served with liquor, such a wretch is not to be touched.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The argumentative loudmouth is no pure seed; recognize him for what he is, an outcaste in spirit, whatever his birth. He treats neither the Vedas, nor the scriptures, nor the words of the wise as having any authority over him. Tuka says: he is like a sweet dish served alongside liquor. Do not touch him.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns his definition of caste inward again. The real outcaste is not the low-born but the contentious man who recognizes no authority above his own opinion, not scripture, not the wise. Such a person is from a corrupt seed in spirit. The closing image is precise: a sweet dish set out with liquor is spoiled by the company it keeps, however good it looks; so the loudmouth's cleverness is poisoned by his refusal of all guidance. Stay away, not from his birth, but from his arrogance, which contaminates whatever it touches.

GATHA 0117

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, one thing in the belly

मराठी मूळ

शब्दा नाहीं धीर । ज्याची बुद्धि नाहीं स्थिर ॥१॥
 त्याचें न व्हावे दर्शन । खळा पंगती भोजन ॥२॥
 संतास जो निंदी । अधम लोभासाठीं वंदी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे पोटी । भाव अणीक जया होटी ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One whose words lack steadiness, whose resolve is never firm.

Do not seek the sight of such a one. Do not share the meal-row with the wicked.

One who slanders the saints and bows to the base out of greed.

Says Tuka, one thing in the belly, another on the lips.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A person whose words have no steadiness, whose resolve is never firm: do not seek out his company, and do not sit in the same meal-row with the wicked. He slanders the saints, and bows low to the base out of plain greed. Tuka says: one thing in his belly, and another thing altogether on his lips.

WHAT IT MEANS

A portrait of the double-minded man, and a warning to keep clear of him. His words are unreliable because his resolve is unsteady; his behavior is governed by appetite, so he will run down the genuinely holy while fawning on the powerful when there is something to gain. The mark Tukaram fixes on is the split between inside and outside, one thing in the belly, another on the lips, the very hypocrisy he hates most. To share even a meal-row with such a person, he suggests, is to absorb a little of that doubleness.

GATHA 0118

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, you become what you follow

मराठी मूळ

चोरें चोरातें करावा उपदेश । आपुला अभ्यास असेल तो ॥१॥
 शिंदळीच्या मागें वेचितां पाउलें । होईल आपुलें तिच्या ऐसें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे भितो पुढिलिया दत्ता । म्हणऊनि चिंता उपजली ॥२॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A thief teaches a thief only what he himself practices. Waste your steps trailing a wayward woman, you will become like her. Says Tuka, I fear what is already assigned ahead, and so this anxiety has arisen.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A thief can only teach another thief the trade he himself practices. Wear out your feet following after a wayward woman, and you will end up just like her. Tuka says: I am afraid of what lies ahead for me, and that is exactly why this anxiety has risen up in me.

WHAT IT MEANS

Two plain truths about influence, and then a startling turn inward. You become what you follow: a thief passes on only thievery, and trailing after the corrupt makes you corrupt. So far it is a warning about company. But the last line is pure Tukaram, the saint suspicious of himself: rather than congratulate himself for knowing better, he confesses that he too fears where his own steps might lead, and that this honest fear is the very source of his vigilance. The teaching about others becomes a reason for self-watchfulness.

GATHA 0119

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, wrong for the moment

मराठी मूळ

मांडवाच्या दारा । पुढें आणिला म्हातारा ॥१॥
 म्हणे नवरी आणा रांड । जाळा नवऱ्याचें तोंड ॥२॥
 समय न कळे । काय उपयोगीं ये वेळे ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे खरा । येथूनिया दूर करा ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

An old man was brought before the wedding canopy. He says, "Bring the whore! Burn the groom's face!" He does not know the occasion, or what serves this moment. Says Tuka, he is a genuine one, all right. Remove him from here.

IN PLAIN WORDS

An old man was led up to the wedding canopy, and he blurts out, bring the whore, set fire to the bridegroom's face. He has no idea what the occasion is, or what is fitting to say at this moment. Tuka says: he is a real specimen, this one. Take him away from here.

WHAT IT MEANS

A short, broad comedy about a man hopelessly out of step with the moment. Brought to a wedding, he shouts curses fit for nowhere, blind to where he is and what the hour calls for. Tukaram's eye is on the deeper failing: not knowing the samaya, the right thing for the right time. Wisdom is not only saying true things but saying the fitting thing in its proper place. The man who has lost that sense, however loud, only needs to be quietly removed. Behind the joke is a teaching about the discernment of the moment.

GATHA 0120

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the squandered birth

मराठी मूळ

कांहीं नित्यनेमाविण । अन्न खाय तो श्वान ॥ वांयां मनुष्यपण । भार वाहे तो वृषभ ॥१॥
 त्याचा होय भूमी भार । नेणे यातीचा आचार ॥ जाला दावेदार । भोगवी अघोर पितरांसि ॥२॥
 अखंड अशुभ वाणी । खरें न बोले स्वर्णी ॥ पापी तयाहुनी । आणीक नाहीं दुसरा ॥३॥
 पोट पोसी एकला । भूतीं दया नाहीं ज्याला ॥ पाठीं लागे आल्या । अतिताचे दाराशीं ॥४॥
 कांहीं संतांचे पूजन । न घडे तीर्थाचें भ्रमण ॥ यमाचा आंदण । सीण थोर पावेल ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे त्यांनीं । मनुष्यपणा केली हानी ॥ देवा विसरुनी । गेलीं म्हणतां मी माझें ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One who eats without any daily discipline, he is a dog. One who wastes his humanness carrying burdens for nothing, he is an ox.

Such a one is a burden upon the earth, ignorant of the conduct his station demands. Having become a claimant to the family line, he sends his ancestors into terrible suffering.

One whose speech is forever inauspicious, who cannot speak truth even in a dream. There is no greater sinner than he; there is no other worse.

One who feeds only his own belly, who has no compassion for any living being, and who hounds the guest that comes to his door.

One who never worships the saints, for whom no pilgrimage ever comes to pass. He becomes an offering to Yama; great suffering he shall receive.

Says Tuka, such people have squandered their humanness. Forgetting God, they were lost the moment they clung to "I" and "mine."

IN PLAIN WORDS

A man who eats with no daily discipline at all is a dog. One who wastes his human birth hauling burdens for nothing is an ox. He is a weight on the earth, ignorant of how a human life should be lived, and by his conduct he drags even his ancestors into torment. His speech is forever foul; he cannot tell the truth even in a dream. There is no greater sinner anywhere. He feeds only his own belly, has no pity for any creature, and harasses the very guest who comes to his door. He never honors the saints, no pilgrimage is ever made. He becomes Death's own property, and great suffering awaits him. Tuka says: such people have thrown their humanness away. Forgetting God, they were lost the very moment they began to say, I and mine.

WHAT IT MEANS

A full catalogue of the wasted human life, building to its single root cause. Tukaram runs through the signs, no discipline, no compassion, foul speech, inhospitality, neglect of saints and of God, and at each step strips away the dignity of the human birth: such a person is a dog, an ox, a mere weight on the earth, Death's property. But the last line names the source of it all. Every item on the list flows from one thing: forgetting God and clinging to I and mine. The moment the self becomes the center, the humanness is already squandered. The whole portrait is the cost of that one forgetting.

GATHA 0121

Social Criticism

Social criticism, where defilement lives

मराठी मूळ

कन्या गो करी कथेचा विकरा । चांडाळ तो खरा तया नांवें ॥१॥
 गुण अवगुण हे दोन्ही प्रमाण । यातिशीं कारण नाही देवा ॥२॥
 आशाबद्ध नये करुं तें करिती । तुका म्हणे जाती नरकामधीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One who sells daughters, cows, and sacred stories. He is the truly fallen one, that is his name. Virtue and vice are the only true measures; caste has nothing to do with God. Says Tuka, those bound by desire do what should never be done. They fall into hell.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Who is the truly low one? Not the man born low. It is the man who sells what is holy: his daughter, his cow, even the telling of God's story. Your birth does not make you low. What you do makes you low. Good and bad are the only measure. Before God, caste counts for nothing. People ruled by their wants do what should never be done. Tuka says: they are the ones who fall.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram moves the idea of pollution off birth and onto conduct, keeping the harshest word in the language to do it. The truly defiled one, the real outcaste, is not the person born low but the one who turns sacred things into merchandise. What makes you low is what you do. Good and bad are the only measure, and before God a person's birth counts for nothing at all. Coming from a man whose own right to sing of God was attacked over his birth, this is less a tidy reform than a testimony; and his anger lands not on the low-born but on the desire-bound who know better and do worse.

GATHA 0122

The Nature of God

Nature of God, Hari and Hara are one

मराठी मूळ

हरिहरां भेद । नाहीं करुं नये वाद ॥१॥
 एक एकाचे हृदयीं । गोडी साखरेच्या ठायीं ॥२॥
 भेदकासी नाड । एक वेलांटी च आड ॥३॥
 उजवें वामांग । तुका म्हणे एक चि अंग ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Between Hari and Hara there is no difference; do not quarrel over this. Each dwells in the heart of the other, like sweetness within sugar. For the one who insists on division, even a single vowel mark brings ruin. Says Tuka, left side and right side are still one body.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Between Hari and Hara there is no real difference; do not waste breath quarreling over it. Each lives in the heart of the other, the way sweetness lives inside sugar. For the man who insists on dividing them, even a single vowel mark becomes a stumbling-block. Tuka says: the left side and the right side are still one body.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram steps into the old sectarian quarrel between the followers of Vishnu, called Hari, and Shiva, called Hara, and dismisses it. The two are not two; each dwells in the other as sweetness dwells in sugar, inseparable. The person who insists on a difference trips over the smallest thing, a single vowel mark, because his whole project is

division for its own sake. The closing image settles it: left and right are different sides, but one body. To set the gods against each other is to fight one's own limbs.

GATHA 0123

True Worship

True worship, everything in its place

मराठी मूळ

वक्त्या आधीं मान । गंध अक्षता पूजन । श्रोता यति जाला जाण । तरी त्या नाहीं उचित ॥१॥
 शीर सर्वांगा प्रमाण । यथाविधि कर चरण । धर्माचें पाळण । सकळीं सत्य करावें ॥२॥
 पट्ट पुत्र सांभाळी । पिता त्याची आज्ञा पाळी । प्रमाण सकळीं । ते मर्यादा करावी ॥३॥
 वरासनीं पाषाण । तो न मानावा सामान्य । येर उपकरणें । सोनियाचीं परी तीं नीच ॥४॥
 सोनियाचा पैजण । मुगुटमणि केला हीण । जयाचें कारण । तया ठायीं अळंकार ॥५॥
 सेवका स्वामीसाठीं मान । त्याचें नाम त्याचें धन । तुका म्हणे जाण । तुम्ही संत तदर्थी ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

First, honor the speaker with sandalwood paste, flowers, and worship. Even if the listener be a renunciant, he does not deserve that same honor.

The head governs the whole body. As hands and feet serve their proper duty, so let all uphold the law of dharma in truth.

The anointed heir is cherished by all, yet even his father obeys the throne's command. Let everyone observe that rightful order.

A stone seated on the high altar must not be treated as ordinary. Other implements, even if made of gold, remain lowly beside it.

A golden anklet, however precious, is counted less than the jewel in the crown. Each ornament belongs to its own rightful place.

The servant earns honor for the sake of the master. The master's name is the servant's true wealth. Says Tuka: know this, O saints, and live accordingly.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Honor the one who speaks of God first, with sandal paste and flowers and worship; even a renunciant in the audience does not claim that same honor. The head governs the whole body, and as the hands and feet each keep to their task, so let everyone uphold dharma in truth. The crown prince is cherished by all, yet even his father bows to the throne; let everyone keep that rightful order. A plain stone set on the high altar is no ordinary stone; beside it, even implements of gold rank lower. A golden anklet, precious as it is, counts for less than the jewel in the crown; each ornament has its own rightful place. A servant is honored for his master's sake; the master's name is the servant's true wealth. Tuka says: understand this, O saints, and live by it.

WHAT IT MEANS

An abhanga about rightful order and where honor truly belongs. Tukaram argues by a series of proportions: the speaker of God's word outranks even a renunciant listener; the head governs the limbs; the throne outranks even the prince's father; a stone on the altar outranks golden tools; the crown-jewel outranks the golden anklet. In each case worth is set not by the material but by relation to the sacred center. The conclusion ties it to devotion: a servant's dignity comes entirely from his master, and the master's name is his real wealth. Honor flows from nearness to God, and the saint who grasps this keeps everything in its proper place.

GATHA 0124

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the hollow boaster

मराठी मूळ

घरीं रांडा पोरें मरती उपवासीं । सांगे लोकांपासीं थोरपण ॥१॥
 नेऊनियां घरा दाखवावें काय । काळतोडा जाय चुकावूनि ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे आम्ही जाणों त्या प्रमाण । ठकावे हे जन तैसे नहों ॥३॥
 जोहार - अभंग ३

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

His wife and children starve at home, yet he boasts of his greatness before the public.

If someone were taken to his house, what would they see? The shame-faced one would slip away to avoid them.

Says Tuka, we know the true measure of such a one. We are not the sort who can be deceived.

IN PLAIN WORDS

His wife and children are starving at home, and yet he goes about boasting of his greatness in public. Take someone back to his house and what would they find? The shame-faced man would slip away to avoid being seen. Tuka says: we know exactly what such a person is worth. We are not the kind who can be fooled.

WHAT IT MEANS

A short, sharp portrait of the hollow boaster, the man who performs importance abroad while his own family goes hungry at home. The test Tukaram applies is simple and merciless: would his public face survive a visit to his actual house? It would not, and so he avoids being seen there. The closing note is the satirist's confidence: such pretense fools the crowd but not the discerning, and Tukaram counts himself among those who can read the true worth behind the show. The gap between the public boast and the private reality is the whole of the man.

GATHA 0125

Worldly Metaphors

Reckoning, the watchman calls

मराठी मूळ

मायबाप जोहार । सारा साधावया आलों वेसकर ॥१॥
 मागील पुढील करा झाडा । नाही तरी खोडा घालिती जी ॥२॥
 फांकुं नका रुजू जालिया वांचून । सांगा जी कोण घरीं तीं धण्या ॥३॥
 आजि मायबाप करा तडामोडी । उद्यां कोणी घडी राहेना हो ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे कांहीं न चले ते बोली । अखरते सालीं झाडा घेती ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Johar, my lords and patrons! I have come as the village watchman to settle all accounts.**Clear your debts, past and future, or they will throw you in the stocks.**Do not slip away without presenting yourself. Tell me, master, who is the true owner of this house?**Today, patrons, break it all and settle it. Tomorrow, not a single moment is promised.**Says Tuka: empty words will not work here. At the end, they strip even the husk in the reckoning.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Johar, my lords and patrons. I have come, the village watchman, to settle all the accounts. Clear your debts, the old ones and the ones still to come, or you will be put in the stocks. Do not slip off without showing yourself; tell me, master, who is the real owner of this house? Settle it all today, my patrons, break it open and reckon it now, for tomorrow not a single moment is promised to you. Tuka says: empty words will not pass here. In the end they strip away even the husk in the reckoning.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram takes on the voice of the vesakar, the village watchman who calls out johar and comes to collect what is owed, and behind that voice stands Death and the final reckoning. The debts to be cleared are a life's deeds; the stocks are the consequence; the unanswerable question, who really owns this house, exposes how little of what we call ours is truly ours. The urgency is the heart of it: settle today, because tomorrow is not promised, and at the end the accounting is total, stripping away even the husk. He uses the lowly servant's role to deliver the highest warning.

GATHA 0126

Worldly Metaphors

Reckoning, the watchman's due

मराठी मूळ

येऊं घा जी कांहीं वेसकरास । आंतून बाहेर वोजेचा घास ॥१॥
 जो यावें तों हात चि रिता नाही । कधीं तरी कांहीं द्यावें घ्यावें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे उद्यां लावीन म्हनेरा । जे हे दारोदारांभोंवतीं फिरा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Let whatever comes be given to the watchman. A share of every load passing in and out is his due.**Whoever enters must not come empty-handed. Something given, something taken, every single time.**Says Tuka, tomorrow I will levy the fine on all of you who wander door to door.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let the watchman be given his share, a mouthful from every load that passes in or out. Whoever comes through must not arrive empty-handed; something given, something taken, every single time. Tuka says: tomorrow I will levy the fine on all of you who go wandering from door to door.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram stays in the watchman's voice. The watchman's customary due, a share of everything that moves through the village gate, becomes an image of the toll that life and death exact on all our comings and goings. No one passes free; every transaction carries its levy. And the closing line keeps the threat of the reckoning hanging over those who drift from door to door, busy with the world. Under the homely custom is the same teaching as the verse before it: an account is being kept, and a fine will be paid, on everything you do.

GATHA 0127

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the house stripped bare

मराठी मूळ

देती घेती परज गेली । घर खालीं करूनियां ॥१॥
 धांवणियाचे न पडे हातीं । खादली राती काळोखी ॥२॥
 वघियांचे अवघें नेलें । काहीं ठेविलें नाहीं मागें ॥३॥
 सोंग संपादुनि दाविला भाव । गेला आधीं माव वरि होती ॥४॥
 घराकडे पाहूं नयेसं जालें । अमानत केलें दिवाणांत ॥५॥
 आतां तुका कोणा न लगे चि हातीं । जाली ते निश्चिती बोलों नये ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

While giving and taking went on, what was held in trust slipped away. The house was stripped bare.

What the raid seized cannot be recovered. A dark night swallowed it whole.

The thieves took everything. Not a thing was left behind.

They played their part in disguise, showed devotion on the surface, but the illusion had already departed from within.

One cannot even bear to look at the house now. It has all been deposited in the court.

Says Tuka, now no one can lay hands on it. What has come to pass is certain, and of it nothing more should be spoken.

IN PLAIN WORDS

While the buying and selling went on, the thing held in trust quietly slipped away, and the house was left stripped bare. What the raid carried off cannot be recovered; a dark night swallowed it whole. The thieves took everything and left nothing behind. They had played their parts in costume, showing devotion on the surface, but the substance had already gone from within. One cannot even bear to look at the house now; the whole matter has been deposited with the court. Tuka says: now it is in no one's hands to seize. What has happened is settled, and of it nothing more need be said.

WHAT IT MEANS

A dark, riddling poem about dispossession. On the surface it is a house emptied by thieves in the night while its keeper was busy trading; what was held in trust is gone, and only bare walls remain. Read inwardly, it is the stripping-away of everything the self falsely held, including a devotion that was all surface, costume without substance. The turn comes at the end: the emptied matter has been handed over to the court, deposited where no thief and no claimant can reach it. Whatever exactly was lost, it is now beyond anyone's grasp, settled and final, and Tukaram lets it rest in silence.

GATHA 0128

The Power of the Name

The Name, God comes running

मराठी मूळ

शुकसनकादिकीं उभारिला बाहो । परिक्षितीला हो दिसां सातां ॥१॥
उठाउठी करी स्मरणाचा धांवा । धरवत देवा नाहीं धीर ॥२॥
त्तरा जाली गरुड टाकियेला मार्गे । द्रौपदीच्या लागें नारायणें ॥३॥
तुका म्हणे करी बहु च तांतडी । प्रेमाची आवडी लोभ फार ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Sages like Shuka and Sanaka raised their arms in triumph at what God did for Parikshit in seven days.

At the first cry of remembrance, God breaks into a run. He cannot hold His patience, not for a moment.

Such was His haste that He left Garuda behind, racing on foot to reach Draupadi in her hour of need.

Says Tuka, He is in a great rush always. His love for the devotee's love is deep, His greed for it boundless.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Sages like Shuka and Sanaka raised their arms in wonder at what God did for Parikshit in just seven days. At the very first cry of remembrance, God breaks into a run; he cannot hold his patience even for a moment. So great was his haste once that he left his eagle Garuda behind and ran on foot to reach Draupadi in her hour of need. Tuka says: he is always in a great hurry. His love for the devotee's love runs deep, and his hunger for it knows no bound.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram celebrates God's sheer eagerness to come to those who call him. He gathers the famous stories, Parikshit saved in seven days, Draupadi rescued in the open assembly, to make one point: God does not wait to be coaxed. At the first remembrance he comes running, too impatient even to mount his eagle. The lovely reversal in the last line is that the God who needs nothing is pictured here as greedy, hungry for the devotee's love, in a hurry to receive it. The image turns the whole transaction of grace around: the Lord wants us more than we want him.

GATHA 0129

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, the bitter neem

मराठी मूळ

बोललों तें कांहीं तुमचिया हिता । वचन नेणतां क्षमा कीजे ॥१॥
 वाट दावी तया न लगे रुसावें । अतित्याई जीवें नाश पावे ॥२॥
 निंब दिला रोग तुटाया अंतरीं । पोभाळितां वरि आंत चरे ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे हित देखण्यासि कळे । पडती आंधळे कूपा माजी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Whatever I have spoken was only for your benefit. If my words fall short, please forgive me.

Do not resent the one who shows you the way. The transgressor perishes by his own willfulness.

Neem is given to cut the disease within. If you merely pamper and fondle the surface, the rot keeps spreading inside.

Says Tuka: only those with eyes can recognize what is truly good for them. The blind fall straight into the well.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Whatever I have said was only for your good; if my words came out clumsily, please forgive them. Do not resent the one who shows you the road. The willful man destroys himself by his own stubbornness. Neem is given, bitter, to cut a disease at its root; pamper only the surface and the rot goes on spreading inside. Tuka says: only the one with eyes can see what is truly good for him. The blind walk straight into the well.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks as the reluctant truth-teller, and asks not to be hated for it. Hard words, like bitter neem, are medicine meant to cut a disease at the root; soothing flattery only lets the rot spread unseen. So he begs forgiveness for any clumsiness even as he refuses to soften the substance, and warns that resenting the one who shows the way is self-destruction. The closing image is stark: real good can only be recognized by those willing to see, while the blind, those who will not, walk straight into the well. To accept correction is to have eyes.

GATHA 0130

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the monkey's fist

मराठी मूळ

माकडें मुठीं धरिलें फुटाणे । गुंतले ते नेणे हात तेथें ॥१॥
 काय तो तयाचा लेखावा अन्याय । हित नेणे काय आपुलें तें ॥२॥
 शुके नळिकेशीं गोवियेले पाय । विसरोनि जाय पक्ष दोन्ही ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे एक ऐसे पशुजीव । न चले उपाव कांहीं तेथें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A monkey grabs roasted grain in its fist. Its hand is stuck there, and it does not know it.

What fault can be laid upon it? It does not know its own good.

A parrot's feet are caught in a hollow stick. It forgets both its wings.

Says Tuka, some are animal-souled like this. No remedy avails them.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A monkey closes its fist around the roasted grain inside the trap, and then cannot pull its hand free, and does not even realize that it is its own grip that holds it. What blame can you lay on it? It simply does not know its own good. A parrot's feet catch on the little rolling perch, and in its panic it forgets it has two wings to fly with. Tuka says: some creatures are animal-souled like this, and for them no remedy works at all.

WHAT IT MEANS

Two famous images of self-made captivity. The monkey is trapped only by its own refusal to open its fist; let go of the grain and it is free, but it will not, and does not even see that the prison is its own grip. The parrot, feet caught on a spinning perch, forgets that its wings could lift it away at any moment. Both are pictures of the soul held not by the world but by its own clinging and its own forgetting. Tukaram's sober close admits a limit: some are so identified with the trap that no help reaches them. The only key was always to open the hand, or to remember the wings.

GATHA 0131

The Nature of God

Nature of God, the trial of his lovers

मराठी मूळ

हरि तूं निष्ठ निर्गुण । नाहीं माया बहु कठिण । नव्हे तें करिसी आन । कवणें नाहीं केलें तें ॥१॥
 घेऊनि हरिश्चंद्राचें वैभव । राज्य घोडे भाग्य सर्व । पुत्र पत्नी जीव । डोंबाघरीं वोपविलीं ॥२॥
 नळा दमयंतीचा योग । बिघडिला त्यांचा संग । ऐसें जाणे जग । पुराणें ही बोलती ॥३॥
 राजा शिबी चक्रवर्ती । कृपाळु दया भूतीं । तुळविलें अंतीं । तुळें मास तयाचें ॥४॥
 कर्ण भिडता समरंगणीं । बाणीं व्यापियेला रणीं । मागसी पाडोनी । तेथें दांत तयाचे ॥५॥
 बळी सर्वस्वें उदार । जेणें उभारिला कर । करुनि काहार । तो पाताळीं घातला ॥६॥
 श्रियाळाच्या घरीं । धरणें मांडिलें मुरारी । मारविलें करीं । त्याचें बाळ त्याहातीं ॥७॥
 तुज भावें जे भजती । त्यांच्या संसारा हे गति । ठाव नाहीं पुढती । तुका म्हणे करिसी तें ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

O Hari, you are truly without attributes, and yet your Maya is exceedingly harsh. You do what has never been done, what no one else would dare.

You took Harishchandra's kingdom, his horses, all his glory, and delivered his wife and son to the house of the Domb.

You tore Nala from Damayanti and ruined their union. So the world knows, and so the Puranas attest.

King Shibi, compassionate to all creatures, you made him weigh his own flesh upon the scales.

Karna, bold on the battlefield, pierced by arrows in the fray, you knocked out even his teeth, demanding still more.

Bali, generous with everything he had, who raised his hand to give it all, you forced him into servitude and cast him into the netherworld.

At Shriyala's house, O Murari, you staged a sit-in and had his own child slain by his own hand.

Says Tuka, this is the fate of those who love you with all their being. There is no knowing what you will do next.

IN PLAIN WORDS

O Hari, you are truly beyond all qualities, and yet your Maya can be terribly hard; you do what has never been done, what no one else would dare. You took everything Harishchandra had, his kingdom, his horses, all his fortune, and set his wife and son to labor in an outcaste's house. You broke Nala and Damayanti apart and ruined their life together; the world knows it, and the Puranas say so. King Shibi, who was merciful to every creature, you made weigh his own flesh on the scales. Karna, brave on the battlefield, riddled with arrows, you knocked out even his teeth and still demanded more. Bali, who gave away everything he had with an open hand, you forced into servitude and pushed down into the netherworld. At Shriyala's house, Murari, you staged your sit-in and had the father slay his own child with his own hands. Tuka says: this is what becomes of those who love you with their whole being. There is no telling what you will do next.

WHAT IT MEANS

One of Tukaram's boldest and most unsettling abhangas, spoken with a lover's audacity. He recites the catalogue of God's greatest devotees, Harishchandra, Nala, Shibi, Karna, Bali, Shriyala, and points out that each was put through annihilating trial precisely because he loved God so completely. The formless, attribute-less Lord, he says, wields a Maya that can be merciless, doing to his closest ones what no one else would dare. It is not a complaint that turns away but a complaint that clings: he names the terror of the path honestly, that to love God wholly is to be tested past all bearing, and ends not in doctrine but in awe, there is no knowing what you will do next. Faith here includes the courage to say this aloud.

GATHA 0132

The Power of the Name

The Name, Death barred by flame

मराठी मूळ

चाल केलासी मोकळा । बोल विठ्ठल वेळोवेळां ॥१॥
 तुज पापचि नाहीं ऐसें । नाम घेतां जवळीं वसे ॥२॥
 पंच पातकांच्या कोडी । नामें जळतां न लगे घडी ॥३॥
 केलीं मागें नको राहों । तुज जमान आम्ही आहों ॥४॥
 करीं तुज जीं करवती । आणि नामें घेऊं किती ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे काळा । रीग नाहीं निघती ज्वाळा ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

You have been set free. Now walk freely, and speak Vitthal's name at every turn.

You carry no sin whatsoever. When you take the Name, He comes to dwell beside you.

Ten million mortal sins, crores upon crores. The Name burns them all; it does not take even a moment.

What was done before, do not dwell on it. We stand surety for you.

Whatever deeds you are made to do, and however many Names you are asked to take.

Says Tuka: Death has no entry here. Flames issue forth and bar the way.

IN PLAIN WORDS

You have been set free; now walk loose and easy, and say Vitthal's name at every turn. It is as if you never had any sin at all: the moment you take the Name, he comes and lives beside you. Ten million deadly sins, crores upon crores of them, the Name burns the whole heap in less than an instant. Do not stay stuck on what you did before; we ourselves stand surety for you. Whatever deeds you are set to do, however many Names you are asked to take, take them. Tuka says: into this, Death has no entrance; flames leap up and bar his way.

WHAT IT MEANS

A poem of total reassurance built on the power of the Name. Tukaram tells the burdened soul it is already free: take Vitthal's name and God himself moves in beside you, so completely that it is as though no sin had ever been. Even an unimaginable mass of sins is burned away in a moment by the Name. He meets the one obstacle, guilt

over the past, head on: do not dwell there, for we, the saints, stand surety for you. And he ends with a guarantee of safety: where the Name is, Death cannot enter, turned back by a wall of flame. The Name does not merely cleanse; it stands guard.

GATHA 0133

The Power of the Name

The Name, God hears the feeling

मराठी मूळ

बाळ बापा म्हणे काका । तरी तो कां निपराध ॥१॥
 जैसा तैसा भाव गोड । पुरवी कोड विठ्ठल ॥२॥
 साकरेसि म्हणतां धोंडा । तरी कां तोंडा न रुचे ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे आरुष बोल । नव्हे फोल आहाच ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

If a child calls its father "uncle," is the child not blameless?

Whatever the feeling, if it is sweet, Vitthal fulfills that wish.

If you call sugar a stone, does it not still taste sweet on the tongue?

Says Tuka: rough words, spoken truly, are no hollow husk.

IN PLAIN WORDS

When a small child calls its father uncle, is the child to blame for it? Whatever the feeling is, so long as it is sweet, Vitthal grants the wish behind it. If you call sugar a stone, does it stop tasting sweet on your tongue? Tuka says: rough, clumsy words, if they are spoken truly, are no empty husk.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram reassures the unlearned and the inarticulate. A toddler who muddles its words and calls father uncle is innocent; the love is real even when the speech is wrong. So too with God: Vitthal answers the feeling, not the correctness of the address. Sugar stays sweet whatever you call it, and plain, rough words carry real substance when the heart behind them is true. The teaching guards devotion from the tyranny of correctness. God listens past the grammar to the love.

GATHA 0134

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, feeling is the salt

मराठी मूळ

चितीं नाहीं तें जवळीं असोनि काय । वत्स सांडी माय तेणें न्यायें ॥१॥
 प्रीतीचा तो वायु गोड लागे मात । जरी जाय चित्त मिळोनियां ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे अवघें फिकें भावाविण । मीठ नाहीं अन्न तेणें न्यायें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

What good is nearness if the chitta is not in it? By that same logic, a mother cow abandons her calf.

Sweet feels the talk of love, the breeze of affection, when the chitta merges wholly.

Says Tuka, without bhava all is tasteless. By that same logic, food without salt.

IN PLAIN WORDS

What is the use of being near someone if your heart is not in it? By that same logic, a mother cow would simply walk away from her calf. The talk of love is sweet, and the very breeze of affection is sweet, but only when one heart has merged into the other. Tuka says: without real feeling everything is flat and tasteless, the way food is when there is no salt in it.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram makes feeling, bhava, the one thing that gives devotion its savor. Physical nearness is empty if the heart is absent; presence without love is like a mother who feels nothing for the calf at her side. What makes the language of love sweet is not the words but the merging of one heart into another. And the homely closing image fixes it: bhava is the salt of the spiritual life. Without it, every practice, however correct, is bland and lifeless. With it, even simple things become delicious.

GATHA 0135

True Worship

True worship, clean within

मराठी मूळ

काय कशी करिती गंगा । भीतरिं चांगा नाही तो ॥१॥
 अधर्णी कुचर बाहेर तैसा । नये रसा पाकासि ॥२॥
 काय टिळे करिती माळा । भाव खळा नाही त्या ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे प्रेमें विण । बोले भुंके अवघा शीण ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

What good are baths in the Ganga for one who is not pure within?

Like something half-cooked and spoiled inside, it yields no flavour in the cooking.

What good are tilak-marks and rosaries for one whose feeling is crooked?

Says Tuka, without love, all speaking is barking, all of it only weariness.

IN PLAIN WORDS

What good are baths in the Ganga to a person who is not clean within? He is like food half-cooked and already spoiled inside, which yields no flavor however you cook it. What good are the tilak marks and the rosaries to someone whose heart is crooked? Tuka says: without love, all the talking is just barking, and the whole of it only wearies you.

WHAT IT MEANS

Another of Tukaram's attacks on outward religion empty of the inner thing. Sacred baths, forehead marks, prayer beads, all the visible apparatus, are worthless if the heart is impure or crooked; the spoiled ingredient cannot be saved by cooking. The standard, as always, is love. Without it, religious speech is mere noise, the barking of a dog, and it leaves you only tired. He is not against the outward forms as such; he is against mistaking them for the substance they are meant to express.

GATHA 0136

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, the world you project

मराठी मूळ

शिंदळा साल्याचा नाही हा विश्वास । बाईल तो त्यास न विसंभे ॥१॥
 दुष्ट बुद्धि चोरी करी निरंतर । तो म्हणे इतर लोक तैसे ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे जया चित्तीं जे वासना । त्याची भावना त्यापरी ॥३॥
 काला चेंडुफळी - अभंग १००

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The scoundrel, that son of a whore, trusts no one. He cannot let his own wife out of sight.

The wicked mind steals constantly. He insists all other people do the same.

Says Tuka, whatever desire sits in one's chitta, one's perception is shaped accordingly.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The scoundrel trusts no one at all; he cannot even let his own wife out of his sight. The thieving mind steals without pause, and then assumes that everyone else is stealing too. Tuka says: whatever desire is sitting in a person's heart, his whole way of seeing the world is shaped to match it.

WHAT IT MEANS

A sharp piece of psychology. The faithless man suspects everyone of faithlessness, the thief assumes all others are thieves, because each person reads the world through the desires that fill his own heart. Tukaram states the principle plainly: perception follows inner craving. We do not see the world as it is; we see it as we are. The unsettling corollary is that your suspicions and assumptions about others are a confession about yourself. To purify the seeing, you have to purify the heart behind the eyes.

GATHA 0137

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the ball-game of the world

मराठी मूळ

झेला रे झेला वरचेवर झेला । हातिचें गमावी तो पाठीं साहे टोला ॥१॥
 त्रिगुणाचा चेंडू हातें झुगारी निराळा । वरिलिया मुखें मन लावी तेथें डोळा ॥२॥
 आगळा होऊनि धरी वरिचिया वरी । चपळ तो जिंके गाढ्या ठके येरझारीं ॥३॥
 हातीं सांपडलें उभें बैसों नेदी कोणी । सोरीमागें सोरी घेती ओणवें करुनि ॥४॥
 डाई पडिलिया सोसी दुःखाचे डोंगर । पाठीवरी भार भोंवता ही उभा फेर ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे सुख पाहे तयाचें आगळें । जिंकी तो हरवी कोणी एका तरी काळें ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Catch it! Catch it! Keep catching, over and over! Lose what is in your hand, and you pay with a blow to the back.

The ball of the three gunas, the hand flings it aside; whatever face lands up, the mind fixes its eye right there.

The bold one leaps and grabs it again and again from above; the quick one wins, the coward stumbles back and forth, bewildered.

What falls into the hand, no one lets you sit still with it; turn after turn they seize it, bending you forward as they go.

When the bad throw lands, you endure mountains of sorrow; a load rides your back, and the whole circle stands spinning around you.

Says Tuka: look at the joy of that rare one who breaks free. The one who wins today, time strips bare at one turn or another.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Catch it, catch it, keep catching it, throw after throw. Drop what is in your hand, and you take a blow on the back. The ball is made of the three gunas; the hand flings it up, and wherever its face lands, the mind fixes its eye right there. The bold one leaps and seizes it again and again from above; the quick player wins, the timid one stumbles back and forth, bewildered. Whatever you catch, no one lets you sit still and keep it; turn after turn they snatch it away, bending you double as they go. When the bad throw lands on you, you bear mountains of sorrow, a weight on your back and the whole ring spinning around you. Tuka says: look at the joy of that rare one who breaks free of the game. The one who wins today, time will strip bare at some turn or other.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns a children's ball-game into an image of life in the world. The ball is the play of the three gunas, the qualities that make up nature; the players scramble to catch and hold, but no one is allowed to keep anything, for the next turn snatches it away. Skill and boldness win a round, but every winner is eventually stripped by time. To be in the game at all is to be bent double under its weight and dizzy by its spinning. The one note of joy is reserved for the rare player who steps out of the game entirely. Worldly success is real but temporary; only escape from the whole contest is freedom.

GATHA 0138

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, quit the pile-on

मराठी मूळ

अड्डुनि कां थीर पोरा न म्हणसी किर । धरुनियां धीर लाजे बुर निघाला ॥१॥
 मोकळा होतासि कां रे पडिलासि डाई । वरिलांचा भार आतां उतरेसा नाही ॥२॥
 मेळवूनि मेळा एकाएकीं दिली मिठी । कवळिलें एक बहु बैसविलीं पाठीं ॥३॥
 तळील तें वरी वरील तें येतें तळा । न सुटे तोंवरी येथें गुंतलिया खेळा ॥४॥
 सांडितां ठाव पुढें सईल धरी हात । चढेल तो पडेल ऐसी ऐका रे मात ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे किती आवरावे हात पाय । न खेळावें तोंच बरें वरी न ये डाय ॥६॥
 कोडें - अभंग २

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Child, why won't you stand still and call out "I quit!"? Summon your nerve. Ashamed, you ducked and went under.

You were free and clear, so why did you fall on a bad throw? Now the weight of those on top will not come off.

Gathering the whole crowd, they seized each other all at once. One was grabbed while many more climbed on his back.

The one below comes up, the one on top goes down. Until you break free, you are tangled in this game.

Leave your spot and the next player grabs your hand. Whoever climbs will fall. Listen to these words.

Says Tuka: how long can you restrain your hands and feet? Better not to have played at all than end up under the pile.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Child, why will you still not stand still and call out, I quit? Find your nerve. Out of shame you ducked your head and went under. You were free and clear, so why did you let the bad throw catch you? Now the weight of all the players piled on top will not lift off you. They gathered the whole crowd and grabbed each other all at once; one was seized while many more climbed onto his back. The one underneath rises, the one on top sinks, and until you break loose you stay tangled in the game. Leave your place and the next player grabs your hand; whoever climbs will surely fall. Hear these words. Tuka says: how long can you keep your hands and feet under control in there? It would have been better never to have played than to end up crushed at the bottom of the pile.

WHAT IT MEANS

A companion to the ball-game poem, drawn from the rough children's game of climbing and pile-on. The world is that game: you were free, but shame and hesitation drew you in, and now you are pinned under the weight of everyone else's scrambling. The cruel logic of it is that positions constantly reverse, the one on top sinks, the one below rises, so there is no winning, only endless entanglement until you break free. Tukaram's blunt counsel: the wise move is to quit, to stand still and say I am out, and better still never to have joined the scramble at all. The only victory is non-participation.

GATHA 0139

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the riddle of I and mine

मराठी मूळ

कोडें रे कोडें ऐका हें कोडें । उगवूनि फार राहे गुंतोनियां थोडें ॥१॥
 पुसतसे सांगा मी हें माझें ऐसें काई । रुसूं नका नुगवे तो झवे आपुली आई ॥२॥
 सांगतों हें मूळ काहीं न धरावी खंती । ज्यालें ज्यवो मेलें मरो प्रारब्धा हातीं ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे अभिमान सांडावा सकळीं । नये अंगावरी वायां येऊं देऊं कळी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*A riddle, a riddle, hear this riddle: so much is solved, yet tangled over a trifle.**I ask you, tell me: is this "I" and "mine" truly real? Do not be cross; if you cannot solve it, go ask your own mother.**I tell you the root of it: hold no grief in your heart. What lives, let it live; what dies, let it die. All is in the hands of destiny.**Says Tuka: let everyone abandon pride. Do not invite strife upon yourself for nothing.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

A riddle, a riddle, listen to this riddle: so much of it gets solved, and then you stay tangled over one small thing. I ask you, tell me plainly: is this I and this mine actually real? Do not take offense; if you cannot work it out, go and ask your own mother. I will tell you the root of the matter, so hold no grief in your heart: let what lives go on living, let what dies die; it is all in the hands of destiny. Tuka says: let everyone set pride aside, and do not go inviting strife down on yourself for nothing.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram poses the whole human problem as a riddle with one stubborn knot. A person may untangle a great deal and still stay caught on a single small thing, and that thing is the assumption I and mine. He asks, almost teasingly, whether that I and mine were ever real at all. His answer, the root of the riddle, is the counsel of equanimity and surrender: grieve over nothing, let living things live and dying things die, since all of it rests with destiny, not with you. And the practical key is to drop pride, the great defender of I and mine, and stop manufacturing conflict over what was never yours to control.

GATHA 0140

The Necessity of Experience

Experience, I have seen myself

मराठी मूळ

नुगवे तें उगवून सांगितलें भाई । घालुनियां ताळा आतां शुद्ध राखा घाई ॥१॥
 आतां कांहीं नाहीं राहिलें । म्यां आपणा आपण पाहिलें ॥२॥
 कमाईस मोल येथें नका रीस मानू। निवडूं नये मज कोणा येथें वानूं ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे पदोपदीं कान्हो वनमाळी । जयेजत मग सेवटिला एक वेळीं ॥३॥
 पुण्य पाहिजे बहुत । जन्मांतरींचें संचित । होईल करीत । आला अधिकारी तो ॥४॥
 काय पाहातां हे भाई । हरुषें नाचा धरा घाई । पोटभरी कांहीं । घेतां उरी कांहीं ठेवा ॥२॥
 जें सुख दृष्टी आहे । तें च अंतरीं जो लाहे । तुका म्हणे काय । कळिकाळ तें बापुडें ॥३॥
 अवघे गोपाळ म्हणती या रे करुं काला । काय कोणाची सिदोरी ते पाहों द्या मला ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

That which never arose, I have revealed it, brothers. Now bolt the door and keep it pure with urgency.

Nothing remains now. I have seen myself, by myself.

Do not resent the price this earning commands here. None should sort or describe me against another.

Says Tuka: at every step, Krishna, wearer of the forest garland, victory to Him, and at the last, all at once.

Much merit is needed for this, the accumulated treasure of past births. When the worthy one arrives, it simply happens.

What are you waiting for, brothers? Dance with joy, seize this chance. Eat your fill and set something aside.

The happiness the eyes behold, let the chitta receive it too. Says Tuka, what then can poor Death do?

All the cowherd boys call out: come, let us share the feast! Let me see what provisions each of you has brought.

IN PLAIN WORDS

That which never came into being, brothers, I have shown it to you plainly; now bolt the door, and keep what you have found pure and unspilled. Nothing is left for me to do now. By myself, I have seen my own self. Do not resent the price this earning costs; do not measure me or rank me against anyone. Tuka says: at every step, Krishna, wearer of the forest garland, victory to him, and at the last, all at once. Much merit is needed for this, the saved-up treasure of many past lives; when the worthy one arrives, it simply happens of itself. What are you waiting for, brothers? Dance for joy and seize the moment. Eat your fill, and set something by. Let the heart receive the very happiness the eyes behold. Tuka says: then what can poor Death do to you? All the cowherd boys are calling, come, let us make the feast; let me see what provisions each of you has brought.

WHAT IT MEANS

A poem of arrival that opens into the cowherds' feast. Tukaram announces that he has realized and revealed the unborn reality, that there is nothing left for him to accomplish, and that he has seen his own true self by himself, needing no external measure or rank. Such realization, he adds, is not cheap; it rests on the merit of many lives,

and ripens of itself when the soul is ready. Then the tone turns to celebration: dance, seize the moment, let the inner heart receive the joy the senses glimpse, and Death is left helpless. The closing call to bring provisions for the shared feast carries it into the kala, the communal mixing of all the cowherds' food, his image for the gathered devotees' joy.

GATHA 0141

The Moral Ideal

Kala, the honest feast

मराठी मूळ

नका कांहीं मागें पुढें रे ठेवूं खरें च बोला । वंची वंचला तो चि रे येथें भोवंडा त्याला ॥१॥
 घेतल्या वांचून झाडा रे नेदी आपुलें कांहीं । एकां एक ग्वाही बहुत देती मोकळें नाही ।
 ताक सांडी येर येर रे काला भात भाकरी दहीं । आलें घेतो मध्यें बैसला नाही आणवीत तें ही ॥२॥
 एका नाही धीर तांतडी दिल्या सोडोनि मोटा । एक सोडितील गाठी रे एक चालती वाटा ।
 एक उभा भार वाहोनि पाहे उगाचि खोटा । एक ते करुनि आराले आतां ऐसें चि घाटा ॥३॥
 एकीं स्थिराविल्या गाई रे एक वळत्या देती । एकांच्या फांकल्या वोढाळा फेरे भोंवतीं घेती ।
 एकें चाराबोरा गुंतलीं नाहीं जीवन चितीं । एक एका चला म्हणती एक हुंबरी घेती ॥४॥
 एकीं एकें वाटा लाविलीं भोळीं नेणतीं मुलें । आपण घरीच गुंतले माळा नासिलीं फुलें ।
 गांठीचें तें सोडूं नावडे खाय आइतें दिलें । सांपडलें वेठी वोढी रे भार वाहातां मेलें ॥५॥
 एक ते माया गुंतले घरीं बहुत काम । वार्ता ही नाही तयाची तया कांहीं च ठावें ।
 जैसें होतें शिळे संचित तैसें लागलें खावें । हातोहातीं गेलें वेचुनि मग पडिलें ठावें ॥६॥
 एकीं हातीं पायीं पटे रे अंगीं लाविल्या राखा । एक ते सोलिव बोडके केली सपाट शिखा ।
 एक ते आळसी तळीं रे वरी वाढिल्या काखा । सिदोरी वांचून बुद्धि रे केला अवघ्यां वाखा ॥७॥
 तुका म्हणे आतां कान्होबा आम्हां वांटोनि द्यावें । आहे नाही आम्हांपाशीं तें तुज अवघें चि ठावें ।
 मोकलितां तुम्ही शरण आम्ही कवणासि जावें । कृपावंते कृपा केली रे पोट भरे तों खावें ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Do not hold anything back, speak only the truth. Whoever cheats will himself be cheated; spin him around and let him face the consequences.

Without a full accounting, no one gives up what is theirs; everyone testifies against one another, and nothing is left free. Set aside the buttermilk and everything else: rice, bread, and curd. He who sits in the middle takes whatever comes and does not even have to ask for it to be brought.

One is in a hurry and opens his bundle too soon. Another is untying his knots while yet another is already walking away. One stands bearing a load and watches foolishly while accomplishing nothing. Some have already made up their minds and settled into their positions.

Some have tethered their cows, while others drive the strays. Some chase the wandering cattle, circling round and round. Some are so absorbed in grazing and fodder that they have forgotten to drink. One calls to another saying, let us go, while another lows like a longing cow.

Some have set the simple, innocent children on distant paths while they themselves are tangled at home, ruining garlands of flowers. They will not spend what they have tied up in their own knots but gladly consume whatever is served to them freely. Whatever is seized by force they drag along; the beast of burden dies under the load it is made to carry.

Some are entangled in the household by the snares of illusion and attachment, completely oblivious to any higher calling. Whatever stale provisions they had stored up from before, that is what they are now forced to eat. What was spent hand over hand is now gone, and only then does the loss become clear.

Some have tied cloths on hands and feet and smeared ash on their bodies. Some are shaven and shorn, their tuft of hair cleanly removed. Some are lazy, lying below while their armpits spread above. Without any real provisions, their cleverness has become a joke to everyone.

Says Tuka, now, O Krishna, distribute the shares among us all. You know well what each of us has and does not have. If you let us go, to whom shall we, your dependents, turn? O compassionate Lord, you have shown your grace; let us eat until our bellies are full.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Hold nothing back, and speak only the truth: whoever cheats here will himself be cheated, and be spun round to face it. Until everyone gives a full account, no one will surrender what is his; each testifies against the other, and nothing passes free. Set out all of it, the buttermilk, the rice, the bread, the curd; the one who sits in the middle takes whatever comes, and need not even ask for it. One is in too much of a hurry and opens his bundle too soon; one is still untying his knots while another has already walked off; one just stands there bearing a load and accomplishing nothing; some have already settled smugly into their places. Some have tethered their cows while others chase the strays in circles; some are so lost in grazing they forget to drink. Some send the simple, trusting children off down distant roads while they themselves stay tangled at home, spoiling the very garlands of flowers; they will not spend what they have knotted away, but gladly eat whatever is served them free. Some are so caught in the snares of attachment that they never hear the higher call at all, and are left chewing the stale provisions they had stored; what was spent hand to hand is gone, and only then do they feel the loss. Some have tied cloths on their limbs and smeared their bodies with ash, some are shaven and shorn; the lazy lie about idle; and with no real provisions of their own, all their cleverness has become a joke. Tuka says: now, Krishna, divide the shares among us all. You know exactly what each of us has and has not. If you abandon us, where are we, your dependents, to go? You have shown your grace, O compassionate one; now let us eat until our bellies are full.

WHAT IT MEANS

A long, affectionate, satirical allegory of the spiritual community gathered for the kala, the cowherds' shared feast on the riverbank, with Krishna seated in the middle. Tukaram parades the types we all recognize: the hasty, the dawdling, the smug, the distracted, the miser who hoards his own and eats others' freely, the householder lost in attachment, the showy ascetic with ash and shaven head but no real substance. The demand at the start, hold nothing back, tell the truth, sets the terms: the feast is honest sharing, and cheating only cheats oneself. After all the human comedy, the poem ends in pure surrender: Krishna alone knows what each truly has, Krishna must apportion the shares, and his dependents have nowhere else to turn. The satire dissolves into trust, and everyone is fed by grace.

GATHA 0142

The Nature of God

Nature of God, whole love to each

मराठी मूळ

बैसवुनि फेरी । गडियां मध्यभागीं हरी । अवघियांचें करी । समाधान सारिखें ॥१॥
 पाहे तो देखे समोर । भोगी अवघे प्रकार । हरुषें झेली कर । कवळ मुखीं देती ते ॥२॥
 बोले बोलतिया सवें । देतील तें त्यांचें घ्यावें । एक एका ठावें । येर येरा अदृश्य ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे देवा । बहु आवडीचा हेवा । कोणाचिया जीवा । वाटों नेदी विषम ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Seating them in a circle, Hari at the centre, He satisfies every one of them equally.

Whoever looks sees Him directly before them. He savours every kind of offering. With delight He catches in His hands the morsels they place at His mouth.

He speaks along with each one speaking, accepts whatever each one gives. Each knows only their own exchange; to all others, it remains unseen.

Says Tuka: God is jealous of His love for each. He lets no soul feel the slightest inequality.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He seats them all in a circle with Hari himself at the center, and he satisfies every one of them just the same. Whoever looks up sees him directly in front of their own face. He relishes every kind of offering, and delightedly catches in his hands the morsels they lift to his mouth. He talks with each one as they talk to him, and takes whatever each one gives; each knows only his own exchange with the Lord, and to all the others it stays unseen. Tuka says: God is jealous in his love for each one, and he lets not a single soul feel even the smallest inequality.

WHAT IT MEANS

A tender picture of God among his devotees at the feast, and a quiet resolution of a hard question: how can God love everyone fully at once? Tukaram shows him seated at the center of the circle, yet directly facing each devotee, talking privately with each, accepting each one's offering, so that every devotee has God wholly to himself and never sees the others' share. The lovely phrase is that God is jealous of his love for each, guarding it so that no one ever feels less loved than another. Divine love is not divided among many; it is given whole to each, all at the same time.

GATHA 0143

*The Necessity of Experience**Experience, a share to each one's strength*

मराठी मूळ

आम्हां निकट वासें । कळों आलें जैसें तैसें । नाहीं अनारीसें । कान्होबाचे अंतरीं ॥१॥
 पीडती आपुल्या भावना । जैसी जयाची वासना । कर्माचा देखणा । पाहे लीळा कौतुक ॥२॥
 खेळ खेळे न पडे डाई । ज्याचा भार त्याच्या ठायीं । कोणी पडतील डाई । कोणी कोडीं उगवीती ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे कवळ । हातीं घेऊनि गोपाळ । देतो ज्यांचें बळ । त्यांसि तैसा विभाग ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Living so close to Him, we have come to know things just as they are. Nothing is hidden in Kanhoba's heart.**Their own desires torment them, each according to their longing. The witness of karma watches this play with wonder.**He plays the game yet never falls into penalty. The burden rests where it belongs. Some fall into penalty; some solve the riddle.**Says Tuka: the cowherd holds the morsel in His hand and gives to each a share matching their strength.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Living so close to him, we have come to see things just as they truly are: there is nothing hidden in Kanhoba's heart. People are tormented by their own feelings, each according to his own craving, while the one who witnesses all action looks on at the play with delight. He plays the game himself and yet never takes a penalty; the burden always rests exactly where it belongs. Some fall into the penalty, and some solve the riddle and go free. Tuka says: the cowherd holds the morsel in his hand and gives to each one a share that matches his strength.

WHAT IT MEANS

From the intimacy of the feast, Tukaram reports what closeness to God reveals: God hides nothing, and the suffering people feel is produced by their own cravings, not imposed from outside. God himself is the witness who plays in the game of the world yet never incurs its penalties, because the weight of each action stays with the one who did it. So in the game some are caught and some win through, strictly by their own doing. And the feast-image makes the justice gentle as well as exact: like the cowherd handing out food, God gives each soul a portion matched to its capacity. The system is fair, and it is also kind.

GATHA 0144

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the feast on the Yamuna

मराठी मूळ

काम सारुनि सकळ । आले अवघे गोपाळ । जाली आतां वेळ । म्हणती आणा सिदोच्या ॥१॥
 देती आपुलाला झाडा । गाई बैसविल्या वाडां । दोंदिल बोबडा । वांकड्याचा हरि मेळीं ॥२॥
 आपुलालिये आवडी । मुदा बांधल्या परवडी । निवडूनियां गोडी । हरि मेळवी त्यांत तें ॥३॥
 भार वागविला खांदीं । नव्हती मिळाली जों मांदी । सकाळांचे संदी । वोझीं अवधीं उतरलीं ॥४॥
 मागे जो तांतडी । त्यासि रागा येती गडी । तुझी कां रे कुडी । येथें मिथ्या भावना ॥५॥
 एक एकाच्या संवादें । कैसे धाले ब्रम्हानंदें । तुका म्हणे पदें । या रे वंदूं हरीचीं ॥६॥
 यमुनें पाबळीं । गडियां बोले वनमाळी । आणा सिदोच्या सकळी । काला करुं आजी ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Having finished all their tasks, the cowherd boys gathered together. The hour had come, and they said, bring out the provisions.

They gave their accounting of the day, and the cows were settled in the enclosures. The pot-bellied, lispng, bent one, Hari himself, joins the circle.

Each one, according to his own liking, had bound up his bundle; Krishna sorted through them and mixed the sweetest portions into the common pile.

They had carried the weight on their shoulders all morning, and now that the group had finally assembled, every burden was set down.

The one who is too eager draws the anger of his friends: why this crooked pretense of yours here?

Through the exchange of words between one and another, they were all filled with the bliss of Brahman. Says Tuka, come, let us bow to these songs of Hari.

On the banks of the Yamuna, among the cowherd boys, the wearer of the forest garland says: bring all your provisions, let us feast together today.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Their work all finished, the cowherd boys gathered together, and when the hour came they called out, bring out the provisions. They gave their account of the day, and the cows were settled in their pens; and the pot-bellied, lispng, slightly bent little one, Hari himself, joined the circle. Each boy had tied up his bundle to his own taste, and Krishna sorted through them all and mixed the sweetest portions into the common heap. They had carried their loads on their shoulders all morning, and now that the whole company had assembled, every burden was set down. Anyone too greedy and grasping draws his friends' annoyance: why this crooked pretending here? And simply through their talk with one another they were all filled with the bliss of Brahman. Tuka says: come, let us bow to these songs of Hari. On the bank of the Yamuna, among the cowherd boys, the garlanded Lord says: bring all your bundles, and today let us make the feast together.

WHAT IT MEANS

The kala itself, the scene Tukaram loves: Krishna as one of the cowherd boys, pot-bellied and lisping and crooked-limbed, sitting in the ring while everyone pools the food they carried all morning. The detail that matters is what Krishna does with the bundles: he mixes them, drawing the sweetest from each into one common heap, so that the feast belongs to all and to no one alone. Burdens carried in isolation are set down once the company gathers; grasping and pretense are gently mocked; and ordinary fellowship, just the boys talking together, becomes the bliss of Brahman. It is Tukaram's picture of the sangha, the company of devotees, where what each brings is shared, sweetened, and turned into joy by the Lord in their midst.

GATHA 0145

Krishna Leela

Kala, the feast and the romp of love

मराठी मूळ

अवघें एके ठायीं । करुनि स्वाद त्याचा पाहीं । मजपाशीं आहे तें ही । तुम्हामाजी देतो ॥१॥
 म्हणती बरवें गोपाळ । म्हणती बरवें गोपाळ । वाहाती सकळ । मोहरी पांवे आनंदें ।
 खडकीं सोडियेल्या मोटा । अवघा केला एकवटा । काला करुनियां वांटा । गडियां देतो हरि ॥२॥
 एकापुढें एक । घाली हात पसरी मुख । गोळा पांवे तया सुख । अधिक चि वाटे ।
 म्हणती गोड जालें । म्हणती गोड जालें । आणिक देई । नाहीं पोट धालें ॥३॥
 हात नेतो मुखापासीं । एर आशा तोंड वासी । खाय आपण तयासी । दावी वांकुलिया ।
 देऊनियां मिठी । पळे लागतील पाठीं । धरुनि काढितील ओठीं । मुखामाजी खाती ॥४॥
 म्हणती ठकडा रे कान्हा । लावी घांसा भरी राणा । दुम करितो शहाणा । पाठोवाठीं तयाच्या ।
 अवघियांचे खाय । कवळ कृष्णा माझी माय । सुरवर म्हणती हाय हाय । सुखा अंतरलों ॥५॥
 एक एका मारी । दुंगा पाठी तोंडावरी । गोळा न साहवे हरि । म्हणे पुरे आतां ।
 येतो काकुलती । गोळा न साहवे श्रीपती । म्हणे खेळों आतां नीती । सांगों आदरिलें ॥६॥
 आनंदाचे फेरी । माजी घालुनियां हरी । एक घालिती हुंबरी । वाती सिंगें पांवे ।
 वांकडे बोंबडे । खुडे मुडे एक लुडे । कृष्णा आवडती पुढें । बहु भाविक ते ॥७॥
 करी कवतुक । त्यांचें देखोनियां मुख । हरी वाटतसे सुख । खदखदां हांसे ।
 एक एकाचें उच्छिष्ट । खातां न मानिती वीट । केलीं लाजतां ही धीट । आपुलिया संगें ॥८॥
 नाहीं ज्याची गेली भुक । त्याचें पसरवितो मुख । अवघियां देतो सुख । सारिखें चि हरी ।
 म्हणती भला भला हरी । तुझी संगती रे बरी । आतां चाळविसी तरी । न वजों आणिकां सवें ॥९॥
 गाई विसरल्या चार । पक्षी श्वापदांचे भार । जालें यमुनेचें स्थिर । जळ वाहों ठेलें ।
 देव पाहाती सकळ । मुखें घोटूनियां लाळ । धन्य म्हणती गोपाळ । धिग जालों आम्ही ॥१०॥
 म्हणती कैसें करावें । म्हणती कैसें करावें । यमुनाजळीं व्हावें । मत्स्य शेष घ्यावया ।
 सुरवरांचे थाट । भरलें यमुनेचें तट । तंव अधिक ची होंट । मटमटां वाजवी ॥११॥
 आनंदें सहित । क्रीडा करी गोपीनाथ । म्हणती यमुनेत हात । नका धुऊं कोणी ।
 म्हणती जाणे जीवीचें । लाजे त्यास येथें कैचें । शेष कृष्णाचें । लाभ थोरिवे ॥१२॥
 धन्य दिवस काळ । आजी पावला गोपाळ । म्हणती धालों रे सकळ । तुझिया नि हातें ।
 मानवले गडी । एक एकांचे आवडी । दहीं खादलें परवडी । धणीवरी आजी ॥१३॥
 तुझा संग बरवा । नित्य आम्हां द्यावा । ऐसें करुनि जीवा । नित्य देवा चालावें ।
 तंव म्हणे वनमाळी । घ्यारे काठिया कांबळी । आतां जाऊं खेळीमेळीं । गाई चारावया ॥१४॥
 तुका म्हणे प्रेमें धालीं । कोणा न साहवे चाली । गाई गोपाळांसि केली । आपण यांसरी ।
 आजि जाला आनंद । आजि जाला आनंद । चाले परमानंद । सवें आम्हांसहित ॥१५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Gather everything into one place, and let me taste it all. What I have with me, I will also put in among yours.

The cowherd boys say, wonderful, wonderful, and they blow their shehnais and flutes in delight. The bundles tied to sticks are all opened up and merged into one heap. Krishna makes the feast and distributes the shares to his friends.

One after another, each stretches out his hand and opens his mouth. The round morsel of food, the flute's note, each brings a joy that seems to grow ever greater. They say, how delicious this has become, give us more, our bellies are not yet full.

He brings a morsel toward his own mouth, and others gape with longing. He eats it himself and teases them with playful gestures. They seize him in an embrace, and he runs; they chase him, catch him, and pull the food from his very lips and eat it.

They say, what a trickster you are, Krishna. He stuffs a bite into someone's mouth and fills another's cheeks, then the clever one runs and they all chase after him. He eats from everyone's share, and they cry, O Krishna, my dear mother. The gods above sigh with longing, saying, alas, we are denied this joy.

One slaps another on the back, the rump, the face. The commotion is too much for Hari; he says, enough now. He comes pleading, for even the Lord cannot bear so much roughhousing; he says, let us now play properly and tells them the rules.

In circles of joy they place Hari in the center. Some blow shehnais, some low like calves, some stamp and clap. The crooked, the lisping, the stumpy, the lame, the stumbling ones, all are beloved to Krishna, for they are the most devoted.

He delights in seeing their faces and feels such happiness that he laughs out loud. Each eats from the other's leftovers without any disgust; even the shy ones He has made bold through His own company.

Whoever is still hungry, He opens their mouth and feeds them. Hari gives equal joy to everyone. They say, well done, well done, Hari. Your company is truly the best. Even if you try to lead us astray now, we will not go with anyone else.

The cows forget their grazing, the birds and beasts grow still. The waters of the Yamuna stop flowing and stand motionless. All the gods watch from above, swallowing their saliva, saying, blessed are these cowherd boys; shame upon us.

They say, what shall we do? Let us become fish in the Yamuna to receive the remnants. The heavenly hosts crowd the banks of the Yamuna, and all the while, Krishna smacks his lips all the more.

In bliss, the Lord of the Gopis plays on. They say, let no one wash their hands in the Yamuna. They say, He knows the heart's secret; shame has no place here. The remnants of Krishna are a gain of the highest honor.

Blessed is this day and hour; the cowherd boy has graced us. They say, we are satisfied, fulfilled by your own hand. The friends are delighted in one another's love. Today we have eaten our fill of curd and rice in abundance.

Your company is the best; grant it to us every day. Let us live this way forever, O God. Then the wearer of the forest garland says, pick up your sticks and blankets. Now let us go merrily together to graze the cows.

Says Tuka, they were so full of love that none could bear to walk. The cows and the cowherd boys were made equal to God Himself. Today there is pure bliss. Today there is pure bliss. The supreme joy walks along with us.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Gather it all into one place, Krishna says, and let me taste it; and what I have brought, I will put in among yours too. Wonderful, wonderful, cry the cowherd boys, blowing their flutes and horns in delight. The bundles tied to their sticks are all opened and poured into one heap, and Krishna makes the kala and hands out the shares to his friends. One after another they stretch out a hand and open a mouth; each morsel, each note of the flute, seems sweeter than the last. Delicious, they cry, give us more, our bellies are not full yet. He carries a morsel toward one mouth and teasingly eats it himself, pulling faces; he hugs one boy and runs, and they chase and catch him and feed him from their own lips. Rascal Kanha, they laugh, and he eats from every hand. The gods looking down sigh, alas, we have missed this joy. The cows forget to graze, the birds and beasts go still, even the Yamuna stops flowing to watch. Blessed are we, the cowherds say, fed today by your own hand; today there is joy, today there is joy, and the highest bliss itself walks home with us. Tuka says: so filled with love they can barely walk, the cowherds, and God among them, turn back at last to tend the cattle.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram's fullest painting of the kala, the cowherds' shared meal on the riverbank, and his image of the saints' fellowship with God. The heart of it is the mixing: every boy's bundle is poured into one heap, and Krishna both serves the feast and joins it, eating from each hand, teasing, chased and caught and fed in turn. There is no rank and no leftover too low to eat; the sharing itself is the bliss. Even the gods envy it, and nature holds still to watch. What he celebrates is not a solemn rite but a romp of love, in which God is not the honored guest at the head of the table but a playmate in the middle of the ring, and the joy of the company is itself the highest bliss, walking home with them at dusk.

GATHA 0146

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the flute that empties the house

मराठी मूळ

या हो या चला जाऊं सकळा । पाहों हा सोहळा आजि वृंदावनीचा ॥१॥
 वाइला गोपाळें वेणुनाद पडे कानीं । धीर नव्हे मनीं चित्त जालें चंचळ ॥२॥
 उरलें तें सांडा काम नका करुं गोवी । हे चि वेळ ठावी मज कृष्णभेटीची ॥३॥
 निवतील डोळे याचें श्रीमुख पाहातां । बोलती तें आतां घरचीं सोसूं वाईट ॥४॥
 कृष्णभेटीआड कांहीं नावडे आणीक । लाज तरी लोक मन जालें उदास ॥५॥
 एकाएकीं चालिलेल्या सादावीत सवें । तुका म्हणे देवें रूपें केल्या तन्मय ॥६॥

फुगड्या - अभंग २

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Come, come, let us all go and see the celebration in Vrindavan today.

The cowherd boy has played His flute and that sound falls upon our ears; the chitta cannot hold still, the mind has grown restless.

Set aside whatever work remains; do not let anything delay you. This is the very moment I know, the time for meeting Krishna.

My eyes will be cooled just by gazing upon His blessed face. Let the household scold as they will; we shall endure the harsh words.

Nothing that stands between us and meeting Krishna holds any appeal. Let the world talk, let shame be what it may; the chitta has grown utterly indifferent to it all.

One by one they set out, calling to others to join them. Says Tuka, the Lord, through His beauty, has made them all absorbed in Him.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Come, come, all of you, let us go and see the festival in Vrindavan today. The cowherd has played his flute, and the sound has fallen on our ears; the heart will not stay still, the mind has gone restless. Drop whatever work is left, let nothing hold you back: this is the very hour I have been waiting for, the time to meet Krishna. My eyes will be cooled just by looking on his face; let the people at home scold me, I will bear their hard words. Nothing that stands in the way of meeting Krishna holds any charm for me now; let the world talk, let shame be what it will, my heart has turned away from all of it. Tuka says: all at once they set off, calling to one another, and God made them one with his own form.

WHAT IT MEANS

The gopis hearing Krishna's flute, which is Tukaram's image for the irresistible call of God. The sound makes the heart unable to keep still; work, propriety, the family's scolding, the world's opinion, all of it suddenly weighs nothing against the one chance to meet the beloved. He captures the moment devotion crosses a threshold: the seeker stops counting the cost and simply goes. And the close names the result, the gopis became one with God's own form. To answer the flute completely is not merely to reach God but to be made into him.

GATHA 0147

Krishna Leela

Fugadi, the whirl that breaks the bond

मराठी मूळ

फुगडी फू फुगडी घालितां उघडी राहे । लाज सांडोनि एक एकी पाहे ॥१॥
 फुगडी गे अवघें मोडी गे । तरीच गोडी गे संसार तोडी गे ॥२॥
 मागें जें शिकली होतीस पोटी । तें चि विचारुनि आतां उच्चारी ओठीं ॥३॥
 त्रिगुणांची वेणी तुझे उडते पाठीं । सावरुनि धरी घाली मूळबंदीं गांठी ॥४॥
 आगळें पाउल जिंकें एकाएक । पावसी मान हे मानवती तिन्ही लोक ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे तुजमजमध्ये एक भाव । सम तुकें बार घेऊं पावों उंच ठाव ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Fugadi, fu! Fugadi! When you play it openly, all is laid bare. Cast off shame and look each other straight in the eye.

Fugadi breaks everything, breaks it all; only then does the sweetness come; only then is the bond of worldly life truly severed.

Whatever you learned before and stored in your belly, bring it now to your lips and speak it aloud.

The braid of the three gunas flies loose behind you; gather it up and tie it firm at the mulabandha, the root-lock.

The one who takes the bolder step wins outright and earns the respect of all three worlds.

Says Tuka, let there be one bhava between you and me; with equal and balanced steps, let us together reach the highest place.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Fugadi, fu! When you whirl the fugadi out in the open, everything is laid bare; cast off shame, and look each other straight in the eye. The fugadi breaks everything, breaks it all to pieces, and only then does the sweetness come, only then is the knot of worldly life cut through. Whatever you learned long ago and stored away inside, bring it now to your lips and say it aloud. The braid of the three gunas flies loose behind you; gather it up and tie it tight at the root-lock. Whoever takes the bolder step wins outright and earns the honor of all three worlds. Tuka says: let there be one single feeling between you and me, and balanced, matched together, we will rise to the high place.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns the fugadi, the women's spinning game where two clasp hands and whirl until dizzy, into an image of ecstatic devotion. The whirl strips away shame and pretense, breaks the ordinary world to pieces, and only in that breaking does the sweetness come and the bond of samsara snap. He weaves in the language of yoga, the loosened braid of the three gunas tied off at the root-lock, the mulabandha, so the spinning is also a discipline. And the goal is union: one shared feeling between the two players, perfectly matched, lifting both to the highest place. The game is the path: let go, whirl, break, and rise together.

GATHA 0148

Krishna Leela

Fugadi, the taunt to the flagging self

मराठी मूळ

फुगडी फू सवती माझे तूं । हागुनि भरलें धू तुझ्या ढुंगा तोंडावरि ॥१॥
 फुगडी घेतां आली हरी । ऊठ जावो जगनोवरी ॥२॥
 हातपाय बेंबळ जाती । ढुंगण घोळितां लागे माती ॥३॥
 सात पांच आणिल्या हरी । वांचुनी काय तगसी पोरी ॥४॥
 सरला दम पांगले पाय । आझुनि वरी घोळिसी काय ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे आझुन तरी । सांगितलें तें गधडी करी ॥६॥
 लखोटा - अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Fugadi, fu! You are my co-wife, O rival. You have defecated on yourself; wash your face and your backside.
 As she played the fugadi, Hari came along; rise now, O bride of the Lord of the world.
 Hands and legs go limp, and as the backside drags, it gathers dust.
 Five and seven more were brought along by Hari; how long can you last without them, girl?
 Your breath is spent, your legs have given way; why do you still try to spin around?
 Says Tuka, even now, do what you have been told, you she-donkey.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Fugadi, fu! You are my co-wife and my rival. You have fouled yourself; go and wash your face and clean up. As she spun the fugadi, Hari came along; rise now, bride of the Lord of the world. Her hands and legs go limp, and her dragging body gathers dust. Hari has brought five or seven others along; how long can you hold out without them, girl? Your breath is spent, your legs have given way; why do you still go on spinning? Tuka says: even now, do the thing you were told to do, you stubborn fool.

WHAT IT MEANS

A rough, comic fugadi-taunt in the idiom of village women's games, where rivals jeer at each other across the spinning. Read as allegory, it is the contest between the soul's flagging lower nature and the resolve that would hand it over to God: the exhausted, soiled, stubborn player is the worldly self, spun out and unable to keep up, taunted to give in and do at last what it was told. Hari arriving in the middle of the game changes everything; the only sane move left is surrender. Tukaram keeps the coarse playground voice on purpose; the teaching wears motley, but it is the familiar one, stop your futile spinning and obey.

GATHA 0149

Krishna Leela

The game, coaching the soul to surrender

मराठी मूळ

लये लये लखोटा । मूळबंदि कासोटा । भावा केलें साहें । आतां माझें पाहें ॥१॥
 हातोहातीं गुंतली । जीवपणा मुकली । धीर माझा निका । सांडीं बोल फिका ॥२॥
 अंगीकारी हरि । नको पडों फेरी । लाज धरीं भांडे । जग झोडी रांडे ॥३॥
 बैस भावा पाठीं । ऐक माझ्या गोष्टी । केला सांडीं गोहो । येथें धरीं मोहो ॥४॥
 पाठमोरा डोल । आवरी तें बोल । पांगलीस बाळा । पुढें अवकळा ॥५॥
 आतां उभी ठायीं । उभाउभीं पाहीं । नको होऊं डुकरी । पुढें गाढव कुतरी ॥६॥
 नामा केलें खरें । आपुलें म्या बरें । तुका म्हणे येरी । पांगविल्या पोरी ॥७॥
 हुंबरी - अभंग १
 तुशीं कोण घाली हुंबरी । साही पांगल्या अठरा चारी ॥ध्रु॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Toss, toss the ball! The root-lock is the waistband, and bhava is the wager. Now watch my turn.

Hand to hand she was caught and lost her sense of self. My resolve is firm; drop your feeble words.

Let Hari accept you; do not fall into the cycle again. Hold your dignity, you shameless one; the world will beat a shameless woman.

Sit behind your bhava and listen to my counsel. Give up the commotion you have made; fix your longing here instead.

Turn your back on the world's sway and restrain your speech. You have scattered yourself, child; ahead lies only ruin.

Now stand firm in your place and look straight ahead. Do not become a sow, or next a donkey, or a bitch.

Nama proved himself true, and I did well for myself. Says Tuka, the rest of the girls were scattered and lost.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Toss it, toss the ball! The root-lock is your waistband, and your wager is bhava itself. Now watch how I take my turn. Hand to hand she was caught, and she lost her sense of being a separate self. My resolve is firm; drop your feeble talk. Let Hari take you up; do not fall back into the cycle again. Hold your dignity, you brazen one, for the world beats down the shameless. Sit close behind your bhava and listen to my counsel: give up the uproar you have raised, and fix your longing here instead. Turn your back on the world's pull and rein in your speech; you have scattered yourself, child, and ahead lies only ruin. Now stand firm in your place. Do not make yourself a pig, a donkey, a stray dog. Nama made his own portion good and true. Tuka says: the others only scattered the girls and lost them.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram coaches the soul as a player being taught the game, with the ball-toss as the discipline and bhava, devotion, as the stake. The instruction is concrete: bind yourself at the root-lock, wager your feeling, and in the catching lose the sense of a separate self. He urges the wavering player to let Hari take her up rather than fall back into the round of births, to drop the noise and fix her longing in one place, to stand firm and not degrade herself. He names Namdev as the one who played his turn truly and well, against the many who only scattered and lost. The game is salvation, and it rewards firmness, single feeling, and surrender.

GATHA 0150

Krishna Leela

Wrestling, the Lord who undoes you

मराठी मूळ

सहस्र मुखावरी हरी । शेष शिणविलें ॥१॥
 चेंडुवासवें घातली उडी । नाथिला काळिया देऊनि बुडी ॥२॥
 अशुद्ध पीतां करुणा नाही । तुवां माउशी ही मारियेली ॥३॥
 रावणाचें घर बुडविलें सारें । त्याचीं रांडापोरें मारियेलीं ॥४॥
 जाणो तो ठावा आहेंसि आम्हां । तुवां आपुला मामा मारियेला ॥५॥
 याशीं खेळतां नाश थोरु । तुकयास्वामी सारंगधरु ॥६॥
 हमामा - अभंग २

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Even with a thousand mouths, Hari exhausted Shesha in the telling.

He leapt with the ball into the Yamuna and subdued the serpent Kaliya by pushing him under.

Drinking the impure without a trace of pity, you even killed your own maternal aunt Putana.

You destroyed the entire house of Ravana and slew his wives and children.

We know your ways well; you even killed your own maternal uncle Kamsa.

Whoever plays with you meets great destruction; Tuka's Lord is Sarangadhara, the bearer of the bow.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Even with a thousand mouths, the serpent Shesha wore himself out trying to tell it all. You leapt into the Yamuna after the ball and forced the serpent Kaliya under. You drank the poisoned milk without a flicker of pity and killed even Putana, who came to you as an aunt. You sank the whole house of Ravana and slew his wives and children. We know your ways well enough: you killed even Kamsa, your own mother's brother. Whoever plays this game with you meets great destruction. Tuka's Lord is Sarangadhara, who bears the bow.

WHAT IT MEANS

A teasing, almost alarmed recital of Krishna's destructive feats, framed as a warning to anyone who would wrestle with God. Kaliya subdued, Putana killed, Ravana's house sunk, Kamsa slain, even kin not spared: to play with this Lord is to be undone. But the destruction Tukaram means is the annihilation of the ego, the false self that cannot survive contact with God. The poem belongs with the wrestling abhangas: it sounds like a list of dangers, and it is, for the separate I. To take God on is to lose, and the losing is the liberation.

GATHA 0151

Krishna Leela

Wrestling, the death of I and you

मराठी मूळ

मशीं पोरा घे रे बार । तुझें बुजीन खालील द्वार ॥१॥
 पोरा हमामा रे हमामा रे ॥२॥
 मशीं हमामा तूं घालीं । पोरा वरी सांभाळीं खालीं ॥३॥
 तरी च मशीं बोल । पोरा जिह्वाळ्याची ओल ॥४॥
 मशीं घेतां भास । जीवा मीतूपणा नास ॥५॥
 मज सवें खरा । पण जाऊं नेदी घरा ॥६॥
 आमुचिये रंगीं । दुजें तगेना ये संगीं ॥७॥
 तुक्यासवें भास । हरी जीवा करी नास ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Take a turn with me, boy. I will seize your lower gate.

Boy, let us wrestle, let us wrestle!

Take the match with me, boy; guard yourself above and below.

Only then may you challenge me, boy, if there is true warmth of kinship between us.

When we wrestle together, the sense of "I" and "you" is destroyed.

He who plays with me truly can never go home again, for in my company, nothing else can survive.

Those who keep company with Tuka, Hari enters their life and annihilates the separateness in their soul.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Take a turn with me, boy; I will seize your lower gate. Boy, let us wrestle, let us wrestle. Take the match with me, and guard yourself above and below. Only then may you challenge me, boy, if there is real warmth of kinship between us. When we wrestle together, the sense of I and you is destroyed. Whoever truly plays with me can never go home again, for in my company nothing else can survive. Tuka says: those who keep company with Tuka, Hari moves into their life and annihilates the separateness in their soul.

WHAT IT MEANS

The wrestling match as union with God, and the destruction it requires. To grapple with God is to put your whole self in his grip, above and below, and the only ones who dare are those bound to him by real kinship-love. The outcome is stated plainly: in the wrestling, the sense of I and you is destroyed, and whoever truly engages can never go back to his old separate life, because nothing of the separate self survives the contact. Tukaram extends the promise to his own company: keep company with him, and Hari enters and annihilates the last separateness in the soul. Love is not safe; it is a grip that ends the self.

GATHA 0152

Krishna Leela

Wrestling, the four watches of a life

मराठी मूळ

हमामा रे पोरा हमामा रे । हमामा घालितां ठकलें पोर । करी येरझार चौऱ्याशीची ॥१॥
 पहिले पहारा रंगासि आलें । सोहं सोहं सें बार घेतलें । देखोनि गडी तें विसरलें । डाई पडिलें आपणची ॥२॥
 दुसऱ्या पहारा महा आनंदें । हमामा घाली छंदछंदें । दिस वाडे तों गोड वाटे । परि पुढें नेणे पोर काय होतें तें ॥३॥
 तिसऱ्या पहारा घेतला बार । अहंपणे पाय न राहे स्थिर । सोस सोस करितां डाई पडसी । सत्य जाणें हा निर्धार ॥४॥

३॥

चौथ्या पहारा हमामा । घालिसी कांपविसी हातपाय । सुऱ्यापाटिलाचा पोर यम । त्याचे पडलीस डाई ॥४॥
 हमामा घालितां भ्याला तुका । त्यानें सांडिली गड्याची सोई । यादवांचा मूल एक । विठोबा त्यासवें चारितो गाई

॥५॥

गाई - अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let us wrestle, boy, let us wrestle! In wrestling, the child was thrown and now wanders through eighty-four lakh births.

In the first watch, it entered the arena of form, taking its turn with the chant "Soham, Soham." But seeing its companions, it forgot everything and fell under the throw of its own doing.

In the second watch, it wrestled with great delight, following one rhythm after another. As the day grew long, everything seemed sweet, but the child did not know what lay ahead.

In the third watch, it took its turn, and pride made its footing unsteady. Strain as you will, you shall fall; know this to be the certain truth.

In the fourth watch, you wrestle with trembling hands and feet. The son of Surya the village headman, Yama, has caught you in his throw.

Says Tuka, the wrestling frightened me, and so I abandoned the way of my companions. There is one boy of the Yadava clan, Vithoba, and I tend the cows in His company.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let us wrestle, boy, let us wrestle. In the wrestling the child was thrown, and now it wanders through the eighty-four lakh births. In the first watch it stepped into the ring and took its turn with the chant Soham, Soham; but the moment it saw its playmates it forgot everything and was thrown by its own move. In the second watch it wrestled with great delight, in one rhythm after another; as the day lengthened it all seemed sweet, but the child had no idea what was coming. In the third watch it took its turn, and pride made its feet unsteady; strain as you will, you are going to fall, know this for certain. In the fourth watch, as it wrestles, its hands and feet begin to tremble; the son of the Sun, Yama himself, throws it to the ground. Tuka grew afraid of this wrestling and let go of the players' company; and Vithoba, one child of the Yadava clan, grazes the cattle at his side.

WHAT IT MEANS

The wrestling match stretched across the four watches of a day, which are the four ages of a life. The soul enters awake, chanting Soham, I am That, but is distracted by its playmates, the world, and thrown by its own doing; the middle of life feels sweet and goes on heedless; pride unsteadies it; and in the last watch, with the body trembling, Yama, son of the Sun, throws it down. The whole game ends in the wheel of rebirth. Tukaram's escape is the telling detail: frightened by the match, he simply left the company of the players, and found Vitthal, one of the cowherds, grazing cattle apart from the game. The way out of the contest is to leave it for God.

GATHA 0153

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the milch cow of grace

मराठी मूळ

आम्हां घरीं एक गाय दुभता हे । पान्हा न समाये त्रिभुवनीं ॥१॥
 वान ते सांवळी नांव ते श्रीधरा । चरे वसुंधरा चौदा भुवनें ॥२॥
 वत्स नाहीं माय भलत्या सवें जाय । कुर्वाळी तो लाहे भावभरणा ॥३॥
 चहू धारीं क्षीर वोळली अमुप । धाले सनकादिक सिद्ध मुनी ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे माझी भूक तेथें काय । जोगाविते माय तिन्ही लोकां ॥४॥
 कांडण - अभंग २

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

In our house there is one milch cow whose yield overflows beyond the three worlds.

Her hide is dark; her name is Shridhara. She grazes across all fourteen realms.

She has no calf, yet she follows anyone at all; whoever caresses her with devotion receives her nourishing abundance.

From her four teats flows immeasurable milk that has satisfied Sanaka and all the sages and perfected beings.

Says Tuka, what is my hunger before her? This mother cow nourishes all three worlds.

IN PLAIN WORDS

In our house there is a single milch cow whose flow of milk cannot be contained by the three worlds. Her color is dark, and her name is Shridhara; she grazes across all fourteen realms. She has no calf of her own, yet she follows anyone at all, and whoever strokes her with devotion receives her overflowing nourishment. From her four teats pours immeasurable milk that has fed Sanaka and all the sages and perfected ones. Tuka says: what is my small hunger before her? This mother nourishes all three worlds.

WHAT IT MEANS

A riddling poem of pure abundance. The dark milch cow whose milk overflows the worlds is God himself, named Shridhara, the dark Krishna; she belongs to no one and follows anyone who strokes her with love, giving without limit. The four teats suggest the inexhaustible sources of grace, enough to have fed the greatest sages. Against such overflow, Tukaram says, his own hunger is nothing; the mother who nourishes all three worlds will hardly be troubled to feed one more. The image turns God from a distant lord into a homely, generous mother-cow in the devotee's own yard, whose only condition is a loving touch.

GATHA 0154

Worldly Metaphors

Grindstone, the chore as sadhana

मराठी मूळ

सिद्ध करुनियां ठेविलें कांडण । मज सांगातीण शुद्ध बुद्धि गे ॥१॥
 आठव हा धरीं मज जागें करीं । मागिले पाहारीं सेवटिचा गे ॥२॥
 सम तुकें घाव घालीं वो साजणी । मी तुजमळिणी जंव मिळे ॥३॥
 एक कशी पाखडी दुसरी निवडी । निःशेष तिसडी ओज करी ॥४॥
 सरलें कांडण पाकसद्धि करी । मेळवण क्षिरीसाकरेचें ॥५॥
 उद्धव अक्रूर बंधु दोघेजण । बाप नारायण जेवणार ॥६॥
 तुका म्हणे मज माहेरीं आवडी । म्हणोनि तांतडी मूळ केलें ॥७॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I have prepared the grain for pounding, and pure wisdom is my companion at the stone.

Hold this remembrance and wake me in the last watch of the night.

Strike even, balanced blows, O my friend, until I merge with you completely.

One sifts, another winnows, and the third separates the pure essence without remainder.

When the pounding is done, prepare the sacred dish; let the seasoning be milk and sugar together.

Uddhava and Akrura, the two brothers, will be the attendants, and the father, Narayana, is the one who will dine.

Says Tuka, I long for my mother's home; that is why I have arranged this occasion in such haste.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I have made the grain ready for pounding, and pure understanding is my companion at the stone. Keep this in mind, and wake me in the last watch of the night. Strike even, balanced blows, my friend, until I have merged completely into you. One sifts, another winnows, and the third picks out the pure essence with nothing left over. When the pounding is finished, prepare the sacred dish, and let the seasoning be milk and sugar together. Uddhava and Akrura, the two brothers, will wait at table, and the father, Narayana, is the one who will eat. Tuka says: I long so for my mother's home that I have hurried to send for it.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram takes the women's grindstone-song, sung in pairs before dawn, and makes the whole chore a figure for spiritual practice. The grain is the self; pure understanding is the working partner; the even, balanced blows are steady discipline, continued until the grinder merges into the one she works with. The threefold sifting, winnowing, and separating is discernment, parting the pure essence from the chaff. The end is a dish cooked for God: Narayana himself is the diner, attended by his devotees. And the longing that drives the whole pre-dawn labor is the soul's homesickness for its true home, the mother's house, which here is God.

GATHA 0155

Worldly Metaphors

Grindstone, the unstruck sound

मराठी मूळ

सावडीं कांडण ओवी नारायण । निवडे आपण भूस सार ॥१॥
 मुसळ आधारीं आवरुनि धरीं । सांवरोनि थिरीं घाव घालीं ॥२॥
 वाजती कांकणें अनुहात गजरें । छंद माहियेरे गाऊं गीति ॥३॥
 कांडिता कांडण नव्हे भाग शीण । तुजमजपण निवडे तों ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे रूप उमटे आरिसा । पाक त्या सरिसा शुद्ध जाला ॥४॥
 आडसण दळण - अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

In the quiet hours, pound the grain while singing the ovi of Narayana, and the chaff will separate from the grain on its own.

Grip the pestle firmly and steady yourself; then strike measured blows.

The bangles ring out in the anahata, the unstruck celestial sound; let us sing the songs of our mother's home.

While pounding the grain, no share of the labor feels like weariness, not until the sense of "you" and "I" is completely winnowed away.

Says Tuka, the form appears in the mirror, and the cooking is done as pure as that reflection.

IN PLAIN WORDS

In the quiet hours, pound the grain while singing the ovi of Narayana, and the chaff will fall away from the grain on its own. Grip the pestle firmly, steady yourself, and bring the blows down measured and even. The bangles ring out as the anahata, the unstruck celestial sound, and we sing the songs of our mother's home. While the grain is being pounded, no part of the labor feels like weariness, not until the sense of you and I has been completely winnowed away. Tuka says: the form appears clear in the mirror, and the cooking comes out as pure as that reflection.

WHAT IT MEANS

Another grindstone allegory, this one fixed on sound and effortlessness. To pound the grain while singing God's name turns the chore into japa, and then the chaff, the impurity, separates by itself, without forcing. The ringing of the worker's bangles becomes the anahata, the unstruck inner sound heard in deep meditation. The remarkable claim is that the labor stops feeling like labor; it is weariless right up to the moment the sense of you-and-I is winnowed out, which is the goal. And when the heart is clear as a mirror, the result, the cooked dish, the finished self, comes out pure. Work done as remembrance ceases to tire and ends in clarity.

GATHA 0156

Worldly Metaphors

Grindstone, grind with care

मराठी मूळ

शुद्धीचें सारोनि भरियेली पाळी । भरडोनि वोंगळी नाम केलें ॥१॥
 आडसोनि शुद्ध करीं वो साजणी । सद्धि कां पापिणी नासियेलें ॥२॥
 सुपीं तों चि पाहें धड उगटिलें । नव्हतां नासिलें जगझोडी ॥३॥
 सुपीं तों चि आहे तुज तें आधीन । दळिल्या जेवण जैसें तैसें ॥४॥
 सुपीं तों चि संग घेई धडफुडी । एकसा गधडी नास केला ॥५॥
 दळितां आदळे तुज कां न कळे । काय गेले डोळे कान तुझे ॥६॥
 सुपीं तों चि वोज न करितां सायास । पडसी सांदीस तुका म्हणे ॥६॥
 दळण - अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Having sifted the pure portion, you filled the tray. But then you ground everything coarsely and ruined the Name.

Sift it clean, O my friend; why, O sinful one, have you spoiled the preparation?

Look carefully into the winnowing tray at what has been opened; what was whole has been destroyed by the storm of worldliness.

All is still there in the tray, and it is in your hands alone. Whether the flour is fine or coarse depends on how you grind.

Look into the tray and pick out the firm, whole grains. By mixing everything together like a she-donkey, you have ruined it all.

While grinding, the stones clash; can you not see or hear what is happening?

Says Tuka, just look carefully into the tray; without effort, the result is there, or else you will slip into the crack and be lost.

IN PLAIN WORDS

You had sifted out the pure portion and filled the tray, and then you ground it all coarsely and ruined the Name. Sift it clean, my friend; why, you foolish one, have you spoiled the whole preparation? Look hard into the winnowing tray at what has been opened up: what was whole has been wrecked by the storm of worldliness. It is all still there in the tray, and it is entirely in your own hands; whether the flour comes out fine or coarse depends only on how you grind. Look into the tray and pick out the firm, whole grains; by mixing everything together like a fool you have ruined the lot. It strikes against you as you grind, so why can you not see it? Have your eyes and ears gone? Tuka says: handle the tray with care, take the trouble, or you will fall straight into the crack.

WHAT IT MEANS

A scolding grindstone-allegory about the work of discernment. The pure grain carefully sifted is the truth, or the Name, already grasped; grinding it carelessly, mixing whole and broken together, ruins it, and the storm of worldliness is what wrecks what was once whole. Tukaram's insistence is that the outcome is entirely in your own hands: fine flour or coarse, a saved life or a spoiled one, depends only on how attentively you do the work. Pick out the sound grains; do not lump everything together in a hurry. The error keeps knocking against you as you go, so the only excuse for missing it is willful blindness. Do the work of discrimination with care, or fall through the gap.

GATHA 0157

Worldly Metaphors

Grinding song, the joy of purity

मराठी मूळ

शुद्ध दळणाचें सुख सांगों काई । मानवित सईबाई तुज ॥१॥
 शुद्ध तें वळण लवकरी पावे । डोलवितां निवे अष्टांग तें ॥२॥
 शुद्ध हें जेवितां तन निवे मन । अल्प त्या इंधन बुडा लागे ॥३॥
 शुद्ध त्याचा पाक सुचित चांगला । अविट तयाला नाश नाही ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे शुद्ध आवडे सकळां । भ्रतार वेगळा न करी जीवें ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

How shall I tell you the joy of pure grinding, dear sister? Let me satisfy you with this.

Pure flour, well ground, is quickly ready; when all eight limbs turn with the quern, the whole being is cooled.

When you eat what is pure, both body and mind are nourished; only a little fuel is needed for such a fire.

The cooking of the pure is well seasoned and excellent; it never grows stale and knows no destruction.

Says Tuka, purity is loved by all, and the Beloved never separates Himself from such a soul.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Dear sister, how can I tell you the joy of pure grinding? Let me satisfy you with it. Flour ground clean is ready quickly; when all eight limbs sway with the quern, the whole body grows cool. Eat what is pure, and both body and mind are nourished; such a fire needs only a little fuel. The cooking of the pure is well seasoned and good; it never goes stale, and it never perishes. Tuka says: everyone loves what is pure, and the Beloved never parts from such a soul, not for the life of him.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a grinding song, the kind women sang at the quern, but Tukaram makes the grindstone an image of inner work. "Pure grinding" is purity of effort and devotion: when the whole body bends to it, the eight limbs all engaged, the result is cooling, nourishing, and lasting. The fire of such purity needs little fuel and its food never goes stale, unlike worldly things that spoil. The poet's claim lands in the last line: God himself will not separate from a soul that is pure, so the work at the stone is really the work of becoming someone the Beloved will never leave.

GATHA 0158

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the riverbank feast above heaven

मराठी मूळ

उपजोनियां पुढती येऊं । काला खाऊं दहीभात ॥१॥
 वैकुंठीं तों ऐसें नाहीं । कवळ कांहीं काल्याचें ॥२॥
 एकमेकां देऊं मुखीं । सुखीं घालूं हुंबरी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे वाळवंट । बरवें नीट उत्तम ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let us be born again and again, so that we may share the feast of curd and rice together.

In Vaikuntha there is nothing like the morsel of this communal meal.

Let us feed one another mouth to mouth and play together with joyful cries.

Says Tuka, the sandy riverbank of Pandharpur is beautiful, level, and perfect.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let us be born again and again, so we can eat the shared meal of curd and rice together. There is nothing like this in Vaikuntha, not a single morsel of the communal feast. Let us feed one another, mouth to mouth, and call out together with joyful cries. Tuka says: the sandy bank of Pandharpur is lovely, level, and the best place of all.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks in the voice of Krishna's cowherd companions, sharing the simple *kālā*, the mixed meal of curd and rice eaten together on the riverbank. The startling wish is to be reborn over and over, not to escape rebirth, just to keep this fellowship of feeding and laughter with Krishna. Against that, even Vaikuntha, the highest

heaven, has nothing to offer: liberation itself is less sweet than this shared morsel. The closing line transfers the scene to Pandharpur's sandbank, telling the listener that the same companionship with God is available right here, on this earth, among devotees.

GATHA 0159

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the herdsman's invitation

मराठी मूळ

याल तर या रे लागें । अवघे माझ्या मार्गे मार्गे ॥१॥
 आजि देतों पोटभरी । पुरे म्हणाल तोंवरी ॥२॥
 हळू हळू चला । कोणी कोणाशीं न बोला ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे सांडा घाटे । तेणें नका भरुं पोटे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

If you wish to come, then come along, all of you, follow close behind me.

Today I will feed you to your heart's content, until you yourselves say, enough.

Walk softly, softly, and let no one speak a word to anyone.

Says Tuka, abandon your scheming and do not stuff your bellies with that.

IN PLAIN WORDS

If you want to come, then come, all of you, follow close behind me. Today I will feed you to the full, until you yourselves say enough. Walk softly, softly; let no one speak to anyone. Tuka says: drop your scheming, and do not fill your bellies with that.

WHAT IT MEANS

Krishna calls his cowherd friends to follow him to a hidden feast where he will satisfy them completely, until they themselves cry enough. The conditions are simple: come close behind him, move quietly, and stop talking among yourselves. The final line names the catch. "Filling the belly with scheming" is the trap; if you come stuffed with your own clever plans, there is no room for what he wants to give. Read inwardly, this is the call to follow God in silence and self-emptying, dropping the calculating mind so that grace can fill you instead.

GATHA 0160

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the swing and the fair share

मराठी मूळ

शिकें लावियेलें दुरी । होतों तिघांचे मी वरी ॥१॥
 तुम्ही व्हारे दोहींकडे । मुख पसरुनि गडे ॥२॥
 वाहाती त्या धारा । घ्यारे दोहींच्या कोंपरा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे हातीं टोका । अधिक उणें नेदी एका ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*He hung the swing up high, and I climbed above the other three.**You two, stand on either side with your mouths open wide, O friends.**The streams of milk are flowing; catch them at both ends.**Says Tuka, He holds the rope-end in His hand and does not let anyone receive more or less than their share.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

He hung the swing up high, and I climbed above the other three. You two, stand on either side, and open your mouths wide, friends. The streams of milk are flowing; catch them at both ends. Tuka says: he holds the rope-end in his hand, and gives no one more or less than their share.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is the cowherds' game, with a high swing and streams of milk caught in open mouths, a scene of play that is also a parable of grace. The speaker climbs above the others, and friends are placed on either side to receive the flow. The point arrives in the signature line: Krishna himself holds the rope-end, and he portions out the bounty so that no one gets more or less than their due. The play conceals a teaching about divine fairness, that the giver controls the measure and gives each soul exactly its share, no favoritism, no shortfall.

GATHA 0161

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the bold are fed, the timid lose

मराठी मूळ

पळाले ते भ्याड । त्यांसि येथें जाला नाड ॥१॥
 धीट घेती धणीवरी । शिकीं उतरितो हरी ॥२॥
 आपुलिया मतीं । पडलीं विचारिं तीं रितीं ॥२॥
 तुका लागे घ्यारे पायां । कै पावाल या ठाया ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The cowards who fled have met with ruin. The bold ones take their fill, for Hari lowers the bounty from above for them.

Those who deliberated on their own, empty of conviction, were left behind.

Says Tuka, fall at His feet; only then will you ever reach this place.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The cowards who ran away met with ruin here. The bold ones take their fill, for Hari lowers the bounty to them. Those who reasoned it out on their own were left empty, with nothing. Tuka says: fall at his feet; only then will you ever reach this place.

WHAT IT MEANS

In the game of reaching the hung-up bounty, the timid who flee lose out, while the bold who press in are fed, because Hari himself lowers the prize to them. The middle line sharpens it: those who trusted only their own reasoning, calculating instead of committing, came away empty. The poem is contrasting cautious self-reliance with daring surrender. Tukaram's close makes the lesson plain: the bounty is not seized by cleverness but received by falling at God's feet, and only that humble boldness brings you to the place where you are filled.

GATHA 0162

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the children fed and joyful

मराठी मूळ

धालें मग पोट । केला गड्यांनी बोभाट ॥१॥
 ये रे ये रे नारायणा । बोलों अबोलण्या खुणा ॥२॥
 खांद्यावरी भार । तीं शिणती बहु फार ॥३॥
 तुकयाच्या दातारें । नेलीं सुखी केलीं पोरें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Their bellies are full, and now the friends raise a joyful clamor.

Come, come, O Narayana, let us speak in signs beyond all words.

They carry burdens on their shoulders and have grown weary beyond measure.

Tuka's generous Lord has taken the children and filled them with joy.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Their bellies are full now, and the friends raise a joyful clamor. Come, come, O Narayana; let us speak in signs, without words. They carry burdens on their shoulders, and they are worn out, very worn out. Tuka says: Tuka's generous Lord has taken the children and made them glad.

WHAT IT MEANS

The cowherd children have eaten their fill and break into happy noise, calling Narayana to join them in a wordless language of signs, the intimacy that needs no speech. There is a tender notice of their tiredness, the burdens on their small shoulders, the weariness of the day. The last line resolves it all: Tuka's open-handed Lord gathers up the worn-out children and fills them with joy. As an inner reading, those who give themselves to God, however small and tired, are taken up and made glad by his generosity, which asks no words, only nearness.

GATHA 0163

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the butter thief blamed

मराठी मूळ

पाहाती गौळणी । तंव पालथी दुधाणी ॥१॥
 म्हणती नंदाचिया पोरें । आजि चोरी केली खरें ॥२॥
 त्याविण हे नासी । नव्हे दुसरिया ऐसी ॥२॥
 सवें तुका मेळा । त्याणें अगुणा आणिला ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*The milkmaids look and find the milk pots overturned.**They say, the son of Nanda has surely stolen the butter today.**No one else could make this kind of mischief.**Says Tuka, I was right there in his company; they dragged the guiltless one into it.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

The milkmaids look, and find the milk pots overturned. They say, the son of Nanda has surely stolen the butter today. No one else makes mischief like this. Tuka says: I was right there with him; they dragged the guiltless one into it.

WHAT IT MEANS

The gopis discover their pots upended and at once blame Nanda's boy, Krishna the butter thief, since no one else gets up to such mischief. Tukaram then slips himself into the scene: he was right beside Krishna, and the milkmaids dragged the innocent one in along with the culprit. The charm of the poem is the devotee claiming a place inside the divine play, even sharing in the blame. Inwardly, to be "caught with" God, swept up in his lila and accused alongside him, is itself the closeness the bhakta longs for; the guiltless one he names is finally Krishna, who steals hearts and bears the charge.

GATHA 0164

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the scolding that hides delight

मराठी मूळ

आतां ऐसें करूं । दोघां धरुनियां मारूं ॥१॥
 मग टाकिती हे खोडी । तोंडीं लागली ते गोडी ॥ध्रु॥
 कोण्डूं घरामधीं । न बोलोनि जागों बुद्धी ॥२॥
 बोलावितो देवा । तुका गडियांचा मेळावा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Now let us do this: catch those two and give them a beating.**Only then will they drop this habit, for they have acquired a taste for it.**Lock them inside the house and keep silent watch over them.**Says Tuka, he calls out to God, gathering his band of friends.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Now let us do this: catch those two and beat them. Only then will they drop this trick, for they have got a taste for it in their mouths. Lock them inside the house, and keep silent watch with our wits awake. Tuka says: he calls out to God, gathering his band of friends.

WHAT IT MEANS

The villagers, exasperated by the butter thieving, plot to catch the two culprits, give them a beating, and shut them in, because the boys have grown too fond of the mischief to stop on their own. The scolding is a thin cover for affection; everyone is really delighting in Krishna's pranks. The signature line turns it: even as the plan to trap him is laid, the speaker is calling out to God and gathering companions. The deeper note is that the longing to "catch" and hold Krishna, to keep him close behind locked doors, is the devotee's own desire to seize and never lose the playful Lord.

GATHA 0165

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the sulking playmates

मराठी मूळ

गडी गेले रडी । कान्हो नेदीस तूं चढी ॥१॥
 आम्ही न खेळों न खेळों । आला भाव तुझा कळों ॥ध्रु॥
 न साहावे भार । बहु लागतो उशीर ॥२॥
 तुका आला रागें । येऊं नेदी मागें मागें ॥३॥
 हाल - अभंग २

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The friends have gone off crying. Krishna, you will not let anyone else climb up!

We refuse to play, we refuse to play; now we see through your ways.

The burden is too much to bear, and you take far too long.

Says Tuka, he has come in anger and will not let anyone follow behind him.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The friends have gone off crying. Krishna, you will not let anyone else climb up! We will not play, we will not play; now we see through your ways. The burden is too much to bear, and you take far too long. Tuka says: he has come in anger, and will not let anyone follow behind him.

WHAT IT MEANS

Krishna's playmates are sulking: he always climbs up first and lets no one else take a turn, so they go off in tears, swearing they will not play and claiming they have seen through his tricks. It is the small drama of children with a domineering favorite, here the Lord himself. Tukaram adds that Krishna comes back in a temper and will not let anyone trail behind him. Beneath the quarrel lies a gentle truth about devotion: the soul protests God's seeming favoritism and delay, his refusal to let us keep pace on our terms, yet the relationship holds, sulking and all, within the larger play.

GATHA 0166

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the rules of the game

मराठी मूळ

यमुनेतटीं मांडिला खेळ । म्हणे गोपाळ गडियांसि ॥१॥
 हाल महाहाल मांडा । वाउगी सांडा मोकळी ॥२॥
 नावें ठेवूनि वांटा गडी । न वजे रडी मग कोणी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे कान्हो तिळतांदळ्या । जिंके तो करी आपुला खेळ्या ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

On the banks of the Yamuna the game of Hal is set up. The cowherd boy says to his friends:

Play the great game of Hal! Cast off all needless show.

Divide into teams by name, so that afterward no one goes away crying.

Says Tuka, Krishna plays the sesame-and-rice game; the one who wins makes the loser his own.

IN PLAIN WORDS

On the bank of the Yamuna the game of Hal is set up. The cowherd boy says to his friends: play the great game of Hal; cast off all needless show. Divide into teams by name, so that afterward no one goes away crying. Tuka says: Krishna plays the sesame-and-rice game; the one who wins makes the loser his own.

WHAT IT MEANS

By the Yamuna, Krishna sets up the game and lays down its rules to his friends: play it fully and seriously, drop all empty show, and divide fairly into named teams so no one ends up cheated and weeping. The closing image gives the game its meaning. In Krishna's version the prize is reversed: the winner does not crush the loser but takes him in as his own. As a spiritual reading, this is how God plays with souls. To be "defeated" by him, caught and overcome, is not to lose but to be claimed and made his, which is the whole point of entering the game.

GATHA 0167

Krishna Leela

Krishna, catch God by his feet

मराठी मूळ

बळें डाई न पडे हरी । बुद्धि करी शाहणा तो ॥१॥
 मोकळें देवा खेळों घावें । सम भावें सांपडावया ॥२॥
 येतो जातो वेळोवेळां । न कळे कळा सांपडती ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे धरा ठायींच्या ठायीं । मिठी जीवीं पायीं घालुनियां ॥३॥
 सुतुतू - अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Hari does not fall by force; the wise one uses his wits.

Let God play freely, so that He may be caught with equal feeling.

He comes and goes again and again; His arts remain hidden until the moment of capture.

Says Tuka, seize Him right where He stands by throwing your arms around His feet with all your life.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Hari does not fall by force; the wise one uses his wits. Let God play freely, so he can be caught with even, equal feeling. He comes and goes, again and again; his arts stay hidden until the moment he is caught. Tuka says: seize him right where he stands, throwing your arms around his feet with all your life.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram lays out the strategy for catching God, who cannot be taken by force, only by wisdom. You must let him play freely and meet him with steady, even-tempered devotion, sama bhāva, rather than grasping. He keeps coming and going, his arts concealed, until the very instant he is caught. The closing instruction is the heart of it: do not chase him about; seize him right where he stands by throwing your arms around his feet with your whole life. The teaching is that God is held not by effort or cleverness but by total, loving surrender at his feet.

GATHA 0168

Worldly Metaphors

The soul and Shiva, a wrestling game

मराठी मूळ

जीवशिवाच्या मांडुनि हाला । अहं सोहं दोन्ही भेडती भला ॥१॥
 घाली हुतुतू फिरोनि पाही आपुणासि । पाही बळिया तो मागिला तुटी पुढिलासि ॥२॥
 खेळिया तो हाल सांभाळी । धुम घाली तो पडे पाताळीं ॥३॥
 बळिया गाढ्या तो चि खेळे । दम पुरे तो वेळोवेळां खेळे ॥४॥
 हातीं पडे तो चि ढांग । दम पुरे तो खेळिया चांग ॥५॥
 मागे पुढें पाहे तो जिंके । हातीं पडे तो चि आधार फिके ॥६॥
 आपल्या बळें खळे रे भाई । गडियाची सांडोनि सोई ॥७॥
 तुका म्हणे मी खेळिया नव्हें । जिकडे पडें त्याचि सवें ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The game of Hal is set between the soul and Shiva; "I" and "I am That" charge at each other like rams.

One rushes across the line playing hututu and looks back at himself; the stronger one breaks through the rear to reach the one ahead.

The skilled player holds the line and guards the game, while the one who charges recklessly falls into the depths.

Whether strong or coward, only the one with enduring breath plays round after round. The one who gets a handhold makes the leap; the player with stamina is the true champion.

The one who watches both front and back wins, while the one who is caught finds his support crumble.

Play on your own strength, O brother, and abandon the crutch of others.

Says Tuka, I am no player in this game; whichever side I fall on, I stay with them.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The game of Hal is set between the soul and Shiva; "I" and "I am That" charge at each other like rams. One rushes across the line playing hututu and looks back at himself; the stronger one breaks through the rear to reach the one ahead. The skilled player holds the line and guards the game, while the one who charges recklessly falls into the depths. Strong or coward, only the one whose breath lasts plays round after round. The one who gets a handhold makes the leap; the player with stamina is the true champion. The one who watches both front and back wins, while the one who is caught finds his support crumble. Play on your own strength, brother; abandon the crutch of others. Tuka says: I am no player in this game; whichever side I fall on, I stay with them.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns the village game of hututu into the contest between the individual soul and the absolute. "I" (aham) and "I am That" (soham) charge at each other like rams, the sense of separate self against the knowledge of oneness. The poem is a coach's running commentary: hold the line, do not charge recklessly, keep your breath, watch both ahead and behind, and above all play on your own strength rather than leaning on others. In the

spiritual reading, the realization has to be won by one's own sustained effort, not borrowed. The closing turn is the surprise: Tuka steps out of the role of player and says he simply belongs to whichever side he lands on, surrendering the whole contest of self rather than trying to win it.

GATHA 0169

Krishna Leela

Wonder, the infinite as a child

मराठी मूळ

अनंत ब्रम्हांडे उदरीं । हरि हा बाळक नंदा घरीं ॥१॥
 नवल केव्हडें केव्हडें । न कळे कान्होबाचें कोडें ॥२॥
 पृथ्वी जेणें तृप्त केली । त्यासि यशोदा भोजन घाली ॥३॥
 विश्वव्यापक कमळापती । त्यासि गौळणी कडिये घेती ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे नटधारी । भोग भोगून ब्रम्हचारी ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Infinite universes dwell within His belly, yet Hari lives as a small child in Nanda's house.

How great is this wonder, how vast! The mystery of Krishna cannot be fathomed.

He who nourished the whole earth, Yashoda now serves Him a meal.

The all-pervading Lord of Lakshmi is carried on the hips of the milkmaids.

Says Tuka, He is the great actor in disguise; He moves in Brahman yet plays as if He has never tasted the world.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Endless universes lie in his belly, and yet Hari is a small child in Nanda's house. How great this wonder is, how great. No one can fathom Krishna's riddle. He fed the whole earth; now Yashoda sets a meal before him. He fills all the worlds, he is the lord of Lakshmi; and the milkmaids carry him on their hips. Tuka says: he is the actor in disguise. He tastes every pleasure and stays untouched, a chaste one through it all.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is holding two facts together that should not fit: the formless Brahman, who contains and sustains everything, has become a little boy in a cowherd's house. The wonder he keeps naming is exactly this scandal of scale, the infinite eating from Yashoda's hand, the all-pervading one carried on a hip. He calls Krishna an actor in disguise to say the smallness is real play, not a loss of greatness. The closing claim is the sharpest: the Lord enjoys the whole world yet remains untouched by it, present in it without being caught by it. The poem points the listener toward that same freedom inside engagement.

GATHA 0170

Krishna Leela

Joy at the avatar, sins carried away

मराठी मूळ

कृष्ण गोकुळीं जन्मला । दुष्टां चळकांप सुटला ॥१॥
 होतां कृष्णाचा अवतार । आनंद करिती घरोघर ॥२॥
 प्रेम नाम वाचें गाती । सदा आनंदें नाचती ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे हरती दोष । आनंदानें करिती घोष ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Krishna was born in Gokul, and a trembling terror seized the wicked.**With the advent of Krishna, joy arose in every household.**They sing His blessed name with love and dance in constant bliss.**Says Tuka, their sins are carried away as they celebrate with joyful cries.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Krishna was born in Gokul, and the wicked were seized with trembling fear. When Krishna came down as the avatar, joy rose in house after house. They sing his name of love with their mouths; they dance in endless bliss. Tuka says: their sins are carried away as they cry out in joy.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram sets two responses side by side at the birth of Krishna: terror in the wicked, joy in every household. The trembling is not random cruelty; the coming of the divine simply unsettles whatever is built on harm. For the rest, the response is singing and dancing, the name spoken aloud with love. The last line names the stake plainly: it is this joyful, vocal celebration of the Name that carries sins away, not penance or fear. The poem holds out praise itself as the cleansing.

GATHA 0171

Krishna Leela

Butter theft, the divine ringleader

मराठी मूळ

मेळउनि सकळ गोपाळ । कांहीं करिती विचार ॥१॥
 चला जाऊं चोरुं लोणी । आजि घेऊं चंद्रधणी ।
 वेळ लावियेला अझुणी । एकाकरितां गडे हो ॥२॥
 वाट काढिली गोविंदीं । मागें गोपाळांची मांदी ॥३॥
 अवघा चि वावरे । कळों नेदी कोणा फिरे ॥४॥
 घर पाहोनि एकांताचें । नवविधा नवनीताचें ॥५॥
 रिघे आपण भीतरी । पुरवी माथुलियाच्या हरी ॥६॥
 बोलों नेदी म्हणे स्थिर । खुणा दावी खा रे क्षीर ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Gathering all the cowherd boys together, they hatched a plan.**Come, let us go steal the butter; today we shall have our fill. The delay has been long enough on account of one person, O friends.**Govinda led the way, and behind him followed the whole throng of cowherd boys.**He roams about everywhere yet lets no one catch on to his movements.**He finds a house that is secluded, full of nine kinds of fresh butter.**He slips inside himself and fills the laps of the cowherd boys.**He tells them not to speak, signaling with his hands: be still, just eat the cream.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Gathering all the cowherd boys, they make a plan. Come, let us go steal the butter; today we will take our fill. The wait has gone on long enough because of one of us, friends. Govinda leads the way, and behind him the whole crowd of cowherd boys. He moves about everywhere yet lets no one catch his movements. He finds a house that is empty, full of nine kinds of fresh butter. He slips inside himself and fills the laps of the cowherd boys. He tells them not to speak; he signals with his hand: be still, just eat the cream.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram tells the butter theft with Krishna as the ringleader, not a bystander. The same Govinda who pervades everything is the one scouting the empty house, slipping in, filling the boys' laps and signaling them to stay quiet. The point of the play is intimacy: the Lord plots and shares and hushes like one of the gang. By making God the thief who feeds his friends first, the poem turns a child's prank into a picture of grace that comes uninvited and serves before it is asked. The hiddenness, moving unseen, lets no one catch him, is the same divine elusiveness made playful.

GATHA 0172

Krishna Leela

Krishna's mischief, the offering eaten

मराठी मूळ

धन्य त्या गौळणी इंद्राच्या पूजनीं । नैवेद्य हिरोनि खातो कृष्ण ॥१॥
 अरे कृष्णा इंद्र अमर इच्छिती । कोण तयांप्रति येइल आतां ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे देव दाखवी विंदान । नैवेद्य खाऊन हासों लागे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Blessed are those milkmaids! When the offerings were laid out for Indra's worship, Krishna stole them and ate them himself.

O Krishna, even the immortal gods long for Indra's favor; who will dare challenge them now?

Says Tuka, the Lord reveals His wondrous play, eating the offerings and then bursting into laughter.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Blessed are those milkmaids. When the offerings were set out for Indra's worship, Krishna snatched them and ate them himself. O Krishna, even the immortal gods long for Indra's favor; who will dare go against them now? Tuka says: the Lord shows his wondrous play. He eats the offering and then begins to laugh.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram retells the moment Krishna eats the food meant for Indra's worship, and he calls the milkmaids who witnessed it blessed. The middle line names the stakes as the world sees them: Indra is the king the gods themselves court, so to seize his offering should be unthinkable. Krishna does it anyway and then laughs, untroubled by the rank everyone else fears. The laughter is the teaching: the highest celestial authority is a small thing before the one who is its source. The poem invites delight in a God who is not bound by the ceremonies built around lesser powers.

GATHA 0173

Krishna Leela

I am the God of gods, Krishna declares

मराठी मूळ

तुम्ही गोपी बाळा मज कैशा नेणा । इंद्र अमरराणा म्यां चि केला ॥१॥
 इंद्र चंद्र सूर्य ब्रम्हा तिन्ही लोक । माझे सकळीक यम धर्म ॥२॥
 मजपासूनिया जाले जीव शिव । देवांचा ही देव मी च कृष्ण ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे त्यांसी बोले नारायण । व्यर्थ मी पाषाण जन्मा आलों ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

You gopis treat me like an ordinary child, as though you do not know me. I am the one who made Indra the king of the gods.

Indra, the moon, the sun, Brahma, all three worlds, Yama and Dharma: they are all mine.

From me have arisen all souls and Shiva himself; I, Krishna, am the God of gods.

Says Tuka, thus spoke Narayana to them, and I, a mere stone, was born in vain.

IN PLAIN WORDS

You gopis treat me like an ordinary child, as if you do not know me. I am the one who made Indra king of the gods. Indra, the moon, the sun, Brahma, all three worlds, Yama and Dharma: all of them are mine. From me arose every soul, and Shiva himself. I, Krishna, am the God of gods. Tuka says: thus Narayana spoke to them; and I, a mere stone, was born in vain.

WHAT IT MEANS

Krishna drops the disguise for a moment and tells the gopis plainly who the child in front of them is: the maker of Indra, the source of sun and moon and Brahma, of every soul and even Shiva, the God of all gods. Tukaram lets the full claim stand at its sharpest, no softening. Then he turns it on himself with the closing line, calling himself a mere stone born in vain. The contrast is the point: set beside the one who is the source of everything, the poet measures his own dull unresponsiveness and grieves it. The verse uses Krishna's self-declaration to expose how little the speaker has woken to it.

GATHA 0174

Krishna Leela

Teasing the wanderer, the cows lost again

मराठी मूळ

कां रे गमाविल्या गाई । आली वळती तुझी जाई । मागें जालें काई । एका तें का नेणसी ॥१॥
केलास फजित । मागें पुढें ही बहुत । लाज नाहीं नित्य । नित्य दंड पावतां ॥२॥
वोला खोडा खळि गाढी । ऐसा कोण तये काढी । धांवेला का पाडी । तुझी आधीं वोढाळा ॥३॥
चाल धांवें । मी ही येतो तुजसवें । तुका म्हणे जंव । तेथें नाहीं पावली ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Why have you lost the cows again? Your mother has come looking for you. Do you not know what happened the last time?

You have been made a fool, again and again, and yet you feel no shame at being punished day after day.

Your habit of mischief is deeply rooted; who can cure it? Will anyone restrain this wandering one?

Come, run, I will come with you. Says Tuka, let us hurry before she arrives there.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Why have you lost the cows again? Your mother has come looking for you. Do you not know what happened last time? You have been made a fool, before and after, many times over, and still you feel no shame though you are punished day after day. Your mischief is a stubborn, deep-set habit; who can pull it out? Will anyone hold back this wandering one of yours? Come, run; I will come with you too. Tuka says: let us hurry, before she gets there.

WHAT IT MEANS

On the surface this is a friend scolding little Krishna, who has wandered off and lost the cows yet again and will catch it from his mother. Tukaram lets the teasing carry a second sense about habit: a pattern of straying so deep-rooted that punishment never cures it, and no one can pull it out. Read on oneself, the wandering one is the restless mind that strays again and again and feels no shame at the repeated cost. The tenderness is that the speaker does not abandon the wanderer; he runs alongside, racing to soften the reckoning. The poem holds both the affection for Krishna and a quiet mirror for our own incurable straying.

GATHA 0175

The Saints

Gratitude to the saints, the watchful cow

मराठी मूळ

काय या संतांचे मानूँ उपकार । मज निरंतर जागविती ॥१॥
 काय देवा यांसि व्हावें उतराई । ठेवितां हा पार्यी जीव थोडा ॥२॥
 सहज बोलणें हित उपदेश । करुनि सायास शिकविती ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे वत्स धेनुचिया चित्तीं । तैसें मज येती सांभाळित ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

How can I repay the debt I owe to the saints? They keep me awake and watchful at all times.

How can one ever become free of this obligation to God? Even if I lay my life at their feet, it seems too little.

Their ordinary conversation is itself a teaching for my benefit; they take great pains to instruct me.

Says Tuka, as a cow's chitta is always fixed on her calf, so do the saints tend to me with ceaseless care.

IN PLAIN WORDS

How can I count the kindness of these saints? They keep me awake at all hours. How, my God, can I ever repay them? To lay my life at their feet is too small a thing. Their ordinary talk is itself good counsel for me; they take great pains to teach me. Tuka says: as a cow's heart stays fixed on her calf, so they come to watch over me.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is naming a debt he says he can never clear: the saints keep him spiritually awake, and even laying down his life would not repay it. The work they do for him is quiet, their plain conversation is already instruction, and they labor over him on purpose. The cow-and-calf image lands the claim: their attention to him is not duty but the helpless, constant love of a mother for her young. The poem points the listener to value such company rightly, as the very means by which one is kept from sleep and steadily taught.

GATHA 0176

Krishna Leela

Vaishnava boldness, the Krishna-jewel

मराठी मूळ

कंठीं धरिला कृष्णमणी । अवघा जनीं प्रकाश ॥१॥
 काला वांटूं एकमेकां । वैष्णवा निका संप्रम ॥२॥
 वांकुलिया ब्रम्हादिकां । उत्तम लोकां दाखवूं ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे भूमंडळीं । आम्ही बळी वीर गाडे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*We have fastened the Krishna-jewel at our throats, and its light plays everywhere among the people.**Let us share the feast with one another; what a splendid gathering of Vaishnavas this is.**We shall show playful gestures even to Brahma and the highest beings.**Says Tuka, upon the face of this earth, we are mighty warriors, strong and invincible.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

We have worn the Krishna-jewel at our throats, and its light is everywhere among people. Let us share the feast with one another; what a fine, glad gathering of Vaishnavas. We will make playful faces even at Brahma and the highest beings. Tuka says: on the whole face of the earth, we are mighty warriors, strong and unbeatable.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks for the band of devotees who carry the Name like a jewel at the throat, and whose shared joy lights up everyone around them. The shared feast is the kala, the cowherds' mingled food, and the gathering of Vaishnavas is its own delight. The boldness is deliberate: those who hold Krishna can make light even of Brahma and the lofty gods, because the Name outranks all heavenly station. The closing boast is not worldly conquest but spiritual fearlessness; devotion makes these unarmed singers the truly invincible ones on earth.

GATHA 0177

Krishna Leela

The Supreme become a cowherd, butter and dance

मराठी मूळ

कवळाचिया सुखें । परब्रम्ह जालें गोरखें । हात गोऊनि खाय मुखें । बोटासांदी लोणचें ॥१॥
 कोण जाणे तेथें । कोण लाभ कां तें । ब्रम्हादिकां दुर्लभ ॥२॥
 घाली हमामा हुंबरी । पांवा वाजवी छंदें मोहरी । गोपाळांचे फेरी । हरि छंदें नाचतसे ॥३॥
 काय नव्हतें त्या घरीं खावया । रिघे लोणी चोरावया । तुका म्हणे सवें तया । आम्ही ही सोंकलों ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

For the joy of a single morsel, the Supreme Brahman itself became a cowherd boy. He eats with both hands and tucks a bit of pickle between his fingers.

Who can know what gain is found there, a thing unattainable even to Brahma and the gods?

He wrestles, he plays, he blows the flute and the shehnai and dances to their rhythm. In circles of cowherd boys, Hari dances to their beat.

What was lacking in that house that He had to sneak in and steal the butter? Says Tuka, we too have been enticed and swept along in His company.

IN PLAIN WORDS

For the joy of one mouthful, the Supreme Brahman became a cowherd boy. He eats with cupped hands, mouth full, a little pickle tucked between his fingers. Who can know what gain is there, what it is, a thing hard even for Brahma and the gods. He wrestles, he calls out, he blows the flute and the pipe to his own tune. In rings of cowherd boys, Hari dances to their beat. What was there lacking to eat in that house, that he had to slip in and steal the butter? Tuka says: along with him, we too have been enticed.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram dwells on the same scandal of scale: Brahman itself takes a cowherd's body for the plain joy of eating with his hands among friends. He insists that what is gained in that ordinary play is hidden even from Brahma and the gods, a sweetness the lofty cannot reach. The wrestling, the flute, the dancing in the boys' circle all show a God who keeps their rhythm rather than imposing his own. The butter theft is examined and found needless, he wanted for nothing, which makes it pure play and pure love. The last line draws the poet in: this is a delight that catches and carries you along once you come near it.

GATHA 0178

Krishna Leela

Claiming Krishna, friends who will not let go

मराठी मूळ

कान्होबा आतां तुम्ही आम्ही च गडे । कोणाकडे जाऊं नेदूं ॥१॥
 वाहीन तुझी भारशिदोरी । वळतीवरी येऊं नेदीं ॥२॥
 ढवळे गाईचें दूध काढूं । एकएकल्यां ठोंबे मारूं ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे टोकवूं त्यांला । जे तुझ्या बोला मानीत ना ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

O Krishna, from now on, you and we are inseparable friends. We will not let you go to anyone else.

I will carry your bundle and your provisions and will not let you wander off on your own.

Let us milk the white cow together and thump the loners who stand apart.

Says Tuka, we will poke and prod those who refuse to heed your word.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Krishna, from now on it is just you and us, friends. We will not let you go to anyone else. I will carry your bundle and your provisions, and will not let you wander off up the path. Let us milk the white cow together and thump the ones who stand off alone. Tuka says: we will poke and prod those who will not heed your word.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks in the voice of the cowherd boys laying a fond, total claim on Krishna: from now on he belongs to them and goes to no one else. They will carry his load and block his straying, keeping him close on purpose. The play turns mock-fierce in the end, milking the cow together, thumping the loners, prodding those who will not listen to Krishna. Read past the game, the ones who stand apart and ignore his word are the souls who keep their distance from God, and the friends mean to draw them in. The poem holds out belonging to Krishna as something to seize and guard, not let drift.

GATHA 0179

Krishna Leela

Belonging to the Lord, his and ours are one

मराठी मूळ

बहु काळीं बहु काळी । आम्ही देवाचीं गोवळीं ॥१॥
 नाहीं विटों देत भात । जेऊं बेसवी सांगातें ॥२॥
 बहु काळें बहु काळें । माझें पांघरे कांबळें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे नाहीं नाहीं । त्याचें आमचें सें कांहीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

So dark, so dark He is. We are the cowherds of the Lord.

He never lets us go hungry; He seats us beside Him and shares His rice.

So dark, so dark. My blanket is the one He wraps around me.

Says Tuka, there is no difference at all between what is His and what is ours.

IN PLAIN WORDS

So dark, so dark he is. We are the cowherds of the Lord. He never lets the rice go cold or lets us go hungry; he seats us beside him to eat. So dark, so dark. The blanket I wrap myself in is his. Tuka says: there is nothing at all, nothing, that is his and not also ours.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram sings as one of the Lord's own cowherds, fixing on Krishna's dark beauty and on the simple intimacies of his care: he feeds them, will not let them go hungry, seats them at his own side. The detail of the borrowed blanket says the closeness reaches into ordinary belongings. The last line lands the whole point: between Krishna and his devotee there is finally no line of mine and yours. The poem offers that erasure of separation, his is ours, as the real gift of belonging to God.

GATHA 0180

Krishna Leela

Swept up by Krishna, enticing others in

मराठी मूळ

बहु बरा बहु बरा । यासांगातें मळि चारा ॥१॥
 म्हणोनि जीवेंसाठीं । घेतली कान्होबाची पाठी ॥२॥
 बरवा बरवा दिसे । समागम याचा निमिषें ॥२॥
 पुढती पुढती तुका । सोंकला सोंकवितो लोकां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*So good, so good He is. In His company, the pasture itself becomes a delight.**That is why, with all my life, I have clung to Krishna's back.**His company looks beautiful every single moment.**Says Tuka, again and again, I was enticed by Him, and now I entice others.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

So good, so good he is. In his company even the dull pasture is sweet. That is why, with my whole life, I have taken hold of Krishna's back. His company looks beautiful every single moment. Tuka says: again and again, I was enticed by him, and now I entice others.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is confessing a happy capture: Krishna's company is so good that even tending cattle in a plain field turns sweet, so he has clung to him with his whole life. Every moment beside him looks beautiful, with no fading. The final line names how this works and what it costs others nothing: having been lured in himself, he now lures others the same way. The poem treats the spread of devotion not as preaching but as enticement, one swept-up soul drawing the next into the same delight.

GATHA 0181

Krishna Leela

Krishna at play, the boy among cowherds

मराठी मूळ

घेती पाण्यासी हुंबरी । त्यांचें समाधान करी ॥१॥
 ऐशी गोपाळांची सवे । जाती तिकडे मार्गे धांवे ॥२॥
 स्थिरावली गंगा । पांगविली म्हणे उगा ॥२॥
 मोहरी पांवा काठी । तुका म्हणे यांजसाठी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When the boys play at lowing like calves by the water, He joins right in and satisfies them all.

Wherever the cowherd boys go, He runs behind them.

Even the Ganga stood still, and He calmed her, saying, be at peace.

Says Tuka, the shehnai, the flute, the stick: all these are just excuses to be with them.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The boys play at lowing like calves by the water. He joins them and makes them all content. Wherever the cowherd boys go, He runs along behind. Even the Ganga stood still; He calmed her, saying, be at peace. Tuka says: the shehnai, the flute, the stick, all of these are only excuses to be with them.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram pictures Krishna not as a distant lord but as one boy among the cowherds, lowing like a calf with them by the water and chasing after them wherever they go. The point of the closing line is the upturning: the flute and the staff and the music are not the reason He is there; they are only the pretext. What He actually wants is the company of His devotees. Even the Ganga, a river that should command worship, falls quiet and is comforted by Him. The whole abhanga lowers God into the game so that nearness, not majesty, becomes the measure of love.

GATHA 0182

Krishna Leela

The Name, God comes running

मराठी मूळ

वळी गाई धांवे घरा । आमच्या करी येरझारा ॥१॥

नांव घेतां तो जवळी । बहु भला कान्हो बळी ॥२॥

नेदी पडों उणें पुरें । म्हणे अवघें चि बरें ॥३॥

तुका म्हणे चित्ता । वाटे न व्हावा परता ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He rounds up the cows and runs home, going back and forth for our sake.

The moment you speak His name, He is right beside you. How truly good and strong is our Krishna.

He never lets anything fall short or go to excess; He says, everything is just fine.

Says Tuka, the chitta feels one thing alone: may He never turn away.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He rounds up the cows and runs home, going back and forth for our sake. The moment you say His name, He is right beside you. How good and strong is our Krishna. He lets nothing fall short and nothing run to excess; He says, everything is just right. Tuka says: the heart wants one thing only. May He never turn away.

WHAT IT MEANS

The claim that carries this abhanga is in the second line: speak the Name and He is already there. Tukaram makes God's care ordinary and tireless, a cowherd going back and forth, never letting things tip into too little or too much, always saying it is well. Against that steady tending, the devotee asks for only one thing, the same thing a

child fears most: that the beloved might one day turn away. The prayer is not for gifts but for the presence itself never to be withdrawn.

GATHA 0183

Krishna Leela

Satisfaction, the road falls away

मराठी मूळ

म्हणती धालों धणीवरी । आतां न लगे शिदोरी । नये क्षणभरी । आतां यासि विसंबों ॥१॥
 चाल चाल रे कान्होबा । खेळ मांडूं रानीं । बैसवूं गोठणीं । गाई जमा करुनि ॥२॥
 न लगे जावें घरा । चुकलिया येरझारा । सज्जन सोयरा । मायबाप तूं आम्हां ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे धालें पोट । आतां कशाचा बोभाट । पाहाणें ते वाट । मागें पुढें राहिली ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

They say, we are satisfied to the brim; we need no more provisions now. We cannot bear to be apart from Him even for a moment.

Come, come, O Krishna, let us set up our games in the forest and settle the cows in the fold.

We need not go home anymore, for all that going and coming is finished. You are our true friend, our kin, our mother and father.

Says Tuka, the belly is full; what is there to cry about now? The road we once watched for, ahead and behind, has simply fallen away.

IN PLAIN WORDS

They say: we are full to the brim. We need no more provisions now. We cannot bear to be apart from Him even for a moment. Come, come, Krishna; let us set up our games in the forest and settle the cows in the fold. We need not go home anymore; all that coming and going is finished. You are our true friend, our kin, our mother and father. Tuka says: the belly is full. What is there to cry about now? The road we watched, ahead and behind, has fallen away.

WHAT IT MEANS

The cowherds speak with the voice of a soul that has finally had enough of seeking. Being filled here is not about food; it is the end of restlessness, of provisioning for the next stretch of journey. When they say all coming and going is finished and the road ahead and behind has fallen away, Tukaram names the stakes plainly: the whole anxious traffic of getting somewhere stops once God is present as friend, kin, mother and father all at once. There is nowhere left to go because the one who is sought is already here, in the forest, in the game.

GATHA 0184

Krishna Leela

Sweetness found, we will not leave

मराठी मूळ

तुझिये संगति । जाली आमुची निश्चिती ॥१॥
 नाहीं देखिलें तें मळे । भोग सुखाचे सोहळे ॥२॥
 घरीं ताकाचें सरोवर । येथें नवनीताचे पूर ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे आतां । आम्ही न वजों दवडितां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*In your company, our conviction is now firm. We have seen joys and celebrations we never knew before.**At home there were only ponds of buttermilk, but here there are floods of fresh butter.**Says Tuka, now we will not leave even if you try to drive us away.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

In your company our minds are settled at last. We have known joys and delights we never saw before. At home there were only ponds of buttermilk; here there are floods of fresh butter. Tuka says: now we will not go, even if you drive us away.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram measures the difference God's company makes by a homely image: thin buttermilk at home, oceans of fresh butter here. The contrast says that ordinary life offered only a watered-down satisfaction, while nearness to God is the rich thing itself. Once a soul has tasted that, the old wandering mind comes to rest. The closing line names the new stubbornness of love: having found this, the devotee refuses to be sent away even if God Himself tries to drive him off.

GATHA 0185

Prayers

Refuge, desire's torment lifted

मराठी मूळ

कामें पीडिलों माया । बहु मारी नाहीं दया ॥१॥
 तुझ्या राहिलों आधारें । जालें अवघें चि बरें ॥२॥
 तुझे लागलों संगती । आतां येतों काकुळती ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे तुझ्या भिडा । कान्होबा हे गेली पीडा ॥३॥
 टिपरी - अभंग ७

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Desire has tormented me, and illusion beats me without mercy.

*I have survived only by leaning on you; through you, everything has turned out well.
Now that I have found your company, I come to you pleading with folded hands.
Says Tuka, O Krishna, by your pressing grace this suffering has departed.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Desire has tormented me; illusion beats me without mercy. I have stayed alive only by leaning on you; through you everything has turned out well. Now that I have your company, I come to you pleading. Tuka says: Krishna, by the pressing of your grace this suffering has gone.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a prayer spoken from inside affliction, not after it. Tukaram does not soften how hard desire and illusion strike; they beat him without mercy. What keeps him standing is not his own strength but leaning on Krishna, and he comes openly as a beggar with folded hands rather than as a master of himself. The relief, when it comes, is credited entirely to grace that presses in and drives the suffering out. The stakes are survival: he says plainly that this leaning is the only reason he is still here.

GATHA 0186

Devotion to Vitthal

The kirtan dance, caste pride trampled

मराठी मूळ

खेळ मांडियेला वाळवंटीं घाई । नाचती वैष्णव भाई रे । क्रोध अभिमान केला पावटणी । एक एका लागतील पायीं
रे ॥१॥

नाचती आनंदकल्लोळीं । पवित्र गाणें नामावळी । कळिकाळावरि घातलीसे कास । एक एकाहुनी बळी रे ॥२॥
गोपीचंदनउटी तुळसीच्या माळा । हार मिरवती गळां । टाळ मृदंग घाई पुष्पवरुषाव । अनुपम्य सुखसोंहळा रे ॥३॥
लुब्धलीं नादीं लागली समाधी । मूढ जन नर नारी लोकां । पंडित ज्ञानी योगी महानुभाव । एकचि सद्धिसाधकां रे
॥४॥

वर्णाभिमान विसरली याति । एकएकां लोटांगणीं जाती । निर्मळ चितें जालीं नवनीतें । पाषाणा पाझर सुटती रे ॥
४॥

होतो जयजयकार गर्जत अंबर । मातले हे वैष्णव वीर रे । तुका म्हणे सोपी केली पायवाट । उतरावया भवसागर रे
॥५॥

एके घाई खेळतां न पडसी डाई । दुचाळ्याने ठकसील भाई रे ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The game has been set up on the open sands with great fervor. The Vaishnava brothers dance, trampling anger and pride underfoot, bowing at one another's feet.

They dance in waves of bliss, singing the holy litany of the Name. They have girded themselves against the power of time itself, each one mightier than the last.

Sandalwood paste, tulsi garlands, and flower necklaces adorn their throats. Cymbals and drums beat in a shower of blossoms, an incomparable festival of joy.

The sound draws everyone into a trance: the dull, the common folk, men and women, the learned, the yogis, and the great souls, all are made equal in that one devotion.

They have forgotten the pride of caste and birth; they prostrate before one another. Their chittas have turned soft as fresh butter, and even stones begin to melt.

The cry of victory resounds and the sky trembles; these Vaishnava warriors are intoxicated. Says Tuka, they have made the path simple and easy for crossing the ocean of worldly existence.

Play with a single-minded stroke and you will never fall; the double-minded one will be defeated, O brother.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The game is set up on the open sands with full force. The Vaishnava brothers dance, trampling anger and pride underfoot, bowing at one another's feet. They dance in waves of bliss, singing the holy litany of the Name. They have girded themselves against the power of time itself, each one mightier than the last. Sandalwood paste, tulsi garlands, flower wreaths around their throats. Cymbals and drums beat in a shower of blossoms, a joy beyond compare. The sound draws everyone into a trance: the dull, the common folk, men and women, the learned, the yogis, the great souls, all made one in this devotion. They forget the pride of caste and birth; they fall flat before one another. Their hearts turn soft as fresh butter, and even stones begin to melt. The cry of victory rings out and the sky shakes; these Vaishnava warriors are drunk with it. Tuka says: they have made the path simple, the way to cross the ocean of this world. Play with one undivided stroke and you will never fall; the double-minded one is the one who is beaten, brother.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes the communal singing on the riverbank sands as a kind of war fought against time and ego, and won by bowing rather than striking. The radical claim is social as much as devotional: in the dance the proud rankings of caste and birth simply dissolve, the learned and the simple, men and women, all leveled into one body of worshippers prostrating to each other. The image of hearts softening like butter and stones melting names what bhakti does that nothing else can. The closing turn warns where the danger lies: salvation is for the single-minded, and only the divided heart, hedging its devotion, loses the game.

GATHA 0187

Worldly Metaphors

The game of devotion, a lineage of players

मराठी मूळ

त्रिगुणांचे फेरी थोर कष्टी होसी । या चौघांसी तरी धरीं सोई रे ॥१॥
 खेळ खेळोनियां निराळा चि राही । सांडी या विषयाची घाई रे ।
 तेणें चि खेळें बसवंत होसी । ऐसें सत्य जाणें माझ्या भाई रे ॥२॥
 सिंपियाचा पोर एक खेळिया नामा । तेणें विठ्ठल बसवंत केला रे । आपुल्या सवंगडिया सिकवूनि घाई ।
 तेणें सतत फड जागविला रे । एक घाई खेळतां तो न चुके चि कोठें । तया संत जन मानवले रे ॥३॥
 ज्ञानदेव मुक्ताबाई वटेश्वर चांगा । सोपान आनंदें खेळती रे । कान्हो गोवारी त्यांनीं बसवंत केला ।
 आपण भोंवतीं नाचती रे । सकळिकां मिळोनि एकी च घाई । त्याच्या ब्रम्हादिक लागती पायीं रे ॥४॥
 रामा बसवंत कबिर खेळिया । जोडा बरवा मिळाला रे । पांचा सवंगडियां एकचि घाई ।
 तेथें नाद बरवा उमटला रे । ब्रम्हादिक सुरवर मिळोनियां त्यांनीं । तो ही खेळ निवडिला रे ॥५॥
 ब्राम्हणाचा पोर खेळिया एक भला । तेणें जन खेळकर केला रे । जनार्दन बसवंत करुनियां ।
 तेणें वैष्णवांचा मेळ मेळविला रे । एक चि घाई खेळतां खेळतो । आपणचि बसवंत जाला रे ॥६॥
 पुढिलांची धरुनियां सोई रे । एक चि घाई खेळतां जो चुकला । तो पडेल संसारडाई रे ॥७॥
 बाराही सोळा गडियांचा मेळा । सतरावा बसवंत खेळिया रे ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Caught in the cycles of the three gunas, you suffer greatly. Hold fast to these four companions and maintain your course.

Play the game and then stand apart, untouched. Give up this frenzy of sensory indulgence. By that very play you will become the champion; know this to be true, my brother.

The tailor's son Nama was one such player who made Vitthal his champion. He taught his companions the moves with great urgency and kept the arena alive at all times. Playing with a single stroke, he never faltered anywhere, and the saints and people were all won over by him.

Jnaneshwar, Muktabai, Vateshwar, Changa, and Sopan played together in bliss. They made the cowherd Krishna their champion and danced around Him in circles. When all of them joined in a single stroke, even Brahma and the gods bowed at their feet.

Rama was the champion and Kabir the player; what a fine pair they made. Five companions played with a single stroke, and from that union arose a beautiful resonance. Even Brahma and all the gods together could not surpass that game.

Eknath, the Brahmin's son, was one fine player who made the whole world into players. He made Janardan the champion and gathered together the fellowship of Vaishnavas. Playing with a single stroke, he played and played until he himself became the champion.

Whoever follows the course of those who went before succeeds. Whoever falters in that single stroke falls into the throw of worldly bondage. Twelve and sixteen players form the group, and the seventeenth is the champion.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Caught in the turning of the three gunas you suffer greatly. Hold fast to these four companions and keep your course. Play the game, then stay apart from it, untouched. Give up this frenzy for the senses. By that very play you become the champion; know this is true, brother. The tailor's son Nama was such a player; he made Vitthal his champion. He taught his companions the moves with urgency and kept the arena awake at all hours. Playing with one stroke, he never faltered anywhere, and the saints and the people were won. Jnaneshwar, Muktabai, Vateshwar, Changa, and Sopan played together in bliss. They made the cowherd Krishna their champion and danced around Him. When all joined in one stroke, even Brahma and the gods bowed at their feet. Rama was the champion, Kabir the player; what a fine pair. Five companions played with one stroke, and from that union a beautiful sound arose. Even Brahma and all the gods together could not surpass that game. The Brahmin's son, a fine player, made the whole world into players. He made Janardan the champion and gathered the fellowship of Vaishnavas. Playing with one stroke, he played until he himself became the champion. Whoever follows the course of those who went before, succeeds. Whoever falters in that one stroke falls into the throw of worldly bondage. Twelve and sixteen players make up the band, and the seventeenth is the champion.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns the village stick-dance into a teaching about how devotion is actually practiced and passed down. The instruction at the start is the heart of it: play the game wholeheartedly and yet stand apart from it, untouched, refusing to be ruled by the senses, and that very detachment-in-action makes you the champion. He then names a lineage of bhaktas, Namdev, Jnaneshwar and his family, Kabir, Eknath, to show this is not theory but a path many have walked, each making God Himself the champion at the center. The recurring phrase about one undivided stroke is the moral: single-mindedness wins, and the one who falters at it falls back into bondage. Devotion here is both a discipline you learn from those before you and a fellowship you join.

GATHA 0188

Devotion to Vitthal

Dance to Pandhari, saguna and nirguna are one

मराठी मूळ

जतिस पद राखों जेणें टिपरिया घाई । अनुहातें वायें मांदळा रे ॥१॥
 नाचत पंढरिये जाऊं रे खेळिया । विठ्ठल रखुमाई पाहूं रे ॥२॥
 सा चहूं वेगळा अठराही निराळा । गाऊं वाजवूं एक चाळा रे ।
 विसरती पक्षी चारा घेणें पाणी । तारुण्य देहभाव बाळा रे ॥३॥
 आंधळ्यासि डोळे पांगळांसि पाय । तुका म्हणे वृद्ध होती तारुण्यें रे ॥४॥
 दोन्ही टिपरीं एक चि नाद । सगुण निर्गुण नाहीं भेद रे ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Keep the rhythm and guard the beat of the wooden clappers while the anahata, the unstruck sound, plays upon the drum.

Let us dance our way to Pandhari, O players, and behold Vitthal and Rakhumai.

Separate from the six, distinct from the eighteen, we shall sing and play as one single act of devotion. Even the birds forget their food and water; youth, bodily pride, and childhood all dissolve.

The blind receive eyes, the lame receive feet, and the old become young again. Says Tuka, both clappers strike as one sound; between saguna and nirguna there is no difference at all.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Keep the steps in time, hold the beat of the wooden clappers, while the unstruck sound plays upon the drum. Let us dance our way to Pandhari, players, and look upon Vitthal and Rakhumai. Apart from the six, separate from the eighteen, we will sing and play as one single act. The birds forget to take their food and water; youth, bodily pride, and childhood all melt away. The blind are given eyes, the lame are given feet. Tuka says: the old grow young again. The two clappers strike one sound; between saguna and nirguna there is no difference at all.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram joins the outer rhythm of the dance to an inner one: the wooden clappers keep human time while the anahata, the unstruck sound heard within, beats on the drum. The pilgrimage to Pandhari to see Vitthal and Rakhumai is set apart from the usual reckonings of philosophy, the six systems and the eighteen branches, because what moves here is love, not analysis. The images of the blind seeing, the lame walking, the old made young say that this devotion overturns every fixed limit. The closing line lands the deepest claim: the two clappers ring as one note, and so the God with form and the formless absolute are not two things but one.

GATHA 0189

Devotion to Vitthal

The dance as winnowing, the impure cast out

मराठी मूळ

कुसरी अंगें मोडितील परी । मेळविति एका छंदें रे ॥१॥
 कांहींच न वजे वायां रे । खेळिया एक चि बसवंत अवघियां रे ।
 सम विषम तेथें होऊं च नेदी । जाणऊनि आगळिया रे ॥२॥
 संत महंत सद्धि खेळतील घाई । ते च सांभाळी माझ्या भाई रे ।
 हात राखोन हाणिती टिपण्या । टिपरें मिळोनि जाय त्याची सोई रे ॥३॥
 विताळाचें अवघें जाईल वायां । काय ते शृंगारुनि काया रे ।
 निवडूनि बाहेर काढिती निराळा । जो न मिळे संताचिया घाई रे ॥४॥
 प्रकाराचें काज नाहीं सोडीं लाज । निःशंक होउनियां खेळें रे ।
 नेणतीं नेणतीं च एकें पावलीं मान । विठ्ठल नामाचिया बळें रे ॥५॥
 रोमांच गुडिया डोलविती अंगें । भावबळें खेळविती सोंगें रे ।
 तुका म्हणे कंठ सद्गदित दाटे । या विठोबाच्या अंगसंगें रे ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

With skillful twists of the body they move in every fashion, yet they bring all together in one single rhythm. Nothing at all goes to waste; there is one champion for everyone.

Where there is one who knows the art, no unevenness is allowed; balance is maintained throughout. The saints and the great ones play their round in one shared stroke; guard that same stroke, O my brother. They strike the clappers with controlled hands, and the clappers meet in perfect unison.

All that is impure will be cast away; what is the use of decorating the body if the inside is rotten? The one who does not join the saints' round is singled out and removed.

There is no need for ceremony; cast off shame and play with utter freedom. Even the ignorant, through nothing but innocence, have earned great honor by the power of Vitthal's name.

Goosebumps rise like festival pennants on their bodies, and they sway with the force of pure devotion. Says Tuka, the throat chokes with emotion in the company of Vithoba.

IN PLAIN WORDS

With skillful turns they bend their bodies every way, yet they bring it all together in one rhythm. Nothing is wasted; there is one champion for everyone. Where someone knows the art, no unevenness is allowed; he keeps it balanced, knowing more than the rest. The saints and the great ones play their round in one shared stroke; guard that same stroke, my brother. They strike the clappers with controlled hands, and the clappers meet in unison. All that is impure will fall away; what use is it to decorate the body? The one who does not join the saints' round is picked out and set aside. There is no need for ceremony; drop your shame and play freely. Even the ignorant, by sheer innocence, have won honor through the power of Vitthal's name. Goosebumps rise like festival flags on their bodies; they sway with the force of devotion. Tuka says: the throat chokes with feeling in the company of Vithoba.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram presses the dance image further, into a winnowing. In the saints' shared round every move is brought into one rhythm and nothing is wasted, but the same gathering that includes also sorts: whoever cannot fall into step with the saints is quietly singled out and removed. He names what does not survive this test, outward show and a decorated body over a rotten inside, and what does, the artless innocence of the ignorant who simply trust the Name. The instruction to drop shame and play freely is the door in; pretension is the thing kept out. The closing image of goosebumps and a choked throat shows the only credential that counts here is genuine feeling in God's company.

GATHA 0190

Devotion to Vitthal

Invitation to the kirtan, a golden day

मराठी मूळ

या रे गडे हो धरुं घाई जाणतां ही नेणतां । नाम गाऊं टाळी वाहू आपुलिया हिता ॥१॥
 फावलें तें घ्यारे आतां प्रेमदाता पांडुरंग । आजि सोनियाचा दिवस सोनियाचा वोडवला रंग ॥२॥
 हिंडती रानोरान भुजंगांत कांट्यावन । सुख तयांहून आम्हां गातां नाचतां रे ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे ब्रम्हादिकां सांवळें दुर्लभ सुखा । आजि येथें आलें फुका नाम मुखा कीर्तनीं ॥३॥
 भीमातीरीं एक वसलें नगर । त्याचें नांव पंढरपुर रे ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Come, friends, let us take up the game together, the knowing and the unknowing alike. Let us sing the Name and clap our hands for our own true good.

Seize what is freely offered now, for the giver of love is Panduranga. Today is a golden day; a golden color has dawned upon us.

Those who wander through forests and thorny thickets suffer, while we know greater happiness simply by singing and dancing.

Says Tuka, this dark-complexioned joy is hard to attain even for Brahma and the gods, yet today it has come freely into our mouths in this kirtan.

On the banks of the Bhima stands a city; its name is Pandharpur.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Come, friends, let us take up the game together, the knowing and the unknowing alike. Let us sing the Name and clap our hands for our own good. Seize what is freely offered now, for Panduranga is the giver of love. Today is a golden day; a golden color has dawned on us. Those who wander through forests and thorny thickets suffer, while we know greater happiness simply by singing and dancing. Tuka says: this dark-hued joy is hard for even Brahma and the gods to reach, yet today it has come to our mouths for nothing, in this kirtan. On the bank of the Bhima stands a city; its name is Pandharpur.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is an open invitation that deliberately makes no distinction between the learned and the simple; both are called to the same singing. Tukaram's urgency is in the word seize: love is being given away free right now, so take it while the golden day lasts. He sets the kirtan against the harder roads to God, the wandering ascetics among thorns, and claims the singers have the better portion with far less pain. The sharp turn is that the dark-complexioned joy of Krishna, which even Brahma and the gods strain to reach, arrives in an ordinary devotee's mouth for nothing at all, simply by chanting. Grace, not effort, is the giver.

GATHA 0191

Devotion to Vitthal

Pandharpur as the city of grace

मराठी मूळ

तेथील मोकासी चार भुजा त्यासी । बाइला सोळा हजार रे ॥१॥
 नाचत जाऊं त्याच्या गांवा रे खेळिया । सुख देईल विसावा रे ।
 पुढें गेले ते निघाई जाले । वाणितील त्याची सीमा रे ॥२॥
 बळियां आगळा पाळी लोकपाळां । रीघ नाहीं कळिकाळा रे ।
 पुंडलीक पाटील केली कुळवाडी । तो जाला भवदुःखा वेगळा रे ॥३॥
 संतसज्जनीं मांडिलीं दुकाने । जया जें पाहिजे तें आहे रे ।
 भुक्तिमुक्ति फुका च साठीं । कोणी तयाकडे न पाहे रे ॥४॥
 दोन्हीच हाट भरले घनदाट । अपार मिळाले वारकरी रे ।
 न वजों म्हणती आम्ही वैकुंठा । जिहीं देखिली पंढरी रे ॥५॥
 बहुत दिस होती मज आस । आजि घडलें सायासीं रे ।
 तुका म्हणे होय तुमचेनी पुण्यें । भेटी तया पायांसी रे ॥६॥
 पंढरी चोहटा मांडियेला खेळ । वैष्णव मिळोनि सकळ रे ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Its ruler has four arms and sixteen thousand wives. Let us dance our way to His town, O players, for He will give us rest and joy.

Those who have gone before have become treasures beyond measure; none can describe their glory. Mightier than the mighty, He sustains the guardians of the world, and even Death has no access there.

Pundalik the headman tilled the field of devotion and became free of the sorrow of worldly life.

The saints and the righteous have set up their shops there, where whatever you need is available. Liberation and worldly enjoyment are given away for nothing, and yet no one even glances at them.

Both the market days are packed and overflowing with countless pilgrims. Those who have seen Pandhari say, we will not go to Vaikuntha.

For many days I held this longing, and today, through great effort, it has been fulfilled. Says Tuka, by the merit of your company, I have touched those holy feet.

On the crossroads of Pandhari, the game is set up; all the Vaishnavas have gathered together.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Its lord has four arms and sixteen thousand wives. Let us dance our way to His town, players; He will give us rest and joy. Those who went ahead became treasures beyond measure; no one can describe their glory. Mightier than the mighty, He sustains the guardians of the world, and Death has no way in. Pundalik the headman tilled the field of devotion and became free of the sorrow of this world. The saints and the good have set up their shops there; whatever you need is to be had. Liberation and worldly enjoyment are given away for nothing, and yet no one even glances at them. Both market days are packed thick; countless pilgrims have gathered. Those who have seen Pandhari say, we will not go to Vaikuntha. For many days I held this longing; today, with great effort, it is fulfilled. Tuka says: by the merit of your company, I have touched those holy feet. On the crossroads of Pandhari the game is set up; all the Vaishnavas have gathered.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes Pandharpur as a city run by God Himself, where Death cannot enter and the saints keep open shops stocked with everything a soul could want. The startling line is that liberation and worldly enjoyment, the two great prizes people chase, are handed out for free here and no one bothers to look at them, because the pilgrims want only the feet of God. Pundalik, the devotee whose love drew Vitthal to Pandhari, is named as the one who plowed devotion into freedom. The claim at the center is a refusal: those who have seen Pandhari say they will not even go to Vaikuntha, heaven itself, because the company of saints on this earth is the higher thing. Tukaram closes by crediting his own arrival not to his effort but to the merit of that very company.

GATHA 0192

Devotion to Vitthal

Krishna the champion, the heavens left empty

मराठी मूळ

टाळ टिपरी मांदळे एक नाद रे । जाला बसवंत देवकीचा बाळ रे ॥१॥
 चला तें कवतुक भाई रे । पाहों डोळां कामीं गुंतलेति काई रे ।
 भाग्यवंत कोणी गेले सांगाति । ऐसें सुख त्रिभुवनीं नाहीं रे ॥२॥
 आनंदाचे वाद सुखाचे संवाद । एक एका दाखविती छंद रे ।
 साही अठरा चारी घालुनियां घाई । नाचती फेरी टाळशुद्ध रे ॥२॥
 भक्ताचीं भूषणें मुद्रा आभरणें । शोभती चंदनाच्या उट्या रे ।
 सत्व सुंदर कास घालूनि कुसरी । गर्जती नाम बोभाटीं रे ॥३॥
 हरि हर ब्रम्हा तीर्थासहित भीमा । देव कोटी तेहतीस रे ।
 विस्मित होऊनि ठाकले सकळ जन । अमरावती केली ओस रे ॥४॥
 वाणितील थोरी वैकुंठिचीं परी । न पवे पंढरीची सरी रे ।
 तुकयाचा दास म्हणे नका आळस करुं । सांगतों नरनारींस रे ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Cymbals, clappers, and drums sound as one; the son of Devaki has become the champion of the arena.

Come, let us see this wonder, O brothers. Why are you entangled in worldly affairs? Some fortunate ones have gone ahead as companions; such bliss is not found in all three worlds.

There are debates of joy and dialogues of happiness; each shows the other his delight. With all six, eighteen, and four playing in unison, they dance in circles to the pure beat of the cymbals.

The devotees are adorned with their sacred marks and ornaments, shining with sandalwood paste. Girded with strength and beauty, they roar the Name aloud.

Hari, Hara, Brahma, the river Bhima with all its sacred sites, thirty-three crore gods, all stand amazed and spellbound. Even the city of the gods, Amaravati, was left deserted.

They speak of the glory of Vaikuntha, yet none can match the splendor of Pandhari. Says the servant of Tuka, do not be lazy; I am telling this to all men and women.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Cymbals, clappers, and drums sound as one; the son of Devaki has become the champion of the arena. Come, let us see this wonder, brothers. Why are you tangled in worldly affairs? Some fortunate ones have gone ahead as companions; such bliss is not found in the three worlds. There are contests of joy and exchanges of delight; each shows the other his gladness. With the six, the eighteen, and the four all playing in unison, they dance in circles to the pure beat of the cymbals. The devotees are adorned with sacred marks and ornaments, shining with sandalwood paste. Girded with strength and beauty, they roar the Name aloud. Hari, Hara, Brahma, the river Bhima with all its holy places, thirty-three crore gods, all stand amazed and spellbound. Even Amaravati, the city of the gods, was left deserted. They praise the glory of Vaikuntha, yet none can match the splendor of Pandhari. The servant of Tuka says: do not be lazy. I am telling this to all men and women.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram sets the singing of the Name at the center and makes Krishna, the son of Devaki, the champion of the whole dance. The frame the poem builds is a reversal of the usual order of things: the gods themselves, Hari, Hara, Brahma, all thirty-three crore of them, are not the spectacle but the spectators, standing amazed at what mere devotees are doing. He pushes the claim to its edge by saying Amaravati, the gods' own city, stood empty, as if even the heavens had emptied out to watch. The verse insists that Pandhari outshines Vaikuntha, that this earthly festival of the Name surpasses paradise. The closing call is practical and urgent: do not be lazy, this is offered to everyone, women and men alike, so come.

GATHA 0193

Krishna Leela

Wonder, the ungraspable God held close

मराठी मूळ

ब्रम्हादिकां न कळे खोळ । ते हे आकळ धरिली ॥१॥
 मोहरी पांवा वाहे काठी । धांवे पाठीं गाईचे ॥२॥
 उच्छिष्ट न लभे देवा । तें हें सदैवां गोवळ्या ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे जोड जाली । ते हे माउली आमुची ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The form that even Brahma and the gods could not grasp has been seized and held right here.

He carries a shehnai and a flute and a stick and runs after the cows.

The leftovers that even the gods in heaven cannot obtain are freely available to the fortunate cowherds.

Says Tuka, this wealth has come to us; this is our own Mauli, our mother.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The form that Brahma and the gods could not grasp is held right here. He carries a reed pipe and a flute and a stick, and he runs behind the cows. The leftovers that the gods in heaven cannot get, the fortunate cowherds eat freely. Tuka says: this wealth has come to us; this is our own Mauli, our mother.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram sets the highest reach of the gods against what the cowherds already have in their hands. The God whose form even Brahma cannot lay hold of walks among them with a stick, herding cattle. What the heavens cannot obtain, the cowherds get as scraps. The point is the reversal: nearness to God in love outranks every exalted station, and the simple cowherds are the truly fortunate ones because to them this God is as close and familiar as a mother.

GATHA 0194

Krishna Leela

Krishna's mischief, the scolding that adorns him

मराठी मूळ

कान्होबा तूं आलगट । नाहीं लाज बहु धीट । पाहिलें वाईट । बोलोनियां खोटें ॥१॥
 परि तूं न संडिसी खोडी । करिसी केली घडीघडी । पाडिसी रोकडी । तुटी माये आम्हांसी ॥२॥
 तूं ठायींचा गोवळ । अविचारी अनर्गळ । चोरटा शिंदळ । ऐसा पिटूं डांगोरा ॥३॥
 जरी तुझी आई । आम्ही घालूं सर्वा ठायीं । तुका म्हणे तें ही । तुज वाटे भूषण ॥४॥
 भोजनाच्या काळीं । कान्हो मांडियेली आळी । काला करी वनमाळी । अन्न एकवटा ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

O Krishna, you are shameless and brazen; you have no modesty at all. You have been caught doing wrong and speaking lies.

Yet you never give up your mischief; you repeat it again and again. You create a direct rift between yourself and us, your own mothers.

You are a born cowherd, reckless and wild, a thief and a rogue. We shall proclaim it far and wide.

Even if we complain to your mother, we will tell everyone everywhere. Says Tuka, even that you would wear as an ornament.

At mealtime, Krishna throws a tantrum. The wearer of the forest garland wants all the food gathered into one pile for a communal feast.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Krishna, you are shameless and brazen; you have no shame, you are too bold. You were caught doing wrong and telling lies. Yet you never drop your mischief; you do it again and again. You make a clean break between yourself and us, your own mothers. You are a born cowherd, reckless and wild, a thief and a rogue; we will proclaim it everywhere. Even if we complain to your mother, even if we tell everyone, Tuka says: you would wear that too as an ornament. At mealtime Krishna throws a tantrum. Vanamali wants all the food gathered into one pile for a shared feast.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram voices the cowherd mothers scolding Krishna, and the scolding is itself a form of intimacy. They list every charge, shameless, lying, thieving, incorrigible, and threaten to spread word of it far and wide. The turn comes in the third verse: even public shaming would only become an ornament on him, because nothing

diminishes him. The closing scene shows what the fuss is really about: he insists their separate portions be mixed into one pile and eaten together, turning a tantrum into the kala, the communal meal where all distinctions dissolve.

GATHA 0195

Krishna Leela

Krishna at the meal, sorting that cuts pleasure and pain

मराठी मूळ

देई निवडुनी । माते म्हणतो जननी । हात पिटूनि मेदिनी । वरि अंग घाली ॥१॥
 कैसा आळ घेसी । नव्हे तें चि करविसी । घेई दुसरें तयेसी । वारी म्हणे नको ॥२॥
 आतां काय करूं । नये यासि हाणूं मारूं । नव्हे बुझावितां स्थिरु । कांहीं करिना हा ।
 तोंचिं केलें एके ठायीं । आतां निवडूनि खाई । आम्हा जाचितोसि काई । हरिसि म्हणे माता ॥३॥
 त्याचें तयाकुन । करवितां तुटे भान । तंव जालें समाधान । उठोनियां बैसे ।
 माते बरें जाणविलें । अंग चोरुनि आपुलें । तोडियलें एका बोलें । कैसें सुखदुःख ॥४॥
 ताट पालवें झाकिलें । होतें तैसें तेथें केलें । भिन्नाभिन्न निवडिलें । अन्नं वेगळालीं ।
 विस्मित जननी । भाव देखोनियां मनीं । म्हणे नाहीं ऐसा कोणी । तुज सारिखा रे ॥५॥
 हरुषली माये । सुख अंगीं न समाये । कवळूनि बाहे देती आलिंगन । आनंद भोजनीं ।
 तेथें फिटलीसे धणी । तुका म्हणे कोणी । सांडा शेष मज ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He says to his mother, sort it out and give it to me separately. He beats the ground with his hands and throws himself down upon it.

What a false accusation you make; you demand what cannot be done. She offers him something else, but he says no, I do not want that.

What shall I do now? I cannot strike or scold him, and he will not be consoled. He refuses to do anything I say. Then suddenly she piles it all together and says, now pick through it and eat as you please. Why do you torment us, says the mother to Hari.

When He is allowed to sort things out on His own terms, His agitation ceases. Then He is satisfied and sits up calmly. Mother, you have done well to make it clear. He hid His own intent and, with a single word, severed the knot of pleasure and pain.

The plate was covered with the end of a cloth. All was done just as it had been before: the different foods were separated into their distinct portions. The mother was astonished, seeing the depth of His feeling, and said, there is no one else like you.

The mother was overjoyed, unable to contain her happiness. She took Him in her arms and embraced Him. The bliss of that meal was complete, and all longing was satisfied. Says Tuka, will someone please leave the remnants for me?

IN PLAIN WORDS

He says to his mother, sort it out and give it to me. He beats the ground with his hands and throws himself down on it. What a false charge you make; you ask for what cannot be done. She offers him something else, but he says no, I do not want that. What shall I do now? I cannot strike him or scold him, and he will not be calmed; he does nothing I say. Then she piles it all in one place and says, now pick through it and eat as you please. Why do you torment us, the mother says to Hari. When he is let to sort it on his own, his upset stops; he grows calm and sits up. Mother, you have made it clear; he hid his own intent, and with a single word he cut the knot of pleasure and pain. The plate was covered with the end of a cloth, and it was all as it had been before: the different foods stood apart in their own portions. The mother was astonished, seeing the depth of his feeling, and said, there is no one like you. The mother was overjoyed; her happiness would not stay inside her. She took him in her arms and embraced him; the joy of that meal was full, and all longing was satisfied. Tuka says: will someone please leave the remnants for me?

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a long domestic scene that turns into a teaching. Krishna refuses to eat unless his portions are sorted out, throws himself on the ground, and will not be consoled until his mother gives up and piles everything together for him to sort himself. The moment she lets him do it his own way, his agitation ends, and the poem reads this as cutting the knot of pleasure and pain: the foods are separated yet undivided, just as they were. The mother is astonished at the depth behind a child's tantrum. Tukaram ends not as a narrator but as a devotee at the edge of the meal, begging for the leftovers, the scraps from God's plate that the earlier poems called the cowherds' greatest fortune.

GATHA 0196

Krishna Leela

The cowherds, weary and hungry, calling Krishna

मराठी मूळ

चला वळूं गाई । बैसों जेऊं एके ठायीं ॥१॥
 बहु केली वणवण । पायपिटी जाला सिण ॥२॥
 खांदीं भार पोटीं भुक । काय खेळायाचें सुख ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे धांवें । मग अवघें बरवें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Come, let us round up the cows and sit down together to eat in one place.

We have wandered far too much; our feet are sore and our bodies are weary.

The load is heavy on our shoulders and hunger gnaws at our bellies; what joy is there in play on an empty stomach?

Says Tuka, run now, and then everything will be well.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Come, let us round up the cows and sit down together to eat in one place. We have wandered too much; our feet are sore and our bodies tired. The load is heavy on our shoulders and hunger gnaws at our bellies; what joy is there in play on an empty stomach? Tuka says: run now, and then everything will be well.

WHAT IT MEANS

The cowherd boys are worn out from a long day of herding and want to gather for the shared meal. They name plainly what has drained them: endless wandering, sore feet, heavy loads, gnawing hunger, and they confess that play brings no joy while the stomach is empty. The closing line points the whole weariness toward Krishna: run to him, and then all is well. Tukaram lets the simple bodily tiredness stand for the soul that finds rest only when it turns to God.

GATHA 0197

Krishna Leela

Trust in Krishna, fear that dares not be spoken

मराठी मूळ

नेणों वेळा काळ । धालों तुझ्यानें सकळ ॥१॥
 नाहीं नाहीं रे कान्होबा भय आम्हापाशीं । वळूनि पुरविसी गाई पोटा खावया ॥२॥
 तुजपाशीं भये । हें तों बोलों परी नये ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे बोल । आम्हा अनुभवे फोल ॥३॥
 विट्टदांडू - अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

We know neither time nor occasion; through you we are satisfied in every way.

There is no fear at all with us, O Krishna. You round up the cows and fill our bellies with everything to eat.

To say we are afraid of you, that is true, but it would not be right to speak of it openly.

Says Tuka, our experience has shown that your words proved hollow.

IN PLAIN WORDS

We know neither the hour nor the time; through you we are satisfied in every way. There is no fear at all with us, Krishna; you round up the cows and fill our bellies with food. To say we fear you, that is true, but it would not be right to speak it openly. Tuka says: by our own experience your words proved hollow.

WHAT IT MEANS

The cowherds tell Krishna that in his company they lose all sense of time and want for nothing; he tends the cattle and feeds them, so no fear remains. Then comes a tender, teasing admission: there is one fear they hold about him, but it is not the kind that can be spoken aloud. The closing line lands the play, his warnings or threats came to nothing in their actual experience, so they have learned not to be afraid of him. Beneath the affectionate banter is the deeper claim that nearness to God dissolves fear and need alike.

GATHA 0198

Krishna Leela

The boys' games, knowing when to stop

मराठी मूळ

माग विट्टदांडू । आणीक कांही खेळ मांडू ॥१॥
 बहु अंगा आले डाव । स्थिर नाहीं कोठें पाव ॥२॥
 कोली हाणे टोला । झेली तेणें तो गोविला ॥३॥
 एकमेकां हाका मारी । सेल जाळी एक धरी ॥४॥
 राजी आलें नांव । फेरा न चुकेचि धांव ॥५॥
 पुढें एक पाटी । एक एकें दोघां आटी ॥६॥
 एका सोस पोटीं । एक धांवे हात पिटी ॥७॥
 तुका म्हणे आतां । खेळ मोडावा परता ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Set down the gilli-danda; let us start some other game.**We have had too many turns, and no foot can find steady ground.**The fielder strikes a blow, and the one who catches it traps the batter. They call out to each other; one throws, and another holds fast.**When a name is called out, no one can escape the running. Ahead stands one panel; one takes on two in a contest.**One is full of longing, while another runs around slapping his hands.**Says Tuka, now it is time to end this game and step aside.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Set down the gilli-danda; let us start some other game. We have had too many turns, and no foot finds steady ground. The fielder strikes a blow, and the one who catches it traps the batter. They call out to each other; one throws, and another holds fast. When a name is called, no one escapes the running. Ahead stands one team; one takes on two in a contest. One is full of longing, and another runs about slapping his hands. Tuka says: now it is time to end this game and step aside.

WHAT IT MEANS

The poem paints the cowherd boys at play, restless games that keep changing, full of running, calling out, catching, and chasing, with no firm footing anywhere. The picture is of motion that never settles. The closing line is the quiet turn: it is time to break off the game and step away. Tukaram lets the boys' endless play stand for the restless activity of life, and the call to stop is the call to leave it for what lies beyond the playing.

GATHA 0199

Krishna Leela

The cowherds' feast, communion of the devoted

मराठी मूळ

पाहातां गोवळी । खाय त्यांची उष्टावळी ॥१॥
 करिती नामाचें चिंतन । गडी कान्होबाचें ध्यान ॥२॥
 आली द्यावी डाई । धांवे वळत्या मार्गे गाई ॥३॥
 एके ठायीं काला । तुका म्हणे भाविकाला ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Look at the cowherd boys: He eats their leftover scraps.**They chant the Name and meditate upon Krishna, their companion.**When the throw falls against them, He runs behind the straying cows to bring them back.**Says Tuka, they sit together in one place for the sacred feast; this is the communion of the devoted.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Look at the cowherd boys: he eats their leftover scraps. They chant the Name and meditate on Krishna, their companion. When the throw falls against them, he runs behind the straying cows to bring them back. Tuka says: they sit together in one place for the sacred feast; this is the communion of the devoted.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram shows the strange order of love between Krishna and the cowherds. God himself eats their leftover scraps, while they keep him in mind by chanting the Name and dwelling on him as their playmate. When the game goes against them, he is the one who runs to fetch their straying cattle, serving those who adore him. The closing line names what the whole scene is: the kala, all of them eating together in one place, which Tukaram calls the true communion of devotees, where love overturns rank and God serves his own.

GATHA 0200

Krishna Leela

The forest fire, the cowherds cry to Krishna

मराठी मूळ

पैल आली आगी कान्हो काय रे करावें । न कळे तें कैसें आजि वांचों आम्ही जीवें ॥१॥
 धांव रे हरी सांपडलों संधी । वोणव्याचे मधीं बुद्धि कांहीं करावी ॥२॥
 अवचितां जाळ येतां देखियेला वरी । परतोनि पाहतां आधीं होतों पाठमोरी ॥३॥
 सभोंवता फेर रीग न पुरे पळतां । तुका म्हणे जाणसी तें करावें अनंता ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Look, a fire is coming, O Krishna, what shall we do? We do not know how we will survive today.

Run, O Hari, we are trapped; the wildfire surrounds us, and some plan must be made.

Suddenly the blaze appeared above us, and when we turned to look back, we found we had already been facing away from it.

The flames circle us on all sides; there is no path to run. Says Tuka, O Ananta, you know what must be done; do whatever it takes.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Look, a fire is coming, Krishna, what shall we do? We do not know how we will live through today. Run, Hari, we are trapped; the wildfire is all around us, some plan must be made. Suddenly the blaze appeared above us, and when we turned to look, we found we were already facing away from it. The flames circle us on every side; there is no way to run. Tuka says: Ananta, you know what must be done; do whatever it takes.

WHAT IT MEANS

The cowherds are caught in a wildfire with no escape, and the poem is their cry of helplessness. They see the blaze close in on all sides and confess they cannot save themselves; there is no path out. The last verse hands the whole crisis over to Krishna: addressing him as Ananta, the endless one, they stop trying to plan and simply trust that he knows what to do. Tukaram makes the trapped cowherds a picture of the soul surrounded by danger it cannot master, whose only refuge is to throw itself wholly on God.

GATHA 0201

Krishna Leela

The God of gods swallows the fire

मराठी मूळ

भिऊं नका बोले झाकुनियां राहा डोळे । चालवील देव धाक नाही येणें वेळे ॥१॥
 बाप रे हा देवांचा ही देव कळों । नेदी माव काय करी करवी ते ॥२॥
 पसरुनि मुख विश्वरूप खाय जाळ । सारुनियां संधी अवघे पाहाती गोपाळ ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे आम्ही मार्गे भ्यालों वायांविण । कळों आलें आतां या सांगातें नाही शिण ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Do not be afraid, speak up, do not hide your eyes. God will manage everything; there is no threat at this moment.

This is the God of gods, whose power none can fathom.

He spread his mouth wide and swallowed the forest fire in his cosmic form, and when the danger passed, all the cowherd boys simply watched.

Says Tuka, we were afraid before for no reason; now that we are in his company, there is no weariness at all.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Do not be afraid, he says; do not hide your eyes. God will manage everything; there is no danger this time. This one is the God of gods; none can fathom his power, none can know what he does or how. He opened his mouth wide and in his cosmic form swallowed the fire, and when the danger had passed, all the cowherd boys simply watched. Tuka says: we were afraid before for nothing; now that we are in his company, there is no weariness at all.

WHAT IT MEANS

Krishna answers the cowherds' terror by telling them not to hide their eyes but to look, because God will handle it. The poem names him the God of gods whose power and ways no one can measure. Then the rescue: in his cosmic form he opens his mouth and swallows the whole forest fire, and the boys watch the danger end. Tukaram draws the lesson in the last line, the earlier fear was wasted, for in God's company there is no danger and no weariness; the soul that stays near him is kept safe.

GATHA 0202

Krishna Leela

Falling at the feet, strength from a humble meal

मराठी मूळ

नेणती तयांसि साच भाव दावी हरी । लाज नाहीं नाचे पांवा वाजवी मोहरी ॥१॥
चला रे याच्या पायां लागों आतां । राखिलें जळतां महा आगीपासूनि ॥२॥
कैसी रे कान्होबा एवढी गिळियेली आगी । न देखों पोळला तुज तोंडीं कोठें अंगी ॥३॥
तुका म्हणे तुम्ही कां रे करितां नवल । आमची सिदोरी खातो त्याचें आलें बळ ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

To the innocent, Hari reveals his true nature. He dances shamelessly and plays the shehnai without a care.

Come, let us fall at his feet now, for he saved us from the great fire.

How did you swallow such a blaze, Kanho, yet we see no burn upon your mouth or body?

Says Tuka, why do you marvel? He eats our humble lunch, and from that comes all his strength.

IN PLAIN WORDS

To the innocent, Hari shows his true nature. He dances without shame and plays the reed pipe with no care. Come, let us fall at his feet now, for he saved us from the great fire. How did you swallow so great a blaze, Kanho, and yet we see no burn on your mouth or your body? Tuka says: why do you marvel? He eats our humble lunch, and from that comes all his strength.

WHAT IT MEANS

After the rescue the cowherds want to fall at Krishna's feet, marveling that he swallowed the whole fire without a single burn. He, meanwhile, simply dances and plays his pipe as if nothing happened, showing his true self to those innocent enough to receive it. Tukaram caps it with a wry, tender claim in the last line: do not be amazed, for his strength comes from eating their plain shared lunch. The point is that God's power is fed by the simple love of his devotees; what looks like a miracle rests on their humble offering.

GATHA 0203

Krishna Leela

Love alone, the God who hungers for it

मराठी मूळ

त्यांनीं धणीवरी संग केला हरीसर्वें । देऊनि आपुलें तो चि देईल तें खावें ॥१॥
 न ठेवी आभार प्रेमाचा भुकेला । बहु दिवस संग हा चि निर्धार त्याला ॥२॥
 कान्होबा तू जेवीं घासोघासीं म्हणती । आरुष गोपाळें त्यांची बहु देवा प्रीती ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे आतां जाऊं आपुलिया घरा । तोय वांचविलें ऐसें सांगों रे दातारा ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those cowherd boys kept Hari's company to their heart's content; they gave him their food and ate whatever he gave in return.

He holds no sense of obligation, for he is hungry only for love; after many days together, this alone is their firm resolve.

The cowherd boys say with rough, artless speech, eat Kanho, eat every morsel, for their love for God is immense.

Says Tuka, now let us go home and tell the generous Lord how he saved us from the waters.

IN PLAIN WORDS

They kept Hari's company to their heart's content; they gave him their food and ate whatever he gave back. He keeps no sense of debt, for he hungers only for love; after many days together, this alone is their firm resolve. They say with rough, plain speech, eat, Kanho, eat every morsel, for their love for God is great. Tuka says: now let us go home and tell the generous Lord how he saved us from the waters.

WHAT IT MEANS

The cowherds share everything with Krishna, giving him their food and eating what he hands back, in a fellowship that asks for nothing in return. The poem says he keeps no account of favors because the only thing he hungers for is love, and that mutual love is the one settled resolve between them. Their devotion shows in plain, unpolished words, pressing him to eat every bite. Tukaram closes by turning homeward to thank the generous Lord for saving them, fixing the whole episode as gratitude offered back to the God who wanted nothing but their hearts.

GATHA 0204

Krishna Leela

The shared lunch, the orphan who clings to God

मराठी मूळ

ध्या रे भोंकरें भाकरी । दहीभाताची सिदोरी । ताक सांडीं दुरी । असेल तें तयापें ॥१॥
 येथें द्यावें तैसें घ्यावे । थोडें परी निरें व्हावें । सांगतां हे ठावें । असों द्या रे सकळां ॥२॥
 माझें आहे तैसें पाहे । नाहीं तरी घरा जाये । चोरोनियां माये । नवनीत आणावें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे घरीं । माझें कोणी नाहीं हरी । नका करुं दुरी । मज पायां वेगळें ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Take these flatbreads and the packed lunch of curd-rice; pour the buttermilk away, whatever you have, bring it along.

Here we give as we receive; even if it is little, let it be honest. Let everyone know this, I say plainly.

Look at what I have as it is; if there is nothing, go home and sneak some fresh butter from your mother.

Says Tuka, at my home I have no one, O Hari. Do not keep me away from your feet.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Take these flatbreads and the packed lunch of curd-rice; pour the buttermilk away, bring whatever you have.

Here we give as we receive; even if it is little, let it be honest. I say this plainly; let everyone know it. Look at what I have as it is; if you have nothing, go home and quietly bring some fresh butter from your mother.

Tuka says: at home I have no one, Hari. Do not keep me away; do not set me apart from your feet.

WHAT IT MEANS

The poem opens with the cowherds pooling their meal, flatbreads, curd-rice, butter, on a single rule: give as you receive, and let even a small share be honest and shared openly. Those with nothing are told to fetch a little butter from home so all may join. The last verse drops the play and becomes Tukaram's own prayer: he has no one of his own, so he begs Hari not to push him away or separate him from his feet. The shared meal of the cowherds becomes the orphaned soul's plea to belong to God, who is the only family it has.

GATHA 0205

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, God who answers the meek

मराठी मूळ

काल्याचिये आसे । देव जळीं जाले मासे । पुसोनियां हांसे । टिरीसांगातें हात ॥१॥
 लाजे त्यासि वांटा नाहीं । जाणे अंतरीचें तें ही । दीन होतां कांहीं । होऊं नेदी वेगळें ॥२॥
 उपाय अपाय यापुढें । खोटे निवडितां कुडे । जोडुनियां पुढें । हात उभे नुपेक्षी ॥३॥
 तें घ्या रे सावकाशें । जया फावेल तो तैसें । तुका म्हणे रसें । प्रेमाचिया आनंदें ॥४॥
 गोपाळ म्हणती कान्होबा या रे कांहीं मागों । आपुलाले आम्ही जीवीची तया आवडी सांगों ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Craving the communal meal, God entered the water and became a fish. He wipes his hands and laughs, playing pranks along the riverbank.

He knows no shame about taking his share; he sees what is within every heart. When someone becomes meek, he never lets them feel separate.

Before him, all schemes and strategies prove false and hollow. Those who stand with folded hands, he never neglects.

Says Tuka, take this at your ease; let each enjoy as they can, savoring the nectar of love and delight.

The cowherd boys say, come Kanho, let us ask for something, let us tell him the longing that dwells in our hearts.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Wanting the feast, God went into the water and became a fish. He wipes his hands and laughs, slapping his thigh, playing along the riverbank. He feels no shame about taking his share; he knows what is inside every heart. When someone grows meek, he never lets them feel set apart. Before him every scheme and strategy is shown to be false and hollow. Those who stand with folded hands, he never neglects. Tuka says: take this at your ease; let each one enjoy as he can, savoring the nectar of love and delight. The cowherd boys say, come Kanho, let us ask for something; let us each tell him the longing in our hearts.

WHAT IT MEANS

This opens the cycle of the gopala-kala, the cowherd boys' shared meal, with Krishna in the middle of it. Tukaram paints God as one who joins the play without dignity or distance: he becomes a fish for a feast, laughs, plays pranks, takes his portion unashamed. The point of the praise is in the second half: this same God reads every heart and refuses to let the lowly feel separate from him. All clever maneuvering collapses before him; only folded hands, simple surrender, are never turned away. The boys' request at the end sets up the whole sequence that follows, where each one will name what he wants.

GATHA 0206

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, what to ask God for

मराठी मूळ

एक म्हणती उगे रे उगे मागेंचि लागों । निजों नका कोणी घरीं रे आजि अवघेचि जागों ॥१॥
 जाणोनि नेणता हरि रे मध्ये उगाचि बैसे । नाइकोनि बोल अइके कोण कोणाचे कैसे ।
 एक एकाच्या संवादा जाणे न मिळे ची ऐसें । पोटीचें होंटा आणवी देतो तयांसि तैसें ॥२॥
 एक म्हणति बहु रे आम्ही पीडिलों माया । नेदी दहीभातसिदोरी ताक घालिती पिया ।
 तापलों वळितां गोधनें नाहीं जीवन छाया । आतां मागों पोटभरी रे याच्या लागोनि पायां ॥३॥
 एक म्हणति तुमचें अरे पोट तें किती । मागों गाई म्हैसी घोडे रे धन संपत्ति हित ।
 देव गडी कान्हो आमुचा आम्हां काय हातिं । कन्याकुमरें दासी रे बाजावरी सुपती ॥४॥
 एक म्हणती बेटे हो कोण करी जतन । गाढव तैसेंचि घोडें रे कोण तयाचा मान ।
 लागे भवरोग वाहतां खांदीं चवघे जण । हातीं काठ्या डोया बोडक्या हिंडों मोकळे राण ॥५॥
 एक म्हणती रानीं रे बहु सावजें फार । फाडफाडूं खाती डोळे रे पाय नेतील कर ।
 राखोनि राखे आपणा ऐसा कइचा शूर । बैसोनि राहों घरीं रे कोण करी हे चार ॥६॥
 घरीं बैसलिया बहुतें बहु सांगती काम । रिकामें कोणासि नावडे ऐसें आम्हासि ठावें ।
 चौघांमध्ये बरें दिसेसें तेथें नेमक व्हावें । लपोनि सहज खेळतां भलें गडियासवें ॥७॥
 एक म्हणती गडी ते भले मळिती मता । केली तयावरी चाली रे बरी आपुली सत्ता ।
 नसावे ते तेथें तैसे रे खेळ हाणिती लाता । रडी एकाएकीं गेलिया गोंधळ उडती लाता ॥८॥
 एक म्हणती खेळतां उगीं राहतीं पोरें । ऐसें काय घडों शके रे कोणी लहान थोरें ।
 अवघीं येती रागा रे एका म्हणतां बरें । संगें वाढे कलह हरावा एकाएकीं च खरें ॥९॥
 एक म्हणती एकला रे तूं जासील कोठें । सांडी मांडी हें वाउगें तुझे बोल चि खोटे ।
 ठायीं राहा उगे ठायीं च कां रे सिणसी वाटे । अवघियांची सिदोरी तुझे भरली मोटे ॥१०॥
 तुका म्हणे काय काहण्या अरे सांगाल गोष्टी । चाटावे तुमचे बोल रे भुका लागल्या पोटीं ।
 जागा करूं या रे कान्होबा मागों कवळ ताटीं । धाले गडी तुका ढेकर देतो विठ्ठल कंठीं ॥११॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One says, hush, stay quiet, just follow behind. Let none sleep at home tonight; let us all stay awake.

Hari, the all-knowing, sits silently in their midst, hearing without seeming to hear, knowing who says what and how. He draws out from the belly what lies on the lips and gives each one accordingly.

One says, we are greatly tormented by our mothers; she will not give us curd-rice lunch and pours buttermilk for others to drink. We are scorched herding cattle with no water or shade; let us now beg at his feet for a full belly.

Another says, how much can your belly hold? Let us ask for cows, buffaloes, horses, wealth, and fortune. Kanho is our friend and our God; what do we not have at hand? Let us ask for daughters, sons, maidservants, and fine beds.

Another says, fools, who will look after all that? A donkey is the same as a horse; who will honor it? Carrying four people on your shoulders brings the disease of worldly life. Better to wander free in the open with sticks and shaved heads.

Another says, the forest is full of wild beasts that tear out eyes and carry off hands and feet. One who cannot even protect himself, what kind of warrior is he? Better to sit at home; who would choose this wandering life?

But if you sit at home, they pile on endless chores; nobody likes an idle person, as we well know. One must look proper among people, and it is best to play secretly with our friend.

Another says, good companions are those who agree with you and let you have your way. Those who do not belong there kick and quarrel; when one runs off crying, chaos breaks out.

Another says, can all the children really stay quiet while playing? How can that happen among the young and old? Everyone gets angry if you call one of them good; quarrels grow in company, and the truth is won only alone.

Another says, where will you go all by yourself? Drop this useless talk; your words are all false. Stay put right where you are; why tire yourself on the road? Everyone's packed lunch is stuffed in your bundle anyway.

Says Tuka, why do you keep telling stories and tales? Your words cannot be licked clean when hunger strikes the belly. Let us wake up Kanho and ask for a morsel at his plate. The friends are full, and Tuka belches with Vitthal's name on his lips.

IN PLAIN WORDS

One says, hush, just follow behind; let no one sleep at home tonight, let us all stay awake. Hari, who knows everything, sits silent in their midst, hearing without seeming to hear, knowing who says what and how. He draws out what is in the belly onto the lips, and gives each one what fits. One says, our mothers torment us; she will not give us curd-rice for lunch and pours buttermilk for others to drink. We are scorched herding cattle with no water and no shade; let us beg at his feet for a full belly. Another says, how much can your belly hold? Let us ask for cows, buffaloes, horses, wealth, and fortune. Kanho is our friend and our God; what do we not have at hand? Let us ask for daughters, sons, maidservants, and fine beds. Another says, fools, who will look after all that? A donkey is no different from a horse; who honors it? Carrying four people on your shoulders brings the disease of worldly life. Better to wander free in the open, with sticks and shaved heads. Another says, the forest is full of wild beasts that tear out eyes and carry off hands and feet. A man who cannot protect himself, what kind of warrior is he? Better to sit at home; who would choose this wandering life? But if you sit at home, they pile on endless chores; nobody likes an idle one, as we well know. One must look proper among people, and it is best to play in secret with our friend. Another says, good companions are the ones who agree with you and let you have your way. Those who do not belong there kick and quarrel; when one runs off crying, chaos breaks out. Another says, can all the children really stay quiet while they play, the young and the old alike? Everyone turns angry if you call just one of them good; quarrels grow in company, and the truth is won only alone. Another says, where will you go all by yourself? Drop this useless talk; your words are all false. Stay put right where you are; why tire yourself on the road? Everyone's packed lunch is already stuffed in your bundle. Tuka says: why do you keep telling stories and tales? Your words cannot be licked clean when hunger strikes the belly. Let us wake Kanho and ask for a morsel at his plate. The friends are full, and Tuka belches with Vitthal's name in his throat.

WHAT IT MEANS

This long abhanga stages the boys arguing over what to beg from Krishna, and lets the argument expose every wrong thing a soul asks God for. Krishna sits silent in the middle, the knower of hearts who draws what is hidden in the belly up onto the lips: the asking itself is the test. Each voice wants something else, more food, then wealth and cattle, then renunciation, then safety, then approval, then easy company, and each is shown to tangle the

asker further in the world. Tukaram cuts through the whole debate at the end: stories do not feed hunger, so stop talking and simply ask God for a mouthful at his own plate. The closing image is the only thing that satisfies, the friends made full and Tuka belching contentedly with the Name in his throat, the point being that what fills the heart is God himself, not the things we plot to request.

GATHA 0207

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, even gods forget themselves

मराठी मूळ

आजि ओस अमरावती । काला पाहावया येती । देव विसरती । देहभाव आपुला ॥१॥
 आनंद न समाये मेदिनी । चारा विसरल्या पाणी । तटस्थ त्या ध्यानीं । गाई जाल्या श्वापदें ॥२॥
 जें या देवांचें दैवत । उभें आहे या रंगांत । गोपाळांसहित । क्रीडा करी कान्होबा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Today even the heavenly city stands empty, for the gods have come to witness the communal feast. The gods themselves forget their divine nature at the sight.

Joy overflows across the earth; the cows have forgotten their fodder and water. Beasts and cattle stand transfixed in meditation.

The very deity of the gods stands here in this arena, playing with the cowherd boys. Kanho sports in their company.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Today the city of the immortals stands empty, for the gods have come to watch the feast. The gods forget their own divine nature at the sight. Joy cannot fit on the earth; the cows have forgotten their fodder and water. Cattle and beasts stand transfixed as if in meditation. The very deity that the gods worship is standing here in this arena, playing with the cowherd boys. Kanho sports in their company.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram measures the worth of Krishna's simple play by who is drawn to it. Heaven empties out, because the gods themselves leave their thrones to watch the cowherd feast. They lose track of their own godhood at the sight; even animals stand still as if absorbed in meditation. The hidden claim is the last line: the God whom the gods themselves worship is the very boy playing here among cowherds. The exalted and the lowly are reversed, and the highest reality is found not in heaven but in this plain, joyful scene by the river.

GATHA 0208

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, the feast on the sand

मराठी मूळ

चला बाई पांडुरंग पाहूं वाळवंटीं । मांडियेला काला भोंवती गोपाळांची दाटी ॥१॥
 आनंदें कवळ देती एकामुखीं एक । न म्हणती सान थोर अवघीं सकळिक ॥२॥
 हमामा हुंबरी पांवा वाजविती मोहरी । घेतलासे फेर माजी घालुनियां हरी ॥३॥
 लुब्धल्या नारी नर अवघ्या पशुयाती । विसरलीं देहभाव शंका नाहीं चितीं ॥४॥
 पुष्पाचा वरुषाव जाली आरतियांची दाटी । तुळसी गुंफोनियां माळा घालितील कंठीं ॥५॥
 यादवांचा राणा गोपीमनोहर कान्हा । तुका म्हणे सुख वाटे देखोनियां मना ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Come, women, let us go see Panduranga at the sandy riverbank, where the communal feast is spread and the cowherd boys crowd all around.

In delight they share morsels from each other's mouths, without regard for young or old, all of them together. They shout and wrestle, blowing flutes and shehnais, placing Hari in the center of their circle.

Men and women and all creatures are enchanted, forgetting their bodily awareness with no doubt in their chitta.

A rain of flowers falls, a throng of lamps is waved, and garlands of tulsi are placed around his neck.

Says Tuka, he is the king of the Yadavas, Kanho who steals the hearts of the gopis, and the mind rejoices at the sight of him.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Come, women, let us go see Panduranga on the sandy bank, where the feast is spread and the cowherd boys crowd all around. In delight they feed morsels from one mouth to another, not minding young or old, all of them together. They shout and wrestle, blowing flutes and pipes, with Hari taken into the center of their circle. Men and women and all the creatures are enchanted, forgetting their bodies, with no doubt in their minds. A rain of flowers falls, a throng of lamps is waved, and they tie garlands of tulsi around his neck. Tuka says: he is the king of the Yadavas, Kanho who steals the hearts of the gopis, and the mind rejoices to see him.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a vision of the kala feast as worship made joyful and equal. The poet calls everyone out to the riverbank to see Panduranga in the thick of it, where the boys feed each other without rank, young and old sharing from one another's mouths. Around Krishna in the center, the line between play and worship dissolves: shouting and wrestling and flute-playing become flowers, waved lamps, and tulsi garlands. All beings, human and animal, lose their body-bound separateness and their doubt in the rapture of his presence. Tuka names him at the end as the Lord of the Yadavas and heart-stealer of the gopis, and the final note is the plain happiness of simply looking at him.

GATHA 0209

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, no impurity near God

मराठी मूळ

माझे गडी कोण कोण । निवडा भिन्न यांतुनी ॥१॥
 आपआपणामध्ये मिळो । एक खेळों एकाशीं ॥२॥
 घाबरियांच्या मोडा काड्या । धाडा भाड्यां वळतियां ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे देवापाशीं । विटाळशी नसावी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Who are my true companions? Sort them out from this group.**Let those who are alike come together; let us play among our own.**Break the sticks of the cowardly and send the timid hirelings away to tend the herds.**Says Tuka, in the presence of God, there should be no impurity of heart.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Who are my true companions? Sort them out from the rest. Let those who are alike come together; let us play among our own. Break the sticks of the cowardly, and send the timid hirelings off to tend the herds. Tuka says: in the presence of God there should be no impurity of heart.

WHAT IT MEANS

Spoken in the voice of the play, this sorts the company that may come close to God. It asks who the real companions are and gathers like with like, those fit for the play set apart from those who are not. The cowardly and the merely hired, who serve for wages and not from love, are turned away to the cattle work. Tukaram lands the meaning in the last line: nearness to God is not a matter of standing or skill but of a clean heart. The sorting is inward, an examination of one's own motive, not contempt for any person.

GATHA 0210

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, God placed in the middle

मराठी मूळ

हे चि अनुवाद सदा सर्वकाळ । करुनियां गोपाळकाला सेवूं ॥१॥
 वोरसलें कामधेनूचें दुभतें । संपूर्ण आइतें गगनभरी ॥२॥
 संत सनकादिक गोमट्या परवडी । विभाग आवडी इच्छेचिये ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे मधीं घालूं नारायण । मग नव्हे सीण कोणा खेळें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let this be our practice at all times: to partake of the cowherd feast and serve it with devotion.

The wish-fulfilling cow has yielded her milk in abundance, filling the sky with its fullness.

The saints like Sanaka and others form a fine assembly, each receiving a share according to their heart's desire.

Says Tuka, let us place Narayana in our midst, and then no one shall feel weary in this play.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let this be our practice always: to share the cowherd feast and serve it with love. The wish-granting cow has poured out her milk in plenty, ready and filling the whole sky. The saints, Sanaka and the others, make a fine gathering, each taking the share his heart desires. Tuka says: let us place Narayana in the middle, and then no one will grow weary in the play.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns the kala into a rule for the whole spiritual life: make the shared feast of devotion your constant work. The provision is endless, for the wish-fulfilling cow fills the very sky, so there is enough for every desire; the great sages gather and each receives according to his longing. The decisive instruction is the last line: put Narayana, God, in the center of the play. With God at the middle of everything shared, the play never tires anyone out, because the joy is not in the things passed around but in the presence they circle.

GATHA 0211

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, refusing high company

मराठी मूळ

अधिकाचा मज कांटाळा । तुम्हां गोपाळां संगति ॥१॥
 काय नाहीं तुम्हापाशीं । सकळांविशीं संपन्न ॥२॥
 उद्योगाचा नेघें भार । लागल्या सार पुरतें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे अधीर जिणें । नारायणें न करावें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I have grown weary of those with high status; I prefer the company of you cowherd boys.

What do you lack? You are rich in everything.

I do not wish to carry the burden of worldly enterprise; what comes along is enough.

Says Tuka, one should not let life become restless. Narayana himself does not wish it so.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I am tired of those of high rank; I would rather keep the company of you cowherd boys. What do you lack? You are rich in everything. I will not carry the burden of worldly striving; whatever comes along is enough. Tuka says: one should not make life restless. Narayana himself does not want it so.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a quiet choice between two kinds of company. The speaker is weary of the great and the high-placed and prefers the plain cowherd boys, who he insists lack nothing and are rich in all that matters. He refuses to shoulder the load of ambition and worldly enterprise, content with whatever comes unsought. Tukaram closes by naming

the principle: a grasping, restless life is wrong, and God himself does not wish his own to live that way. Sufficiency and lowly company are held up as the truer wealth.

GATHA 0212

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, emptying the bundle

मराठी मूळ

जालों आतां एके ठायीं । न वंचूं कांहीं एकमेकां ॥१॥
 सरलों हेंगे देउनि मोट । कटकट काशाची ॥२॥
 सोडोनियां गांठीं पाहें । काय आहे त्यांत तें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे जालों निराळा । आतां गोपाळा देऊं बोभा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Now we have all come together in one place; let us not deceive one another.

We have settled the account by giving up our bundles; what quarrel remains?

Open your knots and see what is inside.

Says Tuka, I have become free of all burdens; now let us call out to our dear cowherd companion.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Now we have all come together in one place; let us not cheat one another. We have settled the account by handing over our bundles; what quarrel is left? Open your knots and look at what is inside. Tuka says: I have become free; now let us call out to our dear cowherd friend.

WHAT IT MEANS

The feast image becomes a picture of full honesty and surrender. The boys are gathered in one place and pledge not to hold anything back from each other; they hand over their bundles and so the account between them is settled, leaving nothing to fight about. To open your knots and show what is inside is to hide nothing, to keep no private store. Tukaram says that once he is emptied out in this way he has become free, unburdened, and only then is he ready to call out to Krishna. The teaching is that calling on God comes after letting go of what we secretly clutch.

GATHA 0213

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, the careless herder

मराठी मूळ

या रे करुं गाई । जमा निजलेती काई । बोभाटानें आई । घरा गेल्या मारील ॥१॥
 घाला घाला रे फुकारे । ज्याची तेणें चि मोहरे । एवढें चि पुरे । केलियानें सावध ॥२॥
 नेणोनियां खेळा । समय समयाच्या वेळा । दुश्चिताजवळा । मिळालेति दुश्चित ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे शीक । न धरितां लागे भीक । धरा सकळीक । मनेरी धांवा वळतियां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Come, let us gather the cows. Why do they lie sleeping? If we arrive home late making a commotion, our mothers will beat us.

Drive them, drive them with shouts; let each one lead his own. This much effort will be enough to rouse them.

Lost in play, they forgot the proper times and seasons. The careless ones gathered only more carelessness around them.

Says Tuka, if you do not learn discipline, you will have to beg. Everyone, hold your minds steady and run after the straying cattle.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Come, let us gather the cows. Why are they lying asleep? If we get home late with a great noise, our mothers will beat us. Drive them, drive them with shouts; let each one round up his own. That much effort will be enough to rouse them. Lost in their play, they forgot the right time and season. The careless ones only gathered more carelessness around them. Tuka says: if you will not learn discipline, you will end up begging. Everyone, hold your minds steady and run after the straying cattle.

WHAT IT MEANS

On the surface this is the boys hurrying to round up scattered, sleeping cows before dark, afraid of a beating at home. Underneath, the cattle and the late hour stand for a life let slide. Those who lose themselves in play forget the right times, and carelessness only breeds more carelessness, gathering around the careless one. Tukaram names the stakes plainly: without discipline you will be reduced to begging. The closing call to hold the mind steady and run after the strays is the real instruction, aimed at one's own scattered attention rather than at any actual herd.

GATHA 0214

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, duty from the heart

मराठी मूळ

वोळलीचा दोहूं पान्हा । मज कान्हा सांगितला ॥१॥
 घ्या जि हेंगे क्षीर हातीं । निगुतीनें वाढावें ॥२॥
 सांगितलें केलें काम । नव्हे धर्म सत्याचा ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे नवें जुनें । ऐसें कोणें सोसावें ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*The newly calved cow has let down her milk. Kanho himself told me about it.**Take this milk in your hands and serve it carefully.**A task done because one is told is not the same as true duty done from the heart.**Says Tuka, who should bear the burden of the old being treated as new and the new as old?*

IN PLAIN WORDS

The newly calved cow has let down her milk. Kanho himself told me of it. Take this milk in your hands and serve it carefully. A task done because you were told to is not the same as true duty done from the heart. Tuka says: who should have to bear the old being passed off as new, and the new as old?

WHAT IT MEANS

A small scene of serving milk at the feast carries a teaching about the spirit of service. The fresh milk comes on Krishna's own word, and the instruction is to take it and serve it with care. The turn is the third line: doing something merely because you were ordered to is not the same as true duty offered from the heart. Tukaram then protests the mixing up of true and false, the old being passed off as new, asking who should have to put up with such substitution. The point is that God is not satisfied by outward, grudging compliance; only sincere, heartfelt service counts.

GATHA 0215

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, content with one's share

मराठी मूळ

येइल तें घेइन भागा । नव्हे जोगा दुसरिया ॥१॥
 आवडी ते तुम्ही जाणा । बहु गुणांसारिखी ॥२॥
 मज घेती डांगवरी । सर्वें हरि नसलिया ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे राबवा देवा । करीन सेवा सांगितली ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I will accept whatever share comes my way; I am not fit for anything more.

You know the love that suits each one's many qualities.

Without Hari by my side, they beat me with sticks.

Says Tuka, put God to work; I will do whatever service I am told.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I will take whatever share comes to me; I am not fit for any more. You know the love that suits each one's many qualities. When Hari is not beside me, they beat me with sticks. Tuka says: put me to work, God; I will do whatever service you tell me.

WHAT IT MEANS

Spoken in the voice of a humble cowherd, this is a prayer of contentment and dependence. The speaker accepts whatever portion falls to him and calls himself unfit for more, leaving it to God, who knows what love and share each person's nature deserves. The middle line is stark: without Hari at his side he is beaten, that is, left exposed and helpless when God's presence is withdrawn. Tukaram ends by offering himself for any task God assigns. The whole posture is one of surrender: take the small share gladly, stay close to God, and ask only to be set to service.

GATHA 0216

Faith and Trust

The Name, God comes running

मराठी मूळ

अंतरली कुटी मेटी । भय धरुनियां पोटी । म्हणतां जगजेठी । धांवें करुणाउत्तरीं ॥१॥
 बाप बळिया शिरोमणी । उतावळि या वचनीं । पडलिया कानीं । धांवा न करी आळस ॥२॥
 बळ दुनी शरणागता । स्वामी वाहों नेदी चिंता । आइतें चि दाता । पंगतीस बैसवी ॥३॥
 वाहे खांदीं पाववी घरा । त्याच्या करी येरझारा । बोबड्या उत्तरा । स्वामी तुकया मानवे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When all tricks and shelters fail and fear fills the belly, simply calling out to the Lord of the world brings his merciful response rushing forth.

The Father, the mighty one, the supreme jewel, is eager at the sound of such words; when they reach his ears, he does not delay in coming to the rescue.

He gives strength and protection to those who surrender; the Master does not let them carry any worry. The generous Lord seats them at his ready table.

He carries them on his shoulders, brings them home, and paces back and forth attending to them. The Lord is pleased even by Tuka's babbling words.

IN PLAIN WORDS

When every trick and shelter has failed and fear fills the belly, just calling out to the Lord of the world brings his merciful answer rushing in. The Father, the mighty one, the crown of all, is quick at such words; the moment they reach his ears he runs to the rescue without delay. He doubles the strength of the one who surrenders; the Master lets him carry no worry, and the giver seats him, food ready, at his own row. He carries him on his shoulders and brings him home; he paces back and forth tending to him. Tuka says: the Master is pleased even by Tuka's babbling words.

WHAT IT MEANS

This abhanga is about what happens when human resources run out. When all schemes and refuges fail and fear takes hold, the one act that works is simply to cry out God's name; he answers with mercy at once. Tukaram piles up the response: the mighty Father runs without delay, doubles the strength of whoever surrenders, lifts away all worry, and seats the helpless one at his own table with food already prepared. The images of God carrying him on his shoulders and pacing in care reverse every expectation of distance between Lord and devotee. The last line is the consolation: God is moved not by polished prayer but by even the broken, babbling words of one who turns to him.

GATHA 0217

Krishna Leela

Adoration, the blessedness of Krishna's world

मराठी मूळ

धन्य तें गोधन कांबळी काष्ठिका । मोहरी पांवा निका ब्रीद वांकी ॥१॥
 धन्य तें गोकुळ धन्य ते गोपाळ । नर नारी सकळ धन्य जाल्या ॥२॥
 धन्य देवकी जसवंती दोहीचें । वसुदेवनंदाचें भाग्य जालें ॥३॥
 धन्य त्या गोपिका सोळा सहस्र बाळा । यादवां सकळां धन्य जालें ॥४॥
 धन्य म्हणे तुका जन्मा तींचि आलीं । हरिरंगीं रंगलीं सर्वभावें ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Blessed are the cattle, the blanket and the staff, the shehnai and the flute and the curved horn.

Blessed is Gokul and blessed are its cowherd boys. Blessed are all the men and women there.

Blessed are Devaki and Yashoda both, and blessed is the fortune of Vasudeva and Nanda.

Blessed are those gopis and the sixteen thousand maidens. Blessed are all the Yadavas.

Says Tuka, blessed indeed are those who were born to be drenched in the color of Hari with their whole being.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Blessed are the cattle, the blanket, the staff. Blessed are the shehnai, the flute, the curved horn. Blessed is Gokul. Blessed are its cowherd boys. All the men and women there are blessed. Blessed are Devaki and Yashoda, both of them. Blessed is the good fortune of Vasudeva and Nanda. Blessed are those gopis and the sixteen thousand maidens. Blessed are all the Yadavas. Tuka says: blessed indeed were those who were born for this, who steeped their whole being in the color of Hari.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram pours out a litany of blessing over everything that touched Krishna's life at Gokul. He begins low, with the cattle and the herdsman's plain things, the blanket and staff and flute, and rises through the village, its boys, its women, its parents, to the gopis and the whole Yadava clan. Nothing is too small to be holy once it has been near God. The last line names what makes them blessed: not their birth or rank, but that they let their whole being be dyed in the color of Hari. The blessing is the nearness, and the dye is total love.

GATHA 0218

Krishna Leela

Wonder, Brahman as the begging child

मराठी मूळ

गौळणी बांधिती धारणासि गळा । खेळे त्या गोपाळांमाजी ब्रम्ह ॥१॥
 धांवोनियां मागे यशोदे भोजन । हिंडे रानोरान गाईपाठीं ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे सर्व कळा ज्याचे अंगीं । भोळेपणालागीं भीक मागे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The milkmaids tie a rope around his neck to restrain him, yet it is Brahman itself that plays among the cowherd boys.

He runs after Yashoda begging for food and wanders from forest to forest following the cows.

Says Tuka, he who holds all powers within him begs like a simple innocent, drawn by the force of devotion.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The milkmaids tie a rope around his neck to hold him still. Yet it is Brahman itself that plays there among the cowherd boys. He runs after Yashoda begging for food. He wanders from forest to forest behind the cows. Tuka says: he who holds every power within him begs like a simple, innocent child, drawn on by devotion.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram sets the smallness of the scene against the vastness of who is in it. A few milkmaids tie a rope on a little boy's neck, and Tukaram says plainly that the one they bind is Brahman, the absolute. He runs begging for food, he trails the cows through the forests, doing everything a small herd-boy does. The point is the willing reversal: the one who contains all powers makes himself this helpless and this hungry. He does it for love, letting devotion pull the infinite down into a child's body.

GATHA 0219

Krishna Leela

Wonder, the power of devotion binds God

मराठी मूळ

देखिलासि माती खातां । दावियानें बांधी माता ॥१॥
 जाळी घेउनि कांबळी काठी । गाई वळी वेणु पाठीं ॥२॥
 मोठें भावार्थाचें बळ । देव जाला त्याचें बाळ ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे भक्तासाठीं । देव धांवे पाठोवाटीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*He was seen eating mud, and when shown the evidence, his mother tied him up.
 Yet he takes the blanket and the staff, herds the cows, and carries the flute on his back.
 Great is the power of devotion; God himself became her child.
 Says Tuka, for the sake of his devotee, God runs along every path.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

He was caught eating mud. When the proof was shown, his mother tied him up. Still he takes the blanket and the staff, herds the cows, carries the flute on his back. Great is the power of true feeling. God himself became her child. Tuka says: for the sake of his devotee, God runs along behind him on every path.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram looks at the ordinary stories of child Krishna and reads the secret in them. The mud-eating, the scolding, the mother tying him to a post, the daily herding: each is something only a real child does, and God consents to all of it. The hinge is the third line, the power of bhava, of true feeling. It is devotion that pulled God into Yashoda's lap as her own son. Tuka lands it as a promise: God is not aloof. For the one who loves him he comes running, staying close on every path the devotee walks.

GATHA 0220

Krishna Leela

Krishna's voice, the child boasting of God's gift

मराठी मूळ

हा गे माझे हातीं । पाहा कवळ सांगाती ॥१॥
 देवें दिला खातों भाग । कराल तर करा लाग ॥२॥
 धालें ऐसें पोट । वरी करुनियां बोट ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे घरीं । मग कै जी या परी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Look here, mother, see this morsel in my hand and this companion beside me.

God himself gave me this share; do what you will about it.

My belly is so full that I can point to it and show you.

Says Tuka, at home, when will I ever receive such abundance as this?

IN PLAIN WORDS

Look here, mother. See this morsel in my hand, and this friend beside me. God himself gave me this share. Do what you like about it. My belly is so full I can point to it and show you. Tuka says: at home, when would I ever get plenty like this?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks in the voice of the herd-boy Krishna come back from the fields, showing his mother what he has. The food in his hand is not stolen or earned; he says God himself gave it, so let her make of that what she will. The full belly he points to is proof. The closing line carries the real point: out there in the open, in company, sharing the common meal, there is an abundance that home alone never gives. For Tukaram the field of the saints and the shared portion is where one is truly fed.

GATHA 0221

Krishna Leela

The devotee's complaint, asking God for his share

मराठी मूळ

अवघें अवघीकडे । दिलें पाहे मजकडे । अशा सवंगडे । सहित थोरी लागली ॥१॥
कां रे धरिला अबोला । माझा वांटा देई मला । सिंदोरीचा केला । झाडा आतां निवडे ना ॥२॥
भूक लागली अनंता । कां रे नेणसी जाणतां । भागलों वळितां । गाई सैरा ओढाळा ॥३॥
तुका करुणा भाकी । हरि पाहे गोळा टाकी । घेता जाला सुखी । भीतरी वांटी आणीकां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He gave everything to everyone on all sides but just looks at me.

Why have you gone silent with me, Lord? Give me my share. The lunch packs have all been cleared out now; nothing remains to sort through.

I am hungry, Ananta. Why do you pretend not to know, though you know everything? I am exhausted from herding these wild, unruly cows.

Says Tuka, he pleads with Hari, who glances over and tosses him a morsel. Taking it, Tuka grows content and quietly shares it among the others.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He gave to everyone on every side, then just looks at me. Why have you gone silent with me? Give me my share. The lunch packs are all cleared out now; there is nothing left to sort through. I am hungry, Ananta. Why do you pretend not to know, when you know everything? I am worn out from herding these wild, straying cows. Tuka says: he pleads with Hari, who glances over and tosses him a morsel. Taking it, he grows content, and quietly shares it among the others.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is the prayer of one who feels passed over while everyone else is fed. In the cowherd setting Tukaram complains that Krishna fed all the others and then fell silent toward him, so he asks outright for his portion before the meal is gone. He names his exhaustion: he is the one who has been chasing the wild, straying cows. The cows are the restless senses and the herding is the spiritual labor that tires him. Then the turn comes. Hari finally looks his way and tosses him even a single morsel, and that one glance and crumb of grace is enough to fill him. Received, it overflows: he hands it on to the others rather than hoarding it.

GATHA 0222

Krishna Leela

Belonging, the simple folk who feast together

मराठी मूळ

आम्ही गोवळीं रानटें । नव्हों जनांतील धीटें ॥१॥
 सिंदोरीचा करुं काला । एक वांटितों एकाला ॥२॥
 खेळों आपआपणांशीं । आमचीं तीं आम्हांपाशीं ॥३॥
 मिळालों नेणते । तुका कान्होबा भोंवते ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

We are wild cowherd folk of the forest, not bold people of the town.

We share our packed lunches in a communal feast, distributing to one another.

We play among ourselves; what is ours stays with us.

Says Tuka, we are gathered as innocents around Kanho.

IN PLAIN WORDS

We are wild cowherd folk of the forest. We are not the bold people of the town. We make a shared feast of our lunches. One hands a portion to another. We play among ourselves. What is ours stays with us. Tuka says: we are gathered as innocents, all around Kanho.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks as one of the rough country herd-boys and sets them against the clever, self-assured townspeople. They have no polish; they are simple forest folk, and they say so without shame. Their way is the shared meal, the kala, where everyone's lunch is pooled and passed hand to hand, and their play stays among their own. The last line names what they are circled around: Kanho, Krishna himself. For Tukaram this is the company of the saints, unsophisticated and open-hearted, whose only wealth is being gathered as innocents around their Lord.

GATHA 0223

Krishna Leela

The child's hurt, God consoles the lowly

मराठी मूळ

अवधियां दिला गोर । मजकरे पाहीना ॥१॥
 फुंदे गोपाळ डोळे चोळी । हुंगा थापली हाणे तोंडा ॥२॥
 आवडती थोर मोटे । मी रे पोरटें दैन्यवाणे ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे जाणों भाव । जीविंचा देव बुझावी ॥३॥
 मृदंग पाटया - अभंग

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*He gave sweets to everyone but did not even look my way.**The cowherd boy sulks, rubbing his eyes, slapping his thigh, and hitting his own face in protest.**He loves only the big and important ones; I am just a poor little child.**Says Tuka, God knows the heart's true feeling and gently consoles the one who is distressed.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

He gave sweets to everyone but would not even look my way. The cowherd boy sulks, rubs his eyes, slaps his thigh, beats his own face in protest. He loves only the big and important ones. I am just a poor little child.
 Tuka says: God knows the true feeling of the heart, and he gently consoles the one who is hurt.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram stages the ache of the small and overlooked. A child watches God hand out sweets to everyone else and pass him by, and breaks down in furious tears, certain he is too lowly to be loved, that only the great and important matter. The complaint is real and Tukaram does not scold it. The resolution is in the last line. God is not moved by who is big or important; he reads the heart's true feeling. So it is exactly the distressed, slighted one whom he turns to and consoles. The lowly self that fears it counts for nothing is the one God comes to comfort.

GATHA 0224

Krishna Leela

Allegory, the game of life and getting caught

मराठी मूळ

मागें पुढें पाहें सांभाळूनि दोनी ठाय । चुकावूनि जाय गडी राखे गडियांसि ॥१॥
 मुरडे दंडा दोहीं तोंडें गडियां सावध करी । भेटतियासंगे तया हाल तुजवरी ॥२॥
 गडियां गडी वांटुनि देई । ज्याचा सोडी तेचि ठायीं ॥३॥
 अगळ्या बळें करील काय । तुज देणें लागे डोय ॥४॥
 नवां घरीं पाउला करीं । सांपडे तो तेथें धरीं ॥५॥
 जिंकोनि डाव करीं । टाहो सत्ता आणिकांवरी ॥६॥
 सांपडोनि डाई बहु । काळ गुंतलासी ॥७॥
 बळिया गडी फळी । फोडी न धरितां त्यांसी ॥८॥
 चुकांडी जो खाय मिळोनि अंगीं जाय । गुंतलासी काय तुका म्हणे अझूनी ॥९॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Look ahead and behind, guarding both sides; dodge cleverly and protect your teammates.**Swing the stick from both ends to keep your friends alert; if someone gets caught, the trouble falls on you.**Divide the friends into teams and release each where they stand.**What can a lone player do with brute force? You will have to give up your turn.**Set foot in new territory and catch whoever you find there.**Win the round and claim your authority over the rest.**You got caught in a trap and wasted so much time. The strong player breaks through the line when it is not held firmly.**Says Tuka, when the blow lands and strikes your body, why are you still tangled in this game?*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Look ahead and behind; guard both sides. Dodge cleverly and protect your teammates. Swing the stick at both ends to keep your friends alert. If one of them is caught, the trouble falls on you. Divide the players into teams; release each one where they stand. What can a single player do by brute force? You will have to give up your turn. Step into new ground and catch whoever you find there. Win the round and claim your rule over the rest. You got caught in the trap and wasted so much time. The strong player breaks through the line when it is not held firmly. Tuka says: when the blow lands and strikes your body, why are you still tangled in this game?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram takes a children's catching game and makes it the whole game of worldly life. The instructions sound like ordinary play: watch both sides, guard your team, divide into sides, win the round and lord it over the others. But running underneath is a warning about how the game catches you. Brute force gets you nowhere; you forfeit your

turn; you get trapped and squander long stretches of time. The line, the defended boundary, is broken by the strong precisely where it is held loosely. The closing question is the real address to the soul: now that the blows are actually landing on your own body, why are you still caught up in playing? It is time to step out of the game.

GATHA 0225

Krishna Leela

Allegory, the guarded game and its costly prize

मराठी मूळ

पाहा रे तमासा तुमचा येथें नव्हे लाग । देईन तो भाग आलियाचा बाहेरी ॥१॥
 जागा रे गोपाळ नो ठायीं ठायीं जागा । चाहुलीनें भागा दूर मजपासूनि ॥२॥
 न रिघतां ठाव आम्हा ठावा पाळतियां । भयाभीत वांयां तेथें काय चांचपा ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे हातां चडे जीवाचिये साटीं । मिटक्या देतां गोड मग लागतें शेवटीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Watch this sport; your tricks will not work here. I will give a share to whoever comes and send them out.

Wake up, cowherd boys, stay alert in your positions. When you hear a footstep, scatter far from me.

Without entering the guarded space, we watchful ones know the terrain; there is no point fumbling around in fear.

Says Tuka, what falls into your hands is won at the cost of your very life. Snap your fingers in delight, for the sweetness comes at the very end.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Watch this sport. Your tricks will not work here. Whoever comes, I will give him his share and send him out. Wake up, cowherd boys; stay alert at your posts. When you hear a footstep, scatter far from me. Without entering the guarded ground, we who keep watch already know the field. There is no use fumbling about in fear. Tuka says: what falls into your hands is won at the cost of your very life. Snap your fingers in delight, for the sweetness comes only at the very end.

WHAT IT MEANS

Again Tukaram uses the herd-boys' game to teach the inner contest. The keeper of the field warns that clever tricks are useless here; each one who comes gets his exact due and is sent off, and the players must stay awake at their posts and scatter at the first footstep. The watchful ones do not need to blunder into the guarded ground in fear, because they already know its lie. Then the stakes are named without softening: the prize is won at the cost of your very life. Nothing real is gained cheaply. And the last note is patience, the sweetness does not come early; it arrives only at the very end, so keep going to the finish.

GATHA 0226

Krishna Leela

Allegory, the trickster who feigns innocence

मराठी मूळ

डाई घालुनियां पोरें । त्यांचीं गुरें चुकवीलीं ॥१॥
 खेळ खेळतां फोडिल्या डोया । आपण होय निराळा ॥२॥
 मारिती माया घेती जीव । नाहीं कीव अन्यायें ॥३॥
 तुका कान्होबा मागें । तया अंगें कळों आलें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*By cheating in the game, the boy caused others to lose track of their cattle.**While playing, he cracked heads open and then stood aside as though he were innocent.**The mothers punish and scold, taking the life out of the child, showing no mercy for the mischief.**Says Tuka, Kanho was behind it all, and eventually it became clear from his own conduct.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

By cheating in the game, the boy made the others lose track of their cattle. While they played he cracked their heads open, then stood aside as if he had done nothing. The mothers punish and scold and take the life out of the child, showing no mercy for the mischief. Tuka says: Kanho was behind it all, and in the end it showed in his own conduct.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram tells the game as a parable of how the world's confusions are arranged. A player cheats, the others lose their cattle, heads get broken, and the one who caused it slips aside wearing an innocent face while the blame and beating land on someone else. The pointed truth is in the last verse: Kanho, Krishna himself, was behind the whole thing. The Lord is the hidden author of the play, and eventually his hand becomes visible in how it all unfolds. Read inward, it asks us to suspect the seemingly innocent cause of our troubles and to recognize that the divine lila is running underneath the tangle, not chance and not only our fellow players.

GATHA 0227

Krishna Leela

The Name as nectar, the tongue wanting more

मराठी मूळ

आतां हें चि जेऊं हेंचि जेऊं । सर्वें घेऊं सिदोरी ॥१॥
 चवीं चवीं घेऊं घास । ब्रम्हरस आवडी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे गोड लागे । तों तों मागे रसना ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Now let us eat this, only this; let us take this packed lunch together.

Let us savor each morsel with the taste of Brahman, the divine nectar of delight.

Says Tuka, as long as it tastes sweet, the tongue keeps asking for more.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Now let us eat just this, only this. Let us take this packed lunch along. Let us savor each mouthful. This is the taste of Brahman, the love we long for. Tuka says: as long as it tastes sweet, the tongue keeps asking for more.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns the shared field-meal into a figure for tasting God. He resolves to eat this and nothing else and to carry this food with him everywhere, savoring each mouthful slowly. He says outright what the food is: brahmaras, the taste of Brahman itself, the sweetness the heart most wants. The closing line is the joy of it. Unlike ordinary food that cloy, this sweetness only deepens the appetite; the more the tongue tastes it the more it asks. For Tukaram that endless hunger for God is not a lack but the mark of the real thing.

GATHA 0228

Ecstasy and Joy

Deliverance, waking from the dream into grace

मराठी मूळ

अवघें चि गोड जालें । मागीलये भरी आलें ॥१॥
 साहय जाला पांडुरंग । दिला अभ्यंतरी संग ॥२॥
 थडिये पावतां तो वाव । मार्गे वाहावतां ठाव ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे गेलें । स्वप्नीचें जागें जालें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Everything has become sweet, for the old account of grace has been filled to the brim.

Panduranga has come to my aid and given me his company deep within.

When you reach the bank, the current becomes gentle; when you were drowning before, there was no ground beneath your feet.

Says Tuka, all that was a dream has now dissolved, and I have awakened.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Everything has turned sweet. The old account has been filled to the brim. Panduranga has come to my aid. He has given me his company deep within. When you reach the bank, the current goes gentle. Before, when you were drowning, there was no ground beneath you. Tuka says: it is all gone now. The dream is over, and I have woken.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is naming the moment of rescue from inside, after it has happened. Everything has turned sweet and the long-standing arrears of grace are paid in full at last. The cause is plain: Panduranga came to help and gave his own company, not outwardly but deep within. Then the river image carries the whole change. While he was

drowning there was no footing anywhere, but once he reaches the bank the fierce current loses its power over him. The closing line settles it: all of that was a dream, and he has now awakened. The terror was real while it lasted, yet from the far bank it is seen for what it was, and only the sweetness remains.

GATHA 0229

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, the cowherds' mock complaint

मराठी मूळ

तुजसवें येतो हरी । आम्हां लाज नाही तरी । उचलिला गिरी । चांग तई वांचलों ॥१॥
 मोडा आतां खेळ । गाई गेल्या जाला वेळ । फांकल्या ओढाळ । नाही तो चि आवरा ॥२॥
 चांग दैवें यमुनेसी वांचलों बुडतां । निलाजिरीं आम्ही नाहीं भय धाक या अनंता ॥३॥
 खातो आगी माती । आतां पुरे हा सांगाती । भोंवतां भोंवेल । आम्हां वाटतें हें चित्तीं ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे उरी नाही तुजसवें । शाहाणे या भावें दुरी छंद भोळियां सवें ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

We come with you, Hari, for we have no shame in following you. You lifted the mountain, and that is how we were saved.

End this game now; the cows have wandered and it is getting late. The wild ones have scattered, and there is no one to gather them.

By good fortune we survived the Yamuna when we were drowning. We are shameless and have no fear or hesitation before you, Ananta.

We eat fire and mud; enough of this companionship, for we suspect in our chitta that wandering with you only leads to more wandering.

Says Tuka, there is no reserve left with you; the clever ones keep their distance, while we simple ones stay close to your play.

IN PLAIN WORDS

We come with you, Hari. We have no shame about following you. You lifted the mountain, and that is how we were saved that time. Stop the game now. The cows have wandered off; it is getting late. The wild ones have scattered, and there is no one to gather them. By good luck we survived the Yamuna when we were drowning. We are shameless; we have no fear of you, Ananta. We eat fire and mud. Enough of this companionship now. We feel in our hearts that wandering with you only leads to more wandering. Tuka says: there is no holding back left with you. The clever ones keep their distance; we simple ones stay close to your play.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks in the voice of the cowherd boys who run with Krishna, and their grumbling is really a confession of love. They list the dangers he has dragged them through, the lifted mountain, the drowning in the Yamuna, and pretend to call it quits: enough, the cows are scattered, stop the game. But the refusal is hollow, and they know it. The poem's edge lands in the last line: the clever calculate the cost and keep their distance, while the simple ones, who have given up all reserve, stay close to the play no matter where it leads. Tukaram counts himself among the shameless simple, and offers that as the higher wisdom.

GATHA 0230

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, the unruly herd

मराठी मूळ

नको आम्हांसवें गोपाळा । येऊं ओढाळा तुझ्या गाई ॥१॥
 कोण धांवें त्यांच्या लागें । मागें मागें येरझारी ॥२॥
 न बैसती एके ठायीं । धांवती दाही दाहा वाटां ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे तू राख मनेरी । मग त्या येरी आम्ही जाणों ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Do not come along with us, cowherd boy, for your cows are wild and unruly.**Who will run after them, going back and forth endlessly?**They will not sit still in one place; they run off in ten different directions.**Says Tuka, you just herd them with your mind, and then we will know how to manage the rest.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Do not come with us, cowherd boy. Your cows are wild and will not be controlled. Who will run after them, going back and forth without end? They will not sit still in one place. They run off in ten different directions. Tuka says: you herd them with your mind, and then we will know how to manage the rest.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram keeps to the cowherds' teasing voice, but underneath the cows are the restless senses and thoughts that scatter in every direction. The boys protest that they cannot keep the wild herd together; chasing them is endless and useless labor. The turn comes at the end: only Krishna himself can hold them, herding them with his mind rather than their feet. The plea is that grace, not the devotee's effort, is what finally gathers the scattered, and once he does that, the rest becomes easy.

GATHA 0231

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, the harassed errand

मराठी मूळ

मागायास गेलों सिदोरी । तुझ्या मायाघरीं गांजियेलों ॥१॥
 तुजविणें ते नेदी कोणा । सांगतां खुणा जिवें गेलों ॥२॥
 वांयांविण केली येरझार । आतां पुरे घर तुझी माया ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे तूं आम्हां वेगळा । राहें गोपाळा म्हणउनी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I went to ask for a packed lunch at your mother's house and was harassed there.

*Without you, she would not give it to anyone. When I tried to explain the situation, I nearly lost my life.
This back and forth was all in vain; enough of your mother's home and your Maya's ways.
Says Tuka, you stay separate from us, cowherd boy, and that is that.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

I went to ask for a packed lunch at your mother's house, and I was tormented there. Without you she would not give it to anyone. When I tried to explain, I nearly lost my life. This back and forth was all for nothing. Enough now of your home and your Maya. Tuka says: you stay separate from us, cowherd boy, and that is that.

WHAT IT MEANS

In the cowherds' aggrieved voice, Tukaram tells of being sent on an errand and meeting only obstruction, then pretends to wash his hands of the whole household. The double meaning sits in the word Maya: the mother's house that turns him away is also the world's enchantment that exhausts the seeker with fruitless coming and going. The boy threatens to break off and keep Krishna at arm's length. But the threat is theater, the lover's bluff; the very heat of the complaint betrays how bound he still is.

GATHA 0232

Krishna Leela

God's longing for the devotee

मराठी मूळ

काकुलती येतो हरी । क्षणभरी निवडितां ॥१॥
तुमची मज लागली सवे । ठायींचे नवे नव्हों गडी ॥२॥
आणीक बोलाविती फार । बहु थोर नावडती ॥२॥
भाविकें त्यांची आवडी मोठी । तुका म्हणे मिठी घाली जिवें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Hari pleads with folded hands, unable to bear even a moment of separation.
I have grown so accustomed to your company; I am not a new friend who just arrived.
Many great ones call to me, but I do not find them appealing.
Says Tuka, so deep is his love for the devoted ones that he clings to them with his very life.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Hari pleads with folded hands; he cannot bear even a moment apart. I have grown used to your company. I am not some new friend who just arrived. Many great ones call to me, but I do not care for them. Tuka says: so deep is his love for the devoted ones that he clings to them with his very life.

WHAT IT MEANS

Here Tukaram turns the picture around: it is God, not the devotee, who is the desperate lover. Hari begs with folded hands and will not endure a moment of separation, reminding the devotee that theirs is no new acquaintance. The radical claim is in the middle: the great and powerful call to God and he is unmoved, but to the

one who simply loves him he clings as if his own life depended on it. The point is that devotion, not greatness, is what binds the Lord; he holds on harder than the devotee does.

GATHA 0233

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, the Kaliya plunge

मराठी मूळ

वरता वेंघोनि घातली उडी । कळंबाबुडीं यमुनेसी ॥१॥
 हरि बुडाला बोंब घाला । घरचीं त्यांला ठावा नाहीं ॥२॥
 भवनदीचा न कळे पार । काळिया माजी थोर विखार ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे काय वाड्या हाका । हातींचा गमावुनियां थिंका ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He climbed up and leaped from the Kadamba tree into the depths of the Yamuna.

Hari has drowned, cry out for help! His own family does not know his whereabouts.

The river of existence is fathomless, and the serpent Kaliya within it is terribly venomous.

Says Tuka, why raise vain cries when the one you held in your hands has slipped away?

IN PLAIN WORDS

He climbed up and leaped from the kadamba tree into the depths of the Yamuna. Hari has drowned. Cry out for help. His own family does not even know where he is. The river of existence has no far shore that you can see, and the serpent Kaliya in it is terribly venomous. Tuka says: what use are these empty cries, once the one you held in your hands has slipped away?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram retells Krishna's leap into the Yamuna to subdue the serpent Kaliya, but reads it as the soul's danger. The river is existence itself, fathomless, and the venom in it is the poison of the world. The cries of the watchers are vain because shouting from the bank saves no one. The blow lands in the last line and points back at the listener: while you had him in your hands you did not value him, and now that he has slipped from your grasp, no amount of noise will bring him back. The poem asks whether you are clutching God now, while you still can.

GATHA 0234

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, the loss by the river

मराठी मूळ

अवघीं मिळोनि कोल्हाळ केला । आतां होता म्हणती गेला ॥१॥
 आपलिया रडती भावें । जयासवें जयापरी ॥२॥
 चुकलों आम्ही खेळतां खेळ । गेला गोपाळ हातींचा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे धांवती थडी । न घली उडी आंत कोणी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*All the boys gathered and raised a great clamor, saying, the one who was just with us is now gone.**Each weeps according to his own bond and feeling.**We were lost in play and let our cowherd friend slip from our hands.**Says Tuka, they all rush to the riverbank, but no one dares leap into the water.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

All the boys gathered together and raised a great outcry, saying the one who was just here is now gone. Each one weeps in his own way, by the bond he had. We were lost in the game, and our cowherd friend slipped from our hands. Tuka says: they all run to the riverbank, but no one dares to leap into the water.

WHAT IT MEANS

The cowherds wail at the bank because Krishna has vanished into the Yamuna, and each grieves to the measure of his own love. Tukaram catches the half-truth in their sorrow: they were absorbed in the game and let him go, and now they mourn. The sharp final image turns on the listener: everyone crowds the edge and cries, but no one is willing to jump in after him. Lament is cheap; only the one ready to risk everything, to leap into the depths, actually seeks God. Tukaram leaves us measuring our own grief against that test.

GATHA 0235

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, the testing of true love

मराठी मूळ

भ्यालीं जिवा चुकलीं देवा । नाहीं ठावा जवळीं तो ॥१॥
 आहाकटा करिती हाय । हात डोकें पिटिती पाय ॥२॥
 जवळी होतां न कळे आम्हां । गेल्या सीमा नाहीं दुःखा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे हा लाघवी मोटा । पाहे खोटा खरा भाव ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Frightened for their lives and unable to find God, they realize he is no longer near.

They cry out in anguish, beating their hands, heads, and feet.

When he was close, they did not know his worth; now that he is gone, their grief knows no bounds.

Says Tuka, this great trickster tests who is truly sincere and who is false.

IN PLAIN WORDS

They are terrified for their lives. They have lost God. He is no longer near them. They cry out in anguish, beating their hands, their heads, their feet. While he was close we did not know his worth; now that he is gone, our grief has no limit. Tuka says: this great trickster is watching, to see whose love is real and whose is false.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram shows the cowherds discovering, only in his absence, what Krishna was worth to them. While he stood beside them they took him for granted; the moment he is gone their grief is boundless. Then comes the turn that reframes the whole scene: the disappearance was no accident but a deliberate test. The trickster Lord hides himself to see who truly loves him and who only loved his presence. The poem holds up a mirror, asking whether our devotion is for God or merely for the comfort of having him near.

GATHA 0236

Krishna Leela

Krishna's play, recognition through doubt

मराठी मूळ

काळिया नाथूनि आला वरी । पैल हरी दाखविती ॥१॥
दुसरिया भावें न कळे कोणा । होय नव्हेसा संदेह मना ॥२॥
रूपा भिन्न पालट जाला । गोरें सांवळेंसा पें देखिला ॥३॥
आश्वासीत आला करें । तुका खरें म्हणे देव ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Having subdued the serpent Kaliya, Hari emerges from the water, and they point to him in the distance.

In their confusion, no one can tell what is real; the mind wavers between belief and doubt.

His form has changed; they see him looking different, both fair and dark at once.

He comes reassuring them with outstretched hands. Says Tuka, this is the true God.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Having subdued Kaliya, Hari comes up out of the water, and they point to him far off. In their confusion no one can tell for sure; the mind swings between yes and no. His form looks changed; they see him both fair and dark at once. He comes toward them, reassuring them with his outstretched hands. Tuka says: this is the true God.

WHAT IT MEANS

Krishna rises from the Yamuna after defeating the serpent, but the watchers cannot be certain it is really him; his form looks altered, fair and dark together, and their minds waver between belief and doubt. Tukaram captures the moment recognition struggles to keep up with grace. The God who returns from the depths is not quite the playmate they lost; he comes back larger and stranger. The doubt is resolved not by proof but by his own reaching hands, and Tukaram cuts through it with a flat declaration: this, the one who descended into the poison and rose again, is the true God.

GATHA 0237

Krishna Leela

God who loves the lowly, not the clever

मराठी मूळ

हरि गोपाळांसर्वे सकळां । भेटे गळ्या गळा मेळवूनी ॥१॥
 भाविकें त्यांची आवडी मोठी । सांगे गोष्टी जीविंचिया ॥२॥
 योगियांच्या ध्याना जो नये । भाकरी त्यांच्या मागोनि खाये ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे असे शाहाणियां दुरी । बोबडियां दास कामारी ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Hari embraces all the cowherd boys, pressing neck to neck in a warm gathering.

His love for the devoted ones is immense, and he speaks to them of the innermost matters of the heart.

The one whom yogis cannot reach in their deepest meditation goes begging for bread among his friends.

Says Tuka, he stays far from the clever and wise, but he becomes the servant and attendant of those who call him in stammering words.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Hari embraces all the cowherd boys, pressing neck to neck in a warm gathering. His love for the devoted ones is great, and he tells them the secrets of his heart. The one whom yogis cannot reach in their deepest meditation goes begging for bread among these friends. Tuka says: he stays far from the clever and the wise, and becomes the servant and attendant of those who call him in stammering words.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram draws the contrast the whole cluster has been building toward. The same Krishna the yogis cannot grasp in profound meditation freely begs bread from his cowherd friends and pours out his heart to them. The radical reversal is stated plainly: he keeps his distance from the learned and the clever, and makes himself the servant of those who call him in broken, stammering words. The poem overturns the usual ranking of seekers. Simple love reaches God where mastery and intellect cannot, and he answers it not as a master but as a servant.

GATHA 0238

Krishna Leela

God who serves out of love

मराठी मूळ

धांव कान्होबा गेल्या गाई । न म्हणे मी कोण ही काई ॥१॥
 आपुलियांचें वचन देवा । गोड सेवा करीतसे ॥२॥
 मागतां आधीं द्यावा डाव । बळिया मी तो नाही भाव ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे ऐशा सवें । अनुसरावें जीवेंभावें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Run, Kanho, the cows have strayed! He does not stop to think about who he is or what he is.**He sweetly fulfills the words of his own people as a loving act of service.**If someone asks, he gives them the first turn, never claiming that he is the mightier one.**Says Tuka, one should follow such a Lord with all one's heart and soul.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Run, Kanho, the cows have strayed. He does not stop to ask who he is or what he is. He sweetly carries out the word of his own people, as a loving act of service. If someone asks, he gives them the first turn; he never claims to be the stronger one. Tuka says: such a Lord is the one to follow with all your heart and soul.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram watches Krishna obey his playmates without a thought for his own rank. Told to run after the strayed cows, he does not pause to remember that he is God; he simply does what his people ask, gladly, as service. In their games he yields the first turn and never throws his weight around, though he is the mighty one. The poem makes this self-forgetting humility the very ground of devotion: a Lord who serves and steps aside out of love is the one worth following completely, body and soul.

GATHA 0239

The Nature of God

The mother's favor, knowing creates distance

मराठी मूळ

धाकुट्याचे मुखीं घांस घाली माता । वरी करी सत्ता शाहाणियां ॥१॥
 ऐसें जाणपणें पडिलें अंतर । वाढे तों तों थोर अंतराय ॥२॥
 दोन्ही उभयतां आपण चि व्याली । आवडीची चाली भिन्न भिन्न ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे अंगापासूनि निराळें । निवडिलें बळें रडतें स्तनीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A mother places food in the mouth of the younger child while she exercises authority over the older, wiser ones.

Through such knowing, a deliberate distance has crept in; the more one grows, the greater the gap becomes.
She gave birth to both from her own body, yet her affection runs along separate paths.
Says Tuka, she separates from her own body what is still crying at the breast, doing so by the force of discernment.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A mother puts the food into the mouth of the younger child, while over the older, wiser ones she exercises authority. Through such knowing, a gap has opened up; the more a child grows, the wider the distance becomes. She bore both of them from her own body, yet her affection runs along separate paths. Tuka says: she pushes away from her own body, by sheer force of judgment, the one who is still crying at her breast.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram uses a mother's two children to picture how God treats the simple and the clever. The little one she feeds with her own hand and holds at the breast; the grown, knowing child she keeps at arm's length and merely commands. Both came from the same body, but their cleverness has put distance between them and her tenderness. The lesson, consistent with this whole cluster, is that knowingness, the pride of being wise, separates us from God's intimate care, while the helpless, dependent one is fed directly. Wisdom that puffs us up is exactly what opens the gap.

GATHA 0240

Worldly Life

Social criticism, religion without surrender

मराठी मूळ

देवाचे म्हणोनि देवीं अनादर । हें मोठें आश्चर्य वाटतसे ॥१॥
 आतां येरा जना म्हणावें तें काई । जया भार डोई संसाराचा ॥२॥
 त्यजुनी संसार अभिमान सांटा । जुलूम हा मोटा दिसतसे ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे अळस करुनियां साहे । बळें कैसे पाहें वांयां जाती ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

It is astonishing that the gods themselves neglect what belongs to God.
What then can be said of ordinary people, who carry the burden of worldly life upon their heads?
Renouncing the world while hoarding pride seems like a great tyranny.
Says Tuka, see how they waste themselves through laziness, letting their strength drain away for nothing.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Those who call themselves God's own, yet the gods themselves treat what belongs to God with neglect. This strikes me as a great wonder. If even they do this, what is there to say about ordinary people, who carry the load of worldly life on their heads? To renounce the world and still hoard your pride looks like a great tyranny. Tuka says: see how, through laziness, they let themselves be wasted; see how their strength drains away for nothing.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is astonished at religion that goes through the motions while neglecting the very God it claims. If even those reckoned holy are careless toward what is God's, ordinary people, bent under the weight of worldly life, are hardly to be blamed. He names a particular hypocrisy: people make a show of renouncing the world while quietly clinging to their pride, and he calls that a kind of violence, a fraud against the self. The closing lines point at sloth, the half-hearted seeking that lets a life and its strength bleed away for nothing. The poem turns the listener toward self-examination: is my own renunciation real, or just pride in a new costume?

GATHA 0241

The Moral Ideal

Take the teaching, not the teacher

मराठी मूळ

उपदेश तो भलत्या हातीं । जाला चित्तीं धरावा ॥१॥
 नये जाऊं पात्रावरी । कवटी सारी नारळें ॥२॥
 स्त्री पुत्र बंदीजन । नारायण स्मरविती ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे रत्नसार । परि उपकार चिंधीचे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Accept instruction from any hand that offers it; hold it in your chitta once it is given.**One should not judge the vessel; a coconut shell can serve as well as a silver plate.**Wife, son, and household servants all prompt you to remember Narayana.**Says Tuka, the gem is precious, yet the credit goes to the rag that wraps it.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Take instruction from any hand that gives it. Once it is given, hold it in your mind. Do not judge the dish it comes on. A coconut shell will serve as well as a silver plate. Your wife, your son, the servants of the house, all of them make you remember Narayana. Tuka says: the gem is what is precious; yet the credit goes to the rag that wraps it.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram tells you to receive truth from wherever it comes and to keep it, instead of measuring the worth of the one who hands it over. He drives the point home with the coconut shell against the silver plate: the value is in what is offered, not in the vessel. Even ordinary household life, wife and son and servants, can turn your mind toward Narayana. His last image keeps you humble: the jewel is the thing of worth, but it is the plain rag wrapping it that earns the thanks, so do not despise the lowly carrier of a great gift.

GATHA 0242

The Saints

Do not judge the saints

मराठी मूळ

संतांचे गुण दोष आणितां या मना । केलिया उगाणा सुकृताचा ॥१॥
 पिळोनियां पाहे पुष्पाचा परिमळ । चिरोनि केळी केळ गाढव तो ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे गंगे अग्नीसि विटाळ । लावी तो चांडाळ दुःख पावे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When one tries to weigh the virtues and faults of saints in the mind, one only exhausts one's own merit.

It is like someone who squeezes a flower to find its fragrance, or a fool who slices open a banana tree to examine it.

Says Tuka, whoever tries to taint the Ganga or the sacred fire with impurity is a wretch who brings suffering upon himself.

IN PLAIN WORDS

When you bring the virtues and faults of the saints into your mind to weigh them, you only burn up your own good merit. It is like squeezing a flower to find its fragrance. It is like a donkey slicing open a banana tree to inspect it. Tuka says: whoever tries to stain the Ganga or the sacred fire with impurity is a wretch, and he brings the suffering down on himself.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram warns against the habit of sitting in judgment over holy people, tallying their good points and bad. The cost is not theirs but yours: the very act spends down your own merit. The flower crushed for its scent and the banana tree hacked apart by a fool show how the inspecting mind destroys the thing it claims to examine. The Ganga and the fire cannot actually be defiled; the one who tries only proves himself the wretch and reaps his own grief. The teaching points at the impulse to appraise the pure, and at where that impulse lands.

GATHA 0243

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the false renunciate

मराठी मूळ

चुंबळीचा करी चुंबळीशीं संग । अंगीं वसे रंग क्रियाहीन ॥१॥
 बीजा ऐसें फळ दावी परिपाकीं । परिमळ लौकिकीं जाती ऐसा ॥२॥
 माकडाच्या गळां रत्न कुळांगना । सांडूनियां सुना बिदी धुंडी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे ऐसा व्याली ते गाढवी । फजिती ते व्हावी आहे पुढें ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A man of worthless company keeps the company of the worthless; though devoid of practice, he wears the color of piety on his body.

The fruit reveals itself at harvest to be of the same nature as its seed; its reputation in the world goes just as it deserves.

It is like hanging a jewel around a monkey's neck while he abandons a noble bride and roams the alleys.

Says Tuka, such a one was born of a she-donkey, and the disgrace that awaits him still lies ahead.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A worthless man keeps worthless company. He wears the color of piety on his body, but the practice is not in him. At harvest the fruit shows itself the same as its seed. So his reputation in the world goes exactly as he has earned it. It is a jewel hung round a monkey's neck. It is a man who abandons a noble bride and goes prowling the alleys. Tuka says: such a one was born of a she-donkey, and the disgrace ahead of him is still to come.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is exposing the man who carries the outward color of devotion while the inner discipline is missing. Like keeps to like, and at the harvest the fruit cannot lie about the seed it grew from; the world's verdict on him will match what he actually is. The jewel on the monkey and the man who leaves a worthy wife to roam back streets name the same waste: real worth handed to one who cannot value it, and the good abandoned for the cheap. The harsh closing line and the warning of disgrace still ahead are aimed at the pattern of empty show, urging you to check whether your own practice matches your appearance.

GATHA 0244

Worldly Life

Worldly life, all in the hands of Death

मराठी मूळ

सांपडला संदीं । मग बळिया पडे फंदीं ॥१॥
 ऐसी कोणी वाहे वेळ । हातीं काळाच्या सकळ ॥२॥
 दाता मागे दान । जाय याचका शरण ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे नेणां । काय सांगों नारायणा ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When caught in the snare of circumstance, even the mighty fall into confusion.

Who can hold off time? All are in the hands of Death.

The generous giver may one day have to beg, and the benefactor may need to seek refuge from a beggar.

Says Tuka, what can I say to Narayana? He alone knows the mystery of it.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Once you are caught in the snare of circumstance, even the strong fall into the trap. Who can hold off the hour? All of us are in the hands of Death. The giver who once handed out gifts may himself come begging. The one who helped may have to take refuge with a beggar. Tuka says: you do not understand it. What can I say to Narayana?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is naming how completely reversal owns our affairs. Caught in circumstance, even the mighty are undone, and no one can push back the appointed hour, since everyone alike is held in the grip of Death. He turns the wheel to show the giver reduced to begging and the benefactor forced to seek shelter from the very poor he once helped. The point is that worldly standing is on loan and can flip without warning. His closing turn to Narayana sets the whole unstable scene against the one who actually holds it, the only refuge the verse leaves standing.

GATHA 0245

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the eye of misfortune

मराठी मूळ

सर्प विंचू दिसे । धन अभाग्या कोळसे ॥१॥
 आला डोळ्यांसि कवळ । तेणें मळलें उजळ ॥२॥
 अंगाचे भोंवडी । भोय झाड फिरती धोंडी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे नाड । पाप ठाके हिता आड ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

To the unlucky man, treasure appears as serpents, scorpions, and lumps of coal.

A film has covered his eyes, and what was bright now seems smeared and dim.

The ground, the trees, and the very stones seem to spin around his body.

Says Tuka, ruin is the force that blocks the path to one's own good.

IN PLAIN WORDS

To the unlucky man, treasure looks like snakes and scorpions and lumps of coal. A film has come over his eyes, and what was bright now looks smeared and dirty. The ground, the trees, the very stones seem to spin around his body. Tuka says: this ruin is the thing that stands across the path to your own good. The sin blocks the way.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes how misfortune corrupts perception itself. To the ill-fated, real treasure appears as serpents, scorpions, and coal: the same good that would bless another reads as menace and worthlessness to him. The film over the eyes and the spinning ground and stones show that the distortion is in the seer, not in the world. The closing line gives the diagnosis: it is sin, the accumulated wrong, that plants itself across the road and keeps a person from his own good. The poem points at the inner blockage, urging you to see that the smeared vision is the symptom, not the world's true face.

GATHA 0246

*The Necessity of Experience**Experience, the senses turned inward*

मराठी मूळ

न देखोन कांहीं । म्या पाहिलें सकळ ही ॥१॥
 जालों अवघियांपरी । मी हें माझें ठेलें दुरी ॥२॥
 न घेतां घेतलें । हातें पायें उसंतिलें ॥३॥
 खादलें न खातां । रसना रस जाली घेतां ॥४॥
 न बोलोनि बोलें । केलें प्रगट झांकिलें ॥५॥
 नाइकिलें कानीं । तुका म्हणे आलें मनीं ॥६॥
 ब्रम्हचारी फिर्याद गेला - अभंग २

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Without seeing anything, I have seen everything.**I became one with all things, and the sense of me and mine fell away.**Without taking, I have received; my hands and feet are at rest.**Without eating, I have tasted; the tongue has become the very flavor.**Without speaking, I have spoken; what was hidden has been made plain.**Says Tuka, without hearing through the ears, it all entered the mind.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Without seeing anything, I have seen it all. I became one with everything, and the sense of me and mine fell far away. Without taking, I have received; my hands and feet have come to rest. Without eating, I have tasted; the tongue itself became the flavor. Without speaking, I have spoken; what was hidden has been shown. Tuka says: without hearing it through the ears, it has all come into the mind.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is reporting a state where every sense works without its ordinary object. He sees with no thing to see, possesses with no act of taking, tastes with nothing eaten, speaks without speech, knows without hearing: each line cancels the usual outward path of the sense and finds the experience complete within. The pivot is the second line, where me and mine fall away and he becomes one with all; once the separate self drops, the senses no longer need to reach out to grasp anything. This is the language of nondual realization stated as plain fact, the whole gathered inward where there is nothing left outside to acquire.

GATHA 0247

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the corrupted garb

मराठी मूळ

काखे कडासन आड पडे । खडबड खडबडे हुसकलें ॥१॥
 दादकरा दादकरा । फजितखोरा लाज नाही ॥२॥
 अवघा जाला राम राम । कोणी कर्म आचरे ना ॥३॥
 हरिदासांच्या पडती पायां । म्हणती तयां नागवावें ॥४॥
 दोहीं ठायीं फजीत जालें । पारणें केलें अवकळा ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे नाश केला । विटंबिला वेश जिहीं ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*With a seat-cloth tucked under his arm, he stumbles and makes a commotion.**The shameless disgrace cries out, help, help! He has no dignity at all.**Everywhere it is all Ram Ram on the lips, but no one truly practices the discipline.**They fall at the feet of the devout only to strip them bare.**In both worlds they have been disgraced, and their observances have gone to ruin.**Says Tuka, they have destroyed themselves by corrupting the very garb of devotion.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

A seat-cloth tucked under his arm, he stumbles and makes a clatter. Help, help, the shameless cheat cries out; he has no dignity at all. Everywhere it is Ram Ram on the lips, but no one actually does the discipline. They fall at the feet of God's devotees only to strip them bare. In both worlds they are disgraced, and their observances have come to ruin. Tuka says: they have destroyed themselves, these who corrupted the very garb of devotion.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is attacking the counterfeit holy man, all show and noise with nothing behind it. The name of Ram is on every tongue while the actual practice is nowhere; reverence for true devotees is faked as a way to rob them. The verse names the stakes plainly: such people are disgraced in this world and the next, and their religious observances yield nothing. The closing line locates the real harm. By wearing the garb of devotion as a mask, they corrupt the garb itself and bring ruin on no one so much as themselves. The poem points at the hypocrisy, not at any single soul, asking you to weigh whether your own outward religion has any inward discipline under it.

GATHA 0248

Social Criticism

Social criticism, renouncing the wrong thing

मराठी मूळ

कुटुंबाचा केला त्याग । नाही राग जंव गेला ॥१॥
 भजन तें वोंगळवाणें । नरका जाणें चुके ना ॥२॥
 अक्षराची केली आटी । जरी पोटी संतनिंदा ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे मागें पाय । तया जाय स्थळासि ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*If one has renounced family but not renounced anger, that devotion is filthy and will not save one from hell.**If one has mastered the letters of scripture yet harbors contempt for saints within, it is all futile.**Says Tuka, such a person's steps lead backward, returning to the very place from which he tried to escape.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

He renounced his family, but the anger never went. So his worship is filthy, and the road to hell is not avoided. He drilled himself in the letters of scripture, but inside he carries contempt for the saints. Tuka says: such a person's feet go backward; he returns to the very place he tried to leave.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is exposing renunciation that drops the easy thing and keeps the deadly one. A man can leave wife and household and still carry his anger intact; with that left in place his devotion is fouled and hell is not escaped. Likewise scriptural learning is wasted if it sits over a hidden contempt for holy people. The closing image is the verdict: his steps lead backward, depositing him right where he started, because he renounced the outer ties and never touched the inner faults. The poem points at the pattern of outward sacrifice masking inward corruption, asking you to look at what you are actually willing to give up.

GATHA 0249

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the hidden poisoner

मराठी मूळ

तारतिम वरी तोंडा च पुरतें । अंतरा हें येतें अंतरीचें ॥१॥
 ऐसी काय बरी दिसे ठकाठकी । दिसतें लौकिकीं सत्या ऐसें ॥२॥
 भोजनांत द्यावें विष कालवूनि । मोहचाळवणी मारावया ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे मैदं देखों नेदी कुडें । आदर चि पुढें सोंग दावी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Everything appears in proper order and the words sound correct, but what lies within eventually rises to the surface.

How can such trickery truly pass for the real thing, appearing in the world as if it were truth?

It is like mixing poison into a fine meal, using sweet enticement to harm.

Says Tuka, the deceiver never lets his crookedness show; he puts forward only the mask of welcome and respect.

IN PLAIN WORDS

On the surface everything is in order and the words sound right; but what is inside comes up to the top in the end. How can such trickery really pass for the true thing, looking in the world as if it were truth? It is poison stirred into a good meal, sweet enticement used to kill. Tuka says: the cheat never lets his crookedness show; he puts only the mask of welcome and respect out in front.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is describing the deceiver whose outside is flawless and whose inside is rotten. The order and the correct words are a surface; given time, what is truly within rises and shows itself. He names the deception sharply: it is poison mixed into a fine meal, sweetness used as the very means of harm, so the danger is greater for being pleasant. The closing line shows the method. The cheat keeps the crookedness perfectly hidden and leads with courtesy and respect. The poem points at the pattern of concealed ill will behind a kind face, urging you to trust what eventually surfaces over what is first served up.

GATHA 0250

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, knowledge without compassion

मराठी मूळ

ब्रम्हनिष्ठ काडी । जरी जीवानांवे मोडी ॥१॥
 तया घडली गुरुहत्या । गेला उपदेश तो मिथ्या ॥२॥
 सांगितले कानीं । रूप आपुले वाखाणी ॥३॥
 भूतांच्या मत्सरें । ब्रम्हज्ञान नेले चोरें ॥४॥
 शिकल्या सांगे गोष्टी । भेद क्रोध वाहे पोटी ॥५॥
 निंदा स्तुति स्तवनीं । तुका म्हणे वेंची वाणी ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

If one established in Brahman breaks even a twig of a living being's life, he has committed the sin of killing his own guru, and all the teachings he received are rendered false.

He was told in initiation to behold his own true Self, yet he spends his time praising his own image.

Through envy toward other beings, his knowledge of Brahman has been stolen by a thief.

He tells others the lessons he has memorized while harboring division and anger in his belly.

Says Tuka, he wastes his speech in both slander and flattery.

IN PLAIN WORDS

If one settled in Brahman snaps even a twig of a living thing's life, he has done the sin of killing his own guru, and the teaching he received is made false. He was told at initiation to behold his own Self; instead he spends his time praising his own image. Through envy of other creatures, his knowledge of Brahman is stolen away by a thief. He recites the lessons he memorized while carrying division and anger in his belly. Tuka says: he wastes his speech on slander and on flattery alike.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram measures so-called spiritual knowledge against the way it treats living beings. To call oneself established in Brahman and yet harm even a twig of life betrays the teaching so deeply that he equates it with killing the guru and voiding the whole instruction. The man was told to see the one Self in all; instead he worships his own image, and his envy of other creatures lets the real knowledge be quietly robbed from him. He repeats memorized doctrine while harboring division and anger, and spends his tongue on slander and flattery by turns. The poem points at the gap between recited Vedanta and an unchanged, divided heart, asking you to test knowledge by its conduct.

GATHA 0251

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, blessed to be born a servant

मराठी मूळ

इहलोकींचा हा देहे । देव इच्छिताती पाहें ॥ १ ॥
 धन्य आम्ही जन्मा आलों । दास विठोबाचे जालों ॥ २ ॥
 तुका म्हणे पावठणी । करुं स्वर्गाची निशाणी ॥ ३ ॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Even the gods look upon this human body with longing.

How blessed we are to have been born and become servants of Vitthal.

Says Tuka, let us make this life a stepping stone and plant the flag upon heaven itself.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Even the gods look on this human body with longing. How blessed we are to have been born and to have become servants of Vithoba. Tuka says: we will make this life a stepping stone, and plant our flag on heaven itself.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is praising the rare gift of the human birth as the very thing the gods themselves envy, because only in it can one love and serve God. He counts himself blessed not for power or pleasure but for becoming a servant of Vithoba; the servitude is the fortune. The closing line turns the body into a means rather than an end: this life is a stepping stone, and from it he means to plant his flag even over heaven. The poem names the stakes of a human life and points it wholly toward devotion.

GATHA 0252

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the story of Krishna above all learning

मराठी मूळ

पंडित वाचक जरी जाला पुरता । तरी कृष्णकथा ऐके भावें ॥१॥
 क्षीर तुपा साकरे जालिया भेटी । तैसी पडे मिठी गोडपणें ॥२॥
 जाणोनियां लाभ घेई हा पदरीं । गोड गोडावरी सेवीं बापा ॥३॥
 जाणिवेचें मूळ उपडोनी खोड । जरी तुज चाड आहे तुझी ॥४॥
 नाना परिमळद्रव्य उपचार । अंगी उटी सारचंदनाची ॥५॥
 जेविलियाविण शून्य ते शृंगार । तैसी गोडी हरिकथेविण ॥६॥
 ज्याकारणें वेदश्रुति ही पुराणें । तें चि विडलनाणें तिष्ठे कथे ॥७॥
 तुका म्हणे येर दगडाचीं पेंवें । खळखळ आवघें मूळ तेथें ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Even if a scholar has mastered all learning, he should listen to the stories of Krishna with devotion.

When milk, ghee, and sugar meet together, they embrace in a sweetness that is beyond description.

Knowing this profit, take it into your lap; savor the sweet upon the sweet, dear one.

Uproot the very sprout of intellectual pride if you truly care about your own liberation.

All the fragrant substances and fine remedies, the sandalwood paste applied upon the body, are nothing; without having eaten, all adornment is hollow, and so is life without the taste of Hari's story.

The Vedas, the scriptures, and the Puranas all exist for this alone: that same Vitthal stands present like true coin in the gathering of devotion.

Says Tuka, everything else is but heaps of stone; all the turmoil of the world has its root right there.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Even if a scholar has finished all his learning, let him still listen to the stories of Krishna with love. When milk and ghee and sugar meet, they fold together in a sweetness beyond telling. Knowing this gain, take it into your lap; taste sweet upon sweet, dear one. Uproot the very sprout of cleverness, root and stem, if you truly care for your own freedom. All the fragrant powders, the fine remedies, the sandalwood paste on the body are nothing. Without having eaten, all the adornment is empty; and so is life without the taste of Hari's story. The Vedas, the scriptures, the Puranas all exist for this one thing: that same Vitthal stands present, like true coin, in the telling of the story. Tuka says: everything else is heaps of stone, and all the world's noise has its root right there.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram sets loving attention to Krishna's story above the highest scholarship. Even the finished scholar should still listen with devotion, for the story mixed with love is like milk, ghee, and sugar coming together into an indescribable sweetness. The hard demand is the third stanza: uproot intellectual pride at the root if you actually want liberation, because cleverness is what blocks the taste. He grants that ornament and fragrance and learning have their place, then strips it away. Without the meal itself the adornment is hollow, and a life without Hari's

story is exactly that. He gives scripture its true purpose: the Vedas and Puranas all point to this, where Vitthal himself stands present like genuine coin in the gathering. Everything outside that, he says, is only heaps of stone, and the world's whole clamor traces back to missing this one center.

GATHA 0253

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the cruel idol-monger

मराठी मूळ

आणिकांच्या कापिती माना । निष्ठपणा पार नाही ॥१॥
 करिती बेटे उसणवारी । यमपुरी भोगावया ॥२॥
 सेंदराचें दैवत केलें । नवस बोले तयासि ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे नाचति पोरें । खोडितां येरें अंग दुखे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

They sever the heads of others and know no limit to their cruelty.

These wretches borrow sins on credit only to suffer in the city of Yama.

They have made a god of a smear of vermilion and make vows to it.

Says Tuka, while the children dance in foolish worship, they cry out in pain when someone scratches them.

IN PLAIN WORDS

They cut off the heads of others, and there is no end to their hardness. These wretches borrow sins on credit, only to pay for it in the city of Yama. They take a smear of vermilion and make a god of it, and they speak their vows to that. Tuka says: the children dance in their foolish worship, but when someone scratches the idol, it is their own bodies that ache.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is attacking a hollow, cruel kind of religion, not the worshipers' helplessness. He sees people who are merciless toward others while running up a debt of sin they imagine they can defer, as if the reckoning in Yama's realm were on credit. He mocks the manufactured god: a smudge of vermilion turned into a deity, vowed to as if it could deliver. The closing image cuts deepest: the worshipers behave like children playing at devotion, so identified with their lump of an idol that an injury to it is felt as a hurt in their own flesh. The point is the emptiness of worship aimed at a thing of one's own making.

GATHA 0254

Sacred Stories

Mythology, the past does not stain

मराठी मूळ

गंधर्व अग्नि सोम भोगिती कुमारी । कोठें चराचरीं त्याग केला ॥१॥
 गायत्री स्वमुखें भक्षितसे मळ । मिळाल्या वाहाळ गंगाओघ ॥२॥
 कागाचिये विष्टें जन्म पिंपळासि । पांडवकुळासि पाहातां दोष ॥३॥
 शकुंतळा सूत कर्ण शृंगी व्यास । यांच्या नामें नाश पातकांसि ॥४॥
 गणिका अजामेळ कुब्जा तो विदुर । पाहातां विचार पिंगळेचा ॥५॥
 वाल्हा विश्वामित्र वसिष्ठ नारद । यांचे पूर्व शुद्ध काय आहे ॥६॥
 न व्हावी तीं जालीं कर्म नरनारी । अनुतापें हरी स्मरतां मुक्त ॥७॥
 तुका म्हणे पूर्व नाठवी श्रीहरी । मूळ जो उच्चारि नरक त्यासि ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Gandharvas, Agni, and Soma all partake of the virgin bride; where in all creation was desire ever renounced?

Gayatri herself consumes impurities from her own mouth, and the streams that join the Ganga become the Ganga.

The holy peepal tree was born from a crow's droppings, and even the Pandava lineage is not without blemish.

Shakuntala, Suta, Karna, Shringi, and Vyasa: their very names destroy all sins.

Ganika, Ajamila, Kubja, Vidura, and the courtesan Pingala all show this truth upon reflection.

Valmiki the robber, Vishwamitra, Vasishtha, and Narada: their pasts were far from pure.

Deeds done by men and women that should never have been done are wiped away when, in remorse, one remembers Hari.

Says Tuka, Shri Hari does not even recall the past; whoever digs up those old roots falls into hell.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Gandharvas, Agni, and Soma all enjoy the virgin bride; where in all creation has desire been renounced? Gayatri eats impurities with her own mouth, and the streams that fall into the Ganga become the Ganga. The peepal tree is born from a crow's droppings, and even the Pandava line, looked at closely, carries blemish. Shakuntala, Suta, Karna, Shringi, Vyasa: their very names burn away sins. The courtesan, Ajamila, Kubja, Vidura, and Pingala the harlot, consider them and see. Valmiki the robber, Vishwamitra, Vasishtha, Narada: what pure past did any of them have? Men and women have done deeds that should never have been done, and remembering Hari in remorse, they are set free. Tuka says: Shri Hari does not call the past to mind; the one who digs up the old roots, hell is for him.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is overturning the idea that a tainted past disqualifies anyone from grace. He stacks up case after case from the old stories, gods, sages, rivers, sacred trees, where the origin or conduct was impure, yet the holiness stands. The pivot is mercy: deeds that should never have been done are wiped clean when one turns back in

genuine remorse and remembers Hari. He goes further than forgiveness, saying God does not even keep the memory of the past. The sting falls on the one who insists on excavating those old roots; that digging, not the old sin, is what earns hell.

GATHA 0255

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the gift wasted on the unfit

मराठी मूळ

सोनियाचें ताट क्षीरीनें भरिलें । भक्षावया दिलें श्वाना लागीं ॥१॥
 मुक्ताफळहार खरासि घातला । कस्तुरी सुकराला चोजविली ॥२॥
 वेदपरायण बधिरा सांगे ज्ञान । तयाची ते खुण काय जाणे ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे ज्याचें तो चि एक जाणे । भक्तीचें महिमान साधु जाणे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A golden plate filled with milk-rice was set before a dog to eat.

A pearl necklace was put upon a donkey, and musk was offered to a pig.

One may recite the Vedas to a deaf man, but how will he ever grasp their meaning?

Says Tuka, the worth of a thing is known only by the one to whom it belongs. Only the saintly know the true greatness of devotion.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A golden plate is filled with milk-rice and set down for a dog to eat. A pearl necklace is hung on a donkey, and musk is offered to a pig. You may recite the Vedas to a deaf man, but how will he grasp what they mean? Tuka says: only the one to whom a thing belongs truly knows its worth. Only the saintly know the greatness of devotion.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is saying that the value of a precious thing depends on the one who receives it. Milk-rice on a golden plate, a pearl necklace, musk, the Vedas: each is beyond price, yet wasted on a dog, a donkey, a pig, a deaf man, who cannot register what they hold. He is not sneering at people so much as naming a hard fact of fitness: devotion is just such a treasure, and its glory is visible only to those who have the heart to know it. The worth is real either way; what changes is whether the receiver can recognize it.

GATHA 0256

Worldly Life

Worldly life, the world cannot be pleased

मराठी मूळ

ऐसा हा लौकिक कदा राखवेना । पतितपावना देवराया ॥१॥
 संसार करितां म्हणती हा दोषी । टाकितां आळसी पोटपोसा ॥२॥
 आचार करितां म्हणती हा पसारा । न करितां नरा निंदिताती ॥३॥
 संतसंग करितां म्हणती हा उपदेशी । येरा अभाग्यासि ज्ञान नाहीं ॥४॥
 धन नाहीं त्यासि ठायींचा करंटा । समर्थासि ताठा लाविताती ॥५॥
 भेटिसि न वजातां म्हणती हा निष्ठ । येतां जातां घर बुडविलें ॥६॥
 लग्न करूं जातां म्हणती हा मातला । न करितां जाला नपुंसक ॥७॥
 निपुत्रिका म्हणती पहा हो चांडाळ । पातकाचें मूळ पोरवडा ॥८॥
 लोक जैसा लोक धरितां धरवे ना । अभक्ता जिरे ना संतसंग ॥९॥
 तुका म्हणे आतां ऐकावें वचन । त्यजुनियां जन भक्ति करा ॥१०॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*It is impossible to satisfy the world's opinion, O Lord, Redeemer of the fallen.**If you engage in worldly life, they call you sinful; if you renounce, they call you a lazy parasite.**If you follow rituals, they say it is mere show; if you do not, they condemn you.**If you keep the company of saints, they call you a preacher; if you do not, they say you lack wisdom.**If you have no wealth, you are a born wretch; if you are prosperous, they mock your pride.**If you do not visit others, they call you arrogant; if you do, they say you are a pest who ruins homes.**If you marry, they say you have gone wild; if you do not, they call you impotent.**If you have no children, they call you accursed; if you have many, they call them a burden of sin.**The ways of the world can never be satisfied, and the company of saints cannot be digested by the faithless.**Says Tuka, listen now to this counsel: abandon the world's opinion and simply practice devotion.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

This worldly opinion can never be kept satisfied, O Redeemer of the fallen, my Lord. Live a household life and they call you a sinner; give it up and they call you a lazy belly-filler. Keep the rituals and they say it is all show; drop them and they condemn you. Keep the company of saints and they call you a preacher; stay away and they say you have no wisdom. Have no wealth and you are a born wretch; be rich and they mock your pride. Stay away from people and they call you cold; come and go and they say you are ruining homes. Marry and they say you have gone wild; do not, and they call you impotent. Have no children and they call you accursed; have many and they call them a brood of sin. The world's way can never be pinned down, and the company of saints cannot be stomached by the faithless. Tuka says: now hear this counsel. Leave the world's opinion behind and simply do devotion.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram lays out the trap of living for other people's verdict: whatever you do, the opposite is held against you. He runs through the whole list, household and renunciation, ritual and no ritual, poverty and wealth, marriage and celibacy, children and none, to show there is no posture that escapes blame. The lesson is not bitterness but release: since the world can never be satisfied, trying to satisfy it is wasted life. He notes too that those without faith simply cannot digest the company of saints, so their judgment is no measure at all. The counsel that lands is plain: stop managing opinion, and put that energy into devotion.

GATHA 0257

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, guard dharma, no false renunciation

मराठी मूळ

धर्म रक्षावया साठी । करणें आटी आम्हांसि ॥१॥
 न बाणतां स्थिति अंगी । कर्म त्यागी लंड तो ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे अधम त्यासी । भक्ति दूषी हरीची ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

We must make every effort to protect righteousness.

One who abandons prescribed duties before attaining the state of inner realization is merely a fraud.

Says Tuka, the worst of all is the one who brings dishonor to the devotion of Hari.

IN PLAIN WORDS

For the sake of guarding dharma, we must take the trouble and make the effort. One who throws off his duties before that settled state is fixed in him is only a fraud. Tuka says: the lowest of all is the one who brings dishonor to the devotion of Hari.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram defends active duty against a counterfeit version of renunciation. Protecting dharma takes real effort, and he accepts that labor as ours to do. He warns against the man who drops his prescribed duties before inner realization has actually taken root in him; such early abandonment is not freedom but fraud, a posture without the substance behind it. The sharpest condemnation is saved for the one who disgraces the devotion of Hari, whom he calls the lowest of all. The pattern under examination is using high spiritual language to excuse skipping the work.

GATHA 0258

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the devotee greater than God

मराठी मूळ

चवदा भुवनें जयाचिये पोटी । तो चि आम्हीं कंठीं साठविला ॥१॥
 काय एक उणें आमुचिये घरीं । वोळगती द्वारीं रिद्धिसिद्धी ॥२॥
 असुर जयानें घातले तोडरीं । तो आम्हांसि जोडी कर दोन्ही ॥३॥
 रूप नाही रेखा जयासि आकार । आम्हीं तो साकार भक्तीं केला ॥४॥
 अनंत ब्रम्हांडें जयाचिये अंगीं । समान तो मुंगी आम्हासाठीं ॥५॥
 रिद्धिसिद्धी सुखें हाणितल्या लाता । तेथें या प्राकृता कोण मानी ॥६॥
 तुका म्हणे आम्ही देवाहूनि बळी । जालों हे निराळी ठेवुनि आशा ॥७॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He who contains the fourteen worlds within his belly, that very one we have enshrined in our hearts.

What could possibly be lacking in our home? Wealth and miraculous powers attend our door.

He who shackled demons in anklets now joins his own two palms before us.

He who has no form, no outline, no shape, we have made manifest through devotion.

He in whose body rest countless universes becomes as small as an ant for our sake.

Wealth and supernatural powers have been kicked away with joy; who then would honor these worldly trifles?

Says Tuka, we have become mightier than God himself by setting aside all desire.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He who holds the fourteen worlds inside his belly, that very one we have stored in our throat. What is lacking in our home? Wealth and miraculous powers wait at our door. He who shackled demons in anklets now folds both his palms before us. He who has no form, no line, no shape, we have made him take form through devotion. He in whose body countless universes rest becomes small as an ant for our sake. Wealth and powers we have kicked away in joy; who here would honor such common trifles? Tuka says: we have become mightier than God himself, by setting our every desire aside.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram makes the startling claim that the devotee becomes greater than God. The logic is love's reversal: the One who contains all worlds is held in the devotee's throat, the formless is given a form by devotion, the infinite shrinks to ant-size out of love for His own. Because the devotee wants nothing, not wealth, not the siddhis that line up at the door, he has nothing left to be ruled by, and so he stands above even the Lord. The boast is not arrogance but the math of surrender: the one who has emptied himself of desire holds the only real power. Desirelessness, not might, is what makes him mightier than God.

GATHA 0259

True Worship

True worship, the image is not the god

मराठी मूळ

केला मातीचा पशुपति । परि मातीसि काय म्हणती । शिवपूजा शिवासी पावे । माती मातीमाजी सामावे ॥१॥
 तैसे पूजिती आम्हां संत । पूजा घेतो भगवंत । आम्ही किंकर संतांचे दास । संतपदवी नको आम्हांस ॥२॥
 केला पाषाणाचा विष्णु । परी पाषाण नव्हे विष्णु । विष्णुपूजा विष्णुसि अर्पे । पाषाण राहे पाषाणरूपे ॥३॥
 केली कांशाची जगदंबा । परि कांसें नव्हे अंबा । पूजा अंबेची अंबेला घेणें । कांसें राहे कांसेंपणें ॥४॥
 ब्रम्हानंद पूर्णामाजी । तुका म्हणे केली कांजी । ज्याची पूजा त्याणें चि घेणें । आम्ही पाषाणरूप राहणें ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

They make Shiva's image out of clay, but can clay be called Shiva? The worship of Shiva reaches Shiva, while the clay returns to clay.

In the same way, when saints are worshipped, it is God who receives that worship. We are mere servants and attendants of the saints; we do not seek the status of sainthood for ourselves.

They make Vishnu's image out of stone, but the stone is not Vishnu. The worship of Vishnu reaches Vishnu, and the stone remains as stone.

They make the image of the Goddess from bronze, but bronze is not the Goddess. The worship of the Goddess reaches the Goddess, and bronze remains as bronze.

Says Tuka, in the fullness of Brahman's bliss, all this is like diluted gruel. The worship belongs to the one who is worshipped; we remain as we are, like stone.

IN PLAIN WORDS

They make Shiva from clay, but who calls the clay Shiva? The worship of Shiva reaches Shiva; the clay sinks back into clay. In the same way the saints are worshipped, and it is God who receives that worship. We are servants, the slaves of the saints; we do not want the rank of sainthood for ourselves. They make Vishnu from stone, but the stone is not Vishnu. The worship of Vishnu reaches Vishnu; the stone stays as stone. They make the Goddess Jagadamba from bronze, but the bronze is not the Goddess. The worship of the Goddess reaches the Goddess; the bronze stays as bronze. Tuka says: in the fullness of Brahman's bliss, all of this is thin gruel. The worship belongs to the one worshipped; we stay as we are, like stone.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram separates the image from the one it points to. Clay, stone, and bronze are only the form a worshiper happens to use; the worship itself travels through to Shiva, Vishnu, or the Goddess, while the material stays exactly what it was. He turns this on himself and his fellow saints: when people honor them, it is God who actually receives it, so he refuses any claim to sainthood and keeps the place of a servant. Measured against the fullness of Brahman, all these honors are watered-down gruel, not the real thing. The humility is precise: he chooses to remain inert as stone and let the worship pass on to the one it truly belongs to.

GATHA 0260

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the company of Vitthal's people

मराठी मूळ

ते माझे सोयरे सज्जन सांगाती । पाय आठविती विठोबाचे ॥१॥
 येरा मानी विधि पाळणापुरतें । देवाचीं तीं भूतें म्हणोनियां ॥२॥
 सर्वभावे जालों वैष्णवांचा दास । करीन त्यांच्या आस उच्छिष्टाची ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे जैसे मानती हरिदास । तैशी नाहीं आस आणिकांची ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those are my true kin, my noble companions, who remember the feet of Vitthal.

As for the others, I regard them only as much as one must; they are God's creatures, after all.

With my whole being, I have become a servant of the Vaishnavas; I long even for their leftovers.

Says Tuka, I hold no desire for anyone else the way I cherish the devotees of Hari.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Those are my true kin, my noble companions, who keep remembering the feet of Vithoba. The rest I regard only as far as duty asks, since they too are God's creatures. With my whole heart I have become a servant of the Vaishnavas; I long even for the food they leave behind. Tuka says: I hold no desire for anyone else the way I cherish the servants of Hari.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram redraws kinship around devotion rather than blood. The people who remember Vithoba's feet are his real family and friends; everyone else he treats with the bare courtesy duty requires, honoring them only as fellow creatures of God. His longing runs the other way entirely, toward the Vaishnavas, to whom he gives himself so completely that he craves even their leftovers as a kind of grace. The claim is that no ordinary attachment can match the love he holds for the servants of Hari. The verse names where his heart actually lives.

GATHA 0261

The Moral Ideal

Moral ideal, compassion and the protection of dharma

मराठी मूळ

दया तिचें नांव भूतांचें पाळण । अणीक निर्दळण कंटकांचें ॥१॥
 पाप त्याचें नांव न विचारितां नीत । भलतें चि उन्मत्त करी सदा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे धर्म रक्षावया साठीं । देवास ही आटी जन्म घेणें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Compassion means the nurturing of all beings and the destruction of those who cause harm.

Sin is acting without considering what is right, behaving recklessly at all times.

Says Tuka, to protect righteousness, even God must take the trouble of being born.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Compassion, that is its name: the nurturing of all beings, and along with it the cutting down of those who do harm. Sin, that is its name: acting without ever asking what is right, behaving wildly all the time. Tuka says: to guard dharma, even God takes the trouble to be born.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram defines compassion as having two edges, not one. True mercy nurtures every living being, and the same mercy uproots those who prey on the helpless; sparing the harmful would not be kindness but neglect of the vulnerable. He sets sin opposite this: living recklessly, never pausing to ask what is right. To make the stakes clear he points to God's own descents, saying that even the Lord takes on birth for the sake of guarding dharma. The pattern he calls out is mistaking softness toward cruelty for compassion.

GATHA 0262

Longing and Separation

Longing, a mother's love

मराठी मूळ

करावें गोमटें । बाळा माते तें उमटे ॥१॥
 आपुलिया जीवाहूनी । असे वाल्हे तें जननी ॥२॥
 वियोग तें तिस । त्याच्या उपचारें तें विष ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे पायें । डोळा सुखावे ज्या न्यायें ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A mother wishes to do good for her child, and the child reflects that goodness back.

She holds the child dearer than her own life.

Separation from the child is poison to her, even if it comes in the guise of comfort and care.

Says Tuka, just as the foot delights the eye that beholds it, so is this principle of love.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A mother wishes good for her child, and that good rises up again in the child. She holds it dearer than her own life. Separation from it is poison to her, even when it comes dressed as care and comfort. Tuka says: just as the foot gives delight to the eye that looks on it, so it is with this love.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram uses a mother's love to describe how God and the devotee hold each other. The mother wills only good for her child, and that good comes back reflected; she values the child above her own life, so that any separation is poison even if it wears the mask of comfort. His closing image, the eye delighting in the foot, points to a love that

does not climb or rank, in which the lowest part gives joy to the highest. The verse is naming the quality of true devotional love: protective, self-forgetting, and pained by any distance. It reads as a longing for that same closeness with the Lord.

GATHA 0263

Longing and Separation

Longing, the soul torn from God

मराठी मूळ

कन्या सासुन्यासि जाये । मागें परतोनी पाहे ॥१॥
 तैसें जालें माझ्या जिवा । केव्हां भेटसी केशवा ॥२॥
 चुकलिया माये । बाळ हुरु हुरु पाहे ॥२॥
 जीवना वेगळी मासोळी । तुका म्हणे तळमळी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When the daughter leaves for her husband's home, she keeps turning back to look.

My soul feels just the same: when will you meet me again, Keshava?

Like a child separated from its mother, who looks around in every direction with anxious eyes.

Says Tuka, like a fish taken out of water, I writhe in longing.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A daughter goes off to her husband's home, and keeps turning back to look. My soul has become just like that: when will you meet me again, Keshava? Like a child who has lost its mother, looking this way and that with frightened eyes. Tuka says: like a fish lifted out of the water, I writhe and burn.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram pours the pain of separation from God into three plain images. The bride leaving her childhood home keeps glancing back, unable to let go; the lost child searches every direction in fear; the fish out of water thrashes and cannot breathe. Each picture sharpens the same ache, his soul cut off from Keshava and unable to rest until they meet again. The cry, when will you meet me, is the heart of the verse. It is the language of viraha, the longing of one who knows where life is and cannot reach it.

GATHA 0264

Social Criticism

Social criticism, a corrupt age

मराठी मूळ

हातीं होन दावी बेना । करिती लेंकीच्या धारणा ॥१॥
 ऐसे धर्म जाले कळीं । पुण्य रंक पाप बळी ॥२॥
 सांडिले आचार । द्विज चाहाड जाले चोर ॥३॥
 टिळे लपविती पातडीं । लेती विजारा कातडीं ॥४॥
 बैसोनियां तक्तां । अन्नविण पिडिती लोकां ॥५॥
 मुदबख लिहिणें । तेलतुपावरी जिणें ॥६॥
 नीचाचे चाकर । चुकलिया खाती मार ॥७॥
 राजा प्रजा पीडी । क्षेत्री दुश्चितासी तोडी ॥८॥
 वैश्यशूद्रादिक । हे तों सहज नीच लोक ॥९॥
 अवघे बाह्य रंग । आंत हिरवें वरी सोंग ॥१०॥
 तुका म्हणे देवा । काय निद्रा केली धांवा ॥११॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*They hold gold coins in hand and bargain for a bride, making settlements over the daughter's future.
 Such are the ways of this dark age, where merit is impoverished and sin grows strong.
 The twice-born have abandoned their rituals and become informers and thieves.
 They hide their sacred marks in folds of cloth and wear leather trousers.
 Sitting upon their thrones, they torment the people without offering food.
 They live off writing decrees, skimming oil and ghee.
 They serve the lowly and, if they stumble, are beaten for it.
 The king oppresses his subjects, and the warrior cuts down the uncertain.
 As for the merchants, laborers, and all the rest, what more need be said of them?
 All is outward decoration; inside it is raw, with only a mask on top.
 Says Tuka, O God, have you fallen asleep? Wake up and come to our rescue.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

They flash gold coins in hand and bargain over the daughter, setting a price on her. Such is the dharma of this dark age: merit goes begging, sin grows strong. The twice-born have thrown off their conduct and become informers and thieves. They hide their sacred marks in the folds of their clothes and wear leather trousers. Seated on their thrones, they torment the people and keep food from them. They live by writing out decrees, getting by on skimmed oil and ghee. They serve the base, and when they slip they are beaten for it. The king oppresses his subjects; the warrior cuts down the defenseless. As for the merchants, the laborers, and the rest, they are simply low by nature. It is all outward color: raw inside, a costume on top. Tuka says: O God, have you gone to sleep? Come running.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram surveys a society he sees rotting in the Kali age, where worth is poor and wickedness is powerful. He moves down the ranks: brahmins who sell daughters and turn informer, hiding their sacred marks while taking on alien dress; officials who tax and starve the people from their seats of power; kings who crush their subjects and warriors who strike the helpless. His verdict is that the whole order has become surface, bright paint over something raw, a mask with nothing behind it. The closing line turns the criticism into a prayer, calling on a God who seems asleep to wake and come. The aim is to hold up the pattern of hollow, self-serving authority, not any single person.

GATHA 0265

Social Criticism

Social criticism, selling a daughter

मराठी मूळ

साळंकृत कन्यादान । करितां पृथ्वीसमान ॥१॥
 परि तें न कळे या मूढा । येइल कळों भोग पुढां ॥२॥
 आचरतां कर्म । भरे पोट राहे धर्म ॥३॥
 सत्या देव साहे । ऐसें करुनियां पाहें ॥४॥
 अन्न मान धन । हें तों प्रारब्धा आधीन ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे सोस । दुःख आतां पुढें नास ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Giving away a well-adorned daughter in marriage is considered equal to giving away the earth itself.

But this does not dawn upon the fool; he will come to understand only when he faces the consequences ahead.

If one performs one's duties properly, the belly is filled and righteousness is upheld.

God supports the truthful; put this to the test and see.

Food, honor, and wealth are all subject to destiny.

Says Tuka, after toil comes sorrow, and in the end, ruin.

IN PLAIN WORDS

To give away a daughter, well adorned, in marriage is as great a gift as giving away the whole earth. But the fool does not see this. He will see it later, when the consequences come. Do your duty rightly; the belly is filled and dharma stands. God upholds the truthful. Try it, and see for yourself. Food, honor, wealth: these are all in the hands of destiny. Tuka says: this greed brings sorrow now, and ruin ahead.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is contrasting two ways of giving a daughter in marriage. To give her freely and well prepared is the highest gift, on a par with giving away the earth itself; to sell her for gain is the act of a fool who cannot yet see what he is doing. He insists that an honest livelihood already feeds the belly and keeps dharma intact, and that God himself stands behind the truthful, a thing one can test. Food, honor, and wealth come by destiny anyway, so grasping for them this way is needless. The warning lands at the end: the greed looks like profit now, but its end is sorrow and ruin.

GATHA 0266

Worldly Metaphors

Satire, the lavish wedding as hell

मराठी मूळ

दिवट्या वाद्यें लावुनि खाणें । करुनि मंडण दिली हातीं ॥१॥
 नवरा नेई नवरी घरा । पूजन वरा पाद्याचें ॥२॥
 गौरविली विहीण व्याही । घडिलें कांहीं ठेवूं नका ॥३॥
 करुं द्यावें न्हावें वरें । ठायीचें कां रे न कळे चि ॥४॥
 वन्हाडियांचे लागे पाठीं । जैसी उटिका तेलीं ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे जोडिला थुंका । पुढें नरका सामग्री ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

With torches and music and a feast laid out, they prepare the bride in all her finery and place her hand in the groom's.

The groom takes the bride home, and the priest receives his ritual offering.

The bride's family and the groom's family are honored; do not hold back anything that has been pledged.

Let the couple bathe and prepare properly; can they not understand what is fitting?

The wedding guests follow behind, squeezed like oil from sesame.

Says Tuka, all this accumulated show is merely spit, preparation for hell.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Torches and music, a feast laid out, the bride dressed in all her finery, her hand placed in the groom's. The groom takes the bride to his house; the priest is paid his offering. The two families are honored; hold back nothing that was pledged. Let the couple be bathed and made ready. Can they not see what is fitting? The wedding guests trail behind, pressed like oil squeezed from sesame. Tuka says: all this heaped-up display is only spit. It is provisions for hell.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram walks through a grand wedding step by step, the torches, the music, the feast, the dressed bride, the paid priest, the honored families, the trailing guests, and lets the show build to its full size. He is not praising any of it. The squeezed guests and the long list of obligations expose how much vanity and expense are demanded of everyone. The verdict cuts through the whole spectacle: all this accumulated splendor amounts to no more than spit, and far from earning merit it is provisions a person packs for hell. The point is not the ceremony itself but the hollow pride and waste that have taken it over.

GATHA 0267

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the daughter-seller

मराठी मूळ

ब्रम्हहत्या मारिल्या गाई । आणीक काई पाप केलें ॥१॥
 ऐका जेणें विकिली कन्या । पवाडे त्या सुन्याचे ॥२॥
 नरमांस खादली भाडी । हाका मारी म्हणोनि ॥३॥
 अवघें पाप केलें तेणें । जेणें सोनें अभिळाषिलें ॥४॥
 उच्चारितां मज तें पाप । जिद्धे कांप सुटतसे ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे कोरान्न रांड । बेटा भांड मागे ना कां ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Even if one has killed a Brahmin or slaughtered cows, even if one has committed every other sin, listen now to the infamy of the one who has sold his daughter for gold.

He has fed on human flesh, which is why he is called a demon.

All sin has been committed by the one who coveted gold.

Says Tuka, merely uttering this sin makes my tongue tremble. The wretch and the shameless rogue: why does he not simply beg for dry bread instead?

IN PLAIN WORDS

Killing a Brahmin, slaughtering cows, every other sin there is: listen now to the disgrace of the man who sold his daughter for gold. He has eaten human flesh; that is why he is called a demon. He who coveted the gold has committed every sin at once. Even to say this sin aloud sets my tongue trembling. Tuka says: you wretch, you shameless rogue, why not just beg for dry bread instead?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram sets the worst sins he can name, killing a Brahmin, slaughtering cows, against the act of selling one's own daughter, and says the seller's infamy outweighs them all. Calling him a flesh-eater and a demon is moral horror, not literal report: a father who treats his child as goods has fed on his own kin. The trembling tongue shows how deeply the act revolts him. The closing taunt points at the real failure: poverty was no excuse, since honest begging for dry bread was always open to him. The contempt is aimed at the pattern of treating a person as merchandise, a warning to examine where one's own greed would lead.

GATHA 0268

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the accomplice

मराठी मूळ

याचा कोणी करी पक्ष । तो ही त्याशी समतुल्य ॥१॥
 फुकासाठी पावे दुःखाचा विभाग । पूर्वजांसि लाग निरयदंडीं ॥धु.॥
 ऐके राजा न करी दंड । जरि या लंड दुष्टासि ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे त्याचें अन्न । मद्यपाना समान ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Whoever takes the side of such a person is equal to him in guilt.**For nothing, he earns a share of suffering, and his ancestors are cast into the torments of hell.**If the king hears of this and does not punish such a wicked scoundrel, then even the king's food is as impure as liquor.**Says Tuka, associating with such evil makes one equally corrupt.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Whoever takes this man's side is just as guilty as he is. For nothing, he earns his share of the suffering, and his ancestors are dragged into the torments of hell. Listen: if the king hears of it and does not punish such a vile scoundrel, then even the king's food is as foul as liquor. Tuka says: to keep company with such evil is to become just as corrupt.

WHAT IT MEANS

Following the rebuke of the daughter-seller, Tukaram turns to everyone around him. To defend such a man is to share his guilt fully and to gain nothing but a portion of his suffering, dragging even one's forebears down. He then raises the stakes to those in power: a king who learns of the wrong and refuses to punish it is himself defiled, his very food made impure. The closing line states the principle plainly: corruption spreads by association, so silence and shelter are not neutral. The poem points the listener toward self-examination about whom they enable and excuse.

GATHA 0269

Autobiography

Autobiography, the singer with no tricks

मराठी मूळ

कपट कांहीं एक । नेणें भुलवायाचें लोक ॥१॥
 तुमचें करितों कीर्तन । गातों उत्तम ते गुण ॥२॥
 दाऊं नेणें जडीबुटी । चमत्कार उठाउठी ॥३॥
 नाहीं शिष्यशाखा । सांगों अयाचित लोकां ॥४॥
 नव्हे मठपति । नाहीं चाहुरांची वृत्ति ॥५॥
 नाहीं देवार्चन । असे मांडिलें दुकान ॥६॥
 नाहीं वेताळ प्रसन्न । कांहीं सांगों खाण खुण ॥७॥
 नव्हे पुराणिक । करणें सांगणें आणीक ॥८॥
 नेणें वाद घटा पटा । करितां पंडित करंटा ॥९॥
 नाहीं जाळीत भणदीं । उदो म्हणोनि आनंदी ॥१०॥
 नाहीं हालवीत माळा । भोंवतें मेळवुनि गबाळा ॥११॥
 आगमीचें कुडें नेणें । स्तंभन मोहन उच्चाटणें ॥१२॥
 नव्हे यांच्या ऐसा । तुका निरयवासी पिसा ॥१३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I know no deceit or trickery to delude people. I simply perform your kirtan and sing your excellent qualities.

I cannot display herbs or roots or perform sudden miracles.

I have no lineage of disciples; I speak freely to all who come.

I am not the head of any monastery, nor do I live on the offerings of followers.

I have not set up a shop of worship or a deity to collect revenue.

I have no spirit or demon at my command to reveal secrets.

I am not a professional reciter who says one thing and does another.

I do not know the pot-and-cloth arguments that make a pedantic scholar into a pauper.

I do not go about beating drums with crowds shouting praises.

I do not turn a rosary surrounded by a throng of idle followers.

I know nothing of tantric tricks, of binding, enchanting, or banishing.

Says Tuka, I am none of these; I am just a hell-dwelling madman.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I know no cunning, no way to fool people. I only sing your kirtan and praise your good qualities. I cannot show off herbs and roots or work sudden miracles. I have no line of disciples; I speak freely to whoever comes. I am no head of a monastery, and I do not live off followers' offerings. I have set up no shop of worship, no deity to bring in money. I have no spirit at my command to reveal hidden things. I am no professional reciter who says one thing and does another. I do not know the pot-and-cloth wrangling that turns a scholar into a pauper. I do not march about beating drums in a shouting crowd. I do not rattle a rosary surrounded by a throng of idlers. I know nothing of the false arts of binding, enchanting, driving away. Tuka says: I am none of these. I am only a hell-dwelling madman.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram defines himself entirely by what he is not. One by one he strikes off the roles a holy man could exploit: the miracle-monger, the guru with a captive following, the abbot living on offerings, the priest running worship as a business, the spirit-conjurer, the hypocrite reciter, the showy debater, the drum-beating crowd-leader, the tantric trickster. Each of these is a way religion can be turned into power or income, and he refuses every one. All he claims is to sing God's praises and speak openly to anyone. The closing self-mockery, calling himself a hell-dwelling madman, is honest humility set against the proud pretenders he has just listed; it invites the listener to weigh real devotion against religious performance.

GATHA 0270

Faith and Trust

Faith, what God gives is sweet

मराठी मूळ

रडोनियां मान । कोण मागतां भूषण ॥१॥
 देवें दिलें तरी गोड । राहे रुचि आणि कोड ॥२॥
 लावितां लावणी । विके भीके केज्या दानी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे धीरा । विण कैसा होतो हिरा ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Who ever gained honor by weeping and begging for it?

What God gives freely is truly sweet; both relish and delight remain with it.

If you cultivate a garden, it yields fruit you can sell, give away, or enjoy.

Says Tuka, without patience, how can a stone ever become a diamond?

IN PLAIN WORDS

Who ever won an ornament by weeping and begging for it? What God gives freely is sweet; the taste and the delight of it stay. Tend a garden and it bears fruit you can sell, give away, or enjoy. Tuka says: without patience, how does a stone ever become a diamond?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is teaching how grace is actually received. Honor that is wrung out by complaint and pleading is worthless; what God grants freely carries a lasting sweetness and joy. He grounds this in plain images: a tended garden yields fruit you can use every way, and a stone becomes a diamond only through long pressure and time. The lesson is patience and trust rather than grasping demand. One waits on God's giving and does the steady work, and the reward, when it comes, is genuine and stays.

GATHA 0271

The Saints

Conduct, one seat for the saints

मराठी मूळ

पूज्या एकासनीं आसनीं आसन । बैसतां गमन मातेशीं तें ॥१॥
 सांगतां ते धर्म नीतीचे संकेत । सावधान हित व्हावें तरी ॥२॥
 संतां ठाया ठाव पूजनाची इच्छा । जीवनीं च वळसा सांपडला ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे एकाएकीं वरासनें । दुजें तेथें भिन्न अशोभ्य तें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When a seat of honor is prepared for the revered one, it is only fitting that one seat be occupied by one person, as a child sits in its mother's lap.

I speak of the principles of propriety and righteous conduct; may you heed them for your own good.

When saints vie for seats and positions of worship, they are already caught in a snare of worldly attachment.

Says Tuka, only one may sit upon the high seat; a second presence there would be unseemly.

IN PLAIN WORDS

When a seat of honor is set out for the revered one, one seat should hold one person, the way a child sits in its mother's lap. I am telling you the rules of right conduct; heed them for your own good. When saints scramble for seats and honors of worship, they are already caught in worldly entanglement. Tuka says: only one belongs on the high seat. A second presence there is out of place and unseemly.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is giving a quiet teaching on propriety among the devout. The image of one seat for one person, like a child in its mother's lap, is about fittingness and undivided place. His real concern surfaces in the middle: the moment saints compete for seats and honors of worship, they have already fallen into the very worldly attachment they are supposed to have left. The high seat is meant for one, and crowding it is unseemly. The poem warns that the appetite for status can creep in even among holy people, and asks them to watch for it in themselves.

GATHA 0272

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the two-faced flatterer

मराठी मूळ

जेणें मुखें स्तवी । तें चि निंदे पाठीं लावी ॥१॥
 ऐसी अधमाची याती । लोपी सोनें खाय माती ॥२॥
 गुदद्वारा वाटे । मिष्टान्नांचा नरक लोटे ॥३॥
 विंचु लाभाविण । तुका म्हणे वाहे शीण ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*The same mouth that praises to one's face turns around and slanders behind one's back.**Such is the breed of the base; they swallow gold and eat dirt.**Just as fine sweets turn to filth when they exit through the anus, so does the base man reduce all that is good to waste.**Says Tuka, like a scorpion that stings for no profit, such a person toils only in vain.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

The same mouth that praises you to your face turns and slanders you behind your back. Such is the breed of the base: they let gold slip away and eat dirt. Fine sweets, passing out through the body, turn into filth; just so the base man turns all that is good to waste. Tuka says: like a scorpion that stings for no gain, such a person only wears himself out.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram exposes the two-faced flatterer, the one whose praise to your face is reversed into slander the moment your back is turned. He calls this a base disposition that throws away what is precious and feeds on what is worthless, gold let go, dirt eaten. The blunt image of sweets turning to filth as they pass through the body shows how such a person degrades whatever good comes near them. The scorpion that stings without profit names the futility: this malice gains nothing, it only exhausts the one who carries it. The poem points at the pattern of duplicity, inviting the listener to test their own tongue against it.

GATHA 0273

The Moral Ideal

Moral warning, friendship with the base

मराठी मूळ

अधमाची यारी । रंग पतंगाचे परी ॥१॥
 विटे न लगतां क्षण । मोल जाय वांयां विण ॥२॥
 सर्पाचिया परी । विषें भरला कल्हारी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे देवा । मज झणी ऐसे दावा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Friendship with the base is like the color of a lac dye: it fades before the moment is over, and its value goes to waste for nothing.

Like a serpent, such a person is full of venom even amid a bed of lotuses.

Says Tuka, O God, never let me encounter such people.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Friendship with the base is like the color of a lac dye: it fades before the moment is out, and its worth is wasted for nothing. Like a serpent, such a person is full of venom even among a bed of lotuses. Tuka says: O God, never let me meet such people.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram measures the worth of bad company through two sharp images. The friendship of base people is like a cheap dye that loses its color almost at once, promising much and holding nothing. Worse, such a person is like a snake whose poison stays in it even when it lies among lotuses; no fair surroundings can sweeten a venomous nature. The poem ends not in scorn but in prayer: he asks God simply to keep him clear of such company. The teaching is about guarding one's own heart by being careful whom one binds oneself to.

GATHA 0274

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, only Panduranga

मराठी मूळ

आणिकांची स्तुति आम्हां ब्रम्हहत्या । एका वांचूनि त्या पांडुरंगा ॥१॥
 आम्हां विष्णुदासां एकविध भाव । न म्हणों या देव आणिकांसि ॥२॥
 शतखंड माझी होईल रसना । जरी या वचना पालटेन ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे मज आणिका संकल्पें । अवघीं च पापें घडतील ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

To praise anyone other than Panduranga is, for us, as grave as killing a Brahmin.

We devotees of Vishnu hold a single-pointed faith; we do not call any other being God.

Let my tongue be split into a hundred pieces if I ever waver from this vow.

Says Tuka, even the thought of turning to another would heap upon me every sin.

IN PLAIN WORDS

To praise anyone but Panduranga is, for us, as grave as killing a Brahmin. We servants of Vishnu hold a single faith; we call no other being God. Let my tongue be split into a hundred pieces if I ever turn from this vow. Tuka says: even the thought of turning to another would heap every sin upon me.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is Tukaram's vow of single-pointed devotion. For him and his fellow devotees of Vishnu, to give praise meant for God to anyone else is no small lapse; he measures it against the gravest of sins. The wish that his tongue be torn to pieces if he ever wavers is the language of an oath, the full weight he places on faithfulness to Panduranga alone. He goes further: not even the act, but the mere thought of turning elsewhere would, for him, gather every sin. The poem names the cost of undivided devotion and his refusal to divide it.

GATHA 0275

Prayers

Prayer, the small wish, the boundless giver

मराठी मूळ

तान्हेल्याची धणी । फिटे गंगा नव्हे उणी ॥१॥
 माझे मनोरथ सिद्धी । पाववावे कृपानिधी ॥२॥
 तूं तों उदाराचा राणा । माझी अल्प चि वासना ॥३॥
 कृपादृष्टी पाहें । तुका म्हणे होई साहे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The thirst of the thirsty is quenched at the Ganga, and the Ganga is not diminished by it.

O treasury of mercy, bring my heart's wishes to fulfillment.

You are the king of the generous; my desires are but small.

Says Tuka, look upon me with the eye of grace and be my support.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The thirsty drink their fill at the Ganga, and the Ganga is not made less. O treasury of mercy, bring my heart's wishes to fulfillment. You are the king of the generous; my desires are only small. Look on me with the eye of grace. Tuka says: be my support.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram prays from the logic of God's abundance. The Ganga quenches every thirst yet loses nothing, so granting his wish costs the giver nothing at all. He addresses God as a treasury of mercy and the king of the generous, then makes himself small against that vastness: his desires are slight, easily met by such a one. The request is simple, a glance of grace and God's support. The poem is a model of humble asking that leans wholly on the giver's bounty rather than on its own worth.

GATHA 0276

The Saints

Saints, worship without love is empty

मराठी मूळ

संताचा अतिक्रम । देवपूजा तो अधर्म ॥१॥
 येती दगड तैसे वरी । मंत्रपुष्पें देवा शिरीं ॥१॥
 अतीतासि गाळी । देवा नैवेद्यासी पोळी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे देवा । ताडण भेदकांची सेवा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*To mistreat a saint while worshipping God is itself unrighteousness.**The flowers and mantras offered upon God's head return like stones thrown upward.**One abuses the guest and then offers a fine bread to the deity.**Says Tuka, the service of one who injures devotees is but a beating upon God.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

To wrong a saint while worshipping God is itself unrighteous. The mantras and flowers set on God's head come back like stones flung upward. You abuse the guest, then offer fine bread to the deity. Tuka says: the service of one who injures devotees is only a beating laid on God.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram tests temple worship against how a person treats God's own people. To honor the deity while mistreating a saint is not piety but its opposite; the offerings of mantra and flower rebound like stones thrown into the air, returning harm to the worshipper. The picture of abusing a guest and then presenting fine bread to the idol shows the contradiction at the heart of such worship. The closing line is severe: to hurt a devotee is to strike God himself, however lavish the ritual. The poem insists that real worship is inseparable from love and respect for the living, not confined to the altar.

GATHA 0277

The Saints

The saints, the one true service

मराठी मूळ

करणें तें देवा । हे चि एक पावे सेवा ॥१॥
 अवघें घडे येणे सांग । भक्त देवाचें तें अंग ॥१॥
 हें चि एक वर्म । काय बोलिला तो धर्म ॥२॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The one service that truly reaches God is this: serve his devotees, for the devotee is God's own body, and through this alone everything is accomplished.

Says Tuka, this is the essential secret; this is what all scriptures call dharma.

IN PLAIN WORDS

There is one thing to do for God; only this reaches him as service. Through it everything gets done. Serve his devotees, for the devotee is God's own body. This is the one secret. This is what dharma always said. Tuka says: this is the heart of it all.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram collapses all of religion into a single act and tells you why it works. The one service that reaches God is to serve his devotees, because the devotee is not separate from God but is God's own body. So when you honor the bhakta you are touching God directly, and through this alone everything else gets accomplished. Tukaram does not present this as one practice among many; he calls it the single secret, and he says this is what dharma was pointing at all along.

GATHA 0278

The Moral Ideal

Moral vow, the firm boundary

मराठी मूळ

मार्गे नेणपणें घडलें तें क्षमा । आतां देतों सीमा करूनियां ॥१॥
 परनारीचें जया घडलें गमन । दावीतो वदन जननीरत ॥२॥
 उपदेशा वरी मन नाहीं हातीं । तो आम्हां पुढती पाहूं नये ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे साक्षी असों घावें मन । घातली ते आण पाळावया ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

What was done in the past through ignorance, let it be forgiven. From now on, I set a firm boundary.

Whoever has committed adultery with another's wife, I show his face for what it is: defiled by incest.

One whose mind remains out of control even after receiving instruction should never be allowed before us again.

Says Tuka, let the conscience be witness; the vow that has been taken must be kept.

IN PLAIN WORDS

What I did in the past out of not knowing, let that be forgiven. From now I draw a firm line. The man who has gone to another man's wife shows the face of one who lies with his own mother. The man whose mind stays out of his hands even after he is taught, let him never come before us again. Tuka says: let the conscience stand as witness; the vow that is taken must be kept.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram forgives the past but slams a door on the future, and he names the line in the harshest terms he can find. Adultery with another's wife, he says, has the face of incest with one's own mother; he refuses to let it look small. He sets a second line for the person who keeps offending even after being instructed: such a one is no longer welcome among them. The point is not to crush a sinner but to make the boundary unmistakable and self-binding, so he calls his own conscience as witness that the vow he has just sworn will be kept.

GATHA 0279

The Moral Ideal

Social criticism, the malicious heart

मराठी मूळ

आणिकांच्या घातें । ज्यांचीं निवतील चित्तें ॥१॥
 ते चि ओळखावे पापी । निरयवासी शीघ्रकोपी ॥ध्रु॥
 कान पसरोनी । ऐके वदे दुष्ट वाणी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे भांडा । धीर नाही ज्याच्या तोंडा ॥३॥
 हनुमंतस्तुति - अभंग ४

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those whose hearts find satisfaction in the harm done to others, know them as sinners, dwellers in hell, quick to anger.

They stretch their ears to listen and then speak vile words.

Says Tuka, the quarrelsome one has no patience upon his tongue.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Those whose minds grow calm and pleased when others are harmed: know them as the sinners. They live in hell already; they flare into anger fast. They open their ears wide to hear, and then their mouths speak evil words. Tuka says: the quarrelsome one has no patience on his tongue.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram gives a plain test for recognizing a corrupt heart: watch what gives it peace. The one who feels satisfied when another person is hurt is the real sinner, already a dweller in hell, quick to rage. He notices the small mechanics of it too, the ears that strain to catch bad news and the mouth that rushes to spread it. The warning points at a pattern any of us can fall into, the appetite for others' ruin and the tongue that cannot hold itself back, rather than at one named enemy.

GATHA 0280

Sacred Stories

Bhakti to Hanuman, surrender

मराठी मूळ

शरण शरण जी हनुमंता । तुज आलों रामदूता ॥१॥
 काय भक्तीच्या त्या वाटा । मज दावाव्या सुभटा ॥ध्रु॥
 शूर आणि धीर । स्वामिकाजीं तूं सादर ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे रुद्रा । अंजनीचिया कुमरा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I surrender to you again and again, O Hanuman; I have come to you, messenger of Rama.

Show me the path of devotion, O great warrior.

You are brave and steadfast, ever ready in the service of your master.

Says Tuka, O Rudra, O son of Anjani, I bow to you.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I surrender, I surrender, O Hanuman; I have come to you, messenger of Rama. Show me the paths of devotion, O great warrior. You are brave and steadfast, ever ready in your master's work. Tuka says: O Rudra, O son of Anjani, I bow.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram comes to Hanuman not for power but for instruction in devotion itself. He repeats the word of surrender and names Hanuman as Rama's messenger, then asks the one thing he wants: show me the ways of bhakti. His reason is in the praise that follows. Hanuman is brave, steadfast, and always ready in his master's service, so he is the perfect teacher of how to love and serve. The closing names, Rudra and son of Anjani, set the bow inside Hanuman's own lineage and glory.

GATHA 0281

Sacred Stories

Praise of Hanuman, destroyer of sins

मराठी मूळ

केली सीताशुद्धी । मूळ रामायणा आधीं ॥१॥
 ऐसा प्रतापी गहन । सुरां सकळ भक्तांचें भूषण ॥२॥
 जाऊनि पाताळा । केली देवाची अवकळा ॥३॥
 राम लक्ष्मण । नेले आणिले चोरून ॥४॥
 जोडूनियां कर । उभा सन्मुख समोर ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे जपें । वायुसुता जाती पापें ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He accomplished the search for Sita even before the Ramayana's great events unfolded.

Such is his glory, profound and mighty; he is the ornament of all gods and devotees.

Going down into the netherworld, he humbled the demons.

Rama and Lakshmana were secretly taken there, and he brought them back.

He stands before his Lord with palms joined in reverence.

Says Tuka, by chanting the name of the Son of the Wind, all sins are destroyed.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He found Sita; this was set before the great events of the Ramayana unfolded. Such is his glory, deep and mighty; he is the ornament of all gods and all devotees. He went down into the netherworld and humbled its demons. Rama and Lakshmana were carried off there by stealth, and he brought them back. He stands before his Lord with palms joined. Tuka says: chant the name of the Son of the Wind, and your sins go.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram strings together Hanuman's deeds to show a power that is total and a heart that is humble. He recalls the search for Sita and the descent into the netherworld, where Hanuman humbled the demons and recovered Rama and Lakshmana after they were carried off by stealth. Yet for all this might, the image he leaves us with is Hanuman standing before his Lord with folded palms, glory bent into service. The turn at the end is the practical claim: simply chanting the name of the Son of the Wind destroys sins, so the listener is handed a path, not just a story.

GATHA 0282

Sacred Stories

Praise of Hanuman, surrender to Rama's servant

मराठी मूळ

काम घातला बांदोडी । काळ केला देशघडी ॥१॥
 तया माझें दंडवत । कपिकुळीं हनूमंत ॥ध्रु॥
 शरीर वज्रा ऐसें । कवळी ब्रम्हांड जो पुच्छे ॥२॥
 रामाच्या सेवका । शरण आलों म्हणे तुका ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He bound Desire and banished Death from the land.

I bow before him, Hanuman of the clan of apes.

His body is hard as a thunderbolt, and with his tail he can encircle the entire universe.

Says Tuka, I have come in surrender to this servant of Rama.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He put Desire in chains; he drove Death out of the land. To him I bow down, Hanuman of the clan of apes. His body is hard as a thunderbolt; with his tail he encircles the whole universe. Tuka says: I have come in surrender to this servant of Rama.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram praises Hanuman as the one who masters the very forces that master us. He says Hanuman bound Desire and banished Death, the two powers no ordinary person can overcome, so bowing to him is bowing to that mastery. The body hard as a thunderbolt and the tail that wraps the whole universe show a strength without limit. But Tukaram's surrender is aimed precisely: he comes not to a free lord but to the servant of Rama, since for him Hanuman's greatness is finally the greatness of perfect service.

GATHA 0283

Sacred Stories

Praise of Hanuman, the burning of Lanka

मराठी मूळ

हनुमंत महाबळी । रावणाची दाढी जाळी ॥१॥
 तया माझा नमस्कार । वारंवार निरंतर ॥ध्रु॥
 करोनी उड्डाण । केलें लंकेचें दहन ॥२॥
 जाळीयेली लंका । धन्य धन्य म्हणे तुका ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Hanuman, the supremely mighty, singed the beard of Ravana.**To him I offer my salutations again and again, without end.**Leaping into the sky, he set Lanka ablaze.**Says Tuka, blessed, blessed is he who burned Lanka to the ground.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Hanuman, the mighty one, scorched Ravana's beard. To him I bow again and again, without end. He leaped into the sky and set Lanka on fire. He burned Lanka down. Tuka says: blessed, blessed is he.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram celebrates the moment Hanuman humbled Ravana and burned his city. The singed beard is the small, almost mocking detail of the demon-king's defeat, and the leap into the sky and the burning of Lanka are the larger act. Against this Tukaram sets his own response, salutations offered again and again without end, and the cry blessed, blessed. The abhanga is pure adoration: it does not argue or instruct, it simply bows before the deed and calls Hanuman fortunate beyond measure.

GATHA 0284

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, destiny's unequal portions

मराठी मूळ

कुंभ अवघा एक आवा । पाकीं एकीं गुफे डावा ॥१॥
 ऐसे भिन्न भिन्न साटे । केले प्रारब्धानें वांटे ॥ध्रु॥
 हिरे दगड एक खाणी । कैचें विजातीसी पाणी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे शिरीं । एक एकाची पायरी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*All pots come from the same kiln of clay, yet some are baked to strength while others crumble in the fire.**So has destiny made distinct portions from the same source.*

Diamonds and common stones come from the same mine, yet water will never be found in the foreign rock.

Says Tuka, each one serves as a stepping stone upon the head of another.

IN PLAIN WORDS

All the pots come from one kiln. In the firing, some hold and some are spoiled. So destiny makes different lots out of the same source. Diamonds and plain stones come from one mine; the foreign rock yields no water. Tuka says: on one head rests the step of another.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram looks at how lives come out unequal from what seems a single origin. The pots are all formed from one kiln of clay, yet the same fire leaves some sound and some ruined, and he names this the work of destiny dividing one source into different lots. The diamond and the common stone share one mine, but worth is not evenly spread, and water is not drawn from the wrong rock. The closing image holds the order this makes: lives are ranked like steps, each one a stair beneath another, so the poem sits with difference as a fact rather than protesting it.

GATHA 0285

The Necessity of Experience

Social criticism, the empty boaster

मराठी मूळ

मांडे पुऱ्या मुखें सांगों जाणे मात । तोंडीं लाळ हात चोळी रिते ॥१॥
ऐसियाच्या गोष्टी फिक्क्या मिठेंविण । रुचि नेदी अन्न चवी नाहीं ॥२॥
बोलों जाणे अंगीं नाहीं शूरपण । काय तें वचन जाळावें तें ॥२॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One can describe fine breads and pastries with the mouth, but the tongue only salivates while the hands remain empty.

Such stories without substance are tasteless, like food without salt; they give no nourishment and have no flavor.

One who boasts of valor but has no courage in the body: such words, says Tuka, ought to be burned.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He can describe sweet breads and pastries with his mouth, but his tongue only waters while his hands stay empty. Such talk is flat, like food with no salt; it gives no taste, no nourishment. He knows how to talk, but there is no courage in his body. Tuka says: such words should be burned.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram skewers the gap between fine words and real substance. A man can name every delicacy, but naming them feeds no one; the tongue waters while the hands stay empty, and talk without backing is food without salt, all noise and no nourishment. He turns the same blade on boasting: the one who speaks of valor but has no courage in his body produces words that deserve to be burned. The target is the pattern of mistaking eloquence for action, an honest mirror for anyone whose speech outruns their deeds.

GATHA 0286

The Saints

The saints, goodness reveals itself

मराठी मूळ

न लगे चंदना सांगावा परिमळ । वनस्पतिमेळ हाकारुनी ॥१॥
 अंतरीचें धांवे स्वभावें बाहेरी । धरितां ही परी आवरे ना ॥२॥
 सूर्य नाहीं जागें करीत या जना । प्रकाश किरणा कर म्हुन ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे मेघ नाचवी मयूरें । लपवितां खरें येत नाहीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Sandalwood need not announce its fragrance by summoning all the plants of the forest.**What is within naturally flows outward; even if one tries, it cannot be contained.**The sun does not go about waking each person; its light simply radiates through its rays.**Says Tuka, the clouds make the peacock dance. What is true can never be hidden.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Sandalwood need not call the forest to announce its scent. What is inside flows out on its own; try to hold it, and it will not be held. The sun does not go around waking each person; its rays simply shine. Tuka says: the cloud sets the peacock dancing. What is true cannot be hidden.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram says real virtue does not advertise; it shows itself by its nature. Sandalwood does not summon the forest to smell it, the sun does not knock on each sleeper to wake him, and the cloud does not instruct the peacock to dance; each simply gives off what it is. So with a true saint: what lives inside flows out on its own, and the effort to contain it fails. The closing line is the whole point, that what is genuine cannot stay concealed, which means goodness needs no announcement and pretense will not pass for it.

GATHA 0287

The Saints

The saints, no flaw in the good

मराठी मूळ

चंदनाचे हात पाय ही चंदन । परिसा नाहीं हीन कोणी अंग ॥१॥
 दीपा नाहीं पाठीं पोटीं अंधकार । सर्वांगें साकर अवधी गोड ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे तैसा सज्जनापासून । पाहातां अवगुण मिळे चि ना ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The hands and feet of a sandalwood tree are all sandalwood. No limb of the philosopher's stone is inferior to any other.

A lamp has no darkness on its front or back; sugar is entirely sweet throughout.

Says Tuka, in the same way, if you look closely at a noble person, you will never find a single flaw.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The hands and feet of sandalwood are also sandalwood. No part of the philosopher's stone is lesser than another. A lamp has no darkness in front or behind. Sugar is sweet through and through. Tuka says: look closely at a good person and you will not find one fault.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram piles up images of things that are the same all the way through to describe the goodness of a true saint. Sandalwood is fragrant in every limb, the philosopher's stone has no inferior part, a lamp carries no darkness on any side, and sugar is sweet in every grain. The point is wholeness: there is no hidden bad patch, no back side that betrays the front. Applied to the sajjana, the noble soul, it means that close inspection turns up no flaw, because the virtue goes all the way down rather than being a surface.

GATHA 0288

The Moral Ideal

The mind, sole maker of bondage and release

मराठी मूळ

मन करा रे प्रसन्न । सर्व सिद्धीचें कारण । मोक्ष अथवा बंधन । सुख समाधान इच्छा ते ॥१॥
मनं प्रतिमा स्थापिली । मनं मना पूजा केली । मनं इच्छा पुरविली । मन माउली सकळांची ॥२॥
मन गुरु आणि शिष्य । करी आपुलें चि दास्य । प्रसन्न आपआपणास । गति अथवा अधोगति ॥३॥
साधक वाचक पंडित । श्रोते वक्ते ऐका मात । नाहीं नाहीं आनुदैवत । तुका म्हणे दुसरें ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Make the mind serene, for it is the cause of all attainment. Whether it be liberation or bondage, happiness or contentment, all depends on the mind's desire.

The mind installs the deity, the mind worships the mind, the mind fulfills its own wishes; the mind is the mother of all.

The mind is both guru and disciple, serving itself; when pleased with itself, it leads upward, and when displeased, it leads downward.

Says Tuka, hear this, O seekers, scholars, listeners, and speakers: there is no other deity besides the mind.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Make the mind glad, for it is the cause of every attainment. Liberation or bondage, happiness or peace, all of it follows the mind's wish. The mind sets up the image; the mind worships the mind; the mind grants its own desire; the mind is mother of all. The mind is both guru and disciple, serving only itself. Pleased with itself, it rises; displeased, it falls. Seekers, readers, scholars, listeners, speakers, hear this. Tuka says: there is no other deity, none, but this.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram puts the whole weight of the spiritual life on the mind itself. Liberation and bondage, joy and peace, every attainment, all of it turns on what the mind wishes, so the first instruction is simply to make the mind serene. He drives the point home by showing the mind doing every role at once: it installs the deity, it is both the worshipper and the worshipped, it grants its own desires, it is mother, guru, and disciple in one. Its own state decides its fate, rising when pleased with itself and sinking when not. The closing address to seekers and scholars carries the radical claim he refuses to soften: there is no other deity to seek but this very mind.

GATHA 0289

Worldly Life

Warning, pride is a golden chain

मराठी मूळ

मायबापें जरी सर्पीण बोका । त्यांचे संगें सुखा न पवे बाळ ॥१॥
 चंदनाचा शूळ सोनियाची बेडी । सुख नेदी फोडी प्राण नाशी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे नरकीं घाली अभिमान । जरी होय ज्ञान गर्व ताठा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

If one's parents are like a serpent or a cat, the child will find no happiness in their company.

A stake made of sandalwood or a chain made of gold will still take your life and never give comfort.

Says Tuka, pride casts one into hell, even if it is dressed up as knowledge and rigid resolve.

IN PLAIN WORDS

If a child's own parents are a serpent and a cat, the child finds no happiness near them. A stake can be carved from sandalwood, a chain can be made of gold; they still pierce you, still kill you, and give no comfort. Tuka says: pride throws you into hell, even when it is dressed up as knowledge and stiff resolve.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is warning that what looks fine on the surface can still destroy you. A sandalwood stake and a golden chain are precious things, yet a stake is still a stake and a chain is still a chain; the beauty does not change what they do. So it is with pride. Pride that wears the costume of spiritual knowledge and firm willpower looks respectable, but it still casts you into hell. The poem asks you to examine the part of yourself that feels learned and unbendable, because that is exactly where this golden chain hides.

GATHA 0290

*The Necessity of Experience**Social criticism, learning without experience*

मराठी मूळ

शिकल्या बोलाचे सांगतील वाद । अनुभव भेद नाही कोणा ॥१॥
 पंडित हे ज्ञानी करितील कथा । न मळिती अर्था निजसुखा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे जैसी लांचासाठीं ग्वाही । देतील हे नाही ठावी वस्तु ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those who have learned arguments from books will debate endlessly, yet none of them has the direct experience of truth.

Scholars and so-called wise ones give discourses, but they never touch the substance of inner bliss.

Says Tuka, they are like false witnesses who testify for a bribe, knowing nothing of the real matter.

IN PLAIN WORDS

People repeat the arguments they learned from books and debate them endlessly. None of them has the direct experience. Scholars and the so-called wise give discourses, but they never touch the real substance, the bliss that is their own. Tuka says: they are like witnesses who testify for a bribe, speaking about a thing they have never known.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is drawing a hard line between borrowed words and direct experience. The learned can argue all day from what they have read, but argument is not the same as having tasted the truth, and discourse is not the same as the inner bliss it describes. His sharpest stroke is the image of the false witness: someone paid to testify about a matter he knows nothing about. The poem turns this on the reader's own talk; it asks whether your spiritual speech is testimony from experience or just a bribed witness reciting lines.

GATHA 0291

*Faith and Trust**Faith, devotee and God are one*

मराठी मूळ

प्रारब्ध क्रियमाण । भक्तां संचित नाही जाण ॥१॥
 अवघा देव चि जाला पाहीं । भरोनियां अंतर्बाहीं ॥२॥
 सत्वरजतमबाधा । नव्हे हरिभक्तांसि कदा ॥३॥
 खाय बोले करी । अवघा त्यांच्या अंगें हरी ॥४॥
 देवभक्तपण । तुका म्हणे नाही भिन्न ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

For devotees, there is destiny and present action, but know that accumulated karma no longer exists for them.

God himself has become everything, filling both inner and outer.

The bonds of the three qualities no longer afflict the devotees of Hari.

Whatever they eat, speak, or do, it is all Hari acting through their bodies.

Says Tuka, between God and his devotee, there is no separation.

IN PLAIN WORDS

For devotees there is still destiny and present action, but know this: their stored-up karma is gone. Look, God himself has become everything, filling them within and without. The three qualities no longer bind the devotees of Hari. Whatever they eat or speak or do, it is all Hari acting through their bodies. Tuka says: between God and his devotee there is no separation.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes what happens to a soul wholly given to Hari. The old accumulated karma that drives rebirth is dissolved; what remains plays out as present life, but its grip is broken. He says God has filled the devotee inside and out, so the three gunas that bind ordinary action no longer touch them. From there he makes the radical claim: their eating, speaking, and doing are Hari acting through them. The point lands in the last line, that for such a devotee there is no gap left between God and the one who loves God.

GATHA 0292

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the Name is enough

मराठी मूळ

शास्त्राचें जें सार वेदांची जो मूर्ति । तो माझा सांगाती प्राणसखा ॥१॥
 म्हणउनी नाहीं आणिकांचा पांग । सर्व जालें सांग नामें एका ॥२॥
 सगुण निर्गुण जयाचीं अंगें । तो चि आम्हां संगें क्रीडा करी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे आम्ही विधीचे जनिते । स्वयंभू आइते केले नव्हों ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He who is the essence of all scriptures and the living form of the Vedas, he is my companion and my dearest friend.

Therefore I have no dependence on anyone else; through his Name alone, everything is complete.

Both the manifest and the formless are aspects of his being, and it is he who plays and sports in our company.

Says Tuka, we are the parents of Brahma himself; we are not self-made or ready-made, but fashioned by devotion.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He who is the essence of all the scriptures, the living form of the Vedas, is my companion, the friend of my very life. So I depend on no one else; through his one Name alone, everything is complete. The manifest and the formless are both his body, and it is he who plays with us. Tuka says: we are the parents of Brahma the creator; we are not self-made nor ready-made, but fashioned by devotion.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is saying that having the Lord as his closest friend ends every other dependence. The being who is the heart of all scripture and the Vedas made flesh is the friend of his life, and through that one Name nothing is lacking. He adds that this Lord is both the form-having and the formless, and he is the one who comes and plays with his devotees. The closing line is the bold one: through devotion the devotee becomes parent even to the creator. He insists devotees are not self-existent or born ready, but shaped into what they are by bhakti itself.

GATHA 0293

Sacred Stories

Devotion, God hungers only for love

मराठी मूळ

ऐका महिमा आवडीचीं । बोरें खाय भिलटीचीं ॥१॥
 थोर प्रेमाचा भुकेला । हा चि दुष्काळ तयाला । अष्टमा सिद्धींला । न मनी क्षीरसागराला ॥२॥
 पव्हे सुदामदेवाचे । फके मारी कोरडे च ॥३॥
 न म्हणे उच्छिष्ट अथवा थोडे । तुका म्हणे भक्तीपुढें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Hear the glory of pure love: the Lord eats the wild berries offered by the tribal woman Shabari.

Such is his hunger for devotion; this is the only famine he knows. He does not regard the eight supernatural powers or the ocean of milk.

He devours the dry, flattened rice of his friend Sudama, eating it by the fistful.

Says Tuka, he does not consider whether it is leftover or too little; before true devotion, nothing else matters.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Hear the glory of pure love. The Lord eats the wild berries the tribal woman Shabari offers him. He is hungry for great love, and this is the only famine he knows. He pays no heed to the eight powers or to the ocean of milk. He eats Sudama's dry flattened rice, taking it by the fistful. He does not ask if it is leftover or too little. Tuka says: before true devotion, nothing else counts.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is naming what God actually wants. He recalls two well-known acts: the Lord eating Shabari's tasted wild berries and devouring Sudama's poor handful of dry rice. The point is that God is not drawn by the eight siddhis or by the ocean of milk, the grand and the luxurious; his one hunger is for love, the only thing he ever lacks. So he never weighs whether an offering is leftover, impure, or small. The poem says plainly that before real devotion, all the powers and riches a person could offer mean nothing.

GATHA 0294

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, surrender before time runs out

मराठी मूळ

कोणें तुझा सांग केला अंगीकार । निश्चिति त्वां थोर मानियेली ॥१॥
 कोणें ऐसा तुज उपदेश केला । नको या विठ्ठला शरण जाऊं ॥२॥
 तेव्हां तुज कोण घालील पाठीसी । घासील भूमीसी वदन यम ॥३॥
 कां रे नागवसी आयुष्य खातो काळ । दिसेंदिस बळ क्षीण होतें ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे यासि सांगा कोणी तरी । विसरला हरी मायबाप ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Tell me, who has taken you under their care? In whom have you placed such great confidence?

Who gave you the advice not to surrender to Vitthal?

When the time comes, who will stand behind you? Yama will grind your face into the earth.

Why do you cheat yourself? Time is devouring your lifespan; day by day your strength is wasting away.

Says Tuka, somebody tell this person, for he has forgotten Hari, his own mother and father.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Tell me, who has taken you into their care, that you are so sure of yourself? Who gave you this advice, not to take refuge in Vitthal? When the end comes, who will stand behind you? Yama will grind your face into the ground. Why do you rob yourself? Time is eating your life; day by day your strength drains away. Tuka says: somebody, please tell this person, for he has forgotten Hari, his own mother and father.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is shaking awake someone who refuses to surrender to God. He presses with questions: who has promised to protect you, that you can afford such confidence, and who taught you to keep away from Vitthal. Then he names the stakes; at death no one will shield you, and Yama will press your face into the dust. Meanwhile time is quietly devouring your lifespan and your strength fades each day. The plea is aimed at self-examination: the person has forgotten that Hari is his true mother and father, the one refuge worth having, and someone needs to say so before it is too late.

GATHA 0295

The Necessity of Experience

Experience, practice makes the impossible possible

मराठी मूळ

साधूनी बचनाग खाती तोळा तोळा । आणिकातें डोळां न पाहवे ॥१॥
 साधूनी भुजंग धरितील हातीं । आणिकें कापती देखोनियां ॥२॥
 असाध्य तें साध्य करितां सायास । कारण अभ्यास तुका म्हणे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those who have practiced can swallow deadly poison by the measure and remain unharmed, while others cannot even bear to look at it.

Those who have trained can hold serpents in their hands, while others tremble merely at the sight.

Says Tuka, what seems impossible becomes possible through effort; the secret is practice.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Those who have practiced can swallow deadly poison by the measure and stay unharmed, while others cannot even bear to look at it. Those who have trained can hold serpents in their hands, while others shake at the mere sight. What seems impossible is made possible by hard effort. Tuka says: the reason is practice.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram uses two extreme images to teach one thing about the spiritual path. A trained person can eat poison by the dose and handle live snakes, things that make ordinary people recoil or tremble. The difference is not magic; it is disciplined practice. The poem then turns the figures into a principle: what looks impossible becomes possible through sustained effort. He names the cause directly, that the secret is abhyasa, steady repeated practice, and so the inner work too is learned the same way.

GATHA 0296

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the false guru

मराठी मूळ

आमचे गोसावी अयाचितवृत्ती । करवी शिष्याहार्ती उपदेश ॥१॥
 दगडाची नाव आधींच ते जड । ते काय दगड तारुं जाणे ॥१॥
 तुका म्हणे वेष विटंबिला त्यांनी । सोंगसंपादणी करिती परी॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Our so-called masters live on unsolicited charity and have their disciples do the teaching on their behalf.

A boat made of stone is heavy from the start; how can a stone boat carry anyone across?

Says Tuka, they have disgraced the very garb of renunciation, performing only the outward show of holiness.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Our so-called holy men live on charity they pretend not to seek, and they make their own disciples do the teaching for them. A boat made of stone is heavy from the start; how can a stone boat carry anyone across? Tuka says: they have disgraced the very garb they wear, keeping up nothing but the costume of holiness.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is exposing a hollow kind of guru. These figures take charity while pretending to want nothing, and they push the actual teaching onto their disciples, having not made the crossing themselves. His image is exact: a stone boat is dead weight from the start, so it cannot ferry anyone, and a guru with no inner realization cannot carry a

seeker across. The point is aimed at the pattern, not at robes themselves; he says such men have shamed the renouncer's dress, turning a sacred sign into mere costume and performance. It is a call to look past the outward show to whether anything real is there.

GATHA 0297

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the world has no substance

मराठी मूळ

मृगजळा काय करावा उतार । पावावया पार पैल थडी ॥१॥
 खापराचे होन खेळती लेंकुरें । कोण त्या वेढारें लाभ हाणि ॥२॥
 मंगळदायक करिती कुमारी । काय त्यांची खरी सोयरीक ॥३॥
 स्वप्नींचें जें सुखदुःख जालें काहीं । जागृतीं तो नाही साच भाव ॥४॥
 सारीं जालीं मेलीं लटिकें वचन । बद्ध मुक्त शीण तुका म्हणे ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Why build a crossing over a mirage when there is no far shore to reach?

Children play with broken pottery as if it were gold coins; who gains or loses in such a trade?

Young girls play at auspicious wedding ceremonies, but what real bond of kinship is formed there?

Whatever joy or sorrow appeared in a dream has no substance when one wakes.

Says Tuka, all that was born and died was but false speech; bondage and liberation and all this weariness are nothing.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Why build a crossing over a mirage, when there is no far shore to reach? Children play with bits of broken pottery as if they were gold coins; who really gains or loses in that trade? Little girls play at performing weddings; what real kinship is ever made there? Whatever joy or sorrow came to you in a dream is not true once you wake. Tuka says: all that is born and dies is false speech; bondage, liberation, all this struggle, it is nothing.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram piles up images of things that look real but are not, to question the substance of the whole world. A mirage has no far bank, so building a ford across it is pointless; broken pottery traded as gold makes no one richer or poorer; children's pretend weddings forge no actual kinship; dream pleasure and pain vanish on waking. Each picture says the same thing about appearances that do not hold up when looked at closely. He pushes the claim to its edge: birth and death themselves are like empty words, and even bondage and liberation, the very terms of the spiritual struggle, are finally nothing at this depth of seeing.

GATHA 0301

Worldly Life

Worldly life, nothing here is yours

मराठी मूळ

माझे म्हणतां याला कां रे नाहीं लाज । कन्या पुत्र भाज धन वित्त ॥१॥
 कोणी सोडवी ना काळाचे हातींचें । एकाविणें साचें नारायणा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे किती सांगावें चांडाळा । नेणे जीवकळा कोण्या जीतो ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Why is this person not ashamed to call daughters, sons, and wealth his own?**No one can free him from the hands of Death except the one Narayana.**Says Tuka, how many times must one tell this wretch? He does not even know by what life-force he lives.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Why is this person not ashamed to call them his own, the daughter, the son, the wife, the money, the wealth?
 No one can free him from the hands of Death, no one except the one Narayana. Tuka says: how many times
 must I tell this wretch? He does not even know by what life-force he himself is alive.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram confronts the easy habit of calling people and possessions mine. Children, spouse, and wealth are claimed as one's own, yet none of them, and nothing the person owns, can save him when Death's hand closes; only Narayana can. The harshness in calling him a wretch is aimed at the blindness, not the man: he clings to ownership while not even knowing the life-force that keeps him breathing. The poem asks for self-examination, that if you cannot account for the life within you, your claim to own anything outside you is hollow.

GATHA 0302

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the world mirrors your own state

मराठी मूळ

आंधळ्यासि जन अवघे चि आंधळे । आपणासि डोळे दृष्टी नाहीं ॥१॥
 रोग्या विषतुल्य लागे हें मिष्टान्न । तोंडासि कारण चवी नाहीं ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे शुद्ध नाहीं जो आपण । तया त्रिभुवन अवघें खोटें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*To a blind man, all the world appears blind, for he has no sight of his own.**To the sick man, even a delicious meal tastes like poison, for his tongue has lost all flavor.**Says Tuka, one who is not pure within will find all three worlds to be false.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

To a blind man, the whole world looks blind, because he himself has no sight. To a sick man, even sweet, rich food tastes like poison, because his mouth has lost its sense of taste. Tuka says: the one who is not pure within finds all three worlds false.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram teaches that what you see outside is colored by your own condition. The blind man assumes everyone is blind, and the sick man finds delicious food bitter as poison; in each case the fault is in the perceiver, not in the world or the food. He turns this into a mirror for the inner life: a person who is impure within will find the whole of the three worlds false and tainted. The poem points the reader back at himself, that the flaw he keeps seeing everywhere may be the report of his own unpurified heart.

GATHA 0303

The Saints

Saints, do not torment a devotee

मराठी मूळ

छळी विष्णुदासा कोणी । त्याची अमंगळ वाणी ॥१॥
 येऊं न द्यावा समोर । अभागी तो दुराचार ॥२॥
 नावडे हरिकथा । त्याची व्यभिचारीण माता ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे याति । भ्रष्ट त्याचि ते मति ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Whoever torments a devotee of Vishnu, his very speech is polluted.

Such a wretch of evil conduct should never be allowed to come near.

One who has no love for Hari's story, his mother is no better than an adulteress.

Says Tuka, such a one is corrupt in birth and fallen in understanding.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Whoever torments a servant of Vishnu, his speech itself is foul. Do not let such a one come in front of you; that wretch is unlucky and corrupt in conduct. The one who has no love for the story of Hari, his mother is no better than an adulteress. Tuka says: such a one is base in birth and his mind is fallen.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram defends the devotee and condemns the impulse to harass one. He says the very speech of a person who torments a servant of Vishnu is polluted, and he would keep such conduct at a distance. His harshest lines fall on the one who feels no love for hearing about Hari, calling his birth and his understanding corrupt. The fierceness is aimed at the pattern of contempt for the sacred and for those who love God, not at writing off a soul; the abhanga measures a person's true state by whether the story of Hari draws them or repels them, and asks the listener which way it pulls in their own heart.

GATHA 0304

Prayers

Longing, devotion without the inner feeling

मराठी मूळ

बोलविसी तैसें आणीं अनुभवा । नाही तरी देवा विटंबना ॥१॥
 मिठेंविण काय करावें मिष्टान्न । शव जीवेंविण शृंगारिले ॥२॥
 संपादणीविण विटंबिले सोंग । गुणेंविण चांग रूप हीन ॥३॥
 कन्यापुत्रेंविण मंगळदायकें । वेचिलें हें फिके द्रव्य तरी ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे तैसी होते मज परी । न देखे अंतरीं प्रेमभाव ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

O God, bring what you speak of into actual experience, otherwise it is only humiliation.

What good is a feast without salt? What use adorning a corpse without life?

Without fulfillment the whole display is wasted, like spending wealth on celebrations when there is no son or daughter to bless.

Says Tuka, such is my own condition: I find no love within.

IN PLAIN WORDS

O God, bring what you speak of into real experience. If you do not, then it is only mockery. What is a feast worth without salt? It is like dressing up a corpse that has no life. Without the real thing, the whole show is wasted. Beauty with no goodness in it is no beauty. It is like blessings for a wedding when there is no son or daughter to receive them, like spending money that tastes of nothing. Tuka says: this is exactly my state. I look inside and find no love there.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is praying for the inner reality behind the words, and he is honest that he does not yet have it. He asks God to turn the promise into lived experience, because devotion that stays on the surface is, he says, a kind of mockery. He piles up images of empty forms: a feast with no salt, a corpse dressed in finery, a wedding blessing with no child to bless, money spent that brings no taste. Each one is right on the outside and dead on the inside. Then he turns the test on himself: he looks into his own heart and finds the love is not there, and that absence is the very thing he is begging God to fill.

GATHA 0305

Worldly Metaphors

Discernment, grace and ripeness

मराठी मूळ

अंगीं ज्वर तया नावडे साकर । जन तो इतर गोडी जाणे ॥१॥
एकाचिये तोंडीं पडिली ते माती । अवघे ते खाती पोटभरी ॥२॥
चारितां बळें येत असे दांतीं । मागोनियां घेती भाग्यवंत ॥३॥
तुका म्हणे नसे संचित हें बरें । तयासि दुसरें काय करी ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One who has fever finds no sweetness in sugar, while others savor its taste freely.

What falls as dirt in one person's mouth, others eat to their fill.

The fortunate beg for what the reluctant must be forced to take.

Says Tuka, when past merit is lacking, what can anyone else do for you?

IN PLAIN WORDS

A man with fever finds no sweetness in sugar, while everyone else tastes how sweet it is. What falls like dirt in one man's mouth, others eat and fill their bellies with. When some are fed by force it sticks in their teeth, yet the fortunate beg to be given it. Tuka says: when a man's stored merit is not good, what can anyone else do for him?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is explaining why the same thing, the Name and grace of God, tastes like nectar to one person and like nothing to another. The fault is not in the sugar; it is in the fever. The teaching and the company of God are offered to all alike, but a sick inner condition cannot taste their sweetness, while the ready soul begs for what the unready spits out. He calls this difference sanchita, the merit a soul carries from before. The hard close is not contempt but a sober limit: where the inner readiness is missing, no outside help can force the taste, which is itself a call to examine and ripen one's own heart.

GATHA 0306

Worldly Life

Social criticism, the wasted life

मराठी मूळ

धिग जीणें तो बाइले आधीन । परलोक मान नाही दोन्ही ॥१॥
धिग जीणें ज्याचें लोभावरी मन । अतीतपूजन घडे चि ना ॥२॥
धिग जीणें आळस निद्रा जया फार । अमित आहार अघोरिया ॥३॥
धिग जीणें नाहीं विवेक वैराग्य । झुरे मानालागीं साधुपणा ॥४॥
तुका म्हणे धिग ऐसे जाले लोक । निंदक वादक नरका जाती ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Shame on the life of one enslaved to his wife; he loses both the next world and his honor.

Shame on the life of one whose mind is set on greed; honoring a guest never comes to pass.

Shame on the life of one given to sloth and excess sleep; boundless appetite, a wretched glutton.

Shame on the life without discernment or renunciation; he pines for the mere reputation of saintliness.

Says Tuka, shame on such people as these: slanderers and quarrelers, they go to hell.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Shame on the life of a man ruled by his wife. He loses both the next world and his honor. Shame on the life of a man whose mind is fixed on greed. He never once honors a guest. Shame on the life of a man full of laziness and too much sleep, eating without limit, a foul glutton. Shame on the life with no discernment and no renunciation, that pines only for the name of holiness. Tuka says: shame on people who have become like this. Slanderers and quarrelers, they go to hell.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram lays out a list of lives he calls disgraceful, and the thread running through them is appetite mistaken for living. The man who is ruled by craving, by greed, by sleep and food, by the wish to look holy without doing the work, has handed his life to the body and lost both worlds. The sharpest line is the fourth: someone with no discernment and no detachment who still hungers for the reputation of a saint, holiness as a costume. He closes by naming where slander and quarrel lead. The poem is meant to be held up as a mirror to the listener's own patterns, not used to despise any particular person.

GATHA 0307

The Power of the Name

Warning, the road to ruin or the Name

मराठी मूळ

अरे हें देह व्यर्थ जावें । ऐसें जरी तुज व्हावें । द्यूतकर्म मनोभावें । सारीपाट खेळावा ॥१॥
मग कैचें हरिचें नाम । निजेलिया जागा राम । जन्मोजन्मींचा अधम । दुःख थोर साधिलें ॥२॥
विषयसुखाचा लंपट । दासीगमनीं अतिधीट । तया तेचि वाट । अधोगती जावया ॥३॥
अणीक एक कोड । नरका जावयाची चाड । तरी संतनिंदा गोड । करीं कवतुकें सदा ॥४॥
तुका म्हणे ऐसें । मना लावी राम पिसें । नाहीं तरी आलिया सायासें । फुकट जासी ठकोनी ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

If you wish this body to go to waste, then play board-games and gamble with full devotion.

Then where will you find the name of Hari? Even in sleep, Rama is awake for the wise, but one who is base birth after birth has earned only great sorrow.

The one addicted to sensual pleasure and shameless in going to maidservants walks the path straight to the lowest hell.

And if you have yet another longing to reach hell, then make a sweet habit of slandering the saints.

Says Tuka, let your mind catch the madness of Rama; otherwise, having come here with such effort, you will depart empty-handed and deceived.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Listen: if you want this body to go to waste, then sit down and gamble and play your board games with all your heart. Then where will the Name of Hari be? For the wise, Rama stays awake even in sleep, but the man who is base birth after birth has earned only great sorrow. The one greedy for sense pleasure, bold in going to servant women, walks the very road down to the lowest place. And if you have one more craving, a craving to reach hell, then make slandering the saints your sweet daily sport. Tuka says: let your mind catch the madness of Rama. If not, then having come here with such effort, you will go empty-handed and cheated.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram preaches by daring the listener, listing the exact habits that throw a human life away as if recommending them. Gambling, slavery to sense pleasure, and above all slander of the saints are each named as a sure road downward, and the irony is the whip: if ruin is what you want, here is how to get it. Against this he sets the one thing that redeems the life, the Name, Rama who stays awake in the heart even when the body sleeps. The stakes he names are the human birth itself, won with great effort and easily squandered. The final plea is to let the mind go mad with Rama, because the only alternative is to leave this life robbed and deceived.

GATHA 0308

The Nature of God

Nondual devotion, defense of the image

मराठी मूळ

अवघें ब्रम्हरूप रिता नाहीं ठाव । प्रतिमा तो देव कैसा नव्हे ॥१॥
 नाहीं भाव तया सांगावें तें किती । आपुल्याला मतीं पाषांडिया ॥२॥
 जया भावें संत बोलिले वचन । नाहीं अनुमोदन शाब्दिकांसि ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे संतीं भाव केला बळी । न कळतां खळीं दूषिला देव ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Everything is the form of Brahman; there is no empty place. How then can an image not be God?

Those without faith cannot be told enough; the heretic clings to his own opinion.

The words the saints have spoken with true feeling find no acceptance among mere word-jugglers.

Says Tuka, the saints made devotion itself the sacrificial offering, but the wicked, not understanding, found fault with God.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Everything is the form of Brahman; there is no empty place anywhere. So how can the image not be God? Those who have no inner feeling, how much can you tell them? The heretic clings to his own opinion. The words the saints spoke out of true feeling find no agreement from mere jugglers of words. Tuka says: the saints made their own devotion the offering they gave. The wicked, not understanding, found fault with God.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram answers those who scorn worship of the murti, the sacred image, by pressing their own logic against them. If all that exists is the form of Brahman and no spot is empty of God, then the image too cannot be other than God. The split he draws is not between idol and spirit but between bhava and its absence: the saints speak from real inner feeling, while the word-jugglers and heretics argue from dry opinion and never reach acceptance. The saints' offering was devotion itself, faith laid on the altar. He ends by naming the real error of the mockers: in faulting the worshipped image they were finding fault with God, blind to what the devotee's heart had already made true.

GATHA 0309

The Necessity of Experience

Discernment, the same outside, two fruits

मराठी मूळ

एक तटस्थ मानसीं । एक सहज चि आळसी ॥१॥
 दोन्ही दिसती सारिखीं । वर्म जाणे तो पारखी ॥२॥
 एक ध्यानीं करिती जप । एक बैसुनि घेती झोप ॥३॥
 एकां भक्ति पोटासाठीं । एकां देवासवें गांठी ॥४॥
 वर्म पोटीं एका । फळें दोन म्हणे तुका ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One sits poised as a witness within the mind; another is simply lazy.

Both appear the same outwardly, but only a true discerner knows the difference.

One does japa in deep meditation; another just sits and sleeps.

For some, devotion is only for filling the belly; for others, there is a true bond with God.

Says Tuka, the secret lies hidden in the belly of each; the fruits of the two are entirely different.

IN PLAIN WORDS

One man sits still as a witness in the mind. Another is simply lazy. The two look the same. Only one who can tell true from false knows the difference. One does his japa deep in meditation. Another just sits and falls asleep. For some, devotion is only to fill the belly. For others, it is a real bond with God. Tuka says: the secret lies hidden inside each one, and the fruit of the two is wholly different.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram points at how easily the outward look of holiness hides two opposite inner states. The stillness of a true witness and plain laziness can sit in the same posture; meditation and dozing can wear the same face; and devotion done for a full belly looks much like devotion that is a genuine bond with God. From the outside they are indistinguishable, and only a real discerner can tell which is which. The whole weight rests on the inner motive, the varma hidden in the heart, because that is what decides the fruit. The poem turns the reader inward to ask which of the two is actually happening in his own sitting.

GATHA 0310

Faith and Trust

Trust, the child and the father

मराठी मूळ

काय कळे बाळा । बाप सदैव दुबळा ॥१॥
 आहे नाहीं हें न कळे । हातीं काय कोण्या वेळे ॥२॥
 देखिलें तें दृष्टी । मागे घालूनियां मिठी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे भावें । माझ्या मज समजावें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*What does a child know of whether its father is forever poor?**It cannot tell what is and what is not, or what will come into its hands and when.**Whatever it sees, it runs and clings to.**Says Tuka, through my devotion, may You console me and make me understand.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

What does a small child know? It does not know whether its father is poor for good. It cannot tell what there is and what there is not, or what will come into the father's hands and when. Whatever it sees in front of it, it runs and throws its arms around. Tuka says: with love, make my own self clear to me; help me understand.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram makes himself the small child and God the father, and the point is the child's complete unknowing. A child has no idea whether the family is poor or provided for, what is coming or when; it simply grasps whatever is in front of it. That ignorance is offered not as a fault but as the very ground of trust: the child does not need to understand the household's accounts to belong to the father. Out of that helplessness Tukaram makes his request, asking God in love to make him understand his own true self and condition, since he cannot reach it on his own.

GATHA 0311

Social Criticism

Social criticism, devotion bent toward gain

मराठी मूळ

भजन घाली भोगावरी । अकर्तव्य मनीं धरी ॥१॥
 धिग त्याचें साधुपण । विटाळूनी वर्ते मन ॥२॥
 नाहीं वैराग्याचा लेश । अर्थचाड जावें आस ॥३॥
 हें ना तें सें जालें । तुका म्हणे वायां गेलें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One who uses devotion merely for worldly enjoyment, harboring improper desires in the mind: shame on such saintliness.

The mind moves steeped in impurity, without even a trace of dispassion, driven only by greed for wealth.

Says Tuka, being neither this nor that, it has all gone to waste.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A man who turns his worship toward enjoyment, who holds forbidden desires in his mind: shame on his saintliness. His mind moves about defiled. There is not a trace of dispassion in him, only craving for wealth and the hope of getting it. He has become neither this nor that. Tuka says: it has all gone to waste.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram exposes a religion practiced as a means to pleasure and gain. The man performs his bhajan, but he aims it at enjoyment and keeps improper longings alive in his mind, so the holiness he wears is shameful. There is no vairagya, no detachment, in him at all; what drives him is greed for wealth and the appetite to acquire. The killing phrase is that he ends up neither this nor that, neither a true worldly man nor a true renunciate, falling between both. The wreck is total: such a life, the poem says, goes wholly to waste, and the listener is left to check his own motive in worship.

GATHA 0312

True Worship

True worship, the vow of Ekadashi

मराठी मूळ

एकादशीस अन्न पान । जे नर करिती भोजन । श्वानविष्टे समान । अधम जन तो एक ॥१॥
 ऐका व्रताचें महिमान । नेमैं आचरती जन । गाती ऐकतीं हरिकीर्तन । ते समान विष्णूशीं ॥२॥
 अशुद्ध विटाळसीचें खळ । विडा भिक्षतां तांबूल । सांपडे सबळ । काळाहातीं न सुटे ॥३॥
 सेज बाज विलास भोग । करी कामिनीशीं संग । तया जोडे क्षयरोग । जन्मव्याधी बळिवंत ॥४॥
 आपण न वजे हरिकीर्तना । अणिकां वारी जातां कोणा । त्याच्या पापें जाणा । ठेंगणा महा मेरु ॥५॥
 तया दंडी यमदूत । जाले तयाचे अंकित । तुका म्हणे व्रत । एकादशी चुकलीया ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those who eat food on Ekadashi are equal to dog's excrement, the lowest of people.

But hear the glory of this sacred vow: those who observe it with discipline, who sing and listen to the praises of Hari, become equal to Vishnu himself.

One who chews betel during the impure period falls into the grip of mighty Death and cannot escape.

One who indulges in luxurious beds and the company of women invites a wasting disease that persists through lifetimes.

One who neither goes to Hari's kirtan nor lets others go bears sins so heavy they would dwarf even Mount Meru.

Says Tuka, Yama's servants punish such a one who has broken the vow of Ekadashi.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Those who eat and drink on Ekadashi are like the dung of a dog, the lowest of men. But hear the greatness of this vow: those who keep it faithfully, who sing and listen to the kirtan of Hari, become equal to Vishnu himself. One who takes betel and pan in the impure time is caught by mighty Death and does not get free of his hand. One who gives himself to soft beds and pleasures and the company of women earns a wasting disease, a strong sickness that follows through births. One who neither goes to Hari's kirtan himself nor lets anyone else go, know that his sin is so great it makes mighty Mount Meru look small. The servants of Yama punish such a man and make him their own. Tuka says: this is for one who has broken the vow of Ekadashi.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram praises the Ekadashi vow by setting its reward and its ruin side by side in stark terms. To keep the fast, and to spend the day singing and hearing the kirtan of Hari, lifts a person to the level of Vishnu; to break it for food, betel, beds, or company drags them down toward Death, disease that trails through lifetimes, and the punishments of Yama. The harshest line is reserved not for the one who merely lapses but for the one who blocks others from kirtan, whose sin is said to dwarf Mount Meru. The fierce images are aimed at the pattern of letting appetite override the day given to God, and at the worse pattern of standing between others and that day.

GATHA 0313

The Moral Ideal

Moral teaching, never break a vow

मराठी मूळ

करवितां व्रत अर्धे पुण्य लाभे । मोडवितां दोघे नरका जाती ॥१॥
 शुद्धबुद्धि होय दोघां एक मान । चोरासवें कोण जिवें राखे ॥२॥
 आपुलें देऊनी आपुला चि घात । न करावा थीत जाणोनियां ॥३॥
 देऊनियां वेच धाडी वाराणसी । नेदावें चोरासि चंद्रबळ ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे तप तीर्थ व्रत याग । भक्ति हे मारग मोडूं नये ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

By encouraging another's vow, you earn half the merit; by causing someone to break it, both go to hell.

When the intention is pure, both share equal honor, but who would protect a thief?

Do not knowingly bring about your own ruin by giving away your merit.

Send someone to Kashi at your expense, but do not lend strength to a thief.

Says Tuka, the paths of austerity, pilgrimage, vows, sacrifice, and devotion must never be obstructed.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Help another keep a vow and you gain half its merit. Cause someone to break it and both of you go to hell. When the intention is pure, both share one honor; but who would keep a thief alive? Do not knowingly ruin yourself by giving your own merit away. Spend your money to send a man to Varanasi; do not lend your strength to a thief. Tuka says: the paths of austerity, pilgrimage, vows, sacrifice, and devotion must never be broken.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram lays down a plain rule about other people's spiritual practice: support it and you share its fruit, obstruct it and you share the punishment. To help someone hold a vow earns half its merit; to make them break it sends both to hell, because the helper of wrongdoing is no better than a thief. He sharpens it with a contrast: gladly spend your wealth to send someone on pilgrimage to Kashi, but never lend your strength to one who would rob another of merit. The closing line widens the rule to every sacred path, austerity, pilgrimage, vows, sacrifice, devotion, none of which a person should ever stand in the way of.

GATHA 0314

The Power of the Name

The Name, the marketplace of grace

मराठी मूळ

इनामाची भरली पेठ । वाहाती दाट मारग ॥१॥
 अवघेची येती वाण । अवघे शकुन लाभाचे ॥२॥
 अडचणी त्या केल्या दुरी । देण्या उरी घेण्याच्या ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे जोडी जाली । ते आपुली आपणा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The marketplace of divine gifts is full to overflowing, and the roads are bustling with traffic.

Every kind of goods arrives, and every sign points to profit.

All obstacles have been cleared away; receiving far outweighs giving.

Says Tuka, the gain that has come is truly our own.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The marketplace of grace is full to overflowing, and the roads to it are packed and busy. Every kind of goods is coming in, and every sign points to profit. The obstacles have been cleared away; there is far more to receive than there is to give. Tuka says: the gain that has come is our very own.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram pictures the Name and grace of God as a thriving market open for trade. The stalls overflow, the roads are crowded, every kind of merchandise has arrived, and every omen points to profit, his way of saying that the wealth of God is freely available right now to anyone who comes. The barriers that once stood in the way have been removed, and the bargain is lopsided in the buyer's favor: what you receive far outweighs the little you put in. The closing turn makes it personal and permanent. This gain is not borrowed or on loan; it has become our own.

GATHA 0315

The Power of the Name

The Name, the simple road across

मराठी मूळ

वेदाचें गव्हर न कळे पाठकां । अधिकार लोकां नाहीं येरां ॥१॥
 विठोबाचें नाम सुलभ सोपारें । तारी एक सरे भवसिंधु ॥२॥
 जाणत्या असाध्य मंत्र तंत्र काळ । येर तो सकळ मूढ लोक ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे विधि निषेध लोपला । उच्छेद या जाला मारगाचा ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The depths of the Vedas cannot be grasped by mere reciters, and ordinary people have no authority over them.

The name of Vitthal is easy and simple; it alone carries one across the ocean of worldly existence.

Mantras and rituals are difficult even for the learned, and the rest of the world is foolish.

Says Tuka, the path of scriptural rules has been lost, and the way itself has been destroyed.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The deep meaning of the Vedas is beyond the reciters; ordinary people have no right to it at all. But the name of Vithoba is easy and simple. That alone carries you across the ocean of this world. Mantras and rituals and the right timings are hard even for the learned, and all the rest of the people are fools before them. Tuka says: the rules of what to do and what not to do have fallen away. The whole old path has been broken open.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram sets the locked door of Vedic learning against the open door of the Name. The depths of the Vedas are beyond mere reciters, and most people were never granted the authority to approach them at all; even the learned struggle with the right mantras, rites, and astrological timings. Against this whole apparatus he holds up one thing: the name of Vithoba, easy, simple, available to anyone, and by itself enough to carry a soul across the ocean of worldly existence. The closing claim is deliberately radical. The old machinery of permitted and forbidden has collapsed and the gatekept path is broken open, because the Name has made it unnecessary.

GATHA 0316

Worldly Life

The one duty, against cleverness

मराठी मूळ

विधीनें सेवन । विषयत्यागातें समान ॥१॥
 मुख्य धर्म देव चितीं । आदि अवसान अंतीं ॥२॥
 बहु अतिशय खोटा । तर्कें होती बहु वाटा ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे भावें । कृपा करीजेते देवें ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Enjoying the senses according to scriptural injunction is equal to renouncing them.

The chief duty is to hold God in one's chitta, from beginning to end.

Excessive cleverness is false; logic only multiplies paths.

Says Tuka, through devotion, God bestows grace.

IN PLAIN WORDS

To enjoy the senses as the scriptures allow is the same as giving them up. The chief duty is to hold God in the mind, at the beginning, through the middle, and at the end. Too much cleverness is false; reasoning only opens many roads. Tuka says: God gives his grace to the one who has love.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram cuts the knot between enjoying the world and renouncing it. If you receive what the senses bring as the scriptures permit, with God held in the mind, that holding is itself a renunciation; the one duty underneath every rule is to keep God in the heart from start to finish. He then names the false road: clever argument, which does not lead home but only forks into more and more paths. The one thing that draws grace is not sharpness of mind but love.

GATHA 0317

True Worship

True worship, treasure in Vaikuntha

मराठी मूळ

येथीचिया अळंकारें । काय खरें पूजन ॥१॥
 वैकुंठीच्या लावूं वाटा । सर्व साटा ते ठायीं ॥२॥
 येथीचिया नाशवंतें । काय रितें चाळवूं ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे वैष्णव जेन । माझे गण समुदाय ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

What true worship can be done with the perishable ornaments of this world?

Let us set our sights on the path to Vaikuntha; all our real wealth lies there.

Why be deceived by these perishable things?

Says Tuka, the Vaishnavas are my people, my community.

IN PLAIN WORDS

What real worship can be done with the perishing ornaments of this world? Let us set out on the road to Vaikuntha; all our wealth is stored there. Why let these perishing things deceive us for nothing? Tuka says: the Vaishnavas are my people, my own company.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram asks what kind of worship can rest on things that rot, and answers that none can. Real worship and real wealth belong in Vaikuntha, God's own realm, so that is where the heart should travel. To be fooled by perishable goods is to be cheated of nothing for nothing. He closes by naming where he truly belongs: among the Vaishnavas, the devotees of God, who are his people and his company.

GATHA 0318

Autobiography

Vocation, the spoken word of Vitthal

मराठी मूळ

उजळावया आलों वाटा । खरा खोटा निवाड ॥१॥
 बोलविले बोल बोलें । धनीविठ्ठला सन्निध ॥२॥
 तरी मनीं नाहीं शंका । बळें एका स्वामीच्या ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे नये आम्हां । पुढें कामा गबाळ ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I have come to illumine the path and distinguish the true from the false.

I speak only the words I am made to speak, for my master Vitthal stands near.

There is no doubt in my mind, for I have the strength of my one Lord.

Says Tuka, worthless things are of no use to us hereafter.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I have come to light up the road and to settle what is true and what is false. I speak only the words I am made to speak, for my master Vitthal stands near. There is no doubt in my mind, for I have the strength of my one Lord. Tuka says: shoddy, worthless stuff will not serve us in what lies ahead.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes his own work and where its authority comes from. His task is to clear the path and to draw the line between the true and the false, but he insists the words are not his own invention: Vitthal stands near and puts them in his mouth. Because the strength is his one Lord's and not his own, there is no doubt left in him to argue with. The warning at the end is plain: anything cheap or impure will be useless when we face what comes after this life.

GATHA 0319

The Moral Ideal

Moral nerve, speak only what is righteous

मराठी मूळ

बोलावें तें धर्मा मिळे । बरे डोळे उघडूनि ॥१॥
 काशासाठीं खावें शेण । जेणें जन थुंकी तें ॥२॥
 दुजें ऐसें काय बळी । जें या जाळी अग्नीसि ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे शूर रणीं । गाढें मनीं बुरबुरी ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Speak that which adds to righteousness, with eyes wide open.**Why eat cow dung that makes everyone spit in disgust?**What else is so powerful that it burns away sin? Says Tuka, the tongue that speaks truth is the real fire.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Speak only what adds to righteousness; keep your eyes wide open. Why eat dung that makes everyone spit in disgust? What else is so strong that it can burn sin to ash? Tuka says: a man is a hero on the battlefield, but inside he trembles like a coward.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram tells the tongue to speak with open eyes and to say only what serves righteousness. He makes the alternative repulsive: foul, shameful speech is like eating dung, and it leaves everyone spitting in disgust, so why choose it. Truthful, righteous speech is named as the rare fire strong enough to burn sin away. The closing line turns the mirror inward: a person can look brave in the open while quietly cowering within, and the test is whether the heart matches the show.

GATHA 0320

Autobiography

Gratitude, saved by lowliness

मराठी मूळ

बरा कुणबी केलों । नाहीं तरि दंभेंचि असतों मेलों ॥१॥
 भलें केलें देवराया । नाचे तुका लागे पायां ॥२॥
 विद्या असती कांहीं । तरी पडतों अपायीं ॥३॥
 सेवा चुकतों संताची । नागवण हे फुकाची ॥४॥
 गर्व होता ताठा । जातों यमपंथें वाटा ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे थोरपणें । नरक होती अभिमानें ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

It is good that I was made a simple farmer, otherwise I would have died of pride. You have done well, O God; Tuka dances and falls at your feet.

Had I possessed any learning, I would have fallen into ruin. I would have missed the service of the saints; that would have been a pointless loss.

With pride and arrogance, I would have walked the road to Yama's city. Says Tuka, through self-importance and ego, people earn themselves a place in hell.

IN PLAIN WORDS

It is good that I was made a simple farmer; otherwise I would have died in my own pride. You did well, O God; Tuka dances and falls at your feet. Had I owned any learning, I would have fallen into ruin. I would have missed the service of the saints, and that would have been a loss for nothing. With pride and stiffness I would have walked the road to Yama's city. Tuka says: through self-importance and ego, people make themselves a hell.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram thanks God for his low station, reading his poverty as a rescue rather than a misfortune. Had he been learned or grand, he is sure pride would have ruined him and pulled him away from serving the saints, which is the one gain worth having. He traces where that pride leads: down the road to Yama, the god of death, and into hell. So he dances and falls at God's feet, treating his humble life as the very mercy that kept his ego from destroying him.

GATHA 0321

Surrender and Acceptance

Surrender, all is Govinda

मराठी मूळ

दाता नारायण । स्वयें भोगिता आपण ॥१॥
 आतां काय उरलें वाचे । पुढें शब्द बोलायाचे ॥२॥
 देखती जे डोळे । रूप आपुलें तें खेळे ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे नाद । जाला अवघा गोविंद ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Narayana is the giver, and he himself is the enjoyer.

What words then remain for the tongue to speak?

The eyes that see are themselves God's guise.

Says Tuka, even these hands and feet are instruments of God.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Narayana is the giver, and he himself is the one who enjoys. What is left now for the tongue to say? The eyes that see are his own form at play. Tuka says: the whole of sound has become Govinda.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram lets the line between God and the self dissolve completely. If Narayana is both the one who gives and the one who receives and enjoys, then there is nothing left for the separate speaker to claim, and the tongue falls quiet. Even seeing is God's own form playing through the eyes. By the end every sound is Govinda himself, so worship and worshipper, word and listener, have collapsed into one.

GATHA 0322

Prayers

Prayer, do not let me drown

मराठी मूळ

कृपा करुनी देवा । मज साच तें दाखवा ॥१॥
 तुम्ही दयावंत कैसे । कीर्ति जगामाजी वसे ॥२॥
 पाहोनियां डोळां । हातीं ओढवाल काळा ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे देवा । माझा करावा कुठावा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

O God, show me by your grace what is truly real.

Your honor will be lost if you abandon me, and ruin is written on my forehead.

Will you watch with open eyes as I drown?

Says Tuka, I place my head at your feet; now do as you will.

IN PLAIN WORDS

By your grace, O God, show me what is truly real. How merciful you are; your fame lives all through the world. Will you watch with open eyes while ruin drags me away by the hand? Tuka says: O God, make me wholly your own.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram prays to be shown what is real, and presses God with God's own reputation. The world calls you merciful, he says, so will you really stand and watch, eyes open, as I am dragged off to ruin. He puts God's honor on the line: to abandon him would stain the very fame for kindness that fills the world. The plea ends simply, asking God to claim him entirely as his own.

GATHA 0323

Prayers

Prayer, your honor is at stake

मराठी मूळ

ठायींची ओळखी । येइल टाकुं टाका सुखीं ॥१॥
 तुमचा जाईल ईमान । माझे कपाळीं पतन ॥२॥
 ठेविला तो ठेवा । अभिळाषें बुडवावा ॥३॥
 मनीं न विचारा । तुका म्हणे हे दातारा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*If you recognize me as your own from the very beginning, then abandon me happily if you wish.**Your honor will be at stake, and ruin will be written on my forehead.**Whatever you have placed as my lot, let it remain.**Says Tuka, I leave all in your keeping.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

You have known me as your own from the start; abandon me freely now if you like. But your honor will be the thing that goes, and ruin will be written on my forehead. Whatever lot you have placed on me, let it stay. Tuka says: do not turn it over in your mind, O giver.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram dares God with a kind of holy bluntness: you have recognized me as yours from the beginning, so go ahead and drop me if you wish. But he names the cost to God, not to himself: it is God's good name that would be lost, even as ruin lands on Tukaram's own head. He accepts whatever fate God has set for him without complaint. The last line asks the generous Lord not to deliberate or weigh the matter, but simply to hold him.

GATHA 0324

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, holding God within

मराठी मूळ

तुझें वर्म ठावें । माझ्या पाडियेलें भावें ॥१॥
 रूप कासवाचे परी । धरुनि राहेन अंतरीं ॥२॥
 नेदी होऊं तुटी । मेळवीन दृष्टादृष्टी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे देवा । चिंतन ते तुझी सेवा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*I know your weak point, and I have won you over through devotion.**Like a tortoise that withdraws its limbs, I will hold your form steadfastly within.*

I will not let it become anything else; I will not release the grip.

Says Tuka, what can the world do now? I have seized the Lord.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I know your weak point; I have brought you down by my love. Like a tortoise drawing in its limbs, I will hold your form and stay within. I will not let the bond break; I will keep our eyes meeting, sight to sight. Tuka says: O God, this remembering of you is itself my service to you.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks with the boldness of a lover who has found God's one soft spot, and that weak point is devotion itself. Like a tortoise pulling its limbs inside, he draws God's form deep within and clamps down so the grip cannot loosen. He refuses to let the bond snap, keeping gaze locked on gaze. The final turn is gentle: simply holding God in remembrance, contemplating him without pause, is the whole of the worship he owes.

GATHA 0325

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, sift grain from grit

मराठी मूळ

गहूँ एकजाती । परी त्या पाधाणी नासिती ॥ १ ॥
वर्म जाणावें तें सार । कोठें काय थोडें फार ॥ २ ॥
कमाईच्या सारें । जाति दाविती प्रकार ॥ ३ ॥
तुका म्हणे मोल । गुणा मिथ्या फिके बोल ॥ ४ ॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Wheat is of one kind, yet stones mixed in ruin it.

Know the essential secret and discern where the impurity lies, however small.

By the quality of one's spiritual earnings, the whole harvest is judged.

Says Tuka, sift carefully; the pure and impure must be separated.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Wheat is all one kind, yet the stones mixed in spoil it. Know the essential secret: see where the flaw lies, however small, and how much there is. By the quality of what one has earned, the whole grade is shown. Tuka says: it is worth that counts; false talk is flat and tasteless.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram uses the threshing floor to talk about the inner life. Good wheat is ruined not by being a poor grain but by the grit mixed into it, so the secret is to find the flaw, however small, and measure it honestly. A person is graded by the real quality of what they have earned within, not by appearances. The closing line states the standard plainly: genuine worth is what counts, and hollow, boastful words are stale and have no taste.

GATHA 0326

The Power of the Name

The Name, the names of the good

मराठी मूळ

पुण्यवंत व्हावें । घेतां सज्जनांची नांवें ॥१॥
 नेघे माझे वाचे तुटी । महा लाभ फुकासाठी ॥२॥
 विश्रांतीचा ठाव । पायीं संतांचिया भाव ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे जपें । संतांचिया जाती पापें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Simply by taking the names of the good, one becomes virtuous. My tongue will not cease from this; it is a great gain gotten free.

The feet of the saints are the resting place; devotion there brings peace. Says Tuka, by repeating the names of the saints, sins are destroyed.

IN PLAIN WORDS

One becomes holy just by taking the names of the good. My tongue will not stop doing it; here is a great gain had for free. The feet of the saints are the resting place; put your trust there. Tuka says: by repeating the saints' names, sins fall away.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram makes the practice almost absurdly simple: merely speaking the names of holy people makes a person holy, and since it costs nothing, it is a great gain had for free. He vows his tongue will never cease the practice. The feet of the saints are the one true resting place, and faith should be set there. Repeating their names, he says, is enough to wear sins away.

GATHA 0327

The Saints

Company decides, longing is the strength

मराठी मूळ

देव होईजेत देवाचे संगती । पतन पंगती जगाचिया ॥१॥
 दोहींकडे दोन्ही वाहातील वाटा । करितील सांटा आपुलाला ॥२॥
 दाखविले परी नाहीं वर्जिजेतां । आला तो तो चित्ता भाग भरा ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे अंगीं आवडीचें बळ । उपदेश मूळबीजमात्र ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

In the company of God one becomes godly; in the company of the world one falls.

Both paths lead in their own direction, each gathering its own kind.

Though it has been shown many times, what cannot be restrained floods the chitta with its own nature.

Says Tuka, the strength lies in one's own longing. Teaching is merely the root-seed.

IN PLAIN WORDS

In the company of God one becomes godly; in the company of the world one falls. The two roads run their own ways, each gathering its own kind. Though this has been shown again and again, what cannot be held back floods the mind with its own nature. Tuka says: the strength is in your own longing; teaching is only the root-seed.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram says the company you keep decides what you become: keep God's company and you grow godly, keep the world's and you sink. The two roads diverge and each one draws its own sort of person along it. The hard truth is that knowing this does not settle it; a person's own ingrained nature keeps flooding the mind no matter how often the lesson is taught. So the real power is the soul's own longing for God; instruction is only the seed, and longing is what must make it grow.

GATHA 0328

The Necessity of Experience

God dissolves all things, the unmaking

मराठी मूळ

शोधिसील मूळें । त्याचें करीसी वाटोळें ॥ १ ॥
 ऐसे संतांचे बोभाट । तुझे बहु जाले तट ॥ २ ॥
 लौकिका बाहेरी । घाली रोंखीं जया धरी ॥ ३ ॥
 तुका म्हणे गुण । तुझा लागलिया शून्य ॥ ४ ॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When you search anything to its root, you destroy it utterly.

Such is the outcry of the saints: your shores of argument are too many.

You cast beyond all worldly convention whoever you seize.

Says Tuka, when Your nature touches anything, it becomes zero.

IN PLAIN WORDS

When you trace a thing down to its root, you break it apart completely. This is the saints' loud cry: your banks of argument are many. Whoever you take hold of, you cast outside all worldly custom. Tuka says: when your nature touches a thing, it turns to zero.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is describing what happens when God's reality is brought to bear on anything. Pressed to its root, a thing loses its standing; the saints cry out that there is no settling on the safe shore of argument, because every position breaks down. When God lays hold of a person, that person is thrown outside the ordinary rules of society. The

poem names the stakes plainly: contact with God reduces every separate thing, every claim, every appearance, to nothing.

GATHA 0329

Faith and Trust

Faith, the limits of human means

मराठी मूळ

वैद वाचविती जीवा । तरी कोण ध्यातें देवा ॥१॥
 काय जाणों कैसी परी । प्रारब्ध तें ठेवी उरी ॥२॥
 नवसें कन्यापुत्र होती । तरि कां करणें लागे पती ॥३॥
 जाणे हा विचार । स्वामी तुकयाचा दातार ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

If physicians could truly save lives, who would then remember God?

Who knows in what manner destiny keeps something in reserve?

If vows alone could produce sons and daughters, why would a husband be needed?

He who knows this truth is Tuka's Lord, the generous giver.

IN PLAIN WORDS

If physicians could save lives, who would still meditate on God? Who knows in what way destiny holds something back? If vows alone made sons and daughters, why would a husband be needed? Tuka says: the one who knows this truth is Tuka's Lord, the generous giver.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram tests the things people lean on instead of God. He notes that doctors do not finally save us and vows do not by themselves produce children, so the credit people give to human means is misplaced. Behind every outcome stands destiny, which keeps its own reserve no one can read. The poem lands on where real reliance belongs: the Lord, the generous giver, is the one who truly knows and holds these matters.

GATHA 0330

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, the road already cleared

मराठी मूळ

मारगीं बहुत । या चि गेले साधुसंत ॥१॥
 नका जाऊ आडराणें । ऐसीं गर्जती पुराणें ॥२॥
 चोखाळिल्या वाटा । न लगे पुसाव्या धोपटा ॥३॥
 झळकती पताका । गरुड टके म्हणे तुका ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Many saints and holy ones have already traveled this road.

The scriptures declare aloud: do not wander off on side paths.

The way has already been cleared; there is no need to ask for the broad highway.

Banners flutter along the route. Says Tuka, it bears the stamp of the Garuda coin.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Many saints and holy ones have already gone this way. Do not wander off on side paths: so the scriptures cry aloud. The road has been swept clean; you need not ask for the broad highway. Banners flutter along it. Tuka says: it bears the stamp of the Garuda coin.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram urges the seeker to take the proven path of devotion rather than strike out alone. The saints have already walked this road, and the scriptures themselves warn against straying onto side tracks. Because the way has been cleared and marked, there is no need to hunt for some other route; the banners of the pilgrims show where it runs. He stamps it as genuine, like coin marked with Garuda, the trusted mark: this is the safe and tested way home.

GATHA 0331

Devotion to Vitthal

Pilgrimage joy, Pandhari at Kartik

मराठी मूळ

कार्तिकीचा सोहळा । चला जाऊं पाहूं डोळां । आले वैकुंठ जवळां । सन्निध पंढरीये ॥१॥
 पीक पिकलें घुमरी । प्रेम न समाये अंबरीं । अवघी मातली पंढरी । घरोघरीं सुकाळ ॥२॥
 चालती स्थिर स्थिर । गरुड टकयांचे भार । गर्जती गंभीर । टाळ श्रुति मृदंग ॥३॥
 मळिलिया भद्रजाती । कैशा आनंदें डुलती । शूर उठावती । एका एक आगळे ॥४॥
 नामामृत कल्लोळ । वृंदें कोंदलीं सकळ । आले वैष्णवदळ । कळिकाळ कांपती ॥५॥
 आस करिती ब्रम्हादिक । देखुनि वाळवंटीचें सुख । धन्य धन्य मृत्युलोक । म्हणती भाग्याचे कैसे ॥६॥
 मरण मुक वाराणसी । पितृऋण गया नासी । उधार नाहीं पंढरीसि । पायापाशीं विठोबाच्या ॥७॥
 तुका म्हणे आतां । काय करणें आम्हां चिंता । सकळ सिद्धींचा दाता । तो सर्वथा नुपेक्षी ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Come, let us go see the festival of Kartik with our own eyes. Vaikuntha has come near, right here at Pandharpur.

The harvest of love is overflowing; even the sky cannot contain it. All of Pandhari is intoxicated, with abundance in every home.

Stately processions of Garuda banners move with a steady pace, and the deep sounds of cymbals, chanting, and drums resound. Noble elephants sway with joy, and heroes rise, each surpassing the other.

Waves of the nectar of the Name fill the air, and all the gatherings are brimming. The host of Vaishnavas has arrived, and even Death trembles before them.

Brahma and the other gods look on with longing at the joy on the sands and say: blessed, blessed are these mortals, how fortunate they are. Kashi grants liberation at death, Gaya frees one from ancestral debts, but at Pandharpur, at Vitthoba's feet, there is no such delay.

Says Tuka, what worry remains for us now? The giver of all accomplishments will never forsake us.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Come, let us go see the Kartik festival with our own eyes. Vaikuntha has come near, right here at Pandhari. The harvest of love has ripened and overflows; the sky cannot hold it. All of Pandhari is drunk with joy, and there is abundance in every home. The processions of Garuda banners move at a steady pace, and cymbals, chanting, and drums sound deep. Noble elephants sway with joy, and heroes rise, each greater than the last. Waves of the nectar of the Name fill the air, and all the gatherings are brimming. The host of Vaishnavas has come, and Death itself trembles. Brahma and the other gods look on with longing at the joy on the sands and say: blessed, blessed are these mortals, how fortunate they are. Kashi grants release at death, Gaya frees one from the debt to the ancestors, but at Pandhari, at Vithoba's feet, there is no waiting. Tuka says: what worry is left for us now? The giver of all that is sought will never forsake us.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram calls everyone to the great Kartik gathering at Pandharpur and tells them that heaven is not somewhere else: Vaikuntha has come down to the riverbank here. He paints the festival as a ripened harvest of love so full it spills past the sky, with processions, drums, and the Name sounding everywhere until even Death shakes. He raises the stakes by comparing Pandhari to the famous holy cities: Kashi gives liberation only at death and Gaya pays off the ancestral debt, but at Vithoba's feet the gift comes now, with no delay. The closing turn is the point: when the giver of everything is this near and this generous, the devotee has nothing left to fear.

GATHA 0332

Devotion to Vitthal

Pilgrimage, the city that burns sin

मराठी मूळ

जया दोषां परीहार । नाहीं नाहीं धुंडितां शास्त्र । ते हरती अपार । पंढरपुर देखिलिया ॥१॥
 धन्य धन्य भीमातीर । चंद्रभागा सरोवर । पद्मातीर्थी विठ्ठल वीर । क्रीडास्थळ वेणुनादीं ॥२॥
 सकळतीर्थांचें माहेर । भूवैकुंठ निर्विकार । होतो नामाचा गजर । असुरकाळ कांपती ॥३॥
 नाहीं उपमा द्यावया । सम तुल्य आणिका ठाया । धन्य भाग्य जयां । जे पंढरपूर देखती ॥४॥
 उपजोनि संसारीं । एक वेळ पाहें पा पंढरी । महा दोषां कैची उरी । देवभक्त देखिलिया ॥५॥
 ऐसी विष्णूची नगरी । चतुर्भुज नर नारी । सुदर्शन घरटी करी । रीग न पुरे कळिकाळा ॥६॥
 तें सुख वर्णावया गति । एवढी कैची मज मति । जे पंढरपुरा जाती । ते पावती वैकुंठ ॥७॥
 तुका म्हणे या शब्दाचा । जया विश्वास नाहीं साचा । अधम जन्मांतरिचा । तया पंढरी नावडे ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those sins for which no remedy can be found even after searching all the scriptures are destroyed simply by seeing Pandharpur. Blessed, blessed is the bank of the Bhima, the lake of the Chandrabhaga.

Vitthal, the hero, stands at Padmatirtha, his playground of the flute's melody. Pandharpur is the mother-home of all sacred places, the Vaikuntha on earth, beyond all duality.

The chanting of the Name resounds there, and demons and Death tremble. There is no comparison to be given; no other place is its equal.

Blessed is the fortune of those who behold Pandharpur. If you are born in this world, see Pandhari just once.

When you behold God and his devotees, even the greatest sins cannot survive. Such is Vishnu's city, where men and women bear four-armed forms, where the Sudarshana discus makes its nest, and where Death itself cannot enter.

The bliss of that place is beyond my capacity to describe. Says Tuka, those who go to Pandharpur attain Vaikuntha, and whoever does not trust these words is a wretch of many lifetimes; he will find no love for Pandhari.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The sins for which no remedy can be found, search the scriptures as you will, are destroyed past counting simply by seeing Pandharpur. Blessed, blessed is the bank of the Bhima, the lake of the Chandrabhaga. Vitthal the hero stands at Padmatirtha, his playground of the flute's song. Pandharpur is the mother-home of all holy places, the Vaikuntha on earth, beyond all change. The chanting of the Name resounds there, and demons and Death tremble. There is nothing to compare it to; no other place is its equal. Blessed is the fortune of those who behold Pandharpur. If you are born into this world, see Pandhari just once. When you behold God and his devotees, even the greatest sins cannot survive. Such is Vishnu's city: men and women bear four-armed forms, the Sudarshana discus makes its nest there, and Death cannot enter. The bliss of that place is beyond my power to describe. Tuka says: those who go to Pandharpur reach Vaikuntha; whoever does not truly trust these words is a wretch of many lifetimes, and Pandhari will hold no love for him.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram makes a sweeping claim: sins that no rite or scripture can wipe away are burned up just by the sight of Pandharpur. He praises the river Bhima, the Chandrabhaga, and Padmatirtha where Vitthal plays his flute, calling the town the source and mother of every holy place, a Vaikuntha set on earth. The stakes are framed against the other great pilgrimages and against death itself: this is Vishnu's own city, where Death cannot pass the gate. He ends with a sharp edge that the poem does not soften: to behold God and his devotees is to outlive every sin, and the one who will not trust this is named a soul wretched across many births, for whom even Pandhari holds no welcome.

GATHA 0333

Worldly Life

Worldly life, the two ditches

मराठी मूळ

एक नेणतां नाडली । एकां जाणिवेची भुली ॥१॥
दोहीं सवा नाड । विहीर एकीकडे आड ॥२॥
तुका म्हणे कर्म । तुझें कळों नेदी वर्म ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Some are ruined by ignorance; others are deluded by their own cleverness.

Both paths lead to trouble, like a well on either side of the road.

Says Tuka, your karma is such that it never lets you see the essential secret.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Some are ruined by not knowing; some are fooled by their own cleverness. Both ways lead to harm, like a well on one side of the road and a pit on the other. Tuka says: your karma is such that it never lets you see the heart of the matter.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram names two ways a person comes to grief, and they look like opposites: blank ignorance on one side, proud cleverness on the other. He gives the image of a road with a well on one edge and a hole on the other, so that veering either way ends in a fall. The trap is that knowing too little and thinking you know too much are both dead ends. He lays the cause at the door of karma, which keeps a person from ever seeing the secret that would let them walk straight between the two.

GATHA 0334

Prayers

Prayer, the confession of an empty show

मराठी मूळ

म्हणवितों दास । मज एवढी च आस ॥१॥
 परी ते अंगीं नाहीं वर्म । करीं आपुला तूं धर्म ॥२॥
 बडबडितों तोंडें । रितें भावेंविण धेंडें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे बरा । दावूं जाणतों पसारा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I wish to be called your servant; that is my only desire.

But I lack the true quality within me, so please fulfill your own nature, O Lord.

My mouth babbles on, but without genuine feeling it is an empty stump.

Says Tuka, I am good at putting on a show, nothing more.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I want to be called your servant; that is my only wish. But the real thing is not in me, so do your own work, Lord, and make me yours. My mouth babbles on, an empty stump with no true feeling behind it. Tuka says: I am good at putting on a show, nothing more.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram prays for one thing, to be counted God's servant, and in the same breath admits he has not earned the name. He confesses that the inner quality is missing: his worship is talk without feeling, a hollow stump making noise. Rather than hide this, he hands the work back to God, asking the Lord to supply by grace what he cannot

supply himself. The honesty is the prayer: he turns his own emptiness and his skill at mere display into a reason for God to act.

GATHA 0335

True Worship

True worship, contentment over strain

मराठी मूळ

पूजा समाधानें । अतिशयें वाढे सीण ॥१॥
 हें तों जाणां तुम्ही संत । आहे बोलिली ते नीत ॥२॥
 पाहिजे तें केलें । सहज प्रसंगीं घडलें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे माथा । पायीं ठेवीं तुम्हां संतां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

True worship lies in contentment; excessive effort only increases suffering.

You saints know this well; what has been spoken is the right way.

Whatever was needed was done; it happened naturally as the occasion arose.

Says Tuka, I place my head at the feet of you saints.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Worship rests in contentment; too much effort only swells the weariness. You saints know this; what has been said is the right way. Whatever was needed was done; it happened of itself as the moment came. Tuka says: I lay my head at your feet, you saints.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram says that real worship lives in a settled, contented heart, not in piling on more and more strenuous ritual, which only adds exhaustion. He appeals to the saints as those who already know this to be true. The right things, he notes, got done on their own when the occasion arose, without his forcing them. He closes by bowing his head at the saints' feet, placing himself under those who understand that ease and trust, not anxious effort, are the heart of devotion.

GATHA 0336

The Necessity of Experience

Awakening, the dream of bondage

मराठी मूळ

स्वप्नीचिया गोष्टी । मज धरिलें होतें वेठी । जालिया सेवटीं । जालें लटिकें सकळ ॥१॥
 वायां भाकिली करुणा । मूळ पावावया सिणा । राव रंक राणा । कैचे स्थानावरि आहे ॥२॥
 सोसिलें तें अंगें । खरें होतें नव्हतां जागें । अनुभव ही सांगे । दुःखें डोळे उघडीले ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे संतीं । सावचित केलें अंतीं । नाहीं तरि होती । टाळी बैसोनि राहिली ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The affairs of a dream had pressed me into bonded labor, but when it ended, everything was revealed as false. In vain I had cried out for mercy, laboring to reach the root of my suffering.

King, beggar, or queen: none remain where they were. What I endured in the body felt real only until I awoke; experience itself opened my eyes through pain.

Says Tuka, the saints finally made me alert; otherwise I would have sat there forever, hands folded, lost in delusion.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The affairs of a dream had pressed me into forced labor; when it ended, all of it was shown to be false. I had cried out for mercy in vain, laboring to reach the root of my suffering. King, beggar, queen: none stay where they stood. What I endured felt real only while I was not awake; experience itself opened my eyes through pain. Tuka says: at the end the saints made me alert; otherwise I would have stayed sitting there forever, hands folded, lost.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram treats this whole worldly life as a dream that held him in bonded labor, suffering and begging for mercy over things that proved false the moment he woke. He shows that the roles we cling to, king, beggar, queen, are all temporary; none holds its place. The pain itself was instructive, since it was through suffering that his eyes finally opened to the unreality of it all. The decisive turn is that he did not wake on his own: the saints roused him at last, and without them he would have sat on in the dream forever, hands folded in helpless delusion.

GATHA 0337

Social Criticism

Social criticism, character over caste

मराठी मूळ

आसुरी स्वभाव निर्दय अंतर । मानसीं निष्ठ अतिवादी ॥१॥
याति कुळ येथें असे अप्रमाण । गुणाचें कारण असे अंगीं ॥२॥
काळकुट पितळ सोनें शुद्ध रंग । अंगाचेंच अंग साक्ष देतें ॥३॥
तुका म्हणे बरी जातीसर्वें भेटी । नवनीत पोटीं सांटविलें ॥४॥
बाळपणीं हरि । खेळे मथुरेमाझारी । पार्यीं घागरिया सरी । कडदोरा वांकी ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A demonic temperament is merciless at heart, obstinate in mind, given to excessive argument. Caste and lineage count for nothing here; what matters is the quality within.

Poison, brass, and pure gold each reveal their nature by their own substance. Says Tuka, a true meeting is one with genuine goodness; like butter hidden in milk, it is stored within the heart.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A demonic nature is merciless within, hard in mind, given to endless argument. Caste and birth count for nothing here; what matters is the quality in a person. Poison, brass, pure gold: each shows its nature by its own substance. Tuka says: a true meeting is one with real goodness, like butter stored hidden inside the milk.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram measures a person by inner character, not by birth. He marks the cruel, stubborn, endlessly quarrelsome temperament as the demonic one, and says plainly that caste and lineage prove nothing about a person's worth. Like poison, brass, and gold, each thing declares what it really is by its own substance, not by its label. He keeps the edge on the pattern of cruelty itself: the meeting worth having is with genuine goodness, the butter quietly held inside the milk, which is found in the heart and not in the rank.

GATHA 0338

Krishna Leela

Krishna, the child who enchants Mathura

मराठी मूळ

मुख पाहे माता । सुख न माये चित्ता । धन्य मानव संचित्ता । वोडवलें आजि ॥१॥
 बाळ चांगलें वो । बाळ चांगलें वो । म्हणतां चांगलें । वेळ लागे तया बोलें ।
 जीवापरीस तें वाल्हे । मज आवडतें ॥२॥
 मिळोनियां याती । येती नारी कुमारी बहुती । नाही आठव त्या चित्तीं । देहभाव कांहीं ।
 विसरल्या घरे । तान्हीं पारठीं लेकुरें । धाक सांडोनियां येरें । तान भूक नाही ॥३॥
 एकी असतील घरीं । चित्त तयापासीं परी । वेगीं करोनि वोसरी । तेथें जाऊं पाहे ।
 लाज सांडियेली वोज । नाहीं फजितीचें काज । सुख सांडोनियां सेज । तेथें धाव घाली ॥४॥
 वेधियेल्या बाळा । नर नारी या सकळा । बाळा खेळवी अबला । त्याही विसरल्या ।
 कुमर कुमारी । नाभाव हा शरीरीं । दृष्टी न फिरे माघारी । तया देखतां हे ॥५॥
 वैरभाव नाही । आप पर कोणीं कांहीं । शोक मोह दुःख ठायीं । तया निरसलीं ।
 तुका म्हणे सुखी । केलीं आपणासारिखीं । स्वामी माझा कवतुकें । बाळवेषें खेळे ॥६॥
 अशोकाच्या वनीं सीता शोक करी । कां हों अंतरले रघुनाथ दुरी ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The mother gazes at the child's face, unable to contain the joy in her chitta. Blessed is the merit that has ripened today.

What a beautiful child, what a beautiful child! One could go on saying it forever; it is dearer to me than life itself. Women and girls gather from every clan, forgetting all sense of the body.

They forget their homes, their hungry and thirsty little ones; fear, thirst, and hunger all vanish. Even those who remain at home have their hearts drawn there, making excuses to rush to that place.

They abandon all modesty, leaving the comfort of their beds, and run. Young and old, men and women, all are enchanted by this child.

The women play with him and forget themselves. Boys and girls lose all bodily awareness; their gaze will not turn away once it falls upon him.

There is no enmity, no sense of mine and yours; sorrow, delusion, and suffering all dissolve. Says Tuka, my Lord has made everyone as joyful as himself, playing in the guise of a child for his own delight.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The mother gazes at the child's face, and the joy will not fit inside her heart. Blessed is the merit that has ripened today. What a beautiful child, what a beautiful child! You could say it forever; he is dearer to me than my own life. Women and girls gather from every clan and forget all sense of the body. They forget their homes, their hungry and thirsty little ones; fear, thirst, and hunger all vanish. Even those who stay home have their hearts pulled there, and make excuses to rush to that place. They drop all modesty, leave the comfort of their beds, and run. Young and old, men and women, all are enchanted by this child. The women play with him and forget themselves. Boys and girls lose all awareness of the body; once the gaze falls on him it will not turn back. There is no enmity, no sense of mine and yours; sorrow, delusion, and suffering all dissolve. Tuka says: my Lord has made everyone as joyful as himself, playing in the guise of a child for his own delight.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram pictures the child Krishna at play in Mathura and the helpless love he draws from everyone who sees him. The mother cannot contain her joy, and women and girls leave homes, beds, modesty, even their own crying children, to come and gaze at him, forgetting hunger, fear, and the body itself. The point under the scene is the power of God's beauty: once the eyes fall on him the gaze will not turn back, and in his presence the old divisions of mine and yours, along with sorrow and delusion, simply dissolve. Tukaram names the final stakes: the Lord takes the form of a playful child on purpose, and by it he makes everyone share in his own joy.

GATHA 0339

Sacred Stories

Mythology, Sita's lament in Lanka

मराठी मूळ

येउन गुंफेमाजी दुष्टें केली चोरी । कांहो मज आणिले अवघड लंकापुरी ॥१॥
 सांगा वो त्रीजटे सखिये ऐसी मात । देईल कां नेदी भेटी रघुनाथ ।
 मन उतावळि जाला दुरी पंथ । राहों न सके प्राण माझा कुडी आंत ॥२॥
 काय दुष्ट आचरण होतें म्यां केलें । तीर्थ व्रत होतें कवणाचें भंगीलें ।
 गाईवत्सा पत्नीपुरुषा विघडिलें । न कळे वो संचित चरण अंतरले ॥३॥
 नाडियेलें आशा मृगकांतिसोने । धाडिलें रघुनाथा पाठिलागे तेणें ।
 उलंघिली आज्ञा माव काय मी जाणें । देखुनी सूनाट घेउन आलें सुनें ॥४॥
 नाहीं मूळ मारग लाग अणीक सोये । एकाविण नामें रघुनाथाच्या माये ।
 उपटी पक्षिया एक देउन पाये । उदकवेढ्यामध्ये तेथें चाले काये ॥५॥
 जनकाची नंदिनी दुःखें ग्लानी थोरी । चुकली कुरंगिणी मेळा तैशा परी ।
 संमोखी त्रीजटा स्थिर स्थिर वो करी । घेइल तुकयास्वामी राम लंकापुरी ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Sita laments in the Ashoka grove: the wicked stole me away by stealth and brought me to this perilous Lanka. Why, O Rama, have you gone so far from me? Tell me, dear Trijata, my friend, will Raghunath grant me his sight or not? My heart is desperate, the distance is vast, and my life can scarcely remain in this body.

What evil did I commit? Whose pilgrimage or vow did I obstruct? Did I separate a cow from its calf or a wife from her husband? I cannot fathom what past deed has caused these feet to be taken from me. I was deceived by the illusion of a golden deer; Raghunath was sent chasing after it.

I violated his command, but what could I know of such sorcery? Seeing the place deserted, a demon carried me away. There is no path, no trail, no other recourse except the name of Raghunath alone.

A bird gave his life fighting with his wings; and I am trapped here, surrounded by water, unable to move. Janaka's daughter is overwhelmed with grief, like a doe separated from the herd.

Trijata consoles her: be steady, be steady; Says Tuka, my Lord Rama will come and reclaim Lanka.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Sita laments in the Ashoka grove: the wicked one stole me away by stealth; why was I brought to this dreadful Lanka? Why, O Rama, have you gone so far from me? Tell me, dear Trijata, my friend: will Raghunath grant me his sight or not? My heart is desperate, the road is long, and my life can hardly stay in this body. What wrong did I do? Whose pilgrimage or vow did I spoil? Did I part a cow from its calf, or a wife from her husband? I cannot tell what past deed has taken these feet from me. I was deceived by the longing for the golden deer; Raghunath was sent chasing after it. I broke his command, but what could I know of such sorcery? Seeing the place empty, a demon carried me off. There is no path, no trail, no other recourse, only the name of Raghunath. A bird gave his life fighting with his wings; and I am trapped here, ringed by water, unable to move. Janaka's daughter is overcome with grief, like a doe cut off from the herd. Trijata comforts her: be steady, be steady. Tuka says: my Lord Rama will come and reclaim Lanka.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram voices Sita in captivity, mourning in the Ashoka grove after Ravana's theft and crying out for the distant Rama. She searches her own conscience for what sin could have cost her his feet, and traces her plight back to her longing for the golden deer and her breaking of the protective command. Hemmed in by water with no path out, she has only one resource left, the name of Raghunath, the very thing the poem holds up as the refuge in despair. The closing turn shifts from her grief to assurance: through Trijata's steadying words and Tuka's own voice, the promise lands that Rama will come, take Lanka, and reclaim her.

GATHA 0340

Worldly Metaphors

The pure heart, naturally sweet

मराठी मूळ

वीट नेघे ऐसें रांधा । जेणें बाधा उपजे ना ॥१॥
 तरी च तें गोड राहे । निरें पाहे स्वयंभ ॥२॥
 आणिकां गुणां पोटीं वाव । दावी भाव आपुला ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे शुद्ध जाती । ते मागुती परतेना ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Cook in such a way that no one feels disgust with the food and no harm arises from it. Only then does it remain sweet, naturally and of its own accord.

Other qualities have emptiness at their core and merely display their nature outwardly. Says Tuka, what is pure by its very nature never turns back.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Cook so that the food takes no taint, so that no harm comes from it. Then it stays sweet, on its own, pure of itself. Other qualities are hollow at the core; they only show off what they are. Tuka says: what is pure by birth never turns back.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram uses cooking as the figure for a life and a heart. Food prepared cleanly, with nothing rotten worked into it, stays sweet of its own accord; nothing has to be added to make it good. He sets this against qualities that are empty inside and only display themselves outwardly, all surface and no substance. The point lands on inward purity: what is genuinely pure does not need to perform, and it does not lapse or turn back from itself.

GATHA 0341

Confession and Sin

Confession, finding the boat

मराठी मूळ

नव्हर्तो सावचित । तेणें अंतरलें हित ॥१॥
 पडिला नामाचा विसर । वाढविला संवसार ॥२॥
 लट्क्याचे पुरीं । वाहोनियां गेलों दुरी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे नाव । आम्हां सांपडला भाव ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I was not vigilant, and so my own welfare slipped away. I forgot the Name, and worldly life kept growing.

Carried far away on the current of falsehood, I drifted into the distance. Says Tuka, now I have found the boat of true devotion.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I was not watchful, and so my own good slipped away from me. I forgot the Name, and worldly life kept growing. On the flood of falsehood I was carried far off. Tuka says: now I have found the boat, true devotion.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram traces a single failure to its root: he stopped paying attention. Because he was not vigilant, he forgot the Name, and the more he forgot it the more worldly life swelled around him. He pictures himself swept far downstream on a current of falsehood, carried away from his own welfare. The turn comes at the end: he has found the boat, devotion itself, the one thing that can carry him back across the same flood that took him.

GATHA 0342

*The Necessity of Experience**No substitute for practice*

मराठी मूळ

अन्नाच्या परिमळें जरि जाय भूक । तरि कां हे पाक घरोघरीं ॥१॥
 आपुलालें तुम्ही करा रे स्वहित । वाचे स्मरा नित्य राम राम ॥२॥
 देखोनि जीवन जरि जाय तान । तरि कां सांटवण घरोघरीं ॥३॥
 देखोनियां छाया सुख न पवीजे । जंव न बैसीजे तया तळीं ॥४॥
 हित तरी होय गातां अईकतां । जरि राहे चित्ता दृढ भाव ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे होसी भावें चि तूं मुक्त । काय करिसी युक्त जाणिवेची ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

If the mere fragrance of food could satisfy hunger, why would anyone cook in every household? Seek your own highest good; let your tongue constantly repeat Rama, Rama. If merely seeing water could quench thirst, why would anyone store it at home? Just looking at the shade of a tree does not bring comfort until you actually sit beneath it.

Benefit comes from singing and hearing only when firm devotion takes root in the heart. Says Tuka, you become free through devotion alone; what use is the cleverness of mere knowledge?.

IN PLAIN WORDS

If the smell of food could end hunger, why would anyone cook in house after house? See to your own good. With your tongue say always: Rama, Rama. If the sight of water could end thirst, why would anyone store it in house after house? Looking at the shade brings no rest until you sit down under it. Singing and hearing help only when firm devotion holds in the heart. Tuka says: by devotion alone you are free. What use is your clever knowing?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram piles up plain examples to attack a single evasion: mistaking the idea of a thing for the thing. The smell of food does not feed you, the sight of water does not slake thirst, looking at shade does not cool you until you sit in it; in the same way, merely singing and hearing the Name does no good unless firm devotion takes root in the heart. So he tells the listener to see to his own welfare and actually repeat Rama with the tongue, not just admire the practice. The closing line names the stake: freedom comes through devotion alone, and the cleverness of knowledge, by itself, buys nothing.

GATHA 0343

Devotion to Vitthal

Adoration, all wealth at the feet

मराठी मूळ

काय उणें आम्हां विठोबाचे पाई । नाहीं ऐसैं काई येथें एक ॥१॥
 ते हें भोंवतालें ठायीं वांटूं मन । बराडी करून दारोदारीं ॥२॥
 कोण बळी माझ्या विठोबा वेगळा । आणीक आगळा दुजा सांगा ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे मोक्ष विठोबाचे गावीं । फुकाचीं लुटावीं भांडारें तीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

What is lacking at the feet of Vitthoba? Is there anything that cannot be found there? Why then should I scatter my mind in every direction, crying out from door to door? Who is mightier than my Vitthoba? Tell me, who else is greater? Says Tuka, liberation is found in Vitthoba's own village; those treasures may be plundered free of charge.

IN PLAIN WORDS

What is lacking for us at Vithoba's feet? Is there one thing not found here? Then why scatter my mind all around, begging door to door? Who is stronger than my Vithoba? Tell me, who else is greater? Tuka says: liberation is in Vithoba's own town; plunder those treasure houses, they cost nothing.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram asks why a person who already stands at Vithoba's feet would go begging anywhere else. Nothing is missing there, so scattering the mind from door to door is folly. He challenges the listener to name anyone mightier or greater than his Vithoba, and lets the silence answer. The closing image is bold: liberation is not a far reward to be earned but a treasure house standing open in the god's own town, free for the taking, so why hold back.

GATHA 0344

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, sharing the nectar

मराठी मूळ

सेवितों रस तो वांटितों आणिकां । घ्या रे होऊं नका राणभरी ॥१॥
 विटेवरी ज्याचीं पाउलें समान । तो चि एक दानशूर दाता ॥२॥
 मनाचे संकल्प पाववील सिद्धी । जरी राहे बुद्धी याचे पायीं ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे मज धाडिलें निरोपा । मारग हा सोपा सुखरूप ॥३॥
 ऐसे ऐसियानें भेटती ते साधु । ज्याच्या दरशनें तुटे भवबंदु ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I drink this nectar and distribute it to all. Take it, do not remain lost in worldly wandering.

He whose feet rest evenly upon the brick is the one true generous giver. He will fulfill every desire of the mind if the intellect remains fixed at his feet.

Says Tuka, he has sent me with this message: this path is easy and full of bliss.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I drink this nectar and share it out to all. Take it; do not stay lost in worldly wandering. He whose feet rest level on the brick is the one true open-handed giver. He will bring the mind's resolves to fulfillment, if the mind stays at his feet. Tuka says: he has sent me with this message. This road is easy; it is made of bliss. Going this way, you meet the saints, by whose sight the bond of birth and death is cut.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks as one already drinking the nectar of the Name and handing it around freely, urging others not to waste themselves wandering in the world. He names Vithoba, whose feet stand even on the brick at Pandhari, as the only truly generous giver, and promises that he fulfills the heart's longings on one condition: that the mind stay fixed at his feet. He frames himself as a messenger sent to report that the road is easy and made of joy, not the hard climb people fear. The last line names the reward: walking this way you fall in with the saints, and the mere sight of them cuts the bond of birth and death.

GATHA 0345

Devotion to Vitthal

The marks of one the saints visit

मराठी मूळ

जे कां सिच्चदानंदीं नित्यानंदु । जे कां मोक्षसिद्धी तीर्थ वंदूं रे ॥१॥
 भाव सर्वकारण मूळ वंदु । सदा समबुद्धि नास्ति भेदु ।
 भूतकृपा मोडीं द्वेषकंदु । शत्रु मित्र पुत्र सम करीं बंधु रे ॥२॥
 लघुत्व सर्वभावे अंगीकारीं । सांडीमांडी मीतूपण ऐसी थोरी रे ॥३॥
 अर्थकामचाड नाहीं चिंता । मानामान मोह माया मिथ्या ।
 वर्ते समाधानीं जाणोनि नेणता । साधु भेट देती तया अवचिता रे ॥४॥
 मनीं दृढ धरीं विश्वास । नाहीं सांडीमांडीचा सायास ।
 साधुदर्शन नित्यकाळ त्यास । तुका म्हणे जो विटला जाणीवेस रे ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let us bow to that eternal bliss which is pure being, consciousness, and joy, which is the liberation, the attainment, the holy place itself. Devotion is the root cause of everything; let us bow to that even-mindedness in which there is no division.

Cultivate compassion for all beings, uproot the root of hatred, and regard enemy, friend, and son alike. Embrace humility with your whole being; abandon all sense of "I" and "you," for that is true greatness.

Where there is no anxiety for wealth or desire, where honor, dishonor, attachment, and illusion are recognized as false, where one lives in contentment, knowing yet appearing unknowing, there the saints appear of their own accord. Hold firm faith in your heart without the strain of picking and choosing.

Says Tuka, the one who has grown weary of his own cleverness enjoys the constant sight of the saints.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Bow to that eternal joy which is being, awareness, and bliss; bow to it as liberation, as attainment, as the holy place itself. Devotion is the root cause of all; bow to that even mind in which there is no division. Have mercy on every creature; break the root of hatred; hold enemy, friend, and son the same. Take lowliness on with your whole being; let go of all I and you, for that is true greatness. Where there is no craving for wealth or pleasure, no worry, where honor and dishonor, attachment and illusion are seen as false, where one lives content, knowing yet seeming not to know, there the saints come of their own accord. Hold firm faith in the heart; have no struggle of picking and choosing. The one who has grown sick of his own cleverness, Tuka says, has the saints in sight always.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram lays out the inner shape of a person the saints will seek out unbidden. It begins in worship of the one reality, being, awareness, bliss, and of the even mind that sees no division. Then it turns practical: mercy for every creature, the root of hatred pulled up, enemy and friend and son held alike, and the whole weight of I and mine set down, which he calls the real greatness. Such a person carries no craving for wealth or pleasure and no fear of honor or dishonor, living content and knowing while seeming to know nothing. The poem ends by naming who qualifies: the one who has grown weary of his own cleverness, who holds steady faith without the strain of constantly choosing, is the one the saints are always near.

GATHA 0346

Faith and Trust

Faith, the Giver waits across

मराठी मूळ

भवसागर तरतां । कां रे करीतसां चिंता । पैल उभा दाता । कटीं कर ठेवुनियां ॥१॥
 त्याचे पायीं घाला मिठी । मोल नेघे जगजेठी । भावा एका साठीं । खांदां वाहे आपुल्या ॥२॥
 सुखें करावा संसार । परि न संडावे दोन्ही वार । दया क्षमा घर । चोजवीत येतील ॥३॥
 भुक्तिमुक्तिची चिंता । नाहीं दैन्य दरिद्रता । तुका म्हणे दाता । पांडुरंग वोळगिल्या ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Why do you worry while crossing this ocean of worldly life? The Giver stands right there on the other shore, hands on his hips. Clasp his feet tightly; the Lord of the world asks no price.

For the sake of devotion alone, he will carry you on his own shoulders. Carry on your worldly duties happily, but do not neglect the two sacred days.

Mercy and forgiveness will come looking for you at your own home. Says Tuka, there is no anxiety about enjoyment or liberation, no poverty or want, once you have won the favor of Panduranga.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Crossing the ocean of worldly life, why do you worry? The Giver stands on the far shore, his hands resting on his hips. Clasp his feet tight; the Lord of the world takes no payment. For devotion alone he carries you on his own shoulders. Carry on your worldly life gladly, but do not let the two sacred days go. Mercy and forgiveness will come seeking out your house. Tuka says: no worry over enjoyment or release, no want, no poverty, once you have served Panduranga.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram answers the fear of life as a wide ocean to be crossed: there is no cause for worry, because the Giver already stands waiting on the far shore. Clasp his feet, and he asks no price; for devotion alone he will carry you across on his own shoulders. The instruction is gentle and ordinary, live your worldly life happily, only do not neglect the holy days, and the rest follows. Mercy and forgiveness will come looking for you at your own door, and once you have served Panduranga there is no anxiety left over enjoyment or liberation, and no poverty or want.

GATHA 0347

The Saints

The true saint is God's own form

मराठी मूळ

जें का रंजलें गांजलें । त्यासि म्हणे जो आपुलें ॥१॥
 तो चि साधु ओळखावा । देव तेथें चि जाणावा ॥२॥
 मृदु सबाह्य नवनीत । तैसें सज्जनाचें चित्त ॥३॥
 ज्यासि आपंगिता नाही । त्यासि घरी जो हृदयी ॥४॥
 दया करणें जें पुत्रासी । ते चि दासा आणि दासी ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे सांगूं किती । तो चि भगवंताची मूर्ती ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

One who claims the afflicted and oppressed as his own, that one alone should be recognized as a true saint; know that God dwells right there. The heart of a good person is like fresh butter, soft within and without.

One who embraces in the heart those who have no one else, who shows the same compassion to servants and maids as to one's own children: Says Tuka, how much more can I say? Such a one is the very form of God.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The one who calls the broken and crushed his own, him alone know as the true saint; know that God is right there. The good person's heart is like fresh butter, soft within and without. The one who shelters in his heart those who have no one, who shows a child's mercy to servant and maid alike, Tuka says: how much can I tell? That one is the very form of God.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram gives a single test for recognizing a true saint, and it is not learning or austerity but tenderness toward the abandoned. Whoever takes the afflicted and the crushed for his own is the genuine saint, and God is present exactly there. He likens such a heart to fresh butter, soft all the way through, the same on the outside as within.

The mark is concrete: sheltering those who have nobody, and giving servant and maid the same mercy one gives one's own child; a person like that, he says, is the very form of God in the world.

GATHA 0348

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the bond that shines

मराठी मूळ

याजसाठीं भक्ति । जगीं रुढवावया ख्याति ॥१॥
 नाही तरी कोठें दुजें । आहे बोलाया सहजें ॥२॥
 गौरव यासाठीं । स्वामिसेवेची कसोटी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे अळंकारा । देवभक्त लोकीं खरा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The purpose of devotion is to establish its glory in the world. Otherwise, where is any second thing to speak of? This is the test of service to the Lord: the honor it earns.

Says Tuka, in all the world, what truly shines is the bond between God and devotee.

IN PLAIN WORDS

It is for this that devotion exists: to spread its glory through the world. For otherwise, where is any second thing to speak of? This is its honor, the test of service to the Lord. Tuka says: in all the world, the true ornament is the bond of God and devotee.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram asks what devotion is finally for, and answers that its purpose is to make its own glory known in the world. Apart from this bond there is nothing else worth speaking of at all. He calls faithful service to the Lord the real test, the thing that earns true honor. The closing image is that across the whole world the one genuine ornament, the thing that actually shines, is the bond between God and devotee.

GATHA 0349

The Moral Ideal

Social criticism, the scorner of Hari

मराठी मूळ

अमंगळ वाणी । नये ऐकों ते कानीं ॥१॥
 जो हे दूषी हरिची कथा । त्यासि क्षयरोगव्यथा ॥ध्रु॥
 याति वर्ण श्रेष्ठ । परि तो चांडाळ पापिष्ठ ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे पाप । माय नावडे ज्या बाप ॥३॥
 वाचे नुच्चारी गोविंदा । सदा करी परनिंदा ॥ध्रु॥
 कैसा निरयगांवा । जाऊं न पवे विसावा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे दंड । कैसा न पवे तो लंड ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Inauspicious speech should never be allowed to enter the ears. One who disparages the story of Hari will suffer the agony of wasting disease.

Even if born in the highest caste, such a person is a wretched sinner. Says Tuka, sin belongs to the one who has no love for mother and father. One whose tongue never utters the name of Govinda but always indulges in slandering others: such a person walks straight toward the city of hell and finds no rest.

Says Tuka, how will such a wretch escape punishment?.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Foul speech should not be let into the ears. The one who reviles the story of Hari, his is the agony of wasting disease. Born in the highest caste, he is still a vile sinner. Tuka says: sin belongs to the one who has no love for his mother and father. The tongue that never says Govinda, that always slanders others, how will it reach any rest in the city of hell it is bound for? Tuka says: how will that scoundrel escape his punishment?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram tells the listener to keep foul speech out of the ears, then names the worst kind: reviling the story of Hari. He measures a person not by birth but by conduct; even the highest caste does not save the one who mocks the holy story or has no love for mother and father, who remains a sinner regardless. He sets the slanderer beside the one who never lets Govinda's name cross his tongue and instead spends it tearing others down. The warning is pointed at that pattern of contempt and slander itself: it leads only toward a place of no rest, and no punishment is escaped by it. Read it as a mirror for one's own speech, not as a license to despise the speaker.

GATHA 0350

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the hollow fault-finder

मराठी मूळ

आचरणा ठाव । नाहीं अंगीं स्वता भाव ॥१॥
 करवी आणिकांचे घात । खोडी काढूनि पंडित ॥२॥
 श्वानाचियापरी । मिष्टान्नासि विटाळ करी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे ऐसा । सटवे चि ना पांचा दिसां ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He has no practice of virtue, no genuine devotion within himself. He finds faults in others and contrives their downfall.

Like a dog that defiles even fine food, he contaminates everything. Says Tuka, such a person does not survive even five days.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He has no ground of right conduct, no real devotion in him. He brings about the ruin of others, the learned man, picking out their faults. Like a dog, he defiles even fine food. Tuka says: such a one does not last even five days.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram draws the figure of the clever critic who has nothing under his cleverness, no practice of virtue, no devotion of his own. What he does have is an eye for other people's faults, which he uses to drag them down and ruin them. The harsh image is of a dog that fouls good food it cannot itself enjoy; the fault-finder spoils what is good simply by touching it with contempt. The closing line says such a way of living does not last, and the warning points at the pattern of cynical fault-finding, an invitation to check that impulse in oneself rather than to scorn the person.

GATHA 0351

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the axe-handle son

मराठी मूळ

गर्भाचें धारण । तिनें वागविला सिण ॥१॥
 व्याली कुर्हा डीचा दांडा । वर न घली च तोंडा ॥२॥
 उपजला काळ । कुळा लाविला विटाळ ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे जाय । नरका अभक्ताची माय ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The mother bore the burden of the womb and endured all the pain of labor.

But she gave birth to an axe-handle; it will not even turn its face toward her.

Time itself was born, and defilement was brought upon the clan.

Says Tuka, the very tree gives birth to the wood that becomes the handle of the axe that fells it.

IN PLAIN WORDS

She carried the burden of the womb; she bore all the toil of it. But what she bore was an axe-handle; it will not even turn its face to her. Time itself was born, and defilement was laid on the family. Tuka says: the mother of the one without devotion goes to hell.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram takes the mother's labor, the carried weight of the womb, the pain endured, as the measure of what is owed, and then shows it betrayed. The child she bore turns out to be an axe-handle, the wood fitted into the tool that fells the very tree it came from; it will not so much as look back at her. He names the cost: such a birth brings death and defilement upon the whole family. The sharp closing claim is that the mother of a person without devotion shares his ruin; the weight falls not on her labor but on the godless ingratitude that turns a gift into a weapon, a pattern worth examining in oneself.

GATHA 0352

The Moral Ideal

Moral counsel, the friend who ruins you

मराठी मूळ

पतनासि जे नेती । तिचा खोटा स्नेह प्रीती ॥१॥
 विधीपुरतें कारण । बहु वारावें वचन ॥२॥
 सर्वस्वासि नाडी । ऐसी लाघवाची बेडी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे दुरी । राखतां हे तों ची बरी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The affection of one who leads you to ruin is false love. Keep such a relationship to the bare minimum and restrain your speech.

Such a bond is a deceptive shackle that will cheat you of everything. Says Tuka, this one is fine only when kept at a distance.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The one who leads you to your fall: their fondness is false love, their affection a lie. Speak to them only as far as duty asks; cut the rest of your words short. Such a bond is a clever shackle that cheats you of everything you have. Tuka says: keep this one at a distance; that alone is good.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is naming a particular kind of relationship and telling you what to do with it. The person who draws you toward your own ruin wears the face of affection, but he calls it a counterfeit: false love, a lie. So he sets a limit. Speak to such a person only as much as obligation requires and no further, because the bond looks like friendship

while it works like a shackle, quietly stripping you of all you have. The only safe handling is distance, and he says distance here is not coldness but good sense.

GATHA 0353

Surrender and Acceptance

Surrender, God as the only doer

मराठी मूळ

देव आड जाला । तो भोगिता मी उगला । अवघा निवारला । शीण शुभाअशुभाचा ॥१॥
 जीवशिवाचें भातुकें । केलें क्रीडाया कौतुकें । कैचीं येथें लोके । हा आभास अनित्य ॥२॥
 विष्णुमय खरें जग । येथें लागतसे लाग । वांटिले विभाग । वर्णधर्म हा खेळ तयाचा ॥३॥
 अवघी एकाची च वीण । तेथें कैचें भिन्नाभिन्न । वेदपुरुष नारायण । तेणें केला निवाडा ॥४॥
 प्रसादाचा रस । तुका लाधला सौरस । पायापार्शीं वास । निकट नव्हे निराळा ॥५॥
 मंबाजी गोसावी यांनीं स्वामीस पीडा केली - अभंग ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

God has interposed Himself as the doer; He is the experiencer, and I have gone silent. All the toil of good and evil has been removed.

The play of jiva and Shiva has been made into a child's toy, a plaything of wonder.

Says Tuka, what bondage, what liberation? It was all His game from the start.

IN PLAIN WORDS

God has stepped in as the doer. He is the one who experiences; I have gone quiet. All the strain of good and evil is gone. The play of jiva and Shiva was made into a toy, set up for sport and wonder. What people are there here? This appearance does not last. The world is truly full of Vishnu; this is where everything takes hold. The shares were handed out; caste and duty are his game. It is all woven of one thread. Where, then, is separate and not-separate? Narayana, the Person of the Vedas, made the decision. Tuka has tasted the sweet juice of grace. My place is at his feet, close, not apart.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes what happens when God takes over as the one who acts. Once God is the doer and the experiencer, Tukaram himself falls silent, and the whole exhausting weight of weighing good against evil drops away. He calls the cosmic drama of jiva and Shiva a child's toy God set up for play, and warns that the people and the world we take so seriously are a passing appearance. Yet the world is real as Vishnu's own fullness; even caste and duty are moves in his single game, all woven from one thread, so the old quarrel of separate versus not-separate dissolves. Having tasted that grace, Tukaram says his place is simply at God's feet, close and never apart.

GATHA 0354

Faith and Trust

Faith, the unbreakable grip on the feet

मराठी मूळ

न सोडीं न सोडीं न सोडीं । विठोबा चरण न सोडीं ॥१॥
 भलतें जड पडो भारी । जीवावरी आगोज ॥२॥
 शतखंड देह शस्त्रधारी । करितां परी न भीयें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे केली आधीं । दृढ बुद्धी सावध ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I will not let go, I will not let go, I will not let go of the feet of Vitthoba. Let any burden fall upon me, let any threat come upon my life.

Even if a hundred swords cut this body to pieces, I will not be afraid. Says Tuka, I made this firm resolve from the very start; my mind is alert and unshakable.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I will not let go, I will not let go, I will not let go. Vithoba, I will not let go of your feet. Let any heavy burden fall on me, let the worst come upon my life. Even if swords cut this body into a hundred pieces, I will not be afraid. Tuka says: I made this resolve firm beforehand; my mind is awake.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is making a vow and showing how unconditional it is. The triple refusal, will not let go, will not let go, will not let go, fixes his grip on Vithoba's feet against everything that might pry it loose. Then he names the worst that could come: crushing burdens, threats to his very life, the body hacked into a hundred pieces, and meets each with no fear. The strength is not luck of the moment; he says he settled the resolve in advance and keeps his mind alert, so that when terror arrives the answer is already decided.

GATHA 0355

Autobiography

Autobiography, suffering as rescue

मराठी मूळ

बरवें बरवें केलें विठोबा बरवें । पाहोनि आंत क्षमा अंगी कांटीवरी मारविलें ॥१॥
 शिव्या गाळी नीत नाहीं । बहु फार विटंबिलें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे क्रोधा हातीं । सोडवूनि घेतलें रे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Well done, well done, Vitthoba, you have done well. Seeing the patience within me, you had me beaten on thorns.

Abuses and curses rained without end; I was thoroughly humiliated. Says Tuka, you rescued me from the hands of anger.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Well done, well done, Vithoba, you have done well. You looked at the patience inside me and had this body beaten on the thorns. Curses and abuse came without stop; I was disgraced again and again. Tuka says: you pulled me free from the hands of anger.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is thanking God for an ordeal, which is the strange turn of the poem. He praises Vithoba for what looks like cruelty: having seen the patience hidden in Tukaram, God put it to the test by letting him be beaten on thorns, cursed, and humiliated over and over. The point lands in the last line. The whole humiliation was a rescue, prying him loose from the grip of anger, the inner enemy that abuse usually feeds. Read as self-examination, it asks whether the insults we suffer might be the very thing that frees us from our own rage, rather than proof of how wronged we are.

GATHA 0356

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, the thorny path made smooth

मराठी मूळ

पावलों पावलों । देवा पावलों रे ॥१॥
 बरवें संचित होते तैसें जालें रे । आतां काय बोलों रे ॥२॥
 सोज्ज्वळ कंटकवाटा भावें करुं गेलों रे । तुका म्हणे करुनि वेगळा केलों रे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I have arrived, I have arrived, O God, I have arrived. My past merit was good, and so it has come to pass; what more can I say? The thorny path has become smooth through devotion.

Says Tuka, having been brought through it, I have been set apart and made free.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I have arrived, I have arrived, O God, I have arrived. My past store of merit was good, and so it has turned out this way; what more can I say now? I set out in love to walk the bright thorny road. Tuka says: he carried me through it and set me apart.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram cries out that he has reached the goal, and then refuses to take the credit. He traces the arrival back to good merit gathered long before, so the reaching feels less like an achievement than a gift come due, leaving him with nothing more to say. He recalls setting out in devotion onto a path that was at once shining and full of thorns. The closing line gives the resolution: God himself brought him through the thorns and set him apart, made free, so the whole journey is finally God's doing and not his own.

GATHA 0357

Confession and Sin

Confession, done with bad company

मराठी मूळ

कां होती कां होती । देवा एवढी फजीती ॥१॥
 मुळीं वर्म नसतों चुकलों । तो मी ऐसें चित्तीं ॥२॥
 होणार होऊनि गेलें । मिथ्या आतां खंती रे ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे पुरे आतां । दुर्जनाची संगती रे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

O God, why was there such disgrace? In my chitta I know that I was at fault from the very root. What was destined to happen has happened; it is useless to grieve over it now.

Says Tuka, enough now; let the company of the wicked come to an end.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Why was there, why was there, O God, such a disgrace? Deep in my mind I know I was at fault from the very root, that the error was mine. What was bound to happen has happened; it is empty to grieve over it now. Tuka says: enough now, enough of the company of the wicked.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is owning a humiliation instead of complaining about it. He asks God why such a disgrace fell on him, but does not stop at the question; in his own heart he admits the fault was his from the root, not someone else's doing. Then he refuses to wallow: what was destined has already happened, and grieving over it now is hollow. The resolve he draws is practical and aimed at himself. The disgrace grew out of keeping bad company, so he ends that company for good. The poem points at the pattern, the company we choose, rather than at any person to despise.

GATHA 0358

Prayers

Prayer, the only giver of life

मराठी मूळ

सोडवा सोडवा । सोडवा हो अनंता ॥१॥
 तुजविण ऐसा । कोण दुजा प्राणदाता ॥२॥
 कोणा लाज नेणां ऐसें । आणिकां शरण आम्ही जातां ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे सखया । माझ्या रखुमाईच्या कांता ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Save me, save me, save me, O Ananta. Who else but you is the giver of life? I know no one, and shame prevents me from taking refuge elsewhere.

Says Tuka, O my dear friend, O husband of Rukmini, save me.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Save me, save me, save me, O Ananta. Who else but you is the giver of life? I know no other, and shame keeps me from going to anyone else for refuge. Tuka says: O dear friend, husband of Rakhumai, save me.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is crying for rescue and closing off every other door as he does it. The threefold save me, save me, save me carries the urgency, and the address to Ananta, the endless one, names where he turns. His reasoning is exclusive: God alone gives life, so there is no second giver to run to, and he would feel shame even attempting to take refuge anywhere else. The plea ends in intimacy rather than dread, calling God his dear friend and the husband of Rakhumai, so the one he begs for help is also the one he loves and belongs to.

GATHA 0359

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the mind absorbed in Hari

मराठी मूळ

पुत्राची वार्ता । शुभ ऐके जेवीं माता ॥ १ ॥
तैसें राहो माझें मन । गातां ऐकतां हरिगुण ॥ २ ॥
नादें लुब्ध जाला मृग । देह विसरला अंग ॥ २ ॥
तुका म्हणे पाहे । कासवीचें पिलें माये ॥ ३ ॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

As a mother's heart overflows with joy upon hearing good news of her son, so let my mind remain absorbed in singing and hearing the qualities of Hari. The deer, captivated by music, forgets its very body.

Says Tuka, see how the baby tortoise gazes upon its mother with love.

IN PLAIN WORDS

As a mother takes in good news of her son, may my mind rest like that while singing and hearing the qualities of Hari. The deer is caught by the sound and forgets its own body. Tuka says: see how the baby tortoise watches its mother.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is praying for a certain quality of attention and giving three pictures of it. He asks that his mind, while singing and hearing the praises of Hari, hold the way a mother's heart holds when she hears good news of her son: wholly, gladly, with nothing held back. The deer drawn by music until it forgets its own body shows attention so complete that self drops away. The baby tortoise gazing toward its mother, fed by that gaze alone in the old image, shows a love that lives by looking. Together they ask that devotion be absorbed, self-forgetting, and sustained by simple longing toward God.

GATHA 0360

The Nature of God

Nature of God, grace turns poison to nectar

मराठी मूळ

ध्यानी योगीराज बैसले कपाटीं । लागे पाठोवाटीं तयांचिया ॥१॥
 तान भुक त्यांचें राखे शीत उष्ण । जाले उदासीन देहभाव ॥२॥
 कोण सखें तयां आणीक सोयरे । असे त्यां दुसरे हरीविण ॥३॥
 कोण सुख त्यांच्या जीवासि आनंद । नाहीं राज्यमद घडी तयां ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे विष अमृता समान । कृपा नारायण करितां होय ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Great yogis sit in meditation behind closed doors, and God follows them even there. He tends to their hunger and thirst and watches over their hunger, thirst, heat, and cold, for they have become indifferent to the body.

Who else is their friend or relative besides Hari? What other joy gladdens their souls? They have no attachment to kingly power, not even for a moment. Says Tuka, when Narayana shows his grace, even poison becomes nectar.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Great yogis sit in meditation behind closed doors, and God follows close on their path. He keeps their hunger and thirst, watches over their cold and heat, for they have grown indifferent to the body. What friend, what kin, do they have other than Hari? They have no second one. What joy gladdens their souls? Not for a moment is there the pride of a kingdom in them. Tuka says: poison becomes the same as nectar when Narayana shows his grace.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes the renunciate yogis and the God who tends them. They sit shut away in meditation, having grown indifferent to the body, and God does not leave them to fend for themselves: he follows behind and looks after their hunger, thirst, cold, and heat. Their company is narrowed to one. Hari is their only friend and only kin, and the pride of power or kingdom never touches them even for a moment. The final line names what makes this possible. When Narayana pours out grace, even poison turns into nectar, so what would harm anyone else becomes, for them, the very thing that sustains.

GATHA 0361

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, cling to the hem and be ferried

मराठी मूळ

न व्हावें तें जालें देखिले पाय । आतां फिरुं काय मागें देवा ॥१॥
 बहु दिस होतों करीत हे आस । तें आलें सायासें फळ आजि ॥२॥
 कोठवरि जिणें संसाराच्या आशा । उगवो हा फांसा येथूनियां ॥३॥
 बुडालीं तयांचा मूळ ना मारग । लागे तो लाग सांडूनियां ॥४॥
 पुढें उलंघितां दुःखाचे डोंगर । नाहीं अंतपार गर्भवासा ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे कास धरीन पीतांबरीं । तूं भवसागरीं तारुं देवा ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

That which was never meant to be has come to pass: I have beheld your feet. O God, shall I now turn back? For many days I held this longing, and today the fruit of that labor has come.

How long can one live on the hopes of worldly life? Let this noose be cut loose right here. Those who have drowned have no trace or path left behind; I must abandon the trail that pulls me back.

Ahead lie mountains of suffering, and the torment of the womb has no end. Says Tuka, I will cling to the hem of your yellow garment; you, O God, are my ferry across this ocean of existence.

IN PLAIN WORDS

What was never to be has happened: I have seen your feet. Now, O God, why would I turn back? For many days I carried this longing, and today, after much labor, the fruit has come. How long can one live on the hopes of worldly life? Let this noose be cut loose right here. Those who drowned left no root and no road behind; I must give up the trail that drags me back. Ahead lie mountains of suffering, and the womb's torment has no end. Tuka says: I will cling to the hem of your yellow garment. You, O God, are my ferry across the ocean of being.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram has reached the feet he longed for and now refuses to go backward. Seeing God's feet was something he thought could never be, and after many days of longing and hard effort the fruit has finally come, so turning back is unthinkable. He weighs the alternative coldly: worldly hope is a noose, the ones who drowned in it left no path worth following, and ahead of that road lie only mountains of pain and the endless torment of being born again. So he chooses the one hold that saves. He clings to the hem of God's yellow garment and trusts God as the ferry that carries him across the whole ocean of birth and death.

GATHA 0362

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, Vaikuntha brought to earth

मराठी मूळ

वैकुंठा जावया तपाचे सायास । करणें जीवा नास न लगे कांहीं ॥१॥
 तया पुंडलिकें केला उपकार । फेडावया भार पृथीवीचा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे सोपी केली पायवाट । पंढरी वैकुंठ भूमीवरी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

To reach Vaikuntha there is no need for the ordeals of penance or for destroying one's body. Pundalik rendered that great service to relieve the burden of the earth.

Says Tuka, he made the footpath easy: Pandharpur is Vaikuntha right here on the ground.

IN PLAIN WORDS

To go to Vaikuntha there is no need for the strain of penance, no need to destroy the body. Pundalik did that great service, to lift the burden of the earth. Tuka says: he made the footpath easy. Pandhari is Vaikuntha here on the ground.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is saying the highest heaven has been moved within reach. The old route to Vaikuntha demanded harsh penance and the wearing down of the body, and he sets that aside as unnecessary. The reason is Pundalik, whose devotion drew God to stand on the brick at Pandharpur; Tukaram frames this as a service done to relieve the earth's burden. The payoff is the closing claim, and he does not soften it. Pandhari is not a road to Vaikuntha but Vaikuntha itself, laid down on the ground as an easy footpath that ordinary people can simply walk.

GATHA 0363

Faith and Trust

Faith, courage over cowardice

मराठी मूळ

शोकें शोक वाढे । हिमतीचे धीर गाढे ॥१॥
 येथें केले नव्हे काई । लंडीपण खोटें भाई ॥२॥
 करिती होया होय । परी नव्हे कोणी साह्य ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे घडी । साधिलिया एक थोडी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Grief only multiplies grief, but the courageous remain steadfast in their resolve. Nothing can be accomplished here through cowardice, O brother.

Those who act with determination bring things into being, though no one else may come to help. Says Tuka, even one small moment, when seized with effort, is enough.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Grief only makes grief grow; the courageous stay firm in their resolve. What cannot be done here by such means? Cowardice is false, brother. Those who keep saying yes, yes bring things to pass, though no one comes to help them. Tuka says: even one small moment, when it is seized, is enough.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is rebuking despair and praising steady nerve. He observes that grief feeds on itself and only multiplies, while the courageous hold firm to their resolve and so get things done. Cowardice, he says plainly, is a lie, a false self-image that excuses inaction. He notes too that the determined act and bring things into being even when no one stands beside them to help. The closing turn is encouragement: you do not need endless time or perfect conditions, because even a single small moment, once it is truly seized, is enough to accomplish what matters.

GATHA 0364

The Necessity of Experience

Nondual sight, no second thing

मराठी मूळ

म्हणउनी खेळ मांडियेला ऐसा । नाही कोणी दिशा वर्जियेली ॥१॥
 माझिया गोतें हें वसलें सकळ । न देखिजे मूळ विटाळाचें ॥२॥
 करुनि ओळखी दिली एकसरें । न देखों दुसरें विषमासी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे नाही काळापाशीं गोवा । स्थिति मति देवा वांचूनियां ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

This is why such a game was set in motion: no direction has been left out. All that exists is my kin kin; the root of any impurity cannot be found.

Having been introduced and given over all at once, I see no second thing, no inequality. Says Tuka, there is no entanglement with Death; apart from God, there is neither condition nor understanding.

IN PLAIN WORDS

This is why the whole game was set up like this: no direction was left out. Everything that exists is my own kin. I cannot find any root of impurity anywhere. He introduced me to it all at once, and now I see no second thing, no high and no low. Tuka says: there is no snare in Death for me. Apart from God there is no state and no mind.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is describing what the world looks like once the eye no longer divides it. The cosmos is a game God set in motion, and not one corner of it is left outside that play. So everything is his own family, and he can find no source for impurity anywhere, because impurity was only ever a way of cutting one thing off from another. Shown the whole at once, he sees no second thing and no ranking of higher over lower. With nothing held apart, death has no hook to catch him; only God remains, and there is no separate condition or mind left over.

GATHA 0365

The Saints

The true Vaishnava, beyond caste

मराठी मूळ

वैष्णव तो जया । अवघी देवावरी माया ॥१॥
 नाहीं आणीक प्रमाण । तन धन तृण जन ॥ध्रु॥
 पडतां जड भारी । नेमा न टळे निर्धारिं ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे याती । हो का तयाची भलती ॥३॥
 आम्ही न वजों तया वाटा । नाचूं पंढरीचोहटां ॥ध्रु॥
 पावोत आत्मिस्थिति । कोणी म्हणोत उत्तम मुक्ति ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे छंद । आम्हां हरिच्या दासां निंद ॥३॥
 ॥ स्वामीस सद्गुरूची कृपा जाली ॥ - अभंग ४

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A true Vaishnava is one whose entire love rests upon God alone. There is no other measure: body, wealth, reputation, and people are all as grass to him.

Even when the heaviest burden falls, his vow never wavers. Says Tuka, let his caste be whatever it may. We will not walk those other paths; we dance in the open square of Pandhari.

Let anyone attain the state of Self-realization; let them call it the highest liberation. Says Tuka, we who are servants of Hari find all such talk of no account.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A true Vaishnava is one whose whole love rests on God. There is no other measure. Body, wealth, reputation, people: all of it is grass to him. Even when the heaviest burden falls on him, his vow does not waver. Tuka says: let his caste be whatever it may. We will not walk those other paths; we dance in the open square of Pandhari. Let anyone reach the state of the Self; let them call it the highest liberation. Tuka says: we who are servants of Hari hold all such talk of no account.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is redefining who counts as a real devotee, and the test is love, not birth. The one mark of a Vaishnava is that his whole heart rests on God; body, wealth, name, and people weigh no more than grass against that. Such a one holds his vow steady under any burden, and his caste, high or low, is simply beside the point. Tukaram then sets devotion above the prize that most spiritual paths chase: even the state of Self-realization, even the highest liberation, does not interest the servant of Hari. He would rather dance in the open square at Pandhari than walk the road that ends in mukti.

GATHA 0366

Autobiography

Autobiography, the Guru's initiation

मराठी मूळ

सद्गुरार्ये कृपा मज केली । परी नाहीं घडली सेवा कांहीं ॥१॥
 सांपडविलें वाटे जातां गंगास्नाना । मस्तकीं तो जाणा ठेविला कर ॥२॥
 भोजना मागती तूप पावशेर । पडिला विसर स्वप्नामाजी ॥३॥
 कांहीं कळहे उपजला अंतराय । म्हणोनियां काय त्वरा जाली ॥४॥
 राघवचैतन्य कैशवचैतन्य । सांगितली खुण मळिकेची ॥५॥
 बाबाजी आपलें सांगितलें नाम । मंत्र दिला राम कृष्ण हरि ॥६॥
 माघाशुद्ध दशमी पाहुनि गुरुवार । केला अंगीकार तुका म्हणे ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The Sadguru showed me grace, though I had done no service to deserve it. He caught hold of me on the road as I was going for a bath in the Ganga and placed his hand upon my head.

He asked for a quarter-measure of ghee with his meal, but I forgot this in a dream. Some dispute arose as an obstacle, and therefore there was haste.

Raghava Chaitanya, Keshava Chaitanya, gave me the sign of the rosary. Babaji told me his own name and gave me the mantra: Rama, Krishna, Hari.

Says Tuka, on Thursday, the tenth day of the bright half of Magha, he accepted me as his own.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The Sadguru showed me grace, though I had done no service to earn it. He caught hold of me on the road as I was going to bathe in the Ganga, and placed his hand on my head. He asked for a quarter-measure of ghee with his meal, and I forgot it in a dream. Some quarrel arose as an obstacle, and so there was haste. Raghava Chaitanya, Keshava Chaitanya: he gave me the sign of the rosary. Babaji told me his own name and gave me the mantra: Rama, Krishna, Hari. Tuka says: on Thursday, the tenth day of the bright half of Magha, he accepted me as his own.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is telling the story of his own initiation and insisting it was pure gift. He had done nothing to deserve a teacher, yet the Sadguru stopped him on the road to the river and laid a hand on his head. The middle lines record the homely, dreamlike details around the event: a request for ghee forgotten in a dream, a dispute that hurried things along. Then comes the lineage and the heart of the gift: the names Raghava Chaitanya and Keshava Chaitanya, the sign of the rosary, the teacher Babaji, and the mantra Rama, Krishna, Hari. Tukaram dates the moment exactly, the way one remembers the turning point of a life.

GATHA 0367

*The Power of the Name**The Name, the Guru's easy mantra*

मराठी मूळ

माझिये मनींचा जाणोनियां भाव । तो करी उपाव गुरुराजा ॥१॥
 आवडीचा मंत्र सांगितला सोपा । जेणें गुंफा कांहीं कोठें ॥२॥
 जाती पुढें एक उतरले पार । हा भवसागर साधुसंत ॥३॥
 जाणत्या नेणत्या ज्या जैसी आवडी । उतार सांगडी तापे पेटिं ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे मज दावियेला तारु । कृपेचा सागरु पांडुरंग ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Knowing the longing in my mind, my Guru devised a remedy. He gave me a beloved mantra, so easy that there is no obstacle anywhere.

Some go ahead and cross to the other shore: the saints are the way across this ocean of existence. For the knowing and the unknowing alike, whatever their heart desires, there are rafts, boats, and planks to carry them over.

Says Tuka, he showed me the vessel, the ocean of mercy, Panduranga.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Knowing the longing in my mind, my Guru-king made a remedy. He gave me a beloved mantra, so easy that there is no snag anywhere. Some go ahead and cross to the far shore: the saints are the way across this ocean of being. For the wise and the simple alike, whatever each one's heart desires, there are rafts and boats and planks to carry them over the heat. Tuka says: he showed me the vessel, the ocean of mercy, Panduranga.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is praising the simplicity of the path his Guru handed him. The Guru read the exact longing in his heart and answered it with one easy mantra, a remedy with no catch in it. The world is an ocean to be crossed, and the saints are the crossing itself; whether a person is learned or unlettered, there is some craft fitted to them, a raft or plank for every kind of soul. The point is that the way over is not reserved for the clever. Tukaram ends by naming his own vessel: Panduranga, the very ocean of mercy that carries him.

GATHA 0368

Surrender and Acceptance

Surrender, the saints stand surety

मराठी मूळ

घालुनियां भार राहिलों निश्चितीं । निरविलें संतीं विठोबासि ॥१॥
 लावूनियां हातें कुरवाळिला माथा । सांगितलें चिंता न करावी ॥२॥
 कटीं कर सम चरण साजिरे । राहिला भीवरें तीरीं उभा ॥३॥
 खुंटले सायास अणिकि या जीवा । धरिले केशवा पाय तुझे ॥४॥
 तुज वाटे आतां तें करीं अनंता । तुका म्हणे संता लाज माझी ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Having placed the entire burden upon him, I rest in certainty. The saints commended me to Vitthoba, stroking my head with their hands, and told me not to worry.

With hands on hips and beautiful even feet, he stands on the bank of the Bhima. All other efforts have ceased for this soul, for I have grasped your feet, O Keshava.

Says Tuka, do with me now as you please, O Ananta; the saints hold my honor in trust.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I have laid the whole burden on him and now I rest in certainty. The saints handed me over to Vithoba. They stroked my head with their hands and told me not to worry. Hands on his hips, his lovely feet level, he stands on the bank of the Bhima. All other effort has stopped for this soul, for I have grasped your feet, O Keshava. Do now whatever you please, O Ananta. Tuka says: the saints hold my honor in their keeping.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is handing his whole life over and naming who arranged the handover. The saints themselves commended him to Vithoba, soothing him like a child, telling him to stop worrying. He pictures the Lord in the familiar Pandharpur stance, hands on hips, feet set even, standing by the river. With those feet gripped, every other striving falls away, and he tells God to do with him whatever God wills. The closing line carries the weight of the poem: he is not facing God alone, because the saints have pledged themselves as surety for his honor.

GATHA 0369

Faith and Trust

Faith, reckless self-surrender

मराठी मूळ

माझिये मनींचा जाणा हा निर्धार । जिवासि उदार जालों आतां ॥१॥
 तुजविण दुजे न धरीं आणिका । भय लज्जा शंका टाकियेली ॥२॥
 ठार्यींचा संबंध तुज मज होता । विशेष अनंता केला संतीं ॥३॥
 जीवभाव तुझ्या ठेवियेला पायीं । हें चि आतां नाही लाज तुम्हां ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे संतीं घातला हावाला । न सोडीं विठ्ठला पाय आतां ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Know this to be the firm resolve of my mind: I have become reckless with my very life. I will hold no one but you; I have cast away fear, shame, and doubt.

The bond between you and me existed from the beginning, and the saints have strengthened it further. I have placed my entire being at your feet; now the responsibility is yours, not mine.

Says Tuka, the saints have vouched for me. I will not let go of your feet now, O Vitthal.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Know this firm resolve of my mind: I have become reckless with my own life. I will hold no one but you. I have thrown away fear, shame, and doubt. The bond between you and me was there from the start, and the saints have made it stronger still. I have placed my whole being at your feet. Now the shame is yours, not mine. Tuka says: the saints have vouched for me. I will not let go of your feet now, O Vitthal.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram declares a surrender that has burned away all caution. He has staked his life and will cling to no one but God, casting off the fear, shame, and doubt that hold most people back. He insists the bond is not new: it was there from the beginning, and the saints have only deepened it. Then he turns the responsibility around with a daring move. Having laid his whole self at God's feet, he says any disgrace now belongs to God, not to him, for it is God's name that suffers if a surrendered devotee is failed. With the saints standing as his guarantors, he refuses to release the feet he has grasped.

GATHA 0370

Faith and Trust

Faith, God protects his own

मराठी मूळ

देव सखा जरी । जग अवघें कृपा करी ॥१॥
 ऐसा असोनि अनुभव । कासाविस होती जीव ॥१॥
 देवाची जतन । तया बाधूं न शके अग्न ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे हरी । प्रर्हा दासि यत्न करी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When God is your friend, the whole world treats you with kindness. Yet even with such experience at hand, why does the soul remain tormented? When God protects someone, even fire cannot harm them.

Says Tuka, Hari attends to the efforts of his devoted servant with great care.

IN PLAIN WORDS

When God is your friend, the whole world treats you with kindness. Even with such experience at hand, why does the soul still torment itself? When God guards someone, not even fire can harm them. Tuka says: Hari himself takes care of the efforts of his servant.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is steadying a frightened heart by pointing to plain experience. If God is truly your friend, the world itself softens toward you, and you have surely seen this happen. So why, he asks, does the soul keep wringing itself with anxiety? The answer he offers is that whatever God protects cannot be touched, and he reaches for the strongest image: even fire cannot burn it. The closing line names the reason for confidence: the servant does not have to manage everything, because Hari himself attends to the devotee's efforts.

GATHA 0371

The Saints

The saints, easy grace versus hard labor

मराठी मूळ

भले भणवितां संतांचे सेवक । आइत्याची भीक सुखरूप ॥१॥
 ठसावितां बहु लागती सायास । चुकल्या घडे नास अल्प वर्म ॥१॥
 पाकसिद्धी लागे संचित आइतें । घडतां सोई तें तेव्हां गोड ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे बरे सांगतां चि गोष्टी । रणभूमि दृष्टी न पडे तों ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Blessed are the servants of the saints: they receive ready-made nourishment of bliss. Much labor goes into shaping something, and a small mistake in the process can cause ruin.

A cooked meal requires all the right ingredients gathered beforehand; when everything comes together, it tastes sweet. Says Tuka, telling stories of war sounds fine, so long as the battlefield has not come into view.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Blessed are those who let themselves be called servants of the saints: theirs is ready-made bliss, asked for and given. To shape a thing yourself takes much labor, and one small slip in the method brings ruin. A cooked meal needs all the right things gathered first; when everything comes together, then it is sweet. Tuka says: telling stories of battle sounds fine, until the battlefield itself comes into view.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is comparing two ways of seeking God: leaning on the saints, or relying on one's own effort. To serve the saints and take the grace they offer is the easy way, ready-made bliss that costs only humility. Doing it yourself is like cooking or craft: it demands every ingredient in place and the right method, and a single mistake spoils the whole. The last line lands the warning with a soldier's bluntness. Boasting of one's own spiritual prowess is like swapping war stories; it is easy talk until the real battlefield appears and tests whether you can actually fight.

GATHA 0372

The Saints

The saints, gladly lowest at their door

मराठी मूळ

संतसमागम एखादिया परी । राहावें त्याचे द्वारीं श्वानयाती ॥१॥
तेथें रामनाम होईल श्रवण । घडेल भोजन उच्छिष्टाचें ॥२॥
कामारी बटीक सेवेचे सेवक । दीनपण रंक तेथें भलें ॥३॥
तुका म्हणे सर्व सुख त्या संगती । घडेल पंगती संतांचिया ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

By any means, one should keep the company of saints. Even if you must linger at their door taking on the very station of a dog, do so.

There you will hear the name of Rama and partake of their blessed leftovers. Be a laborer, a servant, a menial in their service; lowliness and poverty are good there.

Says Tuka, all happiness lies in their company; you will have a place at the table of the saints.

IN PLAIN WORDS

By any means at all, keep the company of saints. Even if you must stay at their door taking the rank of a dog, do it. There you will hear the name of Rama, and you will eat their leftovers. Be a laborer, a servant, a menial in their service; to be lowly and poor is good there. Tuka says: all happiness is in that company. You will get a place at the saints' own table.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is urging the listener to pay any price in pride to be near the saints. He says: even if it means crouching at their door like a dog, do it, because what is gained there is worth more than dignity. At that door you hear the Name and live on the saints' leftovers, and the usual marks of shame, being a servant, a menial, poor and low,

become good things rather than humiliations. The whole poem inverts the world's ranking of high and low. He promises that this self-chosen lowliness ends not in disgrace but at the table itself, in the full company and joy of the saints.

GATHA 0373

*The Necessity of Experience**Bridal mysticism, the union with Govinda*

मराठी मूळ

एकली राणागोविंदा सवें । गेलें ठावें तें जालें ॥१॥
 मज न म्हणा न म्हणा शिंदळी । नाहीं विषम जवळीं आतळलें ॥२॥
 नव्हती देखिली म्यां वाट । म्हणोनि हा धीट संग केला ॥३॥
 भेणें मिठी दिधली गळां । सेजे जवळ दडालें ॥४॥
 सलगी धरी पयोधर । साहाती करमुर सवें ॥५॥
 आहेव मी गर्भीणपणें । हें सांगणें कां लागे ॥६॥
 तुका म्हणे सेवटा नेलें । संपादिलें उभयतां ॥७॥
 होतें बहुत हें दिवस मानसीं । आजि नवस हे फळले नवसीं ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Alone in the wild, I went with Govinda, and what was hidden became known. Do not call me fallen; nothing impure came near me.

I had never seen this path before, and that is why I fearlessly kept his company. Out of fright I threw my arms around his neck and hid myself close beside him.

With tender boldness he held me. I am a married woman, and my condition speaks for itself; why should I need to explain? Says Tuka, he brought it all to completion, and both of us were fulfilled. This longing had dwelt in my heart for many, many days, and today all my prayers have borne fruit.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Alone in the wild, I went with Govinda, and what was hidden became known. Do not call me, do not call me a fallen woman; nothing impure came near me. I had never seen this path before, so I boldly kept his company. Out of fright I threw my arms around his neck and hid close beside him. With tender boldness he held me. I am a married woman, and now I am with child; why must this even be told? Tuka says: he brought it all to completion, and both of us were fulfilled. This longing had been in my heart for many days, and today my prayer has borne fruit.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram sings in the voice of a woman to speak of the soul's secret union with God. She goes off alone with Govinda, and in that solitude what was hidden is finally known. She heads off the scandal at once: do not call her fallen, nothing impure touched her, because this love is not what the gossips imagine. The fright, the clinging to his neck, the hiding close beside him are the soul's first terror and surrender on an unknown path. The pregnancy is the sign that the union truly bore fruit, a thing too plain to need explaining; a longing carried for many days has at last been answered, and both lover and Beloved are fulfilled.

GATHA 0374

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, the union that never repeats

मराठी मूळ

व्हावी भेटी ते जाली गोविंदासीं । आतां सेवा करीन निश्चयेसीं वो ॥१॥
 स्थिर स्थिर मज चि साहे करा । बहु कष्ट सोसिल्या येरझारा ।
 येथें आड मज न साहावे वारा । देऊनि कपाट आलें तें दुसरें वारा वो ॥२॥
 मूळ सत्ता हे सायासाची जोडी । नेदी वेगळें होऊं एकी घडी ।
 नाहीं लौकिक स्मरला आवडी । आता येणें काळें या वो लोभें वेडी वो ॥३॥
 उदयीं उदय साधिला अवकाश । निश्चिंतीनें निश्चिंती सावकाश ।
 धरिये गोडी बहुत आला रस । तुका म्हणे हा मागुता न ये दिवस वो ॥४॥
 स्वयें सुखाचे जाले अनुभव । एक एकीपाशीं सांगतील भाव ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The meeting I longed for with Govinda has taken place. Now I will serve him with all certainty.

Be steady, be steady, and let me bear this quietly, for I have endured too many comings and goings. Let no wind of opposition blow against me here; I have shut the door against all else.

This union is the fruit of great effort; he will not let me be separated from him even for a moment. He has forgotten all social propriety for the sake of love; I have gone mad with devotion in this very moment.

Daybreak after daybreak the space was earned, and in utter peace there is leisure at last. Such sweetness has come, such abundant nectar.

Says Tuka, this day will never come again.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The meeting I longed for with Govinda has happened. Now I will serve him with full resolve. Be steady, be steady, only help me hold still; I have borne too many comings and goings. Let no wind of opposition blow against me here; I have shut the door against everything else. This union is the prize of great effort; he will not let me be parted from him for even one moment. He has forgotten all the world's propriety for love's sake, and in this very moment I have gone mad with longing. Daybreak after daybreak the chance was won, and in deep peace there is rest at last. Such sweetness has come, such abundant nectar. Tuka says: this day will never come again.

WHAT IT MEANS

Again in the bride's voice, Tukaram sings the moment the soul's long-sought meeting with God finally arrives. After endless comings and goings, she begs only to be held steady now, to let no opposing wind reach her, having shut the door on all else. The union is the fruit of hard striving, and now the Beloved will not allow even a moment's separation; for love's sake both of them have abandoned the world's sense of what is proper. She has gone mad with devotion, and what follows is deep peace and overflowing sweetness. The last line gives the ecstasy its edge: this day is unrepeatable, a grace that comes once and is never to be taken lightly.

GATHA 0375

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the fellowship of lovers of Hari

मराठी मूळ

अवघ्यां अवघा हा कैसा नवलाव । सर्वसाक्ष तेथें चि त्याचा जीव वो ॥१॥
 आपआपणाशीं करिती नवल । परि वादावाद न संडिती बोल ।
 एका मेघःशामें जलधर वोल । रसीं उतावळि हृदय सखोल वो ॥२॥
 एक विषय तो सकळांचा हरि । त्याच्या आवडीनें आवडी इतरीं ।
 अंध बहिर हे प्रेत लोकां चारी । त्यांची कीर्ति गाइली पुराणांतरी वो ॥३॥
 स्तुति पराविया मुखें रुचिकर । प्रीतिपात्राच्या गौरवीं आदर ।
 परस्परें हे सादरा सादर । योग सज्जनाच्या सुखा नाहीं पार वो ॥४॥
 भक्तिवल्लभ न तुटे चराचरीं । आप्त अनाप्त हे ऐशी ठेवी उरी ।
 दुरी जवळी संचिता ऐसें धरी । रंगा रंगा ऐसें होणें लागे हरि वो ॥५॥
 तुका लाधला हें उच्छिष्ट भोजन । आला बाहेरी प्रेमें वोसंडून ।
 पडिलें कानीं त्या जीवाचें जतन । धरियेले एकाभावे हृदयीं चरण वो ॥६॥
 आजि का वो तूं दिससी दुश्चिती । म्हणी एका मन लगे तुझ्या चित्तीं ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

How marvelous that the one who witnesses everything has his very life dwelling right there. Each one marvels to herself, yet the loving debate never ceases.

One dark-cloud-hued beloved, Hari, has drenched them all; their hearts overflow, eager and deep. The one object of love for all of them is Hari, and for his sake they love one another.

The four worlds of the blind, the deaf, and the lifeless have been redeemed, and their glory is sung in the ancient texts. Praise from another's lips is sweeter still; in honoring the beloved, there is great tenderness.

Each vies to please the other, and the joy of holy company knows no limit. The love of God pervades all movable and immovable creation, making no distinction between intimate and stranger.

Near and far are held according to past merit; one must become like Hari to reach Hari. Says Tuka, I have received the blessed leftovers of that feast. The love poured out of me, and when it fell upon my ears, my very life was guarded.

With single-minded devotion, I hold those feet within my heart.

IN PLAIN WORDS

How wonderful that the One who witnesses everything has his very life right there among them. Each one marvels to herself, yet the loving argument never stops. One dark-cloud-hued Beloved, Hari, has drenched them all; their hearts overflow, eager and deep. The one object of love for all of them is Hari, and for his sake they love one another. The blind, the deaf, the lifeless, the four kinds of beings have been redeemed, and their glory is sung in the old texts. Praise from another's lips tastes sweeter; honoring the beloved is done with great tenderness. Each one vies to please the other, and the joy of holy company has no end. The love of God runs through all that moves and stays still, making no difference between intimate and stranger. Near and far are held according to past merit; one must become like Hari to reach Hari. Tuka says: I have received the blessed leftovers of that feast. The love poured out of me, and when it fell on my ears my very life was guarded. With single heart I hold those feet within my heart.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is celebrating the fellowship of those who love God together. The wonder is that the witness of all things lives right among his devotees, who marvel at him and never tire of their loving back-and-forth. One dark-hued Hari has soaked them all, and because each loves him, they come to love one another too; their shared object turns into shared affection. He notes that even the most hopeless, the blind, the deaf, the lifeless across all kinds of creatures, are redeemed in this love, and that praising the Beloved through one another's mouths is sweeter than praising him alone. The closing turn is the key: God shows no preference between intimate and stranger, and to reach Hari one must become like Hari. Tukaram counts himself fed on the leftovers of that feast, his life guarded, his heart fixed on those feet.

GATHA 0376

Appeals and Exhortations

Krishna's lila, devotion past shame

मराठी मूळ

दिलें ठेवूं तें विसरसी हातीं । नेणों काय बैसला हरि चितीं वो ॥१॥
 सर सर परती जालीस आतां भांड । कैसैं दाखविसी जगासी या तोंड ।
 व्याली माय ते लाजविली रांड । नाहीं थार दो ठायीं जाला खंड वो ॥२॥
 होतें तैसैं तें उमटलें वरी । बाह्य संपादणी अंतरींची चोरी ।
 नाहीं मर्यादा निःसंग बावरी । मन हें गोविंदीं देह काम करी वो ॥३॥
 नाहीं करीत उत्तर कोणासवें । पराधीन भोजन दिलें खावें ।
 नाहीं अचळ सावरावा ठावे । देखों उदासीन तुज देहभावें वो ॥४॥
 कोठें नेणों हा फावला एकांत । सदा किलकिल भोंवतीं बहुत ।
 दोघे एकवाटा बोलावया मात । नाहीं लाज धरिली दिला हात वो ॥५॥
 करी कवतुक खेळ खेळे कान्हा । दावी लाघव भांडवी सासासुना ।
 परा भक्ति हे शुद्ध तुम्ही जाणा । तुका म्हणें ऐसैं कळों यावें जना वो ॥६॥
 भरिला उलंडूनि रिता करी घट । मीस पाणियाचें गोविंदाची चट ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

You forget even what has been placed in your own hands. Who knows what Hari has settled into your chitta.

Go on, step back now, you fraud. How will you show your face to the world? A married woman has been shamed; you have no standing in either place.

What was hidden within has surfaced outwardly: a polished exterior hiding inner theft. She has lost all restraint, this bewildered one; her mind is in Govinda while the body goes through motions.

She makes no reply to anyone; she eats only what is given, like one not in her own keeping. We find her indifferent to everything, lost to bodily awareness.

Where she found this solitude no one knows, for crowds surround her always. The two of them share one path and one conversation; with no shame at all, she has given him her hand.

Says Tuka, Krishna plays his playful game, setting even mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law to quarreling. This is the highest devotion: pure.

May all the world come to know it.

IN PLAIN WORDS

You forget even what was placed in your own hands. Who knows what Hari has settled into your mind. Step back now, you fraud. How will you show your face to the world? You have shamed the mother who bore you; you have no standing in either place. What was hidden inside has come out: a polished outside hiding theft within. She has lost all restraint, this bewildered one. Her mind is in Govinda while her body goes through the motions. She makes no reply to anyone. She eats only what is given, like one no longer her own. She holds nothing steady. We find her indifferent to everything, lost to the body. Where she found this solitude no one knows, for crowds are always around her. The two of them share one path and one talk. With no shame, she has given him her hand. Tuka says: Krishna plays his playful game; he even sets mothers and daughters quarreling. Know this for the highest devotion, pure. May the whole world come to know it.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks in the voice of women scolding a girl who has fallen wholly into love for Krishna, and the scolding slowly turns into recognition. To the world she looks ruined: absent-minded, indifferent, lost to her duties, no longer keeping up appearances. The poem names the stakes by inverting the world's judgment. What looks like disgrace is her mind fixed on Govinda while the body merely moves, and the solitude she keeps in the middle of crowds is union with him. The harsh words land on the worldly habit of measuring devotion by reputation; the verse points instead at the pattern of being so taken by God that nothing of the self is held back. Tuka closes by naming it outright: this absorption past all shame is the purest devotion, and he wants everyone to see it.

GATHA 0377

Krishna Leela

Krishna's lila, the chase of love

मराठी मूळ

चाले झडझडां उसंतूनि वाट । पाहे पाळतूनि उभा तो चि नीट वो ॥१॥
 चाळा लाविलेले गोप गोपीनाथें । जाणे आवडीचें रूप जेथें तेथें ।
 दावी बहुतांच्या बहुवेषपंथें । गुणातीतें खेळ मांडिलेला येथें वो ॥२॥
 मनीं आवडे तें करावें उत्तर । कांहीं निमित्ताचा पाहोनि आधार ।
 उगा राहे कां मारिसी कंकर । मात वाढविसी उत्तरा उत्तर वो ॥३॥
 धरिली खोडी दे टाकोनियां मागें । न ये विनोद हा कामा मशीं संगें ।
 मिठी घालीन या जीवाचिया त्यागें । नाहीं ठाउकी पडिलीं तुझीं सोंगें रें ॥४॥
 सुख अंतरीचें बाह्य ठसठसी । म्हणे विनोद हा काय सोंग यासी ।
 तुज मज काय सोयरीक ऐसी । नंदानंदन या थोरपणें जासी रे ॥५॥
 करी कारण तें कळों नेदी कोणा । सुख अंतरीचे बाह्य रंग जाना ।
 मन मिनलें रे तुका म्हणे मना । भोग अंतरीचा पावे नारायणा वो ॥६॥
 आजि नवल मी आलें येणे राणें । भेटी अवचिती नंदाचिया कान्हें ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

She walks on briskly, pausing now and then, and he stands watching her, perfectly still. The Lord of the gopis has cast this spell: he knows the face of love wherever it appears.

He reveals himself in many guises through many paths, for the one beyond all qualities has set this game in motion here. If something pleases the mind, make it a reply; look for any excuse to speak.

Why do you stand there silently, or else throw pebbles at me? You build the conversation word upon word. She pretends to be offended and turns her back: this playful banter is no use to me.

I will seize you even at the cost of my life, for I know your disguises. The inner joy presses outward and will not be hidden.

She asks: what is this pretense for? What bond is there between you and me? O son of Nanda, you think too highly of yourself. He acts in secret so that no one sees, but the inner joy colors his every outward gesture.

Says Tuka, the mind has merged with the mind; the inner bliss reaches Narayana.

IN PLAIN WORDS

She walks on briskly, pausing now and then. He stands watching her, perfectly still. The Lord of the gopis has cast this spell. He knows the face of love wherever it appears. He shows himself in many guises along many paths, for the one beyond all qualities has set this game going here. If something pleases the mind, make it your reply; look for any excuse to speak. Why do you stand there silent, or throw pebbles at me? You build the talk word upon word. She pretends to take offense and turns her back. This banter is no use to me. I will hold you even if it costs my life, for I know your disguises. The inner joy presses outward and will not stay hidden. What is this pretending for? What bond is there between you and me? O son of Nanda, you think too highly of yourself. He acts in secret so no one sees, yet the inner joy colors his every outward move. Tuka says: mind has merged with mind; the inner bliss reaches Narayana.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram stages the play of teasing and pursuit between Krishna and a gopi as a picture of how love between the soul and God actually works. She walks ahead and he stands watching; he provokes, she protests, and the back-and-forth is itself the courtship. The frame the poem leaves unspoken is that this is no idle flirtation: the one beyond all qualities has deliberately set the game going, taking many forms to draw out love wherever he finds it. The claim it lands is that the joy inside cannot be hidden; it presses through every disguise and every gesture. When the two minds finally merge, that inner bliss reaches Narayana, which is the whole point of the chase.

GATHA 0378

Devotion to Vitthal

Union, the ceasing of coming and going

मराठी मूळ

गोवी सांगती वो सकळ ही जन । होतें संचित आणियेलें तेणें वो ॥१॥
 गेलें होउनि न चले आतां कांहीं । साद घालितां जवळी दुजें नाहीं ।
 अंगीं जडला मग उरलें तें काई । आतां राखतां गुमान भलें बाई वो ॥२॥
 बहुत कामें मज नाहीं आराणूक । एक सारितां तों पुढें उभें एक ।
 आजि मी टाकोनि आलें सकळिक । तंव रचिलें आणिक कवतुक वो ॥३॥
 चिंता करितां हरिली नारायणें । अंगसंगें मिनतां दोघेजणें ।
 सुखें निर्भर जालियें त्याच्या गुणें । तुका म्हणे खुंटलें येणें जाणें वो ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Everyone tells me it was my own accumulated karma that brought this about. What is done is done, and now nothing else will serve.

When I call out, no second voice answers; he has become part of my very limbs, so what else remains? It is good now to quietly guard what I have, for I have many duties and no rest. I finish one task and the next stands waiting.

Today I left everything behind, and then he fashioned yet another wonder. Says Tuka, Narayana stole away my worries, and the two of us merged in intimate closeness. Made utterly content by his qualities, all my coming and going has ceased.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Everyone tells me it was my own stored-up karma that brought this about. What is done is done; nothing else will serve now. When I call out, no second voice answers. He has become part of my own limbs, so what else is left? It is good now to quietly guard what I have, for I have many duties and no rest. I finish one task and the next stands waiting. Today I left everything behind, and then he made yet another wonder. Tuka says: Narayana stole away my worries. The two of us merged in close embrace. Made utterly content by his qualities, all my coming and going has ceased.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks as one whom God has overtaken so completely that there is no longer any distance to cross. The people around her read it as the ripening of past karma, and she does not argue: what is done is done, and nothing else can change it now. The poem names the union plainly. There is no second voice when she calls, because he has become part of her own body, and her worries have been carried off. The claim it lands is in the last line: when the soul and Narayana merge in this closeness, the restless coming and going of birth and longing simply ends, replaced by contentment in him.

GATHA 0379

Krishna Leela

Krishna's spell, forgetting the way home

मराठी मूळ

मैं भुली घरजानी बाट । गोरस बेचन आयें हाट ॥१॥
 कान्हा रे मनमोहन लाल । सब ही बिसरुं देखें गोपाल ॥२॥
 काहां पग डारुं देख आनेरा । देखें तों सब वोहिन घेरा ॥३॥
 हुं तों थकित भैर तुका । भागा रे सब मनका धोका ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I have forgotten the way home; I came to the marketplace to sell buttermilk. O Krishna, enchanter of the mind, beautiful one: seeing Gopala, I forget everything.

I cannot tell where to set my foot; everywhere I look, only he surrounds me. Says Tuka, I stand here astonished; all the mind's delusions have fled.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I have forgotten the way home. I came to the market to sell buttermilk. O Krishna, enchanter of the mind, beautiful one: seeing Gopala, I forget everything. I cannot tell where to set my foot. Everywhere I look, only he surrounds me. Tuka says: I stand here astonished. All the mind's delusions have fled.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram takes the small scene of a milkmaid who went to market and lost her way home, and lets it carry the whole experience of being captured by God. She came on ordinary business, selling buttermilk, and one sight of Gopala emptied her of everything else, even the path back. The frame the poem leaves unspoken is that the world is the marketplace and the way home is the ordinary self she can no longer find. The claim it lands is double: she is so surrounded by him that she cannot move, yet in that very paralysis every delusion of the mind has fallen away. Losing the world's road is finding him.

GATHA 0380

Longing and Separation

Longing, waiting for the Lord

मराठी मूळ

हरिबिन रहियां न जाये जिहिरा । कबकी थाडी देखें राहा ॥१॥
 क्या मेरे लाल कवन चुकी भई । क्या मोहिपासिती बेर लगाई ॥२॥
 कोई सखी हरी जावे बुलावन । बार हि डारुं उसपर तन ॥३॥
 तुका प्रभु कब देखें पाऊं । पासीं आऊं फेर न जाऊं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Without Hari, my heart cannot endure; how long must I stand here waiting? O my beloved, what fault have I committed? Why have you made me wait so long? If some friend would go and call Hari, I would sacrifice my body to that friend. Says Tuka, when will I see my Lord? Once I reach him, I will never go back.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Without Hari, my heart cannot bear it. How long must I stand here waiting? O my beloved, what fault have I done? Why have you made me wait so long? If some friend would go and call Hari, I would give my body to that friend. Tuka says: when will I see my Lord? Once I reach him, I will never go back.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks in the voice of one who cannot endure the absence of Hari and stands waiting, searching herself for the fault that keeps him away. The poem names the ache of separation and the helplessness of not knowing why the meeting is withheld. So great is the longing that she would surrender her own body to anyone who would simply go and call him. The claim it lands is the vow at the end: the meeting she begs for is not a passing visit but a final one. Once she reaches the Lord, she will never turn back to the life she came from.

GATHA 0381

Krishna Leela

Krishna's refuge, hidden from the world

मराठी मूळ

भलो नंदाजीको डिकरो । लाज राखीलीन हमारो ॥१॥
 आगळ आवो देवजी कान्हा । मैं घरछोडी आहे म्हांना ॥२॥
 उन्हसुं कळना वेतो भला । खसम अहंकार दादुला ॥३॥
 तुका प्रभु परवली हरी । छपी आहे हुं जगाथी न्यारी ॥३॥
 नका कांहीं उपचार माझ्या शरीरा । करुं न साहती बहु होतो उबारा ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Blessed is the son of Nanda; he has protected my honor. Come forward, O divine Krishna.

I have left my home for your sake. He is finer than the finest, and my proud and arrogant husband cannot compare.

Says Tuka, Hari has accepted me. I am hidden from the world, set apart and his alone.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Blessed is the son of Nanda; he has guarded my honor. Come forward, O divine Krishna. I have left my home for your sake. He is finer than the finest. My proud and arrogant husband cannot compare. Tuka says: Hari has accepted me. I am hidden from the world, set apart and his alone.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks as a woman who has left everything for Krishna and found in him the protector her own household could not be. She blesses the son of Nanda for guarding her honor and calls him finer than the finest, while the proud husband she left behind cannot stand the comparison. The frame the poem leaves unspoken is the gopi who abandons home and reputation for God, a figure for the soul that turns from worldly belonging to him alone. The claim it lands is in the close: Hari has accepted her, and now she lives hidden from the world, set apart and wholly his. What looks like loss to the world is the safest refuge there is.

GATHA 0382

Longing and Separation

Longing, the ache of desire for God

मराठी मूळ

मनोजन्य व्यथा वेध जाला अंतरा । लवकरी आणा नंदाचिया कुमरा ॥१॥
 सखिया वेशिया तुम्ही प्राणवल्लभा । निवेदिला भाव आर्तभूत या लोभा ।
 उमटली अंगीं वो सांवळी प्रभा । साच हे अवस्था कळे मज माझ्या क्षोभा ॥२॥
 नये कळों नेदावी हे दुजियासि मात । घडावा तयासि उत्कंठा एकांत ।
 एकाएकीं साक्षी येथें आपुलें चित्त । कोण्या काळें होइल नेणों भाग्य उदित वो ॥३॥
 स्वाद सीण देहभान निद्रा खंडन । पाहिले तटस्थ उन्मळित लोचन ।
 अवघें वोसाऊन उरले ते चरण । तुका म्हणे दर्शनापें आलें जीवन ॥४॥
 पडिली भुली धांवतें सैराट । छंद गोविंदाचा चोजवितें वाट ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The ache born of desire has pierced my innermost being. Bring me the son of Nanda, quickly.

O friends, O confidantes, you who are dear as life to me: I have laid bare my longing before you in this desperate love. A dark, beautiful radiance has appeared upon my body, and the truth of my condition is known to me through my own anguish.

Do not let this secret reach another's ears; may the meeting happen in solitude and longing. In this, my own heart alone is witness.

Who knows when that blessed day will dawn? Taste, exhaustion, body-awareness, and sleep have all been shattered. My eyes are fixed and unblinking, emptied of everything but those feet.

Says Tuka, with his vision came new life.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The ache born of desire has pierced my inmost being. Bring me the son of Nanda, quickly. O friends, you who are dear to me as life: I have laid my longing bare before you in this desperate love. A dark, beautiful glow has come over my body, and I know the truth of my state through my own anguish. Do not let this secret reach another's ears. Let the meeting happen in solitude and longing. In this, my own heart alone is the witness. Who knows when that blessed day will dawn. Taste, weariness, awareness of the body, sleep: all are shattered. My eyes are fixed and unblinking, emptied of everything but those feet. Tuka says: with his sight came new life.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram voices the soul as a woman pierced by longing for Krishna, confiding to trusted friends a love so intense it has changed her body and undone her ordinary life. She asks for the meeting to be kept secret and held in solitude, since her own heart is the only witness that can know what she feels. The poem names the cost of this longing without flinching: hunger, rest, sleep, even awareness of the body have been shattered, and her eyes rest on nothing but his feet. The claim it lands is the turn at the end. The very anguish that strips everything away is not death but the threshold of life, for the sight of him restores her.

GATHA 0383

Longing and Separation

Surrender, the Lord appears after confession

मराठी मूळ

मागें सांडोनि सकळ बोभाट । वंदीं पदांबुजें ठेवुनि ललाट वो ॥१॥
 कोणी सांगा या गोविंदाची शुद्धी । होतें वहिलें लपाला आतां खांदीं ।
 कोठें आड आली हे देहबुद्धी । धांवा आळवीं करुणा कृपानिधी वो ॥२॥
 मागें बहुतांचा अंतरला संग । मुळें जयाचिया तेणें केला त्याग ।
 पहिलें पाहातां तें हरपलें अंग । खुंटली वाट नाहीसं जालें जग वो ॥३॥
 शोके वियोग घडला सकळांचा । गेल्या शरण हा अन्याय आमुचा ।
 केला उच्चार रे घडल्या दोषांचा । जाला प्रगट स्वामी तुक्याचा वो ॥४॥
 काय उणें कां करिशील चोरी । किती सांगों तुज नाइकसी हरी ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Leaving behind all clamor, bow and place your forehead at his lotus feet. Has anyone news of Govinda? Before, he hid; now he has placed himself on my shoulders.

Where did this body-consciousness intrude? Call out, plead, invoke the treasury of mercy. Long ago, many companions were lost; the very one who caused the attachment also brought about the parting.

Looking back at the beginning, the body itself has vanished; the road ends, and the world disappears. Grief and separation from all have come upon me.

I surrendered and confessed my faults. When I cried out the wrongs I had committed, Says Tuka, my Lord appeared.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Leaving all clamor behind, bow and place your forehead at his lotus feet. Has anyone news of Govinda? Before, he hid; now he has set himself on my shoulders. Where did this body-consciousness get in the way? Call out, plead, invoke the treasury of mercy. Long ago many companions were lost; the very one who caused the attachment also brought the parting. Looking back to the beginning, the body itself has vanished. The road ends; the world disappears. Grief and separation from all have come upon me. I surrendered and confessed my faults. When I cried out the wrongs I had done, Tuka says: my Lord appeared.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram traces the path from hiddenness to revelation, and names body-consciousness as the one thing that stood in the way. God who once seemed absent is now carried on the very shoulders, and to reach this the seeker had to lose every other companion and attachment, including the sense of being a separate body. The poem names the stakes by describing the dissolution honestly: the road ends, the world disappears, and grief at the parting from all things comes first. The claim it lands is the order of events. It was surrender and the open confession of one's own faults, not any merit, that made the Lord appear. The crying out of the wrongs is what opens the door.

GATHA 0384

Longing and Separation

Longing, holding the elusive Lord

मराठी मूळ

परपरता तूं पळोनि जासी दुरी । अनावर या लौकिका बाहेरी वो ॥१॥
 माया करुणा हे करिते बहुत । किती सोसूं या जनांचे आघात ।
 न पुरे अवसरु हें चि नित्यानित्य । तूं चि सोडवीं करुनि स्थिर चित्त ॥२॥
 बहुत कामें मी गुंतलियें घरीं । जासी डोळा तूं चुकावूनि हरी ।
 करितां लाग न येसी च पळभरी । नाहीं सायासाची उरों दिली उरी वो ॥३॥
 तुज म्हणीयें मी न संगें अनंता । नको जाऊं या डोळ्यां परता ।
 न लगे जोडी हे तुजविण आतां । तुकयास्वामी कान्होबा गुणभरिता वो ॥४॥
 घाली कवाड टळली वाड राती । कामें व्यापिलीं कां पडिली दुश्चिती ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

You keep running further and further away, beyond all worldly restraint. You show so much tenderness, yet how long must I endure the blows of this world? There is never enough time; this happens day after day.

You alone must steady my wavering mind. I am entangled in the many duties of the household, while you, Hari, slip away from my sight.

For all my effort, you will not stay even a moment; you have not left me even the comfort of my striving. I beg you, O Ananta, do not go beyond the reach of my eyes.

Without you, nothing else holds any value. Says Tuka, O Krishna, O son of delight, O generous Kanhoba, stay.

IN PLAIN WORDS

You keep running further and further away, beyond all worldly hold. You show so much tenderness, yet how long must I bear the blows of this world? There is never enough time; this happens day after day. You alone must steady my wavering mind. I am tangled in the many duties of the household, while you, Hari, slip from my sight. For all my effort you will not stay even a moment. You have not left me even the comfort of my striving. I beg you, O Ananta, do not go beyond the reach of my eyes. Without you nothing else holds any worth. Tuka says: O Krishna, O son of delight, O generous Kanhoba, stay.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks as one caught between the pull of God and the grip of daily life, complaining that the Lord slips away just as the world keeps striking blows. The frame is the householder's struggle: tangled in endless duties, never enough time, the mind wavering and unable to hold steady on its own. The poem names the particular pain that the harder she tries to grasp him, the more he eludes her, leaving her not even the small comfort of feeling her effort was worth something. The claim it lands is the plea itself: only God can steady the mind that cannot steady itself, and so she begs Ananta not to pass beyond her sight, since without him nothing else has any value at all.

GATHA 0385

Krishna Leela

Krishna's lila, devotion outweighs all

मराठी मूळ

कोणे लागला गे सदैवेचे हातीं । आजि शून्य शेजे नाहीं दिसे पती वो ॥१॥
 बोले दूतिकेशीं राधा हें वचन । मशीं लाघव दाखवी नारायण ।
 म्हणे कोमळ परी बहु गे निर्गुण । याशीं न बोलें कळला मज पूर्ण वो ॥२॥
 धाडिलें गरुडा आणिलें हनुमंता । तें पाचारिलें होउनि ये वो सीता ।
 लाजिनली रूप न ये पालटितां । जाला भीमकी आपण राम सीता वो ॥३॥
 सत्यभामा दान करी नारदासी । तें कळला वो मज हृषीकेशी ।
 तुळे घालितां न ये कनक वो रासी । सम तुके एक पान तुळसी वो ॥४॥
 मज भुली पडली कैशापरी । आम्हां भोगूनि म्हणे मी ब्रम्हचारी ।
 दिली वाट यमुने मायें खरी । तुम्हां आम्हां न कळे अद्यापवरी वो ॥५॥
 जाणे जीवींचें सकळ नारायण । असे व्यापूनि तो न दिसे लपून ।
 राधा संबोखिली प्रीती आलिंगून । तुका म्हणे येथें भाव चि कारण वो ॥६॥
 मिळोनि गौळणी देती यशोदे गार्हागणीं । दहिं दुध तुप लोणीं शिंकां नुरे कांहीं ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Whose fortunate hand has claimed him? Today the bed is empty; my husband is nowhere to be seen. Radha speaks to her confidante: Narayana is playing his tricks on me.

He appears gentle, but he is truly beyond all attributes. I have known him fully, and I will not speak to him again.

He sent for Garuda and summoned Hanuman. He called for Sita, and she came.

But his form would not change, so he could not disguise his waywardness. He became Bheemaki's husband, and he was Rama to Sita.

When Satyabhama donated him to Narada, that is when I truly understood Hrishiksha. When she placed him on the scales, mountains of gold could not match him; a single tulsi leaf tipped the balance.

How was I so deceived? He enjoys us and then calls himself a celibate. He parted the Yamuna's waters for the sage's wives, and to this day we cannot fathom it.

Says Tuka, Narayana knows the heart of every being. He pervades everything yet remains hidden.

He consoled Radha with a loving embrace, for devotion alone is the cause of everything.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Whose lucky hand has claimed him? Today the bed is empty; my husband is nowhere. Radha speaks to her friend: Narayana is playing his tricks on me. He seems gentle, but he is truly beyond all qualities. I have known him fully, and I will not speak to him again. He sent for Garuda and summoned Hanuman. He called for Sita, and she came. But his form would not change; he could not hide his ways. He became the husband of Bheemaki, and he was Rama to Sita. When Satyabhama gave him away to Narada, that is when I truly knew Hrishiksha. When she set him on the scales, mountains of gold could not match him; a single tulsi leaf tipped the balance. How was I so deceived? He enjoys us, then calls himself a celibate. He parted the Yamuna's waters for the sages' wives, and to this day we cannot fathom it. Tuka says: Narayana knows the heart of every being. He fills everything yet stays hidden. He consoled Radha with a loving embrace, for devotion alone is the cause of all.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram lets Radha's playful complaint carry a teaching about who Krishna really is. She protests his tricks and his many faces, recalling how he answers every form of love, how he is Rama to Sita and husband to Rukmini, how no shape can disguise his true nature. The poem turns on the famous weighing: when Satyabhama tried to balance him with heaps of gold, only a single tulsi leaf offered in devotion could outweigh him. That image names the stakes. God cannot be bought or measured by wealth, only matched by love freely given. The claim it lands is in the close: Narayana knows every heart and pervades all things while staying hidden, and his loving embrace of Radha shows that devotion, and nothing else, is the cause of his coming.

GATHA 0386

Krishna Leela

Krishna's lila, the butter thief embraced

मराठी मूळ

मेळवुनी पोरें तेथें रिघे एकसरें । वेगीं आणोनी सामोरें तेथें लोणी खाय ॥१॥
 हरि सोंकला वो हरि सोंकला वो । सोंकला तो वारीं तुज लाज नाहीं तरी ।
 आम्हां सांपडतां उरी तुज मज नाहीं ॥२॥
 तुज वाटतसे कोड यासि लागतसे गोड । काय हासतेसी वेड तुज लागलें वो ।
 आम्ही जाऊं तुजवरी पोरें चाळविल्या पोरी । काय सांगों भांडखोरी लाज वाटे आम्हां ॥३॥
 मुख मळिण वदन उभा हाडतिये घोणे । तंव दसवंती म्हणे आणा शीक लावूं ।
 थोर आणिला कांटाळा घरीं दारीं लोकपाळां । डेरा रिघोनी गुसळा तेथें लोणी खाय ॥४॥
 मिळोनि सकळा दावें लावूनियां गळां । कैशा बांधिती उखळा येथें राहे उगा ।
 बरा सांपडलासी हरी आजिच्यानें करिसिल चोरी । डोळे घालुनियां येरी येरीकडे हांसे ॥५॥
 फांकल्या सकळा उपडूनियां उखळा । मोडी वृक्ष विमळार्जुन दोन्ही ।
 उठिला गजर दसवंती नव्हे धीर । धांवे तुकयाचा दातार आळंगिला वेगीं ॥६॥
 गोरस घेउनी सातें निघाल्या गौळणी । तंव ती कृष्णाची करणी काय करी तेथें ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He gathers the children, enters the house boldly, and quickly eats the butter right before everyone. Hari is caught, Hari is caught! Scold him if you have no shame; if we catch him, neither you nor we will be spared.

You think it is funny, and he finds it sweet. Why are you smiling? Have you gone mad? We will come to you directly; he has corrupted the boys and girls.

What can we say of his quarrelsome ways? We are ashamed to speak. His face is smeared, his nose is running, and Dasavanti says: bring him here, we will teach him a lesson.

He has caused great trouble in every home and neighborhood. He enters the churning place and eats the butter there.

They all gather, tie a rope around his neck, and bind him to the mortar: now stay still. They say: we have caught you at last, Hari; today you will not steal again.

But he glances mischievously from side to side and laughs. Then, having scattered them all, he uproots the mortar and topples the two Arjuna trees.

A great commotion arises. Dasavanti cannot hold herself back.

Says Tuka, the Lord, my benefactor, runs and embraces the child.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He gathers the children, walks in boldly, and quickly eats the butter in front of everyone. Hari is caught, Hari is caught! Scold him if you have no shame; but if we catch him, neither you nor we will be spared. You think it is funny, and he finds it sweet. Why are you smiling? Have you gone mad? We will come straight to you; he has led the boys and girls astray. What can we say of his quarrelsome ways. We are ashamed to speak. His face is smeared, his nose running, and Dasavanti says: bring him here, we will teach him a lesson. He has caused great trouble in every home and street. He gets into the churning pot and eats the butter there. They all gather, tie a rope around his neck, and bind him to the mortar: now stay still. We have caught you at last, Hari; today you will steal no more. But he glances mischievously side to side and laughs. Then, scattering them all, he uproots the mortar and topples the two Arjuna trees. A great uproar rises; Dasavanti cannot hold herself back. Tuka says: the Lord, my benefactor, runs and embraces the child.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram retells the child Krishna's butter-stealing as both delight and revelation. The gopis come complaining to Yashoda, the boy is caught smeared and laughing, bound to the mortar to keep him still, and even then he breaks free and uproots the twin Arjuna trees. The frame the poem leaves unspoken is that the child who lets himself be tied is the Lord who fills everything; he submits to the rope of a mother's love and yet no binding can hold him. The verse keeps the mood playful and affectionate, the scolding of doting women rather than real anger. The claim it lands is the last line: the same Lord who plays the thief is the seeker's benefactor, and in the end he runs to embrace, which is what all his mischief was reaching toward.

GATHA 0387

Krishna Leela

Krishna's lila, caught by destiny's toll

मराठी मूळ

जाला पानसरा मिठी घातली पदरा । आधीं दान माझें सारा मग चाला पंथें ॥१॥
 सर जाऊं दे परता । मुळीं भेटलासी आतां । नाट लागलें संचिता । खेपा खुंटलिया ॥२॥
 आसुडी पदरा धरी आणीक दुसरा । येरी झोंबतील करा काय वेडा होसी ।
 आलों गेलों बहु वेळां नेणों गोरा कीं सांवळा । सर परता गोवळा काय बोलतोसी ॥३॥
 आम्ही येथें अधिकारी मार्गे केली तुम्ही चोरी । आतां कळलियावरी मार्गे केलें त्याचें ।
 बोलिल्या हांसुनी आम्ही सासुरवासिनी । कां रे झोंबसी दुरूनी करी मात कांहीं ॥४॥
 वांयां परनारी कैशा धरिसी पदरीं । तयां कळलिया उरी तुज मज नाहीं ।
 जडला जिह्वारीं फांकों नेदी तया नारी । जेथें वर्म तें धरी जाऊं पाहे तियेचें ॥५॥
 तया हाती सांपडल्या हाटीं पाटीं चुकाविल्या । कृष्णमळिणीं मिळाल्या त्याही न फिरती ।
 तुका म्हणे खंती वांयां न धरावी चितीं । होतें तुमच्या संचितीं वोडवलें आजि ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He has become a toll-collector on my path and grabbed the hem of my garment. Pay me my dues first, then go your way.

She says: let go, step back. Now that you have met me at the source, the game of fate has begun and these journeys are done.

She shakes free of his hand; he seizes another's garment. The others too start grappling with his hands.

We have come and gone many times; we do not even know if he is fair or dark. Step aside, cowherd boy, what are you saying? We are the rightful ones here; you stole from us before, and now that we have caught on, you must answer for what you did.

They speak, laughing: we are married women living in our in-laws' homes. Why do you grab at us from afar? Say something proper.

In vain you clutch the garments of other men's wives. If their husbands find out, neither you nor we will be spared.

But he has pierced their hearts and will not let those women go; wherever the secret is, he holds fast. Those who fell into his hands were lost even in the marketplace.

The women who mingled with dark-skinned Krishna never turned back. Says Tuka, do not grieve in vain. This was written in your own destiny, and today it has ripened.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He has become a toll-collector on my path and grabbed the hem of my garment. Pay me my dues first, then go your way. She says: let go, step back. Now that you have met me at the source, the game of fate has begun and these journeys are over. She shakes free of his hand; he seizes another's garment. The others too start grappling with his hands. We have come and gone many times; we do not even know if he is fair or dark. Step aside, cowherd boy, what are you saying? We are the rightful ones here; you stole from us before, and now that we have caught on, you must answer for it. They speak, laughing: we are married women living in our in-laws' homes. Why do you grab at us from afar? Say something proper. In vain you clutch the garments of other men's wives. If their husbands find out, neither you nor we will be spared. But he has pierced their hearts and will not let those women go; wherever the secret is, he holds fast. Those who fell into his hands were lost even in the marketplace. The women who mingled with dark Krishna never turned back. Tuka says: do not grieve in vain. This was written in your own destiny, and today it has ripened.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram tells the toll-scene at the riverbank, where Krishna blocks the gopis' path and demands his due, as an image of how God claims the soul. The women protest, scold, and laugh, pleading their respectability and the danger of scandal, but their resistance is the surface of the story. The frame it names is that once he has met them at the source, the cycle of their ordinary journeys is finished. The claim it lands comes through the gopis who could not turn back: whoever falls into his hands is pierced in the heart and lost to the old life for good. Tuka closes by pointing it at the listener's own self-examination: do not grieve at being caught, for this was written in your destiny and has now simply come ripe.

GATHA 0388

Krishna Leela

Gopi's mock complaint, Krishna will not loose his hold

मराठी मूळ

हरी तुझी कांति रे सांवळी । मी रे गोरी चांपेकळी । तुझ्या दर्शनें होईन काळी । मग हें वाळी जन मज ॥१॥
 उगला राहें न करीं चाळा । तुज किती सांगों रे गोवळा । तुझा खडबड कांबळा । अरे नंदबाळा आलगाटा ॥२॥
 तुझिये अंगीं घुरट घाणी । बहु खासी दुध तुप लोणी । घरिचें बाहेरिल आणोनी । मी रे चांदणी सकुमार ॥३॥
 मज ते हांसतील जन । धिःकारिती मज देखोन । अंगीं तुझें देखोनि लक्षण । मग विटंबणा होइल रे ॥४॥
 तुज लाज भय शंका नाही । मज तंव सज्जन पिशुन व्याही । आणीक मात बोलूं काहीं । मसी भीड नाही तुज
 माझी ॥४॥

वचन मोडी नेदी हात । कळलें न साहे ची मात । तुकयास्वामी गोपीनाथ । जीवन्मुक्त करुनि भोगी ॥५॥
 सात पांच गौळणी आलिया मिळोनी यशोदे गार्हा । णें देती कैसें ।
 काय व्यालीस पोर चोरटें सिरजोर जनावेगळें ची कैसें ।
 दहिं दुध लोणी शिंकां नुरे चि काहीं कवाड जैशाचें तैसें ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

O Hari, your complexion is dark, and I am fair as a champa blossom. By beholding you I will turn dark, and then the world will shun me.

Stay quiet and stop your mischief. How many times must I tell you, cowherd? Your blanket is rough and scratchy.

Stay away, O child of Nanda. You smell of ghee and curd; you gorge on milk, butter, and cream from your own house and others'.

I am delicate as moonlight. People will laugh at me; they will jeer when they see me.

If your marks appear on my body, I will be disgraced. You have no shame, no fear, no hesitation, while I have respectable elders and sharp-tongued in-laws.

What more can I say? You have no regard for my dignity at all. Says Tuka, my Lord Gopinath will not let go and will not release her hand. Knowing the truth, he cannot bear to hear her refusals.

He makes her one with himself in liberation, even as he enjoys the play of love.

IN PLAIN WORDS

O Hari, your color is dark; I am fair, fair as a champa flower. If I look at you I will turn dark, and then people will cast me out. Stay quiet; stop your tricks. How many times must I tell you, cowherd? Your blanket is rough and scratchy. Keep away, child of Nanda. You stink of ghee and curds; you stuff yourself with milk, butter, and cream, from your own house and from others' too. I am tender as moonlight. People will laugh at me; they will jeer when they see me. If your marks show on my body I will be shamed. You have no shame, no fear, no second thought, while I have respectable elders and sharp-tongued in-laws. What more can I say? You have no care at all for my honor. Tuka says: my Lord Gopinath will not let her go and will not release her hand. He knows the truth and cannot bear to hear her refuse. He makes her one with himself in liberation while he enjoys this play of love.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram writes in the voice of a gopi scolding Krishna, and the scolding is itself the love. Every complaint she makes, his dark skin, his smell of butter, the disgrace his touch will bring among her in-laws, is a way of staying close while pretending to push away. He has no shame and no fear because he is not bound by the social code that binds her, and that is exactly what frees her from it too. In the closing turn Tukaram names what the quarrel is really about: Gopinath will not let go of the soul that argues with him, because her refusals are only the soul's last resistance. He holds her hand until she is made one with him, and the whole teasing scene is the play through which liberation is given.

GATHA 0389

Krishna Leela

The milkmaids' complaint to Yashoda, love that ruins decorum

मराठी मूळ

चाळवूनि नाशिली कन्याकुमरें आमुच्या सुनांसि लाविलें पिसें गे बाइये ॥१॥
 आझुनि तरी यासि सांगें बरव्या परी नाहीं तरी नाहीं उरी जीवेसाटी ।
 मिळोनि सकळै जणी करुं वाखा सखीं तुज मज होईल तुटी गे बाइये ॥२॥
 नेणे आपपर लौकिक वेव्हार भलते ठायीं भलतें करी ।
 पाळतुनि घरीं आम्ही नसतां तेथें आपण संचार करी ।
 सोगया चुंबन देतो आलिंगन लोळे मेजाबाजावरी ।
 शिंकीं कडा फोडी गोरसाचे डेरे धरितां न सांपडे करीं गे बाइये ॥३॥
 आतां याची चाड नाहीं आम्हां भीड सांपतां कोड पुरवूं मनिचें ।
 सोसिलें बहु दिस नव्हता केला निस म्हणुनि एकुलतें तुमचें ।
 चरण खांबीं जीवें बांधेन सरिसा जवें न चले कांहीं याचें ।
 अर्थ प्राण देतां न सोडी सर्वथा भलतें हो या जिवाचें गे बाइये ॥४॥
 घेउनी जननी हातीं चक्रपाणी देतिसे गौळणी वेळोवेळां ।
 निष्ठ वाद झणीं बोलाल सकळा क्षोभ जाइल माझ्या बाळा ।
 जेथें लागे हात वाढतें नवनीत अमृताच्या कल्लोळा ।
 देखोनि तुकयास्वामी देश देहभाव विसरल्या सकळा गे बाइये ॥५॥
 विरहतापें फुंदे छंद करिते जाती । हा गे तो गे सावधान सवें चि दुश्चिती ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He has lured and ruined our daughters and sons and driven our daughters-in-law mad, O Yashoda. Tell him properly to behave, or else there will be no mercy left; our very lives are at stake.

We women will all unite and confront you; the friendship between you and us will be broken. He knows no boundaries, no propriety, no social custom; he does whatever he pleases wherever he goes.

When we are not watching our homes, he makes his entrance there. He kisses and embraces everyone, rolls on beds and benches, smashes the pots on the ceiling hooks, and empties every vessel of buttermilk; no one can catch him.

We have endured this too long and been too patient, thinking he is your only child. But now we will bind him to a post with all our strength, and nothing he does will save him.

Even if it costs us everything, we will not let go. Then Mother Yashoda takes the Lord of the Discus in her hands and presents him to the milkmaids.

Do not speak harshly, all of you, or my little one will be hurt. Says Tuka, wherever his hands touch, fresh butter springs up in streams of nectar. Seeing my Lord, the whole country forgot every other awareness.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He has lured and ruined our daughters and our sons; he has driven our daughters-in-law mad, O Yashoda. Tell him now, plainly, to behave, or there will be no mercy left; our very lives are at stake. We women will unite and confront you, and the friendship between you and us will break. He knows no boundary, no decency, no custom; he does whatever he likes wherever he goes. When we leave our homes unwatched, he slips in. He kisses everyone, embraces them, rolls on the beds and benches, smashes the pots on the ceiling hooks, and empties every vessel of buttermilk; no one can catch him. We have borne this far too long, patient because he is your only child. Now we will bind him to a post with all our strength, and nothing he does will save him. Even if it costs us everything, we will not let go. Then Mother Yashoda takes the Lord of the Discus in her hands and gives him to the milkmaids again and again. Do not speak harshly, all of you, or my little one will be hurt. Tuka says: wherever his hands touch, fresh butter springs up in streams of nectar. Seeing my Lord, the whole country forgot every other awareness.

WHAT IT MEANS

The milkmaids come to Yashoda as outraged neighbors, listing Krishna's thefts and trespasses as crimes, but the complaint exposes its opposite. He has overturned every household boundary and rule of propriety, and that is precisely why the young people cannot keep their hearts away from him. Their threat to bind him to a post is the gesture of those who can neither hold him nor let him go. When Yashoda hands him over and begs them not to be harsh, the quarrel dissolves into tenderness, and Tukaram lands the truth: his touch turns to streams of nectar, and one look at him makes the whole country forget itself. What looked like ruin is the disordering power of God, which breaks the small order of decorum so that love can take its place.

GATHA 0390

Krishna Leela

The God-struck woman, force cannot recall her

मराठी मूळ

न सांभाळुनि अंग लोटी पाहे भोंवतीं । वेगळी च पडों पाहे कुळाहुनिया ती ॥१॥
 खुंटलीसी जाली येथें अवघियांची गती । आपुलीं परावीं कोण नेणें भोंवती ।
 त्यांचीं नांवें बोभे अहो अहो श्रीपती । नवलाव हा येरां वाटोनियां हांसती ॥२॥
 बाहेरी च धांवे रानां न धरी च घर । न कळे बंधना जाला तेणें संचार ।
 विसरुनि गेली सासुरें की माहेर । एका अवलोकी एका पडिला विसर ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे तुम्ही अवघ्या राहा निश्चळा । न ये आतां येऊं येथें सर्वथा बळा ।
 त्याचा त्याच्या मुखें अवघाची निर्वाळा । बहुतां मते येथें तर्कवाद निराळा ॥४॥
 ये रे कृष्णा खुणाविती खेळों भातुकें । मिळालिया बाळा एके ठायीं कवतुकें ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

She throws herself about without guarding her limbs, looking in every direction, ready to break away from home and family. All of them have reached the end of their wits.

They do not know their own from a stranger's. They cry out his names aloud: O Shripati, Shripati! The onlookers marvel and laugh at this spectacle.

She runs outside into the wilds and will not stay in the house. Through that bond she wanders everywhere, having forgotten whether this is her husband's home or her parents'.

Her gaze is fixed on one alone; all else has dropped from memory. Says Tuka, all of you stay calm and steady. This power will never yield to force.

From his own mouth the full truth will come. All debates and conjectures fall apart here on their own.

IN PLAIN WORDS

She throws herself about, not guarding her body, looking everywhere, ready to break free of home and family. All of them are at the end of their wits. They no longer tell their own people from strangers. They cry his names aloud: O Shripati, Shripati. The onlookers marvel and laugh at the sight. She runs out into the wilds and will not stay in the house. Caught in that bond, she wanders everywhere, forgetting whether this is her husband's home or her parents' home. Her gaze is fixed on one alone; everything else has dropped from her memory. Tuka says: all of you, stay calm and still. This power will never yield to force. From his own mouth the whole truth will come. Here every argument and every guess falls apart on its own.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes a woman so taken by Krishna that she has lost all sense of place, kin, and shame, and the people around her can only watch and laugh. Her wandering is not madness in the ordinary sense; it is the soul gripped by a single love that has erased every other attachment, husband's house and parents' house alike. The crowd's instinct is to restrain her, and Tukaram answers that this is useless: such a bond does not bend to force. The verse turns the laughter back on the onlookers, for the truth of her state will be settled by God himself, and all their reasoning about it simply collapses before it.

GATHA 0391

Krishna Leela

Krishna's hidden maya, drawn inward to the One

मराठी मूळ

कळों नेदी माया त्याचें त्यास ठाउकें । खेळतोंसें दावी लक्षलक्षापें मुकें ॥१॥
 अखंडित चटे त्यांनीं लावियेला कान्हा । आवडे तया त्या वाहाती संकल्प मना ।
 अवघियांचा जाणें जाला मेळासा हरी । मिळोनियां जावें तेथें तया भीतरी ।
 कळों नेदी घरिच्या करी गोवूनी चोरी । हातोहातीं नेती परपरत्या दुरी ॥२॥
 आनंदें निर्भर आपणाशीं आपण । क्रीडतील बाळा त्यजिलें पारिखें जन ।
 एकाएकीं तेथें नाहीं दुसरें भिन्न । तुका म्हणे एका नारायणा वांचून ॥३॥
 खेळतां मुरारी जाय सरोवरा तिरीं । तंव नग्न चि या नारी तेथें देखियेल्या ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

His maya does not let itself be known; only he knows his own secret. He pretends to play, yet silently strips away a hundred thousand attachments.

Those children have fixed their hearts upon Krishna; whatever they desire, their minds carry toward him. Hari has become the gathering place of all.

Go together to meet him there, within. He performs his mischief within the house so no one notices.

Hand to hand they lead one another further and further away. Filled with bliss, they play among themselves, having abandoned all other people.

There is no second, no other, in that place. Says Tuka, there is nothing besides Narayana alone.

IN PLAIN WORDS

His maya will not let itself be known; only he knows his own secret. He seems to play, yet silently he strips away a hundred thousand attachments. Without a break he has fixed those children's hearts on Kanha; whatever they long for, their minds carry to him. Hari has become the gathering place of all. Go together to meet him there, within. He works his theft inside the house, so no one notices. Hand to hand they lead one another further and further away. Full of bliss, they play among themselves, having left all other people behind. There is no second, nothing other, in that place. Tuka says: there is nothing besides Narayana alone.

WHAT IT MEANS

Here the playful stealing of Krishna's childhood is read straight through as the work of his maya, which hides its own method even as it acts. While he seems only to be playing, he is quietly removing attachments by the hundred thousand and gathering every heart into himself. Tukaram points the listener to where this meeting happens, within, and frames the gopis being drawn away from the world as souls led step by step out of their old attachments. The poem ends on the non-dual claim it has been moving toward: in that inward place there is no second thing, nothing besides Narayana alone, which is the whole point the play was disguising.

GATHA 0392

Krishna Leela

The stolen garments at the Kadamba tree, surrender of all but the heart

मराठी मूळ

मांडिले विंदान ख्याल सुखाचें संधान । अंग लपवूनी मान पिलंगत चाले ॥१॥
 ख्याल मांडिला रे ख्याल मांडिला रे । पायां पडतां रे न सोडी नेदी साउलां रे ॥२॥
 साड्या साउलीं पातळें गोंडे कसणिया चोळ्या । बुंथी घेउनी सकळा कळंबावरी पळे।
 खांदी धरुनियां करीं दृष्टी घालोनि सामोरी । बैसे पाला वोढी वरी खदखदां हांसे ॥२॥
 आनंदें कल्लोळ बाळा खेळती सकळ देती उलटिया चपळ । एकी एकीहूनि म्हैस वेल सुर काडी ।
 एकी उगविती कोडीं । नाना परीच्या निकडी खेळ मांडियेला ॥३॥
 एकी आलिया बाहेरी पाहे लुगडें तंव नारी । म्हणे नाहीं नेलें चोरी काय जाणों केव्हां ।
 केला सकळी हाकारा तंव आलिया बाहेरा । आतां म्हणतील घरां जावें कैशा परी ॥४॥
 तंव हांसे वनमाळी वरी पाहोनी सकळी । लाजे रिघालिया जळीं मागें पुढें हात ।
 लाज राखावी गोपाळा आम्हांजणींची सकळां । काय मागसी ये वेळा देऊं गुळवाटी ॥५॥
 जोडोनियां कर या गे सकळी समोर । वांयां न बोलावें फार बडबड कांहीं ।
 भातुकें भूषण नाहीं चाड नेघें धन । करा एक चित्त मन या गे मजपाशीं ॥६॥
 एक एकीकडे पाहे लाज सांडूनियां राहे । म्हणे चला आतां सये जाऊं तयापाशीं ।
 जोडोनियां हात कैशा राहिल्या निवांत । तुका म्हणे केली मात लाज राखिली तयांची ॥७॥
 धरिला पालव न सोडी माझा येणें । कांहीं करितां या नंदाचिया कान्हें ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He has set up an elaborate game, a scheme of pure delight. Hiding himself, he moves with a dancing, leaping gait.

The game is on, the game is on! When they fall at his feet, he will not relent and will not return their garments. He snatches their saris, shawls, petticoats, tassels, sashes, and blouses, and with all of them in hand, he scrambles up the Kadamba tree.

Draping them over his shoulder, he looks down directly at them and bursts out laughing. The children play in joyful uproar, clapping and tumbling.

Some challenge one another with various feats of daring; the game grows wider and wilder. When one comes out of the water, she looks for her clothes and says: I do not know who took them or when.

They all call out together, and more come out, wondering how they will get home now. The wearer of the forest garland laughs, looking down at them all.

Ashamed, they hide in the water, covering themselves with their hands. They plead: protect our honor, O Gopala.

What do you want at this moment? We will give you sweets. He says: come out, all of you, come before me with folded hands.

Do not chatter and waste words. I care nothing for trinkets, ornaments, or wealth.

Give me your hearts and minds undivided. They look at one another and abandon their shame.

One says: come, friend, let us go to him. With folded hands they stand quietly.

Says Tuka, he spoke the word and their honor was preserved.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He has set up an elaborate game, a scheme of pure delight. Hiding himself, he moves with a dancing, leaping step. The game is on, the game is on. When they fall at his feet he will not relent and will not give back their clothes. He snatches their saris, shawls, petticoats, tassels, sashes, and blouses, and with them all in hand he scrambles up the Kadamba tree. He drapes them over his shoulder, looks straight down at them, and bursts out laughing. The children play in joyful uproar, clapping and tumbling. Some dare one another with feats; the game grows wilder. One comes out of the water, looks for her clothes, and says: I do not know who took them, or when. They all call out together, and more come out, wondering how they will ever get home. The wearer of the forest garland laughs, looking down at them all. Ashamed, they shrink back into the water, covering themselves with their hands. They plead: protect our honor, O Gopala. What do you want now? We will give you sweets. He says: come out, all of you, and stand before me with folded hands. Do not chatter and waste words. I care nothing for trinkets, ornaments, or wealth. Give me your hearts and minds, undivided. They look at one another and let go of their shame. One says: come, friend, let us go to him. With folded hands they stand quietly. Tuka says: he spoke the word, and their honor was kept.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram retells the famous play of the stolen clothes as a lesson in total surrender. Krishna takes every garment the gopis have, every covering and ornament, and will not return them no matter how they plead or bargain with sweets. His one demand is plain: not trinkets, not wealth, but the heart and mind given whole and undivided, and to receive it they must come to him stripped of every concealment, hands folded. The shame they must abandon is the self's last covering, the wish to keep something back. When they finally let it go and stand quietly before him, Tukaram closes by saying their honor was preserved by his word, for what is surrendered to God is not lost but kept safe.

GATHA 0393

Krishna Leela

Caught alone by Hari, the soul that cannot pull free

मराठी मूळ

एकली न येतें मी ऐसें काय जाणें । कोठें भरलें अवघड या राणें रे ॥१॥
 सोडी पालव जाऊ दे मज हरी । वेळ लागला रे कोपतील घरीं ।
 सासू दारुण सासरा आहे भारी । तुज मज सांगतां नाहीं उरी रे ॥२॥
 सखिया वेशिया होतिया । तुज फावलें रे फांकतां तयांसी ।
 होतें अंतर तर सांपडतें कैसी । एकाएकीं अंगीं जडलासी रे ॥३॥
 कैसी भागली हे करितां उत्तर । शक्ति मावळल्या आसुडितां कर ।
 स्वामी तुकयाचा भोगिया चतुर । भोग भोगी त्यांचा राखे लोकाचार वो ॥४॥
 गाई गोपाळ यमुनेचे तटीं । येती पाणिया मिळोनि जगजेटी ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I never would have come alone had I known. Who could tell this forest was so full of danger? Let go of my garment, Hari, let me go.

It is getting late and they will be furious at home. My mother-in-law is harsh and my father-in-law is formidable; the consequences for you and me cannot be spoken.

My friends and companions were with me, and you found your chance when they scattered. Had there been any distance, how would you have caught me? Suddenly, all at once, you clung to me.

How weary she is from arguing, her strength failing as she tries to pull her hand free. Says Tuka, the Lord, that expert enjoyer, takes his delight while preserving all outward propriety.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I never would have come alone if I had known. Who could tell this forest was so full of danger? Let go of my garment, Hari, let me go. It is getting late; they will be furious at home. My mother-in-law is harsh, my father-in-law is severe; if anyone tells them of you and me, nothing of us will be left. My friends and companions were with me, and you found your chance when they scattered. If there had been any distance between us, how would you have caught me? All at once you clung to me. How weary she is now from arguing, her strength gone as she tries to wrench her hand free. Tuka says: the Lord, that skilled enjoyer, takes his delight while keeping every outward propriety.

WHAT IT MEANS

A gopi caught alone by Krishna pleads to be released, naming the late hour, the harsh in-laws, the ruin that exposure will bring, and Tukaram lets the whole protest stand as the soul's resistance to being seized by God. She notes that she was only caught because her companions scattered and because there was no distance left between them, which is the condition of the soul left alone with the divine. Her arguing tires her and her strength fails as she tries to pull her hand away, the image of a will that cannot free itself from the grip it secretly wants. Tukaram closes by naming Krishna the skilled enjoyer who takes his delight yet keeps every outward form intact, so that the seizing is real but the world sees nothing amiss.

GATHA 0394

Krishna Leela

Drawn by the flute, work forgotten

मराठी मूळ

चेंडू चौगुणा खेळती वाळवंटीं । चला चला म्हणती पाहूं दृष्टी वो ॥१॥
 ऐशा गोपिका त्या कामातुरा नारी । चित विव्दळ देखावया हरी ।
 मिस पाणियाचें करितील घरीं । बारा सोळा मिळोनि परस्परीं वो ॥२॥
 चिरें चोळिया त्या धुतां विसरती । ऊर्ध्व लक्ष लागलें कृष्णमूर्ती ।
 कोणा नाठवे कोण कुळ याती । जालीं ताटस्त सकळ नेत्रपातीं वो ॥३॥
 दंतधावनाचा मुखामाजी हात । वाघें वाजती नाइके जनमात ।
 करी श्रवण कृष्णवेणुगीत । स्वामी तुकयाचा पुरवील मनोरथ वो ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

They are playing chendoo-chauguna on the sandy banks. Come, come, say the women, let us go watch.

Those gopis, those love-struck women, their hearts yearning to see Hari, use the excuse of fetching water from home, gathering in groups of twelve and sixteen. While washing their garments they forget what they are doing, their gaze fixed upward on the form of Krishna.

No one remembers name or family or caste; all are spellbound, frozen in the direction of his glance. One has her hand in her mouth for cleaning her teeth, yet does not hear a word the world is saying, for her ears are drinking in Krishna's flute song.

Says Tuka, the Lord of Tuka will fulfill every wish of the heart.

IN PLAIN WORDS

They are playing chendoo-chauguna on the sandy banks. Come, come, the women say, let us go and watch. Those gopis, those love-struck women, their hearts aching to see Hari, make the excuse of fetching water from home, and gather in groups of twelve and sixteen. While washing their clothes they forget what they are doing, their gaze fixed upward on the form of Krishna. No one remembers her name, her family, her caste; all stand spellbound, frozen in the line of his glance. One has her hand in her mouth, cleaning her teeth, and does not hear a word the world is saying, for her ears are drinking in Krishna's flute song. Tuka says: the Lord of Tuka will fulfill every wish of the heart.

WHAT IT MEANS

The gopis invent an errand, fetching water, to go where Krishna plays, and once there the errand falls away entirely. Washing forgotten, teeth half-cleaned, names and caste and family all slip from mind as their attention is pulled upward to his form and his flute. Tukaram is showing how the pull of God dissolves ordinary identity and the world's chatter; the woman with her hand still in her mouth hears nothing but the flute. The closing line makes the promise explicit: this is no loss but a fulfillment, for the Lord grants the heart's deepest wish to the one who is taken up in him.

GATHA 0395

Krishna Leela

Scolding the thief of the heart, the Lord seated within

मराठी मूळ

कोठें मी तुझा धरुं गेलें संग । लाविलेलें जग माझ्या पाठीं ॥१॥
 सर सर रे परता अवगुणाच्या गोवळा । नको लावूं चाळा खोटा येथें ॥२॥
 रुपाच्या लावण्यें नेली चित्तवृत्ती । न देखें भोंवतीं मी ते माझी ॥२॥
 तुकयाचा स्वामी माझे जीवीं च बैसला । बोलीं च अबोला करुनियां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

What came over me, keeping your company? You have set the whole world upon my trail. Go away, go back, you rascal of a cowherd.

Do not play your false tricks here. The beauty of your form has stolen my mind and heart; I no longer see anything around me as my own.

Says Tuka, my Lord has seated himself within my very life and, having done so, has fallen silent.

IN PLAIN WORDS

What came over me, that I went near you? You have set the whole world on my trail. Go away, go back, you rascal of a cowherd. Do not play your false tricks here. The beauty of your form has carried off my mind and heart; I no longer see anything around me as my own. Tuka says: my Lord has seated himself in my very life, and having done so, has fallen silent.

WHAT IT MEANS

A short scolding poem where the rebuke is the confession. She tells the cowherd to go away and stop his tricks, but in the same breath admits that his beauty has already taken her mind and that nothing around her feels like her own anymore. The angry words are the soul's protest against a captivation it cannot undo. Tukaram closes by dropping the quarrel entirely: the Lord has settled inside her very life and then gone silent, so the outward fuss is over a presence that has already moved in and will not leave.

GATHA 0396

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy beyond telling, the past cut off

मराठी मूळ

गोड लागे परी सांगतां चि न ये । बैसे मिठी सये आवडीची ॥१॥
 वेधलें वो येणें श्रीरंगरंगें । मीमाजी अंगें हारपलीं ॥२॥
 परते चि ना दृष्टी बैसली ते ठायीं । विसावोनि पायीं ठेलें मन ॥३॥
 तुक्याच्या स्वामीसवें जाली भेटी । तेव्हां जाली तुटी मागिल्यांची ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

It tastes sweet, and yet it cannot be described. An embrace of pure love settles in, the embrace of a beloved companion.

I have been pierced by the splendor of Shrirang; all sense of "I" and "mine" has vanished. My gaze will not turn back; it has settled where it settled, and my mind has come to rest at his feet.

Says Tuka, from the moment I met my Lord, all ties with the past were cut.

IN PLAIN WORDS

It tastes sweet, and yet it cannot be told. An embrace of love settles in, the embrace of a dear companion. I have been pierced through by the splendor of Shrirang; all sense of I and mine has vanished. My gaze will not turn back; it has stayed where it came to rest, and my mind has lain down at his feet. Tuka says: from the moment I met my Lord, all ties with the past were cut.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks from inside the experience of union, where the sweetness is real but words give out. The splendor of God has pierced him so completely that the sense of I and mine simply disappears, and his gaze and mind no longer turn back toward anything else. This is not a feeling he can describe to others; it is a resting place his attention has settled into for good. The closing line names the cost and the gift together: meeting the Lord severed every tie to the old life, and that severing is what the ecstasy amounts to.

GATHA 0397

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the handmaid who will not be shamed

मराठी मूळ

पाहावया माजी नभा । दिसे शोभा चांगली ॥१॥
 बैसला तो माझे मनीं । नका कोणी लाजवूं ॥२॥
 जीवा आवडे जीवाहूनि । नव्हे क्षण वेगळा ॥३॥
 जालें विश्वंभरा ऐसी । तुक्या दासी स्वामीची ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Looking up into the sky, a beautiful radiance appears. He has settled in my mind; let no one shame me for it.
 He is dearer to me than life itself, not separate from me for even a moment. Says Tuka, I have become the
 handmaid of Vishvambhara, the sustainer of all.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Looking up into the sky, I see a beautiful radiance. He has settled in my mind; let no one shame me for it. He is dearer to me than my own life, not apart from me for a single moment. Tuka says: I have become the handmaid of Vishvambhara, the sustainer of all.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram takes the voice of a devotee who has made God her whole life and will not be shamed for it. The Lord has settled in her mind and become dearer than life, never separate from her even for a moment, and she answers in advance the world's mockery of such love by refusing it any hold. Calling herself the handmaid of Vishvambhara, the sustainer of all, she names her relationship as complete service and complete belonging. The verse stands as a quiet defiance: this devotion is not foolishness to be embarrassed by, but the soul's rightful place at the feet of the one who upholds everything.

GATHA 0398

Krishna Leela

The Name on the lips, self forgotten

मराठी मूळ

कोणी एकी भुलली नारी । विकितां गोरस म्हणे घ्या हरी ॥१॥
 देखिला डोळां बैसला मनीं । तो वदनीं उच्चारी ॥२॥
 आपुलियाचा विसर भोळा । गोविंद कळा कौतुके ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे हांसे जन । नाहीं कान ते ठायीं ॥३॥
 करुनी आइत सत्यभामा मंदिरीं रे । वाट पाहे टळोनि गेली रात्री रे ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A certain woman, lost in devotion, went to sell buttermilk but called out: take Hari, take Hari, instead. Having seen him with her eyes, he settled in her mind, and so it was his name her lips uttered.

In innocent forgetfulness of herself, she displayed the art of Govinda's enchantment. Says Tuka, the people laugh, but she has no ears for them.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A certain woman, lost in him, went to sell buttermilk but called out instead: take Hari, take Hari. Having seen him with her eyes, he settled in her mind, and so it was his name her lips spoke. In her innocent forgetting of herself, she showed the art of Govinda's enchantment. Tuka says: people laugh, but she has no ears for them.

WHAT IT MEANS

A woman goes to market to sell buttermilk and finds the wrong cry on her lips: not her wares but the name of Hari. Tukaram shows how a single sight of God displaces everything else, so that the Name rises of itself even in the middle of ordinary work. Her self-forgetting is not a mistake but the visible effect of Govinda's enchantment working on her. The crowd laughs at the foolish-seeming saleswoman, and the closing line gives the measure of her absorption: she does not even hear them, because nothing of the world reaches her now.

GATHA 0399

Krishna Leela

Satyabhama's reproach, the lover whose deeds belie his words

मराठी मूळ

न येचि देव येतील कामलहरी रे । पडिली दुश्चिती तंव तो कवाड टिमकारी रे ॥१॥
 सर गा परता कळला तुझा भाव रे । कार्या पुरतें हें दाविसी लाघव रे ।
 बोलतोसी तें अवघी तुझी माव रे । जाणोनि आलासी उजडता समयो रे ॥२॥
 मीच वेडी तुजला बोल नाही रे । दानावेळे विटंबणा जाली काय रे ।
 मागुती रुद्रासि भेटी दिली तई रे । विश्वास तो तुझ्या बोला आझुनि तरी रे ॥३॥
 भ्रम होता तो अवघा कळों आला रे । मानवत होतें मी भला भला रे ।
 नष्टा क्रिया नाही मां तुझ्या बोला रे । तुकयाबंधु स्वामी कानडया कौसाल्या रे ॥४॥
 तंव तो हरि म्हणे वो निजांगने वो । लाइ नीच कां देसील डोहणे वो ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Satyabhama prepares everything in her chamber and waits as waves of desire rise, but the night passes and God does not come. Waves of longing rise within her.

Then she hears a knock at the door. She says: go back, I have understood your ways.

You show tenderness only when you need something. All your words are deception.

You come now because you know the dawn is near. I am the fool for trusting you; no blame falls on you.

Was I not humiliated at the time of the weighing? Then again, you went and met Shiva without a thought for me. And still I trusted your words until now.

The delusion I held has now been fully revealed. I kept thinking: all is well, all is well.

You are a scoundrel whose actions never match his speech. Says Tuka, my Lord, the son of Kausalya, the beloved of Kanhoba, speaks.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Satyabhama makes everything ready in her chamber and waits as waves of longing rise, but the night passes and the Lord does not come. Then she hears a knock at the door. She says: go back, I have understood your ways. You show tenderness only when you need something; all your words are deception. You come now because you know the dawn is near. I am the fool for trusting you; the blame is not yours. Was I not humiliated at the time of the weighing? Then again you went off and met Shiva without a thought for me, and still, even now, I trusted your words. The delusion I held has been fully exposed. I kept telling myself: all is well, all is well. You are a scoundrel whose deeds never match his speech. Tuka says: my Lord, the son of Kausalya, the beloved of Kanhoba, then speaks. And Hari says: my own dear one, why give me low words to drink?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram puts the complaint of a neglected lover into Satyabhama's mouth: she has waited all night, prepared everything, and the Lord arrives only at dawn, when she sees through the timing. Her charge is sharp, that his tenderness appears only when he wants something and that his deeds never match his sweet words, and she blames her own trusting heart rather than him. The poem voices the soul's familiar grievance against a God who seems to come late and to favor others, recalling old slights to feed the resentment. Yet the quarrel is the language of intimacy, not rejection, and the closing turn has Hari himself begin to answer his beloved, so the reproach opens back into the relationship it never truly left.

GATHA 0400

Krishna Leela

Lovers' quarrel, Krishna and Rukmini

मराठी मूळ

मजपें दुजें आलें तें देव जाणे वो । शब्द काय हे बोलसी ते उणे वो ॥१॥
 पाहा मनीं विचारुनी आधि वो । सांडूनि देई भ्रांति करीं स्थिर बुद्धि वो ।
 तंट केलें हें माझें तुझें उपाधीं वो । उघडी डोळे आझुनि तरी धरीं शुद्धि वो ॥२॥
 कोठें तरी दुनियांत वर्तलें वो । स्त्रियांनीं भ्रतारा दानां दिलें वो ।
 कैसा भला मी नव्हे तें सोसिलें वो । रुसतेसी तूं उफराटें नवल जालें वो ॥३॥
 काय सांग म्यां दैन्य केली कैसी वो । तुझ्या गर्वे आणविलें हनुमंतासि वो ।
 कष्टी केलें मज गरुडा भीमकीसि वो । तुकयाबंधु म्हणे खरें खोटें नव्हे यासि वो ॥४॥
 तंव ते म्हणे ऐका हृषीकेशी वो । नवाजिलें तुम्ही म्हणां आपणांसि वो ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Whatever other one came to me, God alone knows. The words you speak are lesser than the truth.

Look within yourself first and consider. Cast off this confusion and steady your mind.

This quarrel of mine and yours is needless strife. Open your eyes even now and come to your senses.

He says: has it ever happened in this world that a wife gave away her husband as a gift? How good I have been, enduring what I did not deserve. And yet you are the one who sulks; what a wonder this is.

She says: tell me, what humiliation did I cause you? It was your own pride that made Hanuman come. You put me through trouble along with Garuda and Rukmini.

Says Tuka, whether this is right or wrong, nothing can be said.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Whatever other woman came to me, God alone knows. The words you say are smaller than the truth. Look inside yourself first. Think. Drop this confusion and steady your mind. This fight, this mine and yours, is needless trouble. Open your eyes even now and come to your senses. Has it ever happened in the world that a wife gave her husband away as a gift? See how good I have been, bearing what I did not deserve. And yet you are the one who sulks. What a strange thing. She says: tell me, what shame did I cause you? It was your own pride that made you call Hanuman. You put me through trouble, and Garuda, and Rukmini too. Tuka says: whether this is right or wrong, nothing can be said.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram stages a domestic argument between Krishna and Rukmini and lets the bickering carry the point. Krishna protests his innocence and tells her to look within and steady her own mind instead of quarrelling; she throws his old escapades back at him. The poem treats the divine couple with affectionate familiarity, the Lord caught in the same petty wrangling as any married pair. By ending with Tuka unable to say who is right or wrong, the abhanga refuses to take a side: the quarrel itself, the mine-and-yours of wounded pride, is what stands exposed. The mirror it holds up is the listener's own readiness to fight over slights.

GATHA 0401

Krishna Leela

Lovers' quarrel, the devotee's complaint

मराठी मूळ

तरी कां वंचनुक सुमनासि वो । नट नाट्य बरें संपादूं जाणतोसि वो ॥१॥
 सर हो परता परता हो आतां हरी । म्हणे सत्राजिताची कुमरी ।
 जाणतें मी या शब्दाच्या कुसरी । ऐसें च करुन ठकविलें आजिवरी ॥२॥
 भावें गेलें म्हुण न व्हावा वियोग । मनिचे आर्त जन्मांतरीं व्हावा संग ।
 तों तों केलें हें पाठमोरें जग । ऐसें काय जाणें हे तुझे रंग ॥३॥
 काय करुं या नागविलें कामें । लागलें तयास्तव इतुकें सोसावें ।
 नाही तरी कां नव्हती ठावीं वर्मे । परद्वारीं ऐसा हाकलिती प्रसिद्ध नावें ॥४॥
 काय किती सांगावे तुझे गुण । न फुटे वाणी निष्ठ ऐसा निर्गुण ।
 आप पर न म्हणसी माय बहीण । सासूसुनास लावुनि पाहासी भांडण ॥५॥
 इतुकियावरी म्हणे वैकुंठिचा राणा । होऊन गेलें तें नये आणूं मना ।
 आतां न करीं तैसें करी क्रिया आणा । भक्तवत्सल म्हणे तुकयाबंधु कान्हा ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Then why did you deceive the good-hearted one? You are a fine actor who knows how to play every part. Step back, step back now, O Hari, says the daughter of Satrajit.

I know the craft of these words. This is how you have tricked everyone until now.

Because I came to you with devotion, there should have been no separation. From life to life, my deepest wish was to be with you.

Yet you turned the whole world against me. How was I to know these are your ways? What can I do? Love trapped me, and for its sake I endured all this.

Otherwise, would I not have known your tricks? At another man's door you would be chased away by your own famous name. How long shall I list your qualities? My tongue cannot finish; you are truly without attributes.

You make no distinction between your own and another's, between mother and sister. You set mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law fighting and watch the spectacle.

To all this, the King of Vaikuntha replies: what is past cannot be brought back to mind. I will not do so again; take this as my solemn vow.

Says Tuka, the lover of devotees, Krishna, speaks these words.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Then why did you deceive the good-hearted one? You are a fine actor; you know how to play every part. Step back, step back now, Hari, says the daughter of Satrajit. I know the craft of your words. This is how you have tricked everyone until now. Because I came to you with love, there should have been no parting. From birth to birth my heart's longing was to be with you. Yet you turned the whole world against me. How was I to know these are your ways? What can I do? Love trapped me, and for its sake I bore all this. Otherwise, would I not have known your tricks? At another man's door you would be chased away by your own famous name. How long shall I count your qualities? My tongue cannot finish. You are truly without attributes. You make no difference between your own and another's, between mother and sister. You set mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law fighting and watch the show. To all this the King of Vaikuntha says: what is past cannot be brought back to mind. I will not do it again; take this as my vow. Tuka says: the lover of devotees, Krishna, speaks these words.

WHAT IT MEANS

Satyabhama, daughter of Satrajit, scolds Krishna as a smooth-talking actor who has tricked everyone, and her complaint doubles as the soul's complaint to a God who seems to play games with it. She names the wound: she came in love and still suffered separation, life after life. Her listing of his faults turns into praise in spite of itself, since calling him nirguna, beyond all attributes, is the highest word she can reach. Krishna answers simply that the past is past and vows not to repeat it. The exchange dramatizes how the devotee's grievance against the Lord dissolves into the recognition that he is the very thing she cannot stop loving.

GATHA 0402

Krishna Leela

Longing, lost in the forest

मराठी मूळ

कान्हो एकली रे एकली रे । तुजसवें चुकलें रे । भय वाटे वनीं मज अबळा धाकली रे ॥१॥
 निघतां घरीं आई बा वारी । तुजसवें कां आलियें हरी ॥२॥
 लोक वाटा सांगती खोटा । परी मी चटा लागलियें ॥३॥
 पिकल्या बोरी जालें सामोरी । काय जाणें कोठें राहिला हरी ॥४॥
 आड खुंट जालिया जाळी । काय जाणों कान्हें मांडिली रळी ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे जाऊं आलिया वाटा । पाहों हरी पायीं न मोडे कांटा ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

O Krishna, I am alone, all alone. I was separated from you.

Fear grips me in this forest, for I am a timid girl. When I left home, my mother and father tried to stop me; then why did I come with you, O Hari? People warned me you were false, but I was already hooked.

The berry bushes have ripened and stand before me, but where has Hari gone? The forest has grown thick with tangled thorns and bushes; who knows what game Krishna has set up now? Says Tuka, let me retrace the path I came by and search for Hari, even if thorns tear my feet without mercy.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Krishna, I am alone, all alone. I lost you. Fear grips me in this forest, for I am a small, weak girl. When I was leaving, my mother and father tried to stop me. Then why did I come with you, Hari? People said the path was false, but I was already caught. The wild berries have ripened and stand before me, but who knows where Hari has gone? The forest has grown thick with thorns and tangled bushes. Who knows what game Krishna has set up now? Tuka says: let me go back along the path I came by and look for Hari, even if the thorns tear my feet.

WHAT IT MEANS

A girl who left everything to follow Krishna finds herself alone in a dark forest, and the abhanga lets her fright stand for the soul's panic when the felt presence of God withdraws. She had ignored her parents' warning and the world's cautions, drawn on by a love she could not resist, and now she does not know whether his vanishing is abandonment or another of his games. The ripe berries and tangled thorns are the world she must move through to find him again. Her resolve, to retrace her steps even if the thorns tear her feet, names the price: the seeker keeps searching through pain rather than give up the one she has staked her life on.

GATHA 0403

Krishna Leela

Devotion, the child who will not come home

मराठी मूळ

क्याला मज आयो वारितेसी घरा । खेळतों सोकरा नंदाचा मी ॥१॥
 बहु दिसीं जाली यासीं मज भेटी । आतां वाटे तुटी न परावी ॥२॥
 कोवळें बोलतो मना आवरतें । डोळियाचें पातें ढापवेना ॥३॥
 आजि सकळांसी आलें चोलुनियां । कां गो पाठी वांयां पुलविली ॥४॥
 तुमचें तें काय खोळंबलें काज । बल्या कां गो मज कोंडा घरीं ॥५॥
 तुकयाचा धनी गोकुळनायक । सरा कांहीं एक बोलतों मी ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

O mother, why do you call me back home? I am playing with the darling son of Nanda. After so many days I have met him again, and I cannot bear to part from him now.

His tender words steal my heart; my eyelids will not close. Today everyone has come out to join the play; why then do you pull me back in vain? What task of yours am I delaying? Why, mother, do you lock me inside? Says Tuka, the Lord of Gokula is my master, and whatever I say, I say for him.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Mother, why do you call me back home? I am playing with the darling son of Nanda. After many days I have met him again. Now I cannot bear to part from him. His tender words steal my heart; my eyelids will not close. Today everyone has come out to join the play. Why do you pull me back for nothing? What work of yours am I holding up? Why, mother, do you lock me inside the house? Tuka says: the Lord of Gokula is my master, and whatever I say, I say for him.

WHAT IT MEANS

A child resists the mother who keeps calling it home, because it has found Krishna again and will not leave the play. Tukaram uses this small domestic tug to picture the soul absorbed in God against the world that keeps tugging it back to ordinary duty. The mother stands for everything that wants to pull the devotee indoors, away from the open field of play with the Lord. The child's complaint is plain and firm: nothing it does is wasted, since all of it is for the Lord of Gokula. To be locked away from him feels like the only real loss.

GATHA 0404

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the point of no return

मराठी मूळ

आता न ये मागें । मी आलें याच्या रागें । काय माझें जगें । कोपोनियां करावें ॥१॥
 कां गो कलित्यां कोल्हाल । तुम्ही भलत्या च सकल । वेचाल ते बोल । झुटे होती बोलिले ॥२॥
 याचे भेटी माझें मन । स्वरुपीं ठाकले लोचन । वेगळें तें क्षण आतां होऊं नावरे ॥३॥
 काज काम नको जालें । बीजें नावरे बोलिलें । याचिया भेदिलें । कामबाणीं अंतर ॥४॥
 या वेगळें होणें । आतां जळो तैसें जिणें । घेतलें तें मनें । आतां मागें न फिरे ॥५॥
 आतां मोटी वार । माझी नका धरूं चार । तुकयाचा दातार । शेजे तो मी सुतलों ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I will not turn back now; I have come drawn by his love. Let my people rage as it will, what can it do to me? My eyes have settled upon his form, and my heart cannot bear even a moment's separation.

All desire and duty have fallen away, for his arrows of love have pierced my heart. Says Tuka, I have laid down beside my Benefactor; let life without him burn to ash, for I will not retreat.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I will not turn back now. I came drawn by his love. What can my own people do to me, raging? Why all this uproar over a fallen woman? All of you say whatever you like; the words you spend will turn out to be lies. At meeting him my mind, and my eyes, settled on his form. Now I cannot bear to be apart from it even a moment. Duty and work have become unwanted; I cannot even speak the basics. His arrows of desire have pierced my inmost heart. To be parted from him now, let such a life burn. My mind has taken hold, and now it will not turn back. Do not keep watch over me anymore. Tuka says: I have lain down beside my Benefactor.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is the voice of one who has crossed the line and will not recross it. She has been drawn to Krishna by love and now lets the world rage; their scolding, she says, will prove empty in the end. Tukaram pictures total absorption: eyes fixed on his form, all duty and even ordinary speech fallen away, the heart pierced by love's arrows. The radical claim is that life apart from him is worth nothing, fit only to burn. By saying she has lain down beside her Benefactor, she declares a union the watching world has no power left to police.

GATHA 0405

Devotion to Vitthal

Adoration, the swift women of Hari

मराठी मूळ

हरिरता चपळा नारी । लागवरी न रिघती ॥१॥
 अवघ्या अंगें सर्वोत्तम । भोगी काम भोगता ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे देवा ऐशा । देवपिशा उदारा ॥३॥
 गौळणी आल्या वाज । म्हणती या गे राखों आज । सांपडवुनी माजघरांत धरुनी कोंडूं ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The women devoted to Hari are so swift that none can keep pace with them. With their whole being they are supreme, enjoying divine love in fullness.

Says Tuka, such God-intoxicated souls are truly generous. The milkmaids came running, saying, let us catch him today and lock him inside the house.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The women devoted to Hari are so swift that none can keep pace with them. With their whole being they are supreme, enjoying his love to the full. Tuka says: such God-mad, God-intoxicated souls are truly generous. The milkmaids came running and said, let us catch him today, corner him in the inner room, hold him and lock him in.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram praises the women who love Hari so wholly that no one can match their pace, giving themselves over with their entire being. He calls them devapisa, God-mad, and treats that madness as the highest generosity rather than a failing. The closing scene of milkmaids plotting to corner Krishna and shut him in their house is the same love turned playful and bold: they want to seize and keep the Lord himself. The abhanga sets this reckless wholehearted devotion above any measured, careful piety.

GATHA 0406

Krishna Leela

Krishna lila, the butter thief caught

मराठी मूळ

उघडें कवाड उभ्या काळोशाचे आड । साता पांचा एक भीड मौनेची ठेल्या ॥१॥
 नित्य सोंकवला नेदी । सांगों चित्त बोला । आतां सांपडतां याला कोण सोडी जीवें ॥२॥
 जाणोनियां हरी त्याच घरा आला चोरी । गडियां ठेवुनी बाहेरी पूर्वद्वारें शिरे ।
 त्यांच्या भयाभीत चाले पिलंगत भोंवतालें । पाहे तंव देखियेलें नवनीत पुढें ॥३॥
 उतरोनि सिंकें । पाहे चाखोनियां निकें । गोड तें चि एका एकें । हातीं लांबवितो ।
 जाणे राखती तयांसि । तेथें अधिक चि नासी । माग लावी हात पुसी । चोरी जाणावया ॥४॥
 जाणोनियां नारी । मूळ वर्मद्वार धरी । माजे कोंडूनी भीतरी । घरांत धरीयेला ।
 कां रे नागविसी । माझे मुळीं लागलासी । आणवीन तुजपासीं । मागें खादलें तें ॥५॥
 दोही संदी बाहे । धरुनि नेती माते पाहे । काय नासी केली आहे । घरामाजी येणें ।
 तुका म्हणे मुख । त्याचें वाढों नेदी दुःख । दसवंती कवतुक । करुनी रंजविल्या ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The door stands open, yet darkness hides within; the five and seven faculties are crushed into silence. Krishna, knowing the house well, enters stealthily through the front door while his companions wait outside.

He circles cautiously, spots the fresh butter ahead, lowers the hanging pot, and tastes it piece by piece, stretching out his hand for more. The women discover the trail and catch him inside.

Says Tuka, his face never lets sorrow grow; he charmed and delighted them all with his playful mischief.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The door stands open, but darkness hides inside; the five and the seven senses are crushed into silence. Knowing the house well, Hari comes in to steal. He leaves his friends outside and slips in through the front door. Afraid of them, he creeps along, circling close to the ground. Then he sees the fresh butter ahead. He lowers the hanging pot, tastes it carefully, and finds it sweet, and one by one he stretches his hand for more. He knows the women guard their butter, so there he spoils the most. He smears the trail and wipes his hand, to leave the theft to be found. Knowing his ways, the women hold the secret inner door, shut him in, and catch him inside the house. Why do you rob us? You have ruined my store. I will make you bring back all you ate before. They take him by both arms and lead him to his mother. See what spoiling he has done coming into the house. Tuka says: his face never lets sorrow grow; with his playful mischief he charmed and delighted them all.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is the butter-thief story told as pure delight. Krishna sneaks into a milkmaid's house, tastes the hidden butter, makes a deliberate mess, and even smears the trail so the theft will be discovered, all the mischief of a God who wants to be caught. The women do catch him, scold him, threaten to make him repay what he ate, and march him off to his mother. Yet the abhanga's last line turns the scene: his face will not let any real anger or sorrow take hold, and his charm melts the very women who came to punish him. Tukaram lets the playfulness make the point that the Lord disarms those who would accuse him.

GATHA 0407

Longing and Separation

Longing, the missed meeting

मराठी मूळ

आलियें धांवति धांवति भेट होइल म्हण । तंव ते टळली वेळ वो माझा उरला सीण ॥१॥
 आतां काय करूं सांग वो मज भेटेल कैसा । हरिलागीं प्राण फुटे वो थोरी लागली आशा ॥२॥
 लाविला उशीर बहुतीं बहु ओढिती ओढा । सांभाळितां सांग असांग दुःख पावल्यें पीडा ॥२॥
 जळो आतां संसारु वो कई शेवट पुरे । तुकयाच्या स्वामी गोपाळालागीं जीव झुरे ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I came running, hoping to meet him, but the moment passed and only grief remained. How shall I meet Hari now? My life breaks apart, so great is the longing.

Many pulled me back with their claims and delays, and in trying to manage all duties I suffered grievous pain. Let this worldly life burn away.

Says Tuka, my soul pines only for my Lord Gopala.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I came running and running, thinking I would meet him. But the time slipped past, and only my exhaustion was left. Now tell me, what shall I do? How will he meet me? My life breaks for Hari; the longing has grown so great. Many delayed me; many pulled me their own way. While I tried to mind every duty, fit and unfit, I came to grief and pain. Let this worldly life burn away now. When will it ever end? Tuka says: my soul pines for my Lord Gopala.

WHAT IT MEANS

Here the seeker arrives too late: she ran to meet the Lord but the moment had passed, and all her effort left only weariness. Tukaram names what cost her the meeting, the many who delayed and pulled her aside while she tried to keep up with worldly duties, fit and unfit alike. That tending of obligations is exactly what brought her grief. So she curses samsara itself and asks when its tug will ever stop. The abhanga lands on the plain ache of the soul that wants only Gopala and keeps being held back from him.

GATHA 0408

Krishna Leela

Social criticism, the worthless company

मराठी मूळ

आणीक काय थोडीं । परि तें फार खोटीं कुडीं ॥१॥
 सदा मोकळीं च गुरें । होती फजीत तीं पोरें ॥२॥
 सदा घालिता हुंबरी । एक एकांचे न करी ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे घरीं माय । वेळोवेळां मारी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

There are plenty of others, but they are all deceitful and hollow. These children are like cattle always set loose, always making a commotion but never attending to one another.

Says Tuka, the mother at home scolds them again and again.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Are there few others? Yes, but they are mostly false and hollow. They are like cattle always let loose; those children are forever in disgrace. They keep bellowing, raising a din, and none of them does anything for another. Tuka says: at home the mother beats them again and again.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram dismisses the crowd of so-called companions as false and empty, comparing them to stray cattle that wander loose and make noise but help no one. The point is aimed at a pattern, not at any one person: company that is all bluster and self-regard, never any real care for the next person. Such people end up shamed wherever they go, scolded even at home. The contrast left unspoken is the one true companion the devotee should seek instead of this loud, useless herd.

GATHA 0409

Krishna Leela

Social criticism, exposed by good company

मराठी मूळ

बहुतांचे संगती । बहु पावलों फजिती ॥१॥
 बरें केलें नंदबाळें । मागिलांचें तोंड काळें ॥२॥
 माझा करितील तंटा । लपती आलिया बोभाटा ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणी काई । किती म्हणों बाप आई ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

In the company of many I suffered only disgrace. The child of Nanda did well to blacken the faces of all those false ones.

They would pick quarrels on my behalf, then hide the moment trouble came. Says Tuka, how long shall I go on calling for mother and father?.

IN PLAIN WORDS

In the company of many I met only disgrace. The child of Nanda did well; he blackened the faces of all those false ones. They would pick quarrels on my behalf, then hide the moment trouble came shouting. Tuka says: what now? How long shall I keep calling on father and mother?

WHAT IT MEANS

The speaker looks back on the crowd he kept and sees that it brought only shame. He credits the child of Nanda, Krishna, with exposing those false friends and blackening their faces by showing them up for what they were. Such people were quick to start fights in his name and quick to vanish when the trouble they stirred came back

loud. The closing question turns inward and weary: how long will he keep crying out to parents, to ordinary worldly supports, instead of resting in the one who actually stood by him? The verse points at the pattern of fair-weather company and the habit of leaning on the wrong refuges.

GATHA 0410

Krishna Leela

Adoration, singing the deeds of Gopala

मराठी मूळ

गाईन ते लीळा चरित्र पवाडे । राखिले संवगडे सहित गाई ॥१॥
 चोरिलें नवनीत बांधविला गळा । जे तुम्हीं गोपाळा छंद केले ॥२॥
 मोहिल्या गोपिका पांवयाच्या छंदें । केली ते गोविंदें क्रीडा गाऊं ॥३॥
 मायबापा लाड दाखविलें कौतुक । तें या आणूं सुख अंतरासी ॥४॥
 निर्दाळिले दुष्ट भक्तां प्रतिपाळी । ऐसा म्हणों बळी आमुचा स्वामी ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे सरसी असों येणें वोधें । लागोनि संबंधें सर्वकाळ ॥६॥

डांका - अभंग ८

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let me sing the deeds and glories of the Lord who tended the cows alongside his companions. He stole butter and let himself be bound by the throat.

He enchanted the milkmaids with the music of his flute. He showed wondrous affection to his mother and father, and that sweetness we bring now into our own hearts.

He destroyed the wicked and protected the devoted. Says Tuka, let us flow on in this current of his company for all time.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I will sing the play and the deeds and the glories of the Lord who guarded the cows along with his friends. He stole the fresh butter and let himself be bound by the throat, all the games you played, Gopala. He enchanted the milkmaids with the tune of his flute; let us sing the play that Govinda made. He showed his mother and father his loving wonder; let us bring that sweetness now into our hearts. He crushed the wicked and he protects the devoted. Let us call him strong, our master. Tuka says: let us stay close in this stream, joined to him for all time.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram gathers the famous Krishna stories into a song of praise: the cowherd who tends the cattle, steals butter and submits to being tied, charms the milkmaids with his flute, and delights his parents. He names the two faces of the Lord, crushing the wicked and protecting his devotees, and calls him master. The aim is not just to recount the deeds but to draw their sweetness inward, into the singer's own heart. The closing wish is to stay in the current of his company forever, so that remembering his play becomes a way of never leaving him.

GATHA 0411

Devotion to Vitthal

Invocation, inner worship of Vithabai

मराठी मूळ

चौक भरियेला आसनीं पाचारिली कुळस्वामिनी । वैकुंठवासिनि ये धांवोनी झडकरी ॥१॥
 रंगा येई वो विठाई सांवळिये डोळसे । तुझें श्रीमुख साजिरें तें मी केधवां देखेन ॥ध्रु॥
 रजतमधुपारती । पंचप्राणांची आरती । अवघी सारोनी आइती । ये धांवती झडकरी ॥२॥
 मन मारोनियां मेंढा । आशा मनसा तृष्णा सुटी । भक्तिभाव नैवेद्य ताटीं । भरोनि केला हाकारा ॥३॥
 डांका अनुहात गजरे । येउनि अंगासी संचरे । आपुला घेउनी पुरस्कार । आरोग्य करीं तुकयासी ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The sacred square is drawn and the family goddess is invoked. Come quickly, O Vithabai, dweller of Vaikuntha.

I have offered the lamp of the five vital breaths; the mind is slaughtered like a ram, and desire and craving are released. The feast of devotion is prepared in the offering plate.

Says Tuka, come and enter my body with the drumbeat of the unstruck sound; accept this offering and grant me well-being.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The sacred square is drawn, and on the seat the family goddess is called. Dweller of Vaikuntha, come running, come quickly. Come into the dance, Vithabai, dark one with seeing eyes. When will I see your lovely face? The lamp is the rajas and tamas, the wave of the lamp is the five vital breaths; all the offering is made ready, so come running quickly. The mind is killed like a ram; hope, longing, and craving are set loose. The plate of offering is filled with the feeling of devotion, and I have called out. With the drumbeat of the unstruck sound, come and enter my body. Take your own offering, and make Tuka well.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes worship turned wholly inward. The ritual square, the lamp, the offering plate are all reread as inner acts: the dark and dull tendencies become the lamp, the five breaths become its waving, the very mind is sacrificed like a ram and its hopes and cravings released. The deity invoked is Vithoba, addressed tenderly as Vithabai, the family goddess of the heart, summoned to enter his own body with the unstruck inner sound. The longing under it is plain: he aches to see that dark, seeing face. He asks the Lord to accept this offering made of himself and to make him whole.

GATHA 0412

Worldly Metaphors

The true shrine, come quickly

मराठी मूळ

साच माझा देव्हारा । भाक ठेवा भाव खरा । त्रिगुणाचा फुलवरा । आणा विनति सांगतों ॥१॥
 माझें दैवत हें रंगीं । नाचे वैष्णवांच्या संगीं । भरलें मग अंगीं । निवाड करी दोहींचा ॥२॥
 तुझें आहे तुजपासीं । परि तूं जागा चुकलासी । चिवडुनियां नासी । तुझ्या घरिच्यांनीं केली ॥३॥
 आतां न पडे ठावें । वांचूनियां माझ्या देवें । अंधकार व्हावें । नासु ठाव शोधावा ॥४॥
 आंधळ्यासी डोळे । देते पांगुळासी पाय । वांजा पुत्र फळे । नवस पुरविते विठाई ॥५॥
 उगविलीं कोडीं । मागें कितेकांचीं बापुडीं । तुका म्हणे घडी । न लगे नवस द्या आधीं ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

My shrine is true; place your vow there with honest devotion. Bring a garland of the three qualities and I will tell you what I know.

My deity dances in the company of the devoted and, once possessed, settles all disputes. What belongs to you is right beside you, but you have lost your way; your own household has plundered and ruined it.

Without my God the darkness cannot be cleared; one must search the ground. She gives eyes to the blind and feet to the lame; she grants a son to the barren.

Says Tuka, she has solved the riddles of so many wretched souls; do not delay, make your vow at once.

IN PLAIN WORDS

My shrine is the true one. Make your vow here, with real faith. Bring a garland of the three qualities, and I will tell you what I know. My deity dances in the company of the devout. Once she fills the body, she settles every dispute. What you are looking for is right beside you, but you have lost the place. Your own household has plundered it and laid it waste. Now there is no way to find it again, except through my God. The darkness must break; the ground must be searched. She gives eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, a son to the barren. Vithai grants the vow. She has untangled the knots of so many wretched souls before you. Tuka says: it takes no time at all; make your vow first.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks as one who has found the real place of worship and is calling others to it. The thing they are searching for, he says, is already right beside them; they have simply lost their bearings, and their own habits have ransacked it. Vithai, the Goddess form of Vitthal, is named as the one who fixes the dimmed senses, restores what was barren, and unties the knots of life. The point is not magical favors but trust: he tells them to stop delaying and place their vow at this true shrine first, before anything else.

GATHA 0413

Prayers

Plea for fearlessness, hasten

मराठी मूळ

विनति घातली अवधारीं । मज देई वो अभय करीं । पीडिलों खेचरीं । आणीक वारी नांवांची ॥१॥
 रंगा येई वो एकला रंग वोडवला । हरिनाम उठिला गजर केला हाकारा ॥ध्रु॥
 देवांचे दैवते । तुज नमिलें आदिनाथे । ये वो कृपावंते । भोगा माझ्या धांवति ॥२॥
 न लवीं आतां वेळ । आइत सारिली सकळ । तुका म्हणे कुळ । आमुचिये दैवते ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I have laid my plea before you; grant me fearlessness with your own hand. Evil spirits and the cycles of rebirth have tormented me.

Come, O single radiance; the great chant of Hari's name has begun and the call rings out. Even the gods of gods bow to you, O Adinath.

Come, O compassionate one, hasten to my rescue. Says Tuka, delay no more; all is prepared. You are the presiding deity of our lineage.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I have laid my plea before you; hear it. Give me fearlessness from your own hand. Evil spirits have tormented me, and so have the rounds of birth and death. Come, O single radiance; the colors are spread out. The chant of Hari's name has risen; the call has gone out. You are the deity of the gods themselves; even Adinath bowed to you. Come, O compassionate one, run to take away what I must suffer. Do not delay now; everything is made ready. Tuka says: you are the deity of our whole lineage.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram prays for one gift above all, abhaya, fearlessness placed directly in his hand by God. He names what frightens him: tormenting spirits and the repeated cycle of rebirth. The praise is deliberately high, that even the chief of the gods bows here, so the appeal carries weight, and the festival of the Name is already underway, the call already sent. He closes by claiming the bond of lineage: this is not a stranger he begs, but the family deity, so the delay he asks God to drop is the delay of one's own household.

GATHA 0414

Devotion to Vitthal

The Name routs the inner enemies

मराठी मूळ

माझा देव्हारा साचा । नाहीं आणीक कोणाचा । त्रिभुवनीं याचा । ठसा न लगे पुसावें ॥१॥
 या रे लोटांगणीं । कांहीं करा विनवणी । करील झाडणी । भूत काढी संसार ॥२॥
 पडिले विषयांचे गोंधळीं । ते त्रिगुण आकळी । हरिनाम आरोळी । कार्नी पडतां ते उठी ॥३॥
 घेतला अहंकार । काम क्रोध या मत्सरें । पळती प्रेमभरें । अवघे ठाव सांडुनी ॥४॥
 घेतलासे पुरा । माया ममता आसरा । अवघ्या एक सरा । पळती रंग देखोनी ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे द्यावा भाव । फिटेल मनिचा संदेह । आणीक न लगे ठाव । कांहीं कोठें हिंडावें ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

My shrine is the true one; it belongs to no other. Its imprint stands across all three worlds and need not be erased.

Come, prostrate yourselves, offer some prayer; this deity will sweep away the ghosts of worldly existence. Those entangled in the tumult of sense-pleasures are seized by the three qualities, yet when the cry of Hari's name strikes their ears, they rise at once.

Ego, lust, anger, and envy flee in a rush of love, abandoning all their strongholds. Maya and attachment, which had taken full shelter, all scatter together at the sight of the divine color.

Says Tuka, offer your sincere devotion and every doubt in the mind will vanish; you need wander nowhere else.

IN PLAIN WORDS

My shrine is the true one; it belongs to no one else. Its mark stands across all three worlds; you need not ask. Come, fall down full length, make your prayer. This deity will sweep the house clean and drive out the ghost of worldly life. Those who have fallen into the uproar of the senses are gripped by the three qualities. But when the cry of Hari's name strikes their ears, they rise at once. Ego, lust, anger, and envy flee in a rush of love, leaving every stronghold behind. Maya and the sense of mine, which had settled in firmly, all scatter together when they see the color of God. Tuka says: give your true faith, and the doubt in your mind will dissolve. You need wander nowhere else.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes what the Name actually does inside a person. The shrine he points to is the true one, recognizable everywhere, and the worship he asks for is plain prostration and prayer. The real exorcism is interior: the cry of Hari's name wakes those drugged by the senses, and the inner enemies, ego, lust, anger, envy, attachment, flee like routed squatters when the divine presence appears. The closing turn is the whole teaching: offer sincere faith and the mind's doubt clears, so there is no need to roam from shrine to shrine looking elsewhere.

GATHA 0415

Devotion to Vitthal

The family goddess enters

मराठी मूळ

पुढें येते देवी । तिची जती चालों घावी । मागील झाडावी । झाडा मान आसडी ॥१॥
 एकवीरा आली अंगा । आतां निवारील रोगा । माझ्या भक्तापार्शीं सांगा । पूजा भावें करावी ॥धु.॥
 मेंढा मारावा लोवाळ । पूजा पावली सकळ । तुम्हीं केलें बळ । मग मी ठार्यीं न पडें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणें मुळीं । लागली ते आली कुळीं । वंदुनी सकळीं । जीवें भावों ओवाळा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The goddess approaches; let her procession move forward and sweep aside all obstacles behind it. Ekavira has entered the body; she will now cure all disease.

Tell my devotees to worship her with true feeling. Offer the sacrificial ram; the worship has been received in full.

Says Tuka, she who has taken root from the very origin has come into the family; let all bow and offer their lives in adoration.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The goddess comes forward; let her procession move on. Sweep away what lies behind, and shake off all that is owed. Ekavira has entered the body; now she will drive out the disease. Tell my devotees to worship her with true feeling. Offer the ram; the worship has been received in full. You put your strength into it, and after that I do not fall down anywhere. Tuka says: she who took hold from the very root has come into the family. Let everyone bow, and offer their very life in worship.

WHAT IT MEANS

This abhanga is set in the idiom of a village goddess possession, where Ekavira, a form of the Mother, enters and clears away sickness and old debts. Tukaram turns the folk rite toward true devotion: the worship that counts is the one done with bhava, real feeling, and the result is that the devotee no longer collapses. The figure of the goddess taking root from the very origin and coming into the family marks her as the household's own. The call at the end is total, to bow and to offer one's life, not just an offering of ritual goods.

GATHA 0416

Devotion to Vitthal

Each in her rightful place

मराठी मूळ

अवध्या जेष्ठादेवी । कोण पूजनाचा ठाव । धरितां चि भाव । कोठें नाहींसं जालें ॥१॥
 दिसे सारिखें सारिखें । परि तें कारणीं पारिखें । तळीं गेलें देखें । वरी टोले न साहाती ॥धु.॥
 पट एका शिरीं । यथाविधीनें त्या येरी । बसकोळ्या घागरी । डेरे रांझण गाडगीं ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे माना । येथें कोणीं रुसावें ना । आपुलाल्या स्थानां । जेथें त्या चि शोभल्या ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Which is the eldest among all goddesses, and where is her proper seat of worship? The moment you hold true devotion, all that seemed lost reappears. Everything looks alike on the surface, yet each serves a different purpose; what lies beneath cannot withstand the blows that fall from above.

One goddess wears the cloth of honor upon her head with full ceremony, while the others carry pitchers, pots, and vessels. Says Tuka, let none take offense here; each is beautiful in her rightful place.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Among all the elder goddesses, which one holds the true seat of worship? The moment you hold true faith, nothing is missing anywhere. On the surface they all look alike, yet each serves a different purpose. What sinks to the bottom cannot bear the blows that fall from above. One wears the cloth of honor on her head with full ceremony; the others carry the small pots, the pitchers, the jars and vessels. Tuka says: accept it, and let no one sulk here. Each is beautiful in her own place.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram looks at the many goddesses and asks where the real seat of worship lies, then answers that true faith finds it lacking nothing. His point is that things which look identical on the surface are not equal in function, and what is low cannot take the strain that the high one bears. He uses the image of a household: one vessel is honored, the rest carry humble loads, yet none is to be resented. The lesson is contentment with one's appointed place, since each is beautiful exactly where it belongs.

GATHA 0417

Devotion to Vitthal

The Mother who runs to rescue

मराठी मूळ

खेचर खडतर । काळ कांपती असुर । नांदे भीमातीर । पंढरपुर पाटणीं ॥१॥
 आतां करी कां रे हाकारा । सहस्र नामें एकसरा । दवडिते खेचरा । अंगसंगें धरुनी ॥२॥
 सीते जाली झडपणी । राहाणे वासुगीच्या बनीं । पावली जननी । झोंटि मोकळिया केशी ॥३॥
 लाविलें कावरें । प्रल्हादा म्हैसासुरें । आली येकसरें । दांत खात रंगासी ॥४॥
 वसुदेवाचीं बाळें । सात खादलीं ज्या काळें । आली भोगवेळे । तया कारणें तेथें ॥५॥
 पांडवें बापुडीं । वाज केलीं फिरती वेडीं । धांवोनियां काढी । अंगसंगें त्राहाविलीं ॥६॥
 नामाचें चिंतन । तेथें धांवते आपण । न विचारितां हीण । भाव देखे जयाचा ॥७॥
 कुळीची कुळदेवता । तुका म्हणे आम्हां माता । काय भय भूतां । काळ यमदूताचें ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Sky-wanderers and fierce powers tremble and even Death and the demons shake with fear before her. She dwells on the banks of the Bhima at Pandharpur.

Chant her thousand names in one stream; she drives away evil spirits by her very touch. When Sita was seized, the goddess came roaring with her hair unbound.

When Prahlada was tormented by the buffalo-demon, she arrived at once, grinding her teeth in fury. When seven infants of Vasudeva were devoured, she appeared at the fateful hour.

When the Pandavas were driven into helpless exile, she rushed to their side and sheltered them. Wherever the name is remembered, she runs of her own accord, seeing only the devotee's faith.

Says Tuka, she is our family goddess and our mother; what fear can death or its messengers hold for us?.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Sky-wanderers and fierce demons tremble; even Death and the demons shake before her. She dwells on the bank of the Bhima, in the town of Pandharpur. Now why not call out to her? Chant her thousand names in one stream. She drives away the spirits by her very touch, holding close to the body. When Sita was seized, she rushed in; she had been living in the forest of Vasuki, and the Mother came with her hair flying loose. When Prahlada was tormented, she came at once against the buffalo-demon, grinding her teeth. When seven children of Vasudeva were devoured, she came at the fated hour for their sake. When the poor Pandavas were driven to wander like the mad, she ran and pulled them out, sheltering them close. Where the Name is remembered, she runs there herself; she does not weigh the lowly, she sees only the faith of the one who calls. Tuka says: the family deity is our Mother. What fear, then, of ghosts, of Death, or of Death's messengers?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram piles up rescue after rescue to make one point: the family Goddess comes running to whoever calls her with faith. The threatening powers, demons, even Death, are the ones who tremble, not the devotee. The roll call of the saved, Sita, Prahlada, the children of Vasudeva, the exiled Pandavas, is drawn from the shared store of devotional story, used here as evidence that she answers in the worst hour. The decisive line is that she does not measure a person's lowliness; she looks only at their bhava, their faith. So Tukaram closes without fear: if the Mother is ours, the messengers of Death hold no terror.

GATHA 0418

The Power of the Name

The rite ends, the Name remains

मराठी मूळ

देवी देव जाला भोग सरला यावरी । सांगाया दुसरी ऐसी नाहीं उरली ॥१॥
हरिनाम देवनाम तुम्ही गाऊनियां जागा । पेंठवणी मागा नका ठेवूं लिगाड ॥२॥
शेवटीं सुताळी बरवी वाजवावी डांक । ताळा घाली एक सरलियाचे शेवटीं ॥३॥
गुंडाळा देव्हारा मान देती मानकरी । तुका म्हणे बरीं आजि कोडीं उगविलीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The goddess has become the God; the experience is exhausted and no other power remains to speak of. Sing the divine name of Hari and stay awake; claim your reward and leave no entanglements behind.

At the close, sound the final drum well and seal the tally of what has been accomplished. Says Tuka, wrap up the shrine, let the custodians give due honor; today all riddles have been solved.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The goddess has become God; the offering is finished, and there is no other left to speak of. Sing the name of Hari, the name of God, and stay awake. Ask for your reward; do not leave loose ends behind. At the close, sound the final drum well; set the last beat when it is all over. Wrap up the shrine; let the keepers of honor give what is due. Tuka says: today, well done, the riddles have all been solved.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is the close of the worship Tukaram has been describing, and he uses the closing of a rite to make a deeper claim: the Goddess and God are one, so the form of the offering ends while the truth does not. What carries on past the ceremony is the Name, sung in wakefulness, with no unsettled business left behind. The final drumbeat and the folding up of the shrine are the ordinary signs that the rite is complete and rightly honored. The last line names the gain: today the tangles have been undone, the work has come out well.

GATHA 0419

Surrender and Acceptance

Seized by God, no strength left

मराठी मूळ

जाली झडपणी खडतर देवता । संचरली आतां निघों नये ॥१॥
 मज उपचार झणी उपचार झणी आतां करा । न साहे दुसरा भार कांहीं ॥२॥
 नेऊनियां घाला चंद्रभागे तिरीं । जीवा नाही उरी कांहीं आतां ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे कळों आलें वर्तमान । माझें तों वचन आच्छादलें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A fierce deity has seized me; now that she has entered, she will not depart. Attend to me at once; I can bear no other burden.

Take me to the bank of the Chandrabhaga; no strength remains in this body. Says Tuka, the truth has become clear; my own words have been swallowed by her power.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A fierce deity has seized me. Now that she has entered, she will not leave. Tend to me at once, tend to me now; I can bear no other weight. Carry me and lay me on the bank of the Chandrabhaga; there is nothing of this life left in me now. Tuka says: the truth has come clear; my own words are swallowed up.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks from inside the grip of divine possession, where God has taken hold and will not depart. He asks for the only care that fits: not to be eased, but to be carried to the bank of the Chandrabhaga at Pandharpur, the holy river, since nothing of his separate self remains. The phrase that his own words are swallowed names the loss of the speaker, when the one who is seized can no longer speak as himself. What looks like helplessness is the surrender he has wanted: the truth has become plain only when his own voice is gone.

GATHA 0420

*The Necessity of Experience**The play within, I am not here*

मराठी मूळ

अंगीं देवी खेळे । कां रे तुम्हासी न कळे । कोणाचे हे चाळे । सुख दुःख न मनितां ॥१॥
मीं तों आतां येथें नाहीं । ओळखी वचनाच्या ठायीं । पालटाचा घेई । भाव खरें लोपे ना ॥२॥
आपुलाले तुम्ही पुसा । सोवा एव्याच सरिसा । थिरावल्या कैसा काय । जाणों विचार ॥२॥
तुका म्हणे लाभकाळ । तेथें नसावें शीतळ । मग तैशी वेळ । कोठें जाते सांपडों ॥३॥
पांगुळ जालों देवा नाहीं हात ना पाय । बैसलों जयावरी सैराट तें जाय ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The goddess plays within this body; why can you not see it? Whose sport is this, unconcerned with pleasure or pain? I am no longer present here; recognize me only through these words. The outward form changes, but true devotion can never be concealed.

Question your own selves and sit together as equals; once the mind is steadied, who can know what understanding may come? Says Tuka, when the hour of gain arrives, do not remain idle; such a moment, once lost, may never be found again.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The goddess plays within this body. Why can you not see it? Whose sport is this, that takes no notice of pleasure or pain? I am no longer here. Know me only in these words. Take in the change; true faith is never hidden. Ask within yourselves; sit together as equals. Once the mind is steadied, who knows what understanding may come? Tuka says: when the time of gain has come, do not sit there cold. Such a moment, once gone, where will you find it again? I have become crippled, O God, with no hands and no feet. Whatever I sat upon ran wild and carried me off.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram reports that the divine presence is at play inside him, indifferent to his own pleasure and pain, and so the man they knew is no longer there; they should recognize him only through these words. The outward change can be doubted, but he insists that real faith cannot stay concealed. He turns it back on the listeners: look within, steady the mind, and meaning will come of itself. The urgent close is the heart of it: when the hour of grace arrives, do not stay cold and idle, because it will not return; the final image of being carried off, crippled and seatless, by something that ran wild is the surrender he can no longer steer.

GATHA 0421

Prayers

The blind beggar's plea to the saints

मराठी मूळ

खेटितां कुंप कांटी । खुंट दरडी न पाहे । आधार नाहीं मज कोणी । बाप ना माये ॥१॥
 दाते हो दान करा । जातें पंढरपुरा । न्या मज तेथवरी । अखमाचा सोयरा ॥२॥
 हिंडतां गढानें गा । शिणलों दारोदारीं । न मिळे चि दाता कोणी । जन्मदुःखातें वारी ।
 कीर्ति हे संतां मुखीं । तो चि दाखवा हरी । पांगळां पाय देतो । नांदे पंढरपुरीं ॥३॥
 या पोटाकारणें गा । जालों पांगीला जना । न सरे चि बापमाय । भीक नाहीं खंडणा ।
 पुढारा म्हणती एक । तया नाहीं करुणा । श्वान हें लागे पाठीं । आशा बहु दारुणा ॥४॥
 काय मी चुकलों गा । मागें नेणवे कांहीं । न कळे चि पाप पुण्य । तेथें आठव नाहीं ।
 मी माजी भुललों गा । दीप पतंगासोयी । द्या मज जीवदान । संत महानुभाव कांहीं ॥५॥
 दुरोनि आलों मी गा । दुःख जालें दारुण । यावया येथवरी होतें । हें चि कारण ।
 दुर्लभ भेटी तुम्हां । पायीं जालें दुरुषन । विनवितो तुका संतां । दोन्ही कर जोडून ॥६॥
 देश वेष नव्हे माझा । सहज फिरत आलों । करुं सत्ता कवणावरी । कोठें स्थिर राहिलों ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I stumble through hedges and thorns, tripping over stumps and cliffs without seeing; I have no support, no father, no mother. O generous ones, give this gift: carry me to Pandharpur, the home of the eternal Friend.

Wandering door to door, I am exhausted, yet I find no giver who will end the suffering of birth. The saints praise him who grants feet to the crippled and dwells in Pandharpur.

For the sake of this belly I became dependent on people, yet neither parent nor beggar's charity can sustain me. Those ahead say they have no compassion, and the dog of desire follows at my heels.

I do not know what sin I committed before; I cannot tell merit from transgression. I have come from far away through grievous hardship, and only this longing brought me here.

Says Tuka, with folded hands I beg the saints: this meeting with you is the rarest blessing.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I stumble against hedges and thorns, over stumps and cliffs I cannot see. No one supports me, neither father nor mother. Givers, give your gift: I am going to Pandharpur. Carry me that far, you who befriend the helpless. Wandering the roads, I am worn out, door to door. I find no giver who will end the suffering of birth. The saints sing his fame; show me that very Hari. He gives feet to the lame, and he lives in Pandharpur. For the sake of this belly I became a burden on people. Neither parent nor a beggar's alms can keep me; the alms never stop, and they never fill. Those ahead say one thing, but they have no pity. The dog of desire keeps at my heels, and the craving is cruel. What did I do wrong before? I remember nothing behind me. I cannot tell sin from merit; there is no memory of it. I lost myself, like a moth drawn to the lamp. Give me my life back, you saints, you great souls. I have come from far off, through grievous pain. To reach here was the one reason for it all. To meet you is rare; at your feet I have had the sight. Tuka begs the saints, both hands joined. This is no land of mine, no dress of mine; I came wandering by chance. Over whom can I claim any power? Nowhere have I stayed and rested.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram takes on the voice of a blind, friendless beggar to dramatize the soul's helplessness on the road to God. The literal blindness, the thorns, the stumbling, the begging door to door, all stand for a life that cannot find its own way and cannot end the recurring sorrow of birth. The dog of desire at his heels and the moth drawn to the lamp name the cravings that destroy him while he forgets his own good. The turn comes when he reaches the saints: the rare meeting at their feet is the one thing the whole hard journey was for, and so, hands folded, he begs not coins but his very life, the help only they and Hari at Pandharpur can give.

GATHA 0422

Prayers

Blind and lame in a foreign land

मराठी मूळ

पाय डोळे म्हणतां माझे । तींहीं कैसा मोकलिलों । परदेशीं नाहीं कोणी । अंध पांगुळ जालों ॥१॥
 आतां माझी करीं चिंता । दान देई भगवंता । पाठीं पोटीं नाहीं कोणी । निरवीं सज्जन संता ॥२॥
 चालतां वाट पुढें । भय वाटतें चितीं । बहुत जन गेलीं नाहीं आलीं मागुतीं । न देखें काय जालें ।
 कान तरी ऐकती । बैसलों संधिभागीं । तुज धरुनि चितीं ॥३॥
 भाकितों करुणा गा । जैसा सांडिला ठाव । न भरें पोट कधीं नाहीं निश्चळ पाव । हिंडतां भागलों गा ।
 लक्ष चौर्या शी गांव । धरुनि राहिलों गा । हा चि वसता ठाव ॥४॥
 भरवसा काय आतां । कोण आणि अवचिता । तैसी च जाली कीर्ति । तया मज बहुतां ।
 म्हणुनि मारीं हाका । सोयी पावें पुण्यवंता । लागली भूक थोरी । तूं चि कृपाळू दाता ॥५॥
 संचित सांडवलें । कांहीं होतें जवळीं । वित्त गोत पुत माया । तुटली हे लागावळी ।
 निष्काम जालों देवा । होतें माझे कपाळीं । तुका म्हणे तूं चि आतां । माझा सर्वस्वें बळी ॥६॥
 देखत होतों आधीं । मागें पुढें सकळ । मग हे दृष्टी गेली । वरी आले पडळ ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

My eyes and my feet have abandoned me, and I am left blind and lame in a foreign land with no one at my side. Now take care of me, O Lord; give me your gift.

I have no one before or behind me; entrust me to the company of the good. Fear grips my heart on the road ahead, for many have gone that way and never returned.

I sit at the crossroads, holding only you in my mind. I cry for mercy; my belly is never filled, and there is no steady ground beneath my feet.

I have wandered through eighty-four hundred thousand births and settled at last in this one place. Says Tuka, you alone are now my everything; all possessions, kin, and attachments have fallen away, and I am left desireless.

IN PLAIN WORDS

My feet and eyes were called mine, yet all three have abandoned me. In this foreign land there is no one; I have gone blind and lame. Now think of me, give me your gift, O God. There is no one behind me or before me; entrust me to the good and to the saints. Walking the road ahead, fear fills my heart. Many people have gone that way and not come back. I cannot see what became of them. My ears at least still hear; I sit at the crossing, holding only you in mind. I cry for mercy, like one left at a forsaken place. My belly is never full; my feet never find firm ground. Wandering, I am worn out. Through eighty-four hundred thousand births I went, and stopped at last here. This alone is the place to live. What trust can I place now? Who would come for me by chance? The same fame spread of me, that I am one of the many lost. So I call out: come to me, you holy ones; a great hunger has caught me, and you alone are the merciful giver. My store of merit is spent, whatever little I had near me. Wealth, kin, son, attachment, the whole tangle has snapped. I have become free of desire, O God; this was written on my brow. Tuka says: you alone now are my all, my whole strength. Before this I could see, everything behind and before. Then my sight went, and a film came over the eyes.

WHAT IT MEANS

Again Tukaram speaks as a blind and crippled man stranded far from home, with no kin before or behind him, to picture the soul that has lost every worldly support. The road ahead is frightening because all who went before vanished and never returned, the plain image of death; he can only sit at the crossroads with God held in his mind and his ears still open. The vast number, eighty-four hundred thousand births, is the traditional count of the wandering of birth and rebirth, and he says he has stopped at last in this one true place. The reversal is grace: with his merit spent and every tie of wealth, family, and attachment snapped, he is left desireless, and that very emptiness lets him say God alone is now his everything.

GATHA 0423

Prayers

Grant me sight, physician of Pandhari

मराठी मूळ

तिमिर कोंदलेंसें । वाढे वाढतां प्रबळ । भीत मी जालों देवा । काय ज्याल्याचें फळ ॥१॥
 आतां मज दृष्टी देई । पांडुरंगा मायबापा । शरण आलों आतां । निवारुनियां पापा ।
 अंजन लेववुनी । करीं मारग सोपा । जाईन सिद्धिपंथें । अवघ्या चुकती खेपा ॥२॥
 होतसे खेद चित्ता । कांहीं नाठवे विचार । जात होतों जना । मागें तोही सांडिला आधार ।
 हा ना तोसा ठाव जाला । अवघा पडिला अंधार । फिरलीं माझीं मज । कोणी न देती आधार ॥२॥
 जोंवरि चळण गा । तोंवरि म्हणती माझा । मानिती लहान थोर देहसुखाच्या काजा । इंद्रियें मावळलीं ।
 आला बागुल आजा । कैसा विपरीत जाला । तो चि देह नव्हे दुजा ॥३॥
 गुंतलों या संसारें । कैसा झालोंसें अंध । मी माझें वाढवुनी । मायातृष्णेचा बाध ।
 स्वहित न दिसेचि । केला आपुला वध । लागले काळ पाठीं । सवें काम हे क्रोध ॥४॥
 लागती चालतां गा । गुणदोषाच्या ठेंसा । सांडिली वाट मग । जालों निराळा कैसा ।
 पाहातों वास तुझी । थोरी करुनी आशा । तुका म्हणे वैद्यराजा । पंढरीच्या निवासा ॥५॥
 सहज मी आंधळा गा निजनिराकार पंथें । वृत्ति हे निवृत्ति जाली जन न दिसे तेथें ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Darkness has choked everything and grown overwhelming. I am frightened, O God; what is the fruit of this life?
 Now grant me sight, O Panduranga, my mother and father.

I have come to your refuge; remove my sins, apply the healing balm to my eyes, and make the path easy so I
 may travel the way of perfection with no more wandering. Great anguish fills my mind and no remedy comes to
 thought.

I was going toward the world, but even that support I abandoned. Everything has become darkness; my own
 people have turned away and no one offers a hand.

So long as the body had strength, they called me theirs; now that the senses have dimmed, even the same body is
 treated as a stranger. I was tangled in this world and became blind, nurturing 'me' and 'mine' until the craving
 of illusion destroyed my own welfare.

Death pursues me with lust and anger at its side. Says Tuka, O physician-king dwelling in Pandhari, I stumble
 and look for your scent with great hope.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Darkness has closed in and grows stronger as it spreads. I have become afraid, O God. What is the fruit of being alive? Now give me sight, Panduranga, my mother and father. I have come to your refuge; clear away my sins. Line my eyes with the healing salve; make the road easy. I will go by the path of perfection, and all the wasted journeys will end. Grief fills my mind, and no remedy comes to thought. I was going out toward the world, but I left even that support behind. Neither this place nor that is mine; everything has fallen into darkness. My own people have turned away; no one offers a hand. As long as the body could move, they called me theirs. They counted me, high and low, for the body's comforts. Now the senses have failed; the old terror has come. How strangely it has turned; yet this is the same body, no other. I was tangled in this world, and see how blind I became, swelling 'me' and 'mine' under the hurt of illusion's craving. My own good never showed itself; I worked my own killing. Death is at my back, with lust and anger beside it. As I walk I keep striking against the stones of virtue and fault. Then I left the road; see how I became cut off and apart. I watch for your scent, raising a great hope. Tuka says: O physician-king, who dwells in Pandhari. I am blind by nature, on the path of the formless Self; outgoing thought has turned to stillness, where no people are seen.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram cries out from a thickening darkness, afraid and unable to see any fruit in his life, and asks Panduranga, named as both mother and father, to give him sight. The blindness is inner: he describes how the swelling of 'me' and 'mine' under illusion's craving blinded him to his own good, so that he was, in effect, killing himself while death waited with lust and anger at its side. The crowd that once called him theirs deserts him the moment the body weakens, which lays bare how little worldly belonging is worth. So he turns to the one healer: the physician-king of Pandhari, asking for the salve that opens the eyes and the easy road of perfection, until outgoing thought settles into the stillness of the formless Self.

GATHA 0424

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, the self dissolved

मराठी मूळ

मी माजी हारपलें ठायीं जेथींचा तेथें । अदृश्य तें चि जालें कांहीं दृश्य जें होतें ॥१॥
 सुखी मी निजलों गा शून्य सारुनि तेथें । त्रिकूटशिखरीं गा दान मिळे आइतें ॥२॥
 टाकिली पात्र झोळी धर्मअधर्म आशा । कोल्हाळ चुकविला त्रिगुणाचा वोळसा ।
 न मागें मी भीक आतां हा चि जाला भरवसा । वोळली सत्रावी गा तिणें पुरविली इच्छा ॥३॥
 ऊर्ध्वमुखें आळविला सोहं शब्दाचा नाद । अरुप जागविला दाता घेऊनि छंद ।
 घेऊनि आला दान निजतत्त्व निजबोध । स्वरुपीं मेळविलें नांव ठेविला भेद ॥४॥
 शब्द हा बहुसार उपकाराची राशी । म्हणोनि चालविला मागें येतील त्यांसीं ।
 मागोनि आली वाट सिद्धिओळीचि तैसी । तरले तरले गा आणीक ही विश्वासी ॥५॥
 वर्म तें एक आहे दृढ धरावा भाव । जाणिवनागवण नेदी लागो ठाव ।
 म्हणोनि संग टाकी सेवीं अद्वैत भाव । तुका म्हणे हा चि संतीं मागें केला उपाव ॥६॥
 आंधळ्यापांगळ्यांचा एक विठोबा दाता । प्रसवला विश्व तो चि सर्व होय जाणता ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The 'I' within me dissolved right where it was; all that was visible became invisible. I slept in bliss, having swept aside the void, and upon the peak of the three-fold summit the gift appeared ready-made.

I threw away the begging bag and bowl of merit, demerit, and desire, and escaped the tumult of the three qualities. I no longer beg, for the seventeenth power has arrived and fulfilled every wish.

With an upward cry the sound of 'Soham' was raised, and the formless Giver awoke, bringing the gift of self-knowledge. He merged me into my own nature and bestowed the name 'difference' no more.

This word is a treasury of blessing, kept alive for those who follow. Says Tuka, the one secret is to hold firm faith; abandon the tricks of knowing and not-knowing, embrace non-dual devotion, for this is the remedy the saints have always used.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The 'I' in me dissolved right where it stood. All that I could see became unseen. I lay down in bliss, having pushed the void aside, and on the peak of the three summits the gift was already waiting for me. I threw away the begging bowl and bag of merit, demerit, and desire. I slipped past the uproar of the three qualities. I no longer beg; this is my certainty now, for the seventeenth power has come and filled every wish. With my face turned upward I called the sound of 'Soham,' and the formless Giver woke and took up the play. He came bearing the gift: my own truth, my own knowing. He merged me into the one nature and set aside the name of difference. This word is full of meaning, a heap of blessing; so I send it on for those who come after. The path opened up behind me, a row of attainments, and others crossed over too, others who trusted. The one secret is this: hold the heart firm. Do not let knowing or not-knowing find a place to stand. So drop all clinging and live in non-dual love. Tuka says: this is the very way the saints walked before me. The one giver for the blind and the lame is Vithoba. He gave birth to the world; he alone knows all of it.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is reporting from inside an experience he says happened to him, the collapse of the separate self. The 'I' dissolves on the spot, the visible world goes unseen, and what is left is rest and a gift already prepared. He throws away the beggar's tools, which here stand for the whole economy of merit and demerit and wanting, and walks past the three qualities of nature instead of bargaining with them. The center of the poem is the turn at the end: the one secret is not technique but firm devotion, refusing to let the mind's pride in knowing (or its shame at not-knowing) take hold. He frames this not as his discovery but as the road the saints have always walked, and he passes the report forward so that others may cross on it too.

GATHA 0425

The Nature of God

God's mercy, the helpless are saved

मराठी मूळ

घडी मोडी हेळामात्रें पापपुण्यसंचिता । भवदुःख कोण वारी तुजवांचुनि चिंता ॥१॥
 धर्म गा जागो तुझा तूं चि कृपाळू राजा । जाणसी जीवींचें गा न सांगतां सहजा ॥२॥
 घातली लोळणी गा पुंडलीकें वाळवंटीं । पंढरी पुण्य ठाव नीरे भीवरे तटीं ।
 न देखे दुसरें गा । जाली अदृश्यदृष्टी । वोळला प्रेमदाता केली अमृतवृष्टी ॥२॥
 आणीक उपमन्यु एक बाळ धाकुटें । न देखे न चलवे जना चालते वाटे ।
 घातली लोळणी गा हरिनाम बोभाटे । पावला त्याकारणें धांव घातली नेटें ॥३॥
 बैसोनि खोळी शुक राहे गर्भ आंधळा । शीणला येरझारी दुःख आठवी वेळा ।
 मागील सोसिलें तें ना भीं म्हणे गोपाळा । पावला त्याकारणें । लाज राखिली कळा ॥४॥
 न देखे जो या जना तया दावी आपणा । वेगळा सुखदुःखा मोहो सांडवी धना ।
 आपपर तें ही नाहीं बंधुवर्ग सज्जना । तुकया ते चि परी जाली पावें नारायणा ॥५॥
 भगवंता तुजकारणें मेलों जीता चि कैसी । निष्काम बुद्धी ठेली चळण नाहीं तयासी ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

In mere sport you build and demolish the accumulated store of merit and sin. Who but you can remove the sorrow of existence? Your justice is awake, for you are the compassionate King who knows the heart without being told.

Pundalik threw himself down in the sands of Pandharpur on the sacred bank of the Bhima, and his gaze became unseen to all else; the Lord of love appeared and rained nectar. Then there was the child Upamanyu, small and helpless, unable to see or walk among people; he cried out Hari's name, and the Lord rushed to him with great force.

And Shuka, blind within the womb, exhausted by the cycles of birth; he cried out to Gopala, and the Lord came to protect his honor. Says Tuka, that same grace has come to me; may I reach Narayana, who shows himself to those who cannot see and frees them from the bonds of pleasure, pain, and worldly attachment.

IN PLAIN WORDS

In a moment, as if in play, you build up and break down the whole store of sin and merit. Who but you can turn aside the sorrow of this world? Who else carries that worry? Your justice is awake; you are the merciful King. You know what is in the heart without being told; it is your nature. Pundalik threw himself down in the sands at Pandhari, on the holy bank of the Bhima. He saw nothing else; his sight turned inward. The Giver of love poured out, and rained nectar. And there was Upamanyu, a small child, who could not see and could not walk the road that others walk. He threw himself down crying Hari's name, and for his sake the Lord came running hard. Shuka sat folded in the womb, blind, worn out by going and coming, remembering the pain of each turn. He bore what was behind him; he cried 'do not fear,' said Gopala, and for his sake the Lord came and kept his honor. To the one who cannot see this world, you show yourself. You set him apart from pleasure and pain; you make him let go of attachment to wealth. There is no mine and yours, no kin, no good and bad. Tuka has come to that very state; let me reach Narayana. For your sake, Lord, I have died while still alive. The mind that wants nothing has stopped; it does not stir.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a prayer built on precedent: Tukaram lays out a string of cases where the helpless cried out and God came, then places himself in that line. He opens by naming what only God can do, undoing the whole ledger of sin and merit in an instant, and praising a King whose justice is awake and who reads the heart without being told. The examples (Pundalik prostrate in the sands at Pandhari, the blind child Upamanyu, Shuka cramped and blind in the womb) all share one feature: they could not help themselves and called the Name, and the Lord ran to them. Tukaram's claim is that the same grace has reached him, so that he is now dead while still alive, free of the pull of pleasure, pain, and possessions. The poem rests the whole weight of rescue on God's mercy rather than the devotee's strength.

GATHA 0426

The Necessity of Experience

Surrender, the burden laid on God

मराठी मूळ

न चलती हात पाय दृष्टी फिरली कैसी । जाणतां न देखों गा क्षर आणि अक्षरासी ॥१॥
 विठोबा दान दे गा तुझ्या सारिखें नामा । कीर्ति हे वाखाणिली थोर वाढली सीमा ॥२॥
 भक्तिमुक्ति तूं चि एक होसि सिद्धीचा दाता । म्हणोनि सांडवली शोक भय लज्जा चिंता ।
 सर्वस्वें त्याग केला धांव घातली आतां । कृपादान देई देवा येउनि सामोरा आतां ॥३॥
 संसारसागरु गा भवदुःखाचें मूळ । जनवाद अंथरुण माजी केले इंगळ ।
 इयें वज्रघातें तपे उष्ण वरी जाळ । सोसिलें काय करुं दुर्भर हे चांडाळ ॥४॥
 तिहीं लोकीं तुझें नाम वृक्ष पल्लव शाखा । वेंघलों वरि खोडा भाव धरुनि टेंका ।
 जाणवी नरनारी जागो धरम लोकां । पावती पुण्यवंत सोई आमुचिये हाका ॥५॥
 नाठवे आपपर आतां काय बा करुं । सारिखा सोडसवा हारपला विचारु ।
 घातला योगक्षेम तुज आपुला भारु । तुकया शरणागता देई अभयकरु ॥६॥

वासुदेव - अभंग ६

मनु राजा एक देहपुरी । असे नांदतु त्यासि दोघी नारी।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

My hands and feet will not move; my sight has reversed; I can no longer perceive the perishable or the imperishable. O Vitthala, give me the gift of your name, whose fame has spread beyond all measure.

You alone are the giver of devotion, liberation, and all powers; therefore I have cast away grief, fear, shame, and worry. I have renounced everything and now rush toward you; come forward and grant me the gift of your grace.

This ocean of worldly existence is the root of all sorrow; public opinion is a bed lined with burning coals, and the blows of the senses scorch with unbearable heat. In all three worlds your name is a tree with branches and leaves; I have climbed its trunk, clinging with the grip of faith.

Says Tuka, your surrendered one: I can no longer tell self from other, and all reckoning has dissolved. I have placed the burden of my welfare upon you; grant the fearless hand to this refugee.

IN PLAIN WORDS

My hands and feet will not move. My sight has somehow turned around. Even knowing, I no longer see the perishable or the imperishable. Vithoba, give me the gift: a name like your own. That fame is praised; its bounds have grown great. You alone are the giver of devotion, of liberation, of every power. So I have let grief, fear, shame, and worry be taken from me. I have renounced everything; now I have run to you. Grant me the gift of grace, God; come out to meet me now. The ocean of worldly life is the root of all this sorrow. People's talk is a bed, and they have laid burning coals in it. These fall like thunderbolts and scorch; the flame burns above. What I have borne, what can I do; this misery is hard and cruel. In all three worlds your name is a tree with leaves and branches. I have climbed its trunk and clung there, holding on with faith. Let it wake men and women; let dharma stay awake in people. Let the worthy reach it; this is the call we make. I no longer know mine from yours; what shall I do now? The even balance is gone; reckoning has dissolved. I have placed my whole welfare, my burden, on you. To Tuka who has come for refuge, give the hand that says, do not fear.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram writes from a body and mind that have stopped working in the ordinary way, and turns that helplessness into total surrender. He asks Vithoba not for things but for the Name itself, then renounces grief, fear, shame, and worry by handing them over. The harshest image is social: 'people's talk' is a bed lined with burning coals, and the blows of the world fall like thunderbolts, so worldly existence itself is the root of his suffering. Against that he sets the one shelter, the divine Name pictured as a great tree he has climbed and clings to by faith. The poem ends with the core move of surrender: he can no longer separate self from other or balance any account, so he lays the entire burden of his welfare on God and asks only for the gesture of reassurance, the hand that says, do not fear.

GATHA 0427

Devotion to Vitthal

Gratitude, the guide who led me home

मराठी मूळ

पुत्र पौत्र संपन्न भारी । तेणें कृपा केली आम्हांवरी गा ॥१॥
 म्हणउनि आलों या देशा । होतों नाहीं तरी भुललों दिशा ।
 दाता तो मज भेटला इच्छा । येउनि मारग दाविला सरिसा गा ॥२॥
 सवें घेउनि चौघेजण । आला कुमर सुलक्षण ।
 कडे चुकवुनि कांटवण । ऐका आणिली तीं कोण कोण गा ॥३॥
 पुढें भक्तिनें धरिलें हातीं । मागें ज्ञान वैराग्य धर्म येती ।
 स्थिर केलीं जीं आचपळें होतीं । सद्धि आणुनि लाविलीं पंथीं गा ॥४॥
 केले उपकार सांगों काय । बाप न करी ऐसी माय ।
 धर्म त्याच्या देखिले पाय । दिलें अखय भय वारुनि दान गा ॥५॥
 होतों पीडत हिंडतां गांव । पोट भरेना राहावया ठाव ।
 तो येणें अवघा संदेह । म्हणे फेडिलेला तुक्याचा बंधव गा ॥६॥
 गातों वासुदेव मीं ऐका । चित्त ठेवुनि ठायीं भावें एका ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He who is rich in sons and grandsons has shown us his grace. Because of him I came to this land; without him I would have lost my way in every direction.

That generous one met me and walked the path beside me. He brought four companions along: Devotion took my hand and led the way, while Knowledge, Dispassion, and Righteousness followed, steadying all that had been restless and setting me on the true path.

What shall I say of his kindness? Not even a father or mother does so much. By his grace I beheld the Lord's feet, and he gave me the deathless gift, dispelling all fear.

Says Tuka, I was suffering, wandering from village to village, my belly unfilled, with no place to rest; then this brother came and removed every doubt.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He is rich in sons and grandsons. Out of that fullness he showed his grace to me. Because of him I came to this country. Without him I would have lost my way in every direction. The Giver met me, the one I longed for; he came and showed me the road, walking beside me. He brought four companions with him, that fine young man. He led me past the edge of the thorns. Listen, and hear who they were that he brought. Devotion went in front and took my hand. Behind came Knowledge, Dispassion, and Dharma. The ones that had been restless he made steady. He set them on the path and brought them to their goal. What can I say of his kindness? No father, no mother, does so much. By his dharma I saw the Lord's feet. He gave the deathless gift and turned away all fear. I was suffering, wandering from village to village. My belly would not fill; there was no place to stay. He came and ended all that doubt. Tuka's brother says: he redeemed me. Listen, I sing of Vasudeva, keeping my mind fixed in one place with single love.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a thanksgiving poem in which the saint credits everything to a guide, the gracious Giver who found him when he was lost. The striking image is the company the guide brings: Devotion walks in front and takes the seeker's hand, while Knowledge, Dispassion, and Dharma follow behind, and together they steady faculties that had been restless and bring them to their goal. Tukaram measures the kindness against the deepest human bond, saying not even a father or mother does this much. The reward is concrete in his telling: he saw the Lord's feet, received the deathless gift, and had his fear removed. The end grounds it in his own former misery, wandering hungry from village to village with nowhere to rest, so the gratitude lands as rescue from real destitution, not abstract piety.

GATHA 0428

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, death keeps the account

मराठी मूळ

डोळे झाकुनि रात्र करुं नका । काळ करीत बैसला लेखा गा ॥१॥
 राम राम स्मरा आधीं । लाहो करा गांठ घाला मूळबंदीं ।
 सांडावा उगिया उपाधी । लक्ष लावुनि राहा गोविंदीं गा ॥२॥
 ऐसा अल्प मानवी देह । शत गणिलें अर्ध रात्र खाय ।
 पुढें बालत्व पीडा रोग क्षय । काय भजनासि उरलें तें पाहें गा ॥३॥
 क्षणभंगुर नाहीं भरवसा । व्हा रे सावध सोडा माया आशा ।
 न चळे बळ पडेल मग फासा । पुढें हुशार थोर आहे वोळसा गा ॥४॥
 कांहीं थोडें बहुत लागपाठ । करा भक्ति भाव धरा बळकट ।
 तन मन ध्यान लावुनियां नीट । जर असेल करणें गोड शेवट गा ॥५॥
 विनवितों सकळां जनां । कर जोडुनि थोरां लाहनां ।
 दान इतुलें द्या मज दीना । म्हणे तुकयाबंधु राम म्हणा गा ॥६॥
 गेले टळले पाहार तीन । काय निदसुरा अझून ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Do not close your eyes and pretend it is night; Death sits making his account. Remember Rama's name now; seize this chance and tie the knot at the root.

Set aside idle distractions and fix your gaze upon Govinda. This human body is brief: count a hundred years, and half is spent in sleep.

Add childhood, illness, and decline, and see what time remains for devotion. Nothing here is dependable; be alert, release the grip of desire and illusion.

When strength fails, the noose will fall, and the terror ahead is vast. Practice even a little devotion with a firm and steady heart; set body, mind, and attention straight if you wish for a sweet ending.

Says Tuka's brother, with folded hands I beg all people, great and small: give me this one gift, and say the name of Rama.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Do not shut your eyes and pretend it is night. Death sits there, keeping the account. Remember Rama, Rama first of all. Be quick; tie the knot at the very root. Throw off the useless tangles. Fix your whole attention and stay in Govinda. This human body is such a small thing. Count a hundred years, and half of them sleep eats. Then add childhood, the troubles, sickness, decline. See for yourself what is left over for worship. It breaks in a moment; there is no surety. Wake up, you; let go of illusion and desire. When the strength is gone, the noose will fall. Be alert now; a great snare lies ahead. A little or a lot, keep at the practice. Do devotion; hold faith firmly. Set body, mind, and meditation straight, if you want the ending to be sweet. I beg all people, with folded hands, the great and the small alike. Give me just this much gift, to me who is poor: Tuka's brother says, say the name of Rama. Three watches have already passed and gone. Are you still half asleep?

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a wake-up call, addressed to a sleeper who keeps pretending it is still night while Death sits nearby tallying the account. The poem's force comes from a blunt reckoning of time: a hundred-year life is already halved by sleep, and what remains is further eaten by childhood, illness, and old age, so very little is actually left for the inner work. Against that scarcity Tukaram urges the one cheap, available act, remembering the name of Rama, done now and held firmly, body and mind set straight. The 'noose' and 'snare' name the stakes plainly: when strength fails at the end it is too late to begin. The closing plea, asking only that people say the Name, makes the whole exhortation a gift requested rather than a threat delivered.

GATHA 0429

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, give before the round ends

मराठी मूळ

जागे होउनि करा कांहीं दान । नका ऐकोनि झाकों लोचन गा ॥१॥
 हरी राम कृष्ण वासुदेवा । जाणवितसें जना ।
 चिपळ्या टाळ हातीं मुखीं घोष । नारायणा गा ॥२॥
 जें टाकेल कोणा कांहीं । फळ पुष्प अथवा तोय ।
 द्या परी मीस घेऊं नका भाई । पुढें विन्मुख होतां बरें नाहीं गा ॥३॥
 देवाकारणें भाव तस्मात । द्यावें न लगे फारसें वित्त ।
 जालें एक चित्त तरी बहुत । तेवढ्यासाठीं नका करुं वाताहात गा ॥४॥
 आलों येथवरी बहु सायासें । करितां दान हें चि मागावयास ।
 नका भार घेऊं करुं निरास । धर्म सारफळ संसारास गा ॥५॥
 आतां मागुता येईल फेरा । हें तों घडे या नगरा ।
 म्हणे तुकयाबंधु धरा । ओळखी नाहीं तरी जाल अघोरा गा ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Wake up and give something; do not close your eyes after hearing this. I proclaim Hari, Rama, Krishna, Vasudeva to all people, with cymbals and bells in hand and the chant of Narayana on my lips.

Whatever you can spare, a flower, a fruit, or even water, give it; but do not merely pretend, for turning away once you have heard will not serve you well. God asks only for sincere feeling, not great wealth; if the heart becomes one-pointed, that is enough, so do not ruin everything for the sake of withholding.

I have come this far with great effort, only to ask for this one gift. Do not take on the burden of refusal; righteousness is the true profit of worldly life.

Says Tuka's brother, take hold of this recognition, for another chance to visit this town may or may not come; without it you will fall into a terrible darkness.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Wake up and give something. Do not hear this and shut your eyes. Hari, Rama, Krishna, Vasudeva: I am making it known to people, cymbals and bells in hand, the chant of Narayana on my lips. Whatever anyone can spare, a fruit, a flower, or even water, give it. But do not just pretend, brother; turning away once you have heard will go badly for you later. For God's sake, it is the feeling that matters; you need not give much wealth. If the heart becomes one, that is plenty. Do not ruin everything for the sake of holding back. I have come this far with great effort, only to ask for this one thing. Do not take on the weight of refusal. Dharma is the real fruit of worldly life. Whether the round comes again to this town may or may not happen. Tuka's brother says: take hold of this recognition; without it you fall into a terrible darkness.

WHAT IT MEANS

The Vasudeva-singer goes door to door and turns the act of giving alms into a teaching about the heart. The point is not the size of the gift, a fruit, a flower, even water will do, but the sincerity behind it; what God asks for is one-pointed feeling, not wealth. The warning is against the worst response, hearing the call and then pretending you did not, which Tukaram says will go badly for you. He frames giving as 'the real fruit of worldly life,' so generosity becomes the thing the whole of ordinary life is finally for. The closing presses urgency: the singer's round may not pass this way again, and to miss the recognition now is to fall into darkness, so the small chance in front of you is the whole opportunity.

GATHA 0430

The Power of the Name

The Name, two simple syllables

मराठी मूळ

राम राम दोनी अक्षरें । सुलभ आणि सोपारें । जागा मागिले पाहारें । सेवटिचें गोड तें चि खरें गा ॥१॥
 राम कृष्ण वासुदेवा । जाणवी जनासि । वाजवी चिपळिया । टाळ घागर्यावघोषें गा ॥२॥
 गाय वासुदेव वासुदेवा । भिन्न नाहीं आणिका नांवा । दान जाणोनियां करीं आवा । न ठेवीं उरीं कांहीं ठेवा गा ॥
 २॥

एक वेळा जाणविती । धरूनियां राहा चित्तीं । नेघें भार सांडीं कामा हातीं । नीज घेउनि फिरती गा ॥३॥
 सुपात्रीं सर्व भाव । मी तों सर्व वासुदेव । जाणती कृपाळु संत महानुभाव । जया भिन्न भेद नाहीं ठाव गा ॥४॥
 शूर दान जीवें उदार । नाहीं वासुदेवी विसर । कीर्ति वाढे चराचर । तुका म्हणे तया नमस्कार गा ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Rama, Rama: two syllables, simple and easy. Wake in the last watch of the night, for that which is final is truly sweet.

The singer of Vasudeva chants Vasudeva and knows no other name. Give generously; hold nothing back.

Even if told only once, keep it firm in the heart; do not take on burdens, let go of labor, and rest in devotion. All beings carry the divine within them; the saint who knows this sees no difference anywhere.

Says Tuka, I bow to those heroes of generosity who never forget Vasudeva, whose fame fills the moving and the still.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Rama, Rama: two syllables, easy and simple. Wake in the last watch of the night. What comes at the end is the truly sweet thing. Rama, Krishna, Vasudeva: I make it known to people, playing the small cymbals, the bells, the loud chant. Sing Vasudeva, Vasudeva; there is no other name apart from it. Knowing this, make your gift; keep nothing back in your heart. Even if you are told only once, hold it and stay in your mind. Do not take on burdens; drop the work from your hands. Take your rest in it and go your round. Where the vessel is worthy, all feeling is there: I am wholly Vasudeva. The merciful saints, the great souls, know this; for them there is no place where difference stands. Brave and open-handed with their very lives, never forgetting Vasudeva, their fame grows through all that moves and is still. Tuka says: to them I bow.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram presses the whole of the path into the smallest possible thing: two syllables, Rama, said simply, best of all in the last watch before dawn. The teaching is that ease is no objection; the Name is meant to be available to everyone, and the singer carries it through the streets with cymbals and the loud chant. Behind the simplicity sits a non-dual claim, 'I am wholly Vasudeva,' the recognition that the divine is not other and that for the saints who see this no real difference stands anywhere. The poem links this inner seeing to outward generosity: those who give freely and never forget the Name are the heroes he honors. He ends not by instructing but by bowing to them, making admiration itself the close.

GATHA 0431

The Necessity of Experience

Experience, the singer at your gate

मराठी मूळ

बोल बोले अबोलणे । जागें बाहेर आंत निजेलें । कैसें घरांत घरकुल केलें । नेणों आंधार ना उजेडलें गा ॥१॥
वासुदेव करितों फेरा । वाडियांत बाहेर दारा । कोणी कांहीं तरी दान करा । जाब नेदा तरी जातों सामोरा गा ॥

धु.॥

हातीं टाळ दिंडी मुखीं गाणें । गजर होतो बहु मोठ्यानें । नाहीं निवडिलीं थोरलाहानें । नका निजों भिकेच्या भेणें गा
॥२॥

मी वासुदेव तत्वता । कळों येईल विचारितां । आहे ठाउका सभाग्या संतां । नाहीं दुजा आणीक मागता गा ॥३॥
काय जागाचि निजलासी । सुनें जागोन दारापासीं । तुझ्या हितापाठीं करी व्यास व्यासी । भेटी न घेसी वासुदेवासी
गा ॥४॥

ऐसें जागविलें अवघें जन । होतें संचित तींहीं केलें दान । तुका म्हणे दुबळीं कोणकोण । गेलीं वासुदेवा विसरुन गा
॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He speaks the speech that is silence; he is awake outside yet asleep within. How he has built a nest inside the house, where one cannot tell darkness from light.

I, Vasudeva, make my rounds at your gate and in your courtyard. Give me something; if you give no answer, I will come and stand before you.

With cymbals in hand and a song on my lips, the chant thunders loud. I have not sorted out the great from the small; do not hide in sleep for fear of giving alms.

I am Vasudeva in truth; reflect on it and the meaning will become clear. I am known to the blessed saints, and there is no other beggar like me.

Says Tuka, those who had past merit gave their gifts, but the wretched ones went on forgetting Vasudeva.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He speaks the speech that is silence. He is awake outside and asleep within. See how he has made a little house inside the house, where one cannot tell the dark from the light. I, Vasudeva, make my round, through the courtyard and at the outer door. Someone, anyone, give a gift. If you give no answer, I come and stand before you. Cymbals in hand, the dindi going, a song on my lips, the chant rings out loud. I have not sorted the great from the small. Do not hide in sleep for fear of giving alms. I am Vasudeva in truth; reflect on it and the meaning will grow clear. The blessed saints know me. There is no other beggar like me. Why do you lie there asleep, awake by your own empty door like a dog? For your own good, Vyasa makes the work; yet you take no meeting with Vasudeva. So he woke all the people. Those who had merit gave their gift. Tuka says: but the poor wretches, one and another, went on forgetting Vasudeva.

WHAT IT MEANS

The poem speaks in the voice of the Vasudeva-singer, the wandering minstrel who is also a figure for God moving among people. The opening riddles, speech that is silence, awake outside and asleep within, a house inside the house, point to the hidden divine presence that the ordinary eye cannot read. The singer comes to every gate without sorting great from small, asking for a gift and refusing to be ignored: if you give no answer he stands before you. The sharp line, 'why do you lie asleep, awake by your own empty door like a dog,' aims at the pattern of staying spiritually drowsy while help is literally at the door. Tukaram closes by dividing people not by wealth but by response: those with merit gave, while the truly impoverished are those who keep forgetting Vasudeva.

GATHA 0432

The Power of the Name

The Name, wake and give before the end

मराठी मूळ

रामकृष्ण गीती गात । टाळ चिपळ्या वाजवीत । छंदें आपुलिया नाचत । नीज घेऊनि फिरत गा ॥१॥
 जनीं वनीं हा अवघा देव । वासनेचा हा पुसावा ठाव । मग वोळगती वासुदेव । ऐसा मनीं वसूं द्यावा भाव गा ॥२॥
 निज दासाची थोर आवडी । वासुदेवासि लागली गोडी । मुखीं नाम उच्चारी घडोघडीं । ऐसी करा हे वासुदेवजोडी
 गा ॥३॥
 अवघा सारुनि सेवट जाला । प्रयत्न न चले कांहीं केला । जागा होई सांडुनि झोपेला । दान देई वासुदेवालागा ॥
 ३॥
 तुका म्हणे रे धन्य त्याचें जिणें । जींहीं घातलें वासुदेवा दान । त्याला न लगे येणें जाणें । जालें वासुदेवीं राहणे गा
 ॥४॥
 गांवगुंड - अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Singing the songs of Rama and Krishna, clapping cymbals, dancing in his own rapture, the wandering minstrel goes from door to door while the world sleeps. Everywhere, in town and forest, God pervades all; wipe away the stain of desire and let the Vasudeva-singers serve you.

Great is the love of the Lord's true servant; the sweetness of Vasudeva has seized him, and the divine name rings on his lips at every moment. When the end of all accounts arrives and no effort can avail, wake from your slumber and give to the Vasudeva-singer.

Says Tuka, blessed is the life of those who gave that gift; they need never come and go again, for they have come to dwell in Vasudeva.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Singing the songs of Rama and Krishna, ringing the cymbals and the small clappers, dancing in his own delight, he takes his rest and goes his round. In town and in forest, all of this is God. Wipe out the place where desire lives. Then Vasudeva will answer you; let that feeling live in your mind. The Lord's own servant has a great love; the sweetness of Vasudeva has taken hold of him. The Name is on his lips at every moment. Make this your union with Vasudeva. When everything is over and the end has come, no effort you make will work anymore. So wake up, throw off your sleep, and give your gift to Vasudeva. Tuka says: blessed is the life of those who gave their gift to Vasudeva. For them there is no more coming and going; they have come to dwell in Vasudeva.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram joins two themes here: the all-pervading presence of God and the urgency of acting before death. The seer's claim is that town and forest alike are wholly God, so the work is simply to wipe out the place where desire lives, and then the divine answers from everywhere. The servant who keeps the Name on his lips at every moment is offered as the model of the love being described. The warning is the familiar one made concrete: when the end comes, no effort will avail, so the gift must be given now while there is still waking life to give it. The reward is release from the round of coming and going, to 'dwell in Vasudeva,' which is the poem's name for liberation.

GATHA 0433

Autobiography

Autobiography, the holy troublemaker

मराठी मूळ

आम्ही जालों गांवगुंड । अवघ्या पुंड भूतांसी ॥१॥
 दुसरें तें खेळों आलें । एका बोले तो मियां ॥२॥
 अवघियांचा येऊं लाग । नेदूं अंग शिवाया ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे खुटूं नाद । जितूं वाद सर्तीनें ॥३॥
 जोगी - अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I have become the village rogue, a bully to all the spirits and ghosts. Whatever second player comes along, I alone speak for him.

I will come at everyone and let no one touch my body. Says Tuka, I will exhaust their noise and win every argument by sheer persistence.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I have become the village rogue, a bully to all the spirits and ghosts. Whatever second one comes to play, I am the one who speaks for him. I come at every one of them and let none of them touch my body. Tuka says: I will choke off their noise and win the argument by sheer persistence.

WHAT IT MEANS

In this short boast Tukaram casts himself, half playfully, as the local troublemaker, the one the unseen forces have learned to fear. The 'spirits and ghosts' stand for the inner enemies and old terrors that used to push him around; now the relation is reversed and he is the bully. The line about speaking for the 'second player' suggests he answers on behalf of others who are still afraid, taking the contest onto himself. The closing claim is not about cleverness but about persistence: he will simply outlast and outshout the opposing voices until they fall silent. The tone is the confidence of someone who has stopped being intimidated by what once intimidated him.

GATHA 0434

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, the world-yogi's round

मराठी मूळ

जग जोगी जग जोगी । जागजागे बोलती ॥१॥

जागता जगदेव । राखा कांहीं भाव ॥२॥

अवघा क्षेत्रपाळ । पूजा सकळ ॥३॥

पूजापात्र कांहीं । फल पुष्प तोय ॥४॥

बहुतां दिसां फेरा । आला या नगरा ॥५॥

नका घेऊं भार । धर्म तो चि सार ॥६॥

तुका मागे दान । द्या जी अनन्य ॥७॥

सरवदा - अभंग १

एका गा ए भाई । सरवदा सांगतो काई । येथें नाडेल माई । दोघां पुत्रांची ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The world-yogi calls out: wake, wake! The Lord of the world is awake; keep some devotion in reserve. Worship the guardian of all the fields.

Offer something as worship: a flower, a fruit, or water. After many days the yogi's round has come again to this town.

Do not take on the burden of refusal; righteousness alone is the essence. Says Tuka, I ask for one gift: give me your undivided surrender.

IN PLAIN WORDS

World-yogi, world-yogi, calling out, awake, awake. The Lord of the world is awake; keep some devotion in reserve. He is the guardian of every field; worship them all. Offer something as worship: a fruit, a flower, water. After many days the round has come again to this town. Do not take on the weight of refusal; dharma alone is the essence. Tuka asks for a gift: give, please, your undivided self. Listen, brother. What does he keep saying, over and over? Here the mother of two sons will be cheated.

WHAT IT MEANS

The poem is sung in the persona of the wandering 'world-yogi' who comes calling people awake. Its core is the same plea found in the other alms songs: God is awake and watching, so keep some devotion in store and offer something, even a fruit or a flower or water, since it is the gesture, not the value, that counts. Tukaram presses that 'dharma alone is the essence,' so giving rightly is the whole point of worldly life. The single gift he actually asks for is the highest one, undivided surrender of the self. The closing line shifts to a sharper warning that the careless will be cheated, pointing the listener toward not letting this recurring chance slip by unanswered.

GATHA 0435

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the liar's gospel mocked

मराठी मूळ

ते करिती तिची विटंबना । अवघ्या प्रसद्धि जना । एक न मारितां शाहाणा । तो जाणा सुख न पवे ॥१॥
 आणीक ऐका गा ए । सरवदा सांगतो काय । खरें चि बोले तो जाय । नरकामध्ये अधोगती ।
 हें चौघांच्या मुखें । मना आणावें सुखें । अवघीं चुकती दुःखें । खोटें बोला नरनारी ॥२॥
 आणीक नाडेल एक जाण । सरवदा बोलतो वचन । जागें माझें म्हणोन । पडिलें खान तया घरीं ।
 म्हणोन न म्हणा माझें कांहीं । निजीं निजा सुखें ठायीं । यत्न होईल तई । चोराठायीं विश्वास ॥३॥
 आणीक एकी परी । सरवदा सांगतो थोरी । दुःख पावेल नारी । पतिव्रता यामधीं ।
 पांचांनीं दिधली हातीं । म्हणोनि न मनावी निश्चिती । परपुरुषीं होय रती । सुखगती ते पावे ॥४॥
 एकी परी । सरवदा सांगतो तें करीं । दान देतां जो न वारी । नव्हे भला भला तो तुका म्हणे आई ।
 येथें नांव काई । सांगसी तें ठायीं । मरो रांडेचें ॥५॥

मुंढा - अभंग ३

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those who humiliate the mother of the two sons bring disgrace upon themselves before the whole world; without correcting even one person, no one finds happiness. One who speaks the plain truth falls into the netherworld; but if everyone, man and woman, simply speaks what is false, all suffering ends.

Furthermore, the bard warns: whoever claims 'this is mine' invites thieves into his own house; therefore call nothing your own, sleep in peace, and place your trust in the thief's own quarter. Also, the devoted wife will suffer if she obeys the commands of the five senses and takes delight in another; yet the one who resists finds true happiness.

And finally, whoever blocks a person from giving charity is no good person at all. Says Tuka, let the name of that wretch perish.

IN PLAIN WORDS

They humiliate her, and the whole world watches it happen. Without setting even one person straight, know this: the wise man finds no peace. And listen, here is what the bard keeps telling you. The one who speaks the plain truth, he goes down into hell. But if everyone, man and woman, just speaks what is false, then all your sorrows end. And another will be cheated, listen: the one who keeps saying 'this is mine.' A hole gets dug in that man's own house. So do not call anything yours. Sleep easy in your own place. When the chance comes, put your trust in the thief. And here is another, listen to the bard's great teaching: the faithful wife will come to grief. The five gave her into one man's hand, so do not hold to that certainty. Let her take pleasure in another man; that, he says, is the happy way. And one more thing the bard tells you to do: whoever does not block a man from giving charity, he is no good at all. Tuka says, mother, what name shall I even give it; let the harlot's word die.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is satire, and it must be read against its surface: the 'bard' recites a gospel of lies, and Tukaram's point is the exact opposite of every counsel quoted. The voice praises falsehood over truth, theft over honesty, betrayal over faithfulness, and obstructing charity as if these were wisdom, precisely so the listener will recoil and recognize them as the corrupt 'common sense' that actually circulates in the world. The opening image of a woman publicly humiliated sets the moral stakes: a society that will not correct a single wrong finds no peace. By voicing the perverse advice plainly, Tukaram exposes how respectable cynicism inverts every real value. His closing disgust, refusing even to dignify the teaching with a name, turns the listener back on self-examination: do not let this inverted gospel pass for sense.

GATHA 0436

Worldly Metaphors

Warning, watchfulness on the road

मराठी मूळ

संबाल यारा उपर तलें दोन्ही मारकी चोट । नजर करे सो ही राखे पशवा जावे लुट ॥१॥
 प्यार खुदाई रे बाबा जिकिर खुदाई ॥ध्रु॥
 उडे कुदे ढुंग नचावे आगल भुलन प्यार । लडबड खडबड कांहेकां खचलावत भार ॥२॥
 कहे तुका चलो एका हम जिन्होंके सात । मिलावे तो उसे देना तो ही चढावे हात ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Guard yourself, friend; the blows fall from both above and below. Whoever keeps a watchful eye is saved, but the heedless one is plundered.

Love belongs to God alone; remember God alone. Why do you dance and shake your hips, stumbling and staggering under a needless load? Says Tuka, come, let us walk together with those who are true. Whatever we receive, let us offer it back; let us extend a hand upward.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Watch yourself, friend. The blows come from above and from below. The one who keeps his eyes open is kept safe; the heedless one is robbed. Love belongs to God. Remember God. Why do you leap and prance and shake your hips, forgetting love, fumbling and staggering under a load you do not need? Tuka says: come, let us walk together with those who are true. Whatever we are given, let us give it back; let us lift a hand upward.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks here in his plain Hindi voice, as one traveler warning another on a dangerous road. The blows fall from every side, and only attention saves you: the watchful one comes through, the careless one is stripped bare. Against all the showy dancing and shaking that pass for devotion, he sets one quiet rule, love God and keep his name. He then turns the warning into an invitation: walk with the true ones, hold nothing back, and offer everything you receive upward to the One who gave it.

GATHA 0437

Appeals and Exhortations

Satire, the drunken pretender

मराठी मूळ

सब संबाल भ्याने लौंढे खडा केऊं गुंग । मदिरथी मता हुवा भुलि पाडी भंग ॥१॥
 आपसकुं संबाल आपसकुं संबाल । मुंढे खुब राख ताल । मुथिवोहि बोला नहीं तो करूंगा हाल ॥२॥
 आवलका तो पीछें नहीं मुदल बिसर जाय । फिरते नहीं लाज रंडी गधे गोते खाय ॥३॥
 जिन्हो खातिर इतना होता सो नहीं तुझे बेफाम । उचा जोरो लिया तुंबा तुंबा बुरा काम ॥४॥
 निकल जावे चिकल जोरो मुंढे दिलदारी । जबानीकी छोड दे बात फिर एक तारी ॥५॥
 कहे तुका फिसल रुका मेरेको दान देख । पकड धका गांडगुडघी मार चलाऊं आलेख ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Everyone is startled and stands reeling and mute; intoxicated by the wine of delusion, they have lost their senses. Guard yourself, guard yourself.

O shaven-headed one, keep the rhythm well; if you will not even open your mouth, I will give you a hard time. The careless one forgets even his own capital and never looks back.

The shameless wretch goes on swallowing dives into the water. The one for whose sake all this was done is not loyal to you; in a frenzy he has heaped up wicked deeds.

Get away, clear out. O shaven one, show some courage of the heart.

Drop the talk of mere words and come to the one string of truth. Says Tuka, stop slipping and sliding; look at what I am giving you. Seize it, push hard, get down on your knees, and let me draw up the account.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Everyone stands startled, reeling and dumb, drunk on the wine of delusion, their senses gone. Watch yourself, watch yourself. Shaven one, keep the beat well; if you will not even open your mouth, I will give you a hard time. The careless man forgets his own capital and never looks back. The shameless one keeps diving and swallowing water. The One for whose sake all this was done is not loyal to you; in a frenzy you have piled up wicked deeds. Get out, clear off. Shaven one, show some heart. Drop the talk of empty words; come to the one string of truth. Tuka says: stop slipping and sliding. Look at what I am giving you. Seize it, push hard, get down on your knees, and let me settle the account.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram aims this at the religious performer who is drunk on his own act and has lost the point of it. He plays the harsh drill-master to the shaven mendicant: keep the rhythm, open your mouth, stop forgetting that your own soul is the capital you are squandering. The cutting line is that the One for whose sake the whole show was begun gets nothing from it; the frenzy only heaps up harm. The poem ends as a hard offer rather than mere mockery: drop the noise of words, take hold of the single thread of truth, and kneel, and the reckoning can be set right.

GATHA 0438

*The Power of the Name**The Name, beyond great and small*

मराठी मूळ

आवल नाम आल्ला बडा लेते भुल न जाये । इलाम त्याकालजमुपरताही तुंब बजाये ॥१॥
 आल्ला एक तुं नबी एक तुं ॥ध्रु॥
 काटतें सिर पावों हात नहीं जीव उराये । आगले देखे पिछले बुझे । आपें हजुर आयें ॥२॥
 सब सबरी नचाव म्याने । खडा आपनी सात । हात पावों रखते जबाब । नहीं आगली बात ॥३॥
 सुनो भाई बजार नहीं । सब हि निरचे लाव । नन्हा बडा नहीं कोये एक ठोर मिलाव ॥४॥
 एक तार नहीं प्यार । जीवतनकी आस । कहे तुका सो हि मुंडा । राखलिये पायेनपास ॥५॥
 डोई फोडा - अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The first and greatest name is Allah; take it and never be deceived. On the day of reckoning, even over the bridge of judgment, that name will sound like a drum.

Allah is one, the Prophet is one. Even if the head is cut and the hands and feet are severed, the life-breath does not leave.

He who sees what is ahead and understands what is behind stands ready in the divine presence. Listen, brothers, this is no marketplace; everyone must be leveled alike.

There is no great or small; all must meet in one single place. Says Tuka, that shaven-headed fakir who has no attachment to life or body should be kept at the feet of the Lord.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The first and greatest name is Allah; take it and never be fooled. On the day of reckoning, even on the bridge of judgment, that name will sound like a drum. Allah is one, the Prophet is one. Even if the head is cut off and the hands and feet are severed, the life does not leave. The one who sees what is ahead and knows what is behind stands ready in the divine presence. Listen, brothers, this is no marketplace; everyone must be made level. There is no great and no small; all must meet in one single place. There is no thread, no love, no clinging to staying alive. Tuka says: that shaven fakir should be kept at the Lord's feet.

WHAT IT MEANS

Speaking in the fakir's idiom, Tukaram makes the Name the one thing that carries a soul through the final crossing, sounding like a drum even on the bridge of judgment. He presses oneness all the way down: God is one, and the true seeker who has died to fear stands present, unshaken even if the body is cut apart. Then he levels the ground, this is no bargaining place, no rank of great and small; every soul meets in the same single spot. The poem ends by handing over the one who has let go of life and clinging, to be kept at the Lord's feet.

GATHA 0439

True Worship

True worship, only the One remains

मराठी मूळ

तम भज्याय ते बुरा जिकीर ते करे । सीर काटे ऊर कुटे ताहां सब डरे ॥१॥
 ताहां एक तु ही ताहां एक तु ही । ताहां एक तु ही रे बाबा हमें तुम्हें नहीं ॥२॥
 दिदार देखो भुले नहीं किशे पछाने कोये । सचा नहीं पकडुं सके झुटा झुटे रोये ॥३॥
 किसे कहे मेरा किन्हे सात लिया भास । नहीं मेलो मिले जीवना झुटा किया नास ॥४॥
 सुनो भाई कैसा तो ही । होय तैसा होय । बाट खाना आल्ला कहना एकबारां तो ही ॥५॥
 भला लिया भेक मुंढे । आपना नफा देख । कहे तुका सो ही संका । हाक आल्ला एक ॥५॥
 मलंग - अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Those who worship in darkness are wretched, but those who practice zikr, the remembrance of God cut off the head, beat the breast, and make everyone tremble. In that state only you exist, only you.

There is no 'I' and no 'you' apart from you. Whoever beholds the divine face is bewildered; no one can recognize another.

The truthful one cannot be seized, while the false one weeps in his own falsehood. Who can call anything 'mine' when no one has truly kept company? The dead do not meet the living; the false one has brought about his own ruin.

Listen, brother: become whatever you must. Walk the path, eat your bread, and say 'Allah' at least once.

Says Tuka, the shaven one who takes this bargain sees his own profit. Call upon Allah, the One.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Those who worship in the dark are wretched; those who truly remember God cut off the head, beat the breast, and make everyone tremble. There, only you. There, only you. There, only you, my friend; there is no us and no you. Whoever beholds the face is lost to himself; no one can recognize another. The true one cannot be seized; the false one weeps in his own falsehood. Who can say this is mine, when no one has truly kept company? The dead do not meet the living; the false one has ruined himself. Listen, brother: be whatever you must be. Walk the road, eat your bread, and say Allah at least once. The shaven one who takes this bargain sees his own profit. Tuka says: call on Allah, the One.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram contrasts dark, half-hearted worship with true remembrance, which is severe enough to slay the self, the cut head and beaten breast, until only God remains. In that state the difference between I and you collapses; the one who really sees the divine face loses himself and can no longer pick out a separate other. He warns that the false seeker cannot grasp truth and only weeps in his own pretense, his life wasted. The closing counsel is disarmingly simple: live your ordinary life, but say the Name even once and mean it, for that one true word is the whole profit.

GATHA 0440

Worldly Metaphors

Warning, the trickster in the bazaar

मराठी मूळ

नजर करे सो ही जिंके बाबा दुरथी तमासा देख । लकडी फांसा लेकर बैठा आगले ठकण भेख ॥१॥
 काहे भुला एक देखत आंखो मार तडांगो बाजार ॥२॥
 दमरी चमरी जो नर भुला । सोत आघो हि लत खाये ॥२॥
 नहि बुलावत किसे बाबा आप हि मत जाये । कहे तुका उस असाके संग फिरफिर गोदे खाये ॥३॥
 दरवेस -अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The one who watches wins; from a distance, my friend, watch the spectacle. The trickster sits with his staff and snare, his disguise set to deceive those who come near.

Why are you dazzled? Open your eyes and see the blows raining down in this marketplace. The fool who is lured by a penny will get kicked even by his own kind.

Do not go uninvited, my friend, and do not call anyone who has not been summoned. Says Tuka, whoever keeps company with such a one gets kicked again and again.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The one who watches wins. From a distance, friend, watch the show. The trickster sits with his stick and his snare, his disguise set to fool whoever comes near. Why are you dazzled? Open your eyes and see the blows falling in this marketplace. The fool who is tempted by a penny gets kicked even by his own kind. Do not go where you were not called, friend, and do not summon anyone who was not asked. Tuka says: whoever keeps company with such a one gets kicked again and again.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a marketplace parable about the spiritual con man and the greed that walks into his trap. Tukaram tells you to keep your distance and simply watch: the trickster has dressed himself up and laid his snare for whoever draws near. The one who is dazzled and lured by a small gain gets battered, even by people of his own sort. The lesson is to stay where you belong and not go chasing or being chased; keep company with the deceiver and you will be kicked over and over.

GATHA 0441

*The Nature of God**God's will, the true dervish*

मराठी मूळ

अल्ला करे सो होय बाबा करतारका सिरताज । गाउ बछरे तिस चलावे यारी बाघो न सात ॥१॥
 ख्याल मेरा साहेबका । बाबा हुवा करतार । व्हांटें आघे चढे पीठ । आपे हुवा असुवार ॥२॥
 जिकिर करो अल्लाकी बाबा सबल्यां अंदर भेस । कहे तुका जो नर बुझे सो हि भया दरवेस ॥३॥
 वैद्यगोळी - अभंग १

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Whatever Allah wills, that alone happens; the Creator wears the crown. He drives the cow and calf as he pleases; the tiger cannot walk beside them.

My thought is fixed upon the Master, for the Creator himself has become the rider, mounting the steed from the front. Remember Allah, for he dwells within all in every guise.

Says Tuka, whoever truly understands this has become a real dervish.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Whatever Allah wills, that alone happens, friend; the Creator wears the crown. He drives the cow and her calf as he pleases; the tiger cannot walk beside them. My mind is set on the Master, friend, for the Creator himself has become the rider and mounted the horse from the front. Remember Allah, friend, who lives within all in every form. Tuka says: whoever truly understands this has become a real dervish.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram states the heart of trust: nothing happens but God's will, and the Creator alone is sovereign. His images are of that sovereignty made gentle, the cow and calf led safely so that the tiger cannot come near, a guarding will that orders all things. He fixes his whole attention on this Master, who is not distant but has himself become the rider directing the journey, and who dwells inside everything in every disguise. To grasp this, that all is God's doing and God is in all, is what makes someone a true dervish rather than one in name only.

GATHA 0442

The Nature of God

The free medicine of the Name

मराठी मूळ

अल्ला देवे अल्ला दिलावे अल्ला दारु अल्ला खलावे । अल्ला बगर नही कोये अल्ला करे सो हि होये ॥१॥
 मर्द होये वो खडा फीर नामर्दकुं नहीं धीर । आपने दिलकुं करना खुसी तीन दामकी क्या खुमासी ॥२॥
 सब रसोंका किया मार । भजनगोली एक हि सार । इमान तो सब ही सखा । थोड़ी तो भी लेकर ज्या ॥३॥
 जिन्हो पास नीत सोये । वो हि बसकर तिरोवे । सांतो पांचो मार चलावे । उतार सो पीछे खावे ॥४॥
 सब ज्वानी निकल जावे । पीछे गधडा मटी खावे । गांवढाळ सो क्या लेवे । हगवनि भरी नहि धोवे ॥५॥
 मेरी दारु जिन्हें खाया । दिदार दरगां सो हि पाया । तल्हे मुंढी घाल जावे । बिगारी सोवे क्या लेवे ॥६॥
 बजारका बुझे भाव । वो हि पुसता आवे ठाव । फुकट बाटु कहे तुका । लेवे सोहि लें हिसखा ॥७॥

गोंधळ - अभंग ३

राजस सुंदर बाळा । पाहों आलिया सकळा वो । बिबीं बिंबोनि ठेली ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Allah gives, Allah causes to give, Allah is the medicine, Allah causes it to be taken. There is no one besides Allah; whatever Allah does, that alone comes to pass.

The brave one stands firm; the coward has no steadiness. Make your own heart happy; what pride can a thing worth three pennies carry? Strike down all other relishes; the pill of devotion alone is the essence.

Faith is the true companion; take even a little and go your way. Those who sleep beside wealth will also sit and be robbed.

The five and seven senses strike their blows; the aftermath is swallowed later. All youth passes away, and afterward the old donkey eats dust.

Whoever has taken my medicine has beheld the divine face and reached the holy shrine. Says Tuka, I hand out this remedy free. Whoever has the good fortune, let him take it.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Allah gives, Allah makes others give, Allah is the medicine, Allah makes you take it. There is no one but Allah; whatever Allah does, that alone happens. Be a man and stand firm; the coward has no steadiness. Make your own heart glad; what pride can a thing worth three pennies hold? Strike down all the other pleasures; the one pill of devotion is the whole essence. Faith is the true friend; take even a little and go on your way. Those who sleep beside their wealth will sit there and be robbed. The five senses and the seven strike their blows, and the cost is swallowed later. All the youth drains away, and afterward the old donkey eats dust. Whoever has taken my medicine has seen the divine face and reached the holy shrine. Tuka says: I hand out this remedy for free. Whoever has the good fortune, let him take it.

WHAT IT MEANS

In the fakir's voice, Tukaram makes God the giver, the medicine, and the hand that makes you swallow it, all action belongs to the One. He calls for courage rather than cowardice and tells you not to prize the cheap pleasures of the senses, which strike their blows now and send the bill later. The blunt warning is mortal: youth

runs out, and the man who clung to it ends up an old donkey eating dust, while the one who slept beside his wealth wakes up robbed. Against all of this he sets one cure, the pill of devotion, which alone brings the seeker to the divine face. And he gives it away free, asking only that the fortunate take it.

GATHA 0443

Devotion to Vitthal

Adoration of Vithabai, beyond the Vedas

मराठी मूळ

माझी परब्रम्ह वेल्हाळा वो । कोटि रविशशि माझी । परब्रम्ह वेल्हाळा वो ॥१॥
 राजस विठाबाई । माझें ध्यान तुझे पायीं वो । त्यजुनियां चौघींसी । लावी आपुलिये सोई वो ॥२॥
 सकुमार साजिरी । कैसीं पाउलें गोजिरीं वो । कंठीं तुळसीमाळा ।
 उभी भीवरेच्या तिरीं वो । दंत हिरया ज्योति । शंखचक्र मिरवे करीं वो ॥३॥
 निर्गुण निराकार । वेदां न कळे चि आकार वो । शेषादिक श्रमले ।
 श्रुती न कळे तुझा पार वो । उभारोनि बाहे । भक्तां देत अभयकर वो ॥४॥
 येउनि पंढरपुरा । अवतरली सारंगधरा वो । देखोनि भक्ति भाव ।
 वोरसली अमृतधारा वो । देउनि प्रेमपान्हा । तुकया स्वामीनें किंकरा वो ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

My beloved is the playful Parabrahma, radiant as ten million suns and moons. O beautiful Vithabai, my meditation rests at your feet.

Forsaking the four pursuits, I follow only your path. How delicate and lovely are your tender feet, with a garland of tulsī at the throat, standing on the bank of the Bhima.

Your teeth gleam like jewels; the conch and discus shine in your hands. You are formless and beyond all attributes; even the Vedas cannot fathom your shape, and Shesha and the scriptures tire in seeking your limit.

With arms raised, you bestow fearlessness upon the devoted. Says Tuka, having come to Pandharpur as Sarangadhara, seeing the love of the devotees you overflowed with streams of nectar and gave the milk of divine love to this servant.

IN PLAIN WORDS

My beloved is the playful Parabrahma, radiant as ten million suns and moons. O lovely Vithabai, my whole meditation rests at your feet. I let go of the four pursuits and follow only your way. How tender and beautiful are your feet, a garland of tulsī at your throat, as you stand on the bank of the Bhima. Your teeth gleam like jewels; the conch and the discus shine in your hands. You are without form, beyond all qualities; even the Vedas cannot grasp your shape, and Shesha and the scriptures grow weary seeking your limit. With your arms raised, you grant fearlessness to those who love you. Tuka says: you came to Pandharpur as Sarangadhara, and seeing the love of your devotees you overflowed with streams of nectar and gave this servant the milk of your love.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram adores Vithabai, his beloved form of God at Pandharpur, as the playful Absolute itself, brighter than countless suns and moons. He makes his choice clear: he sets aside the four standard aims of life and rests his whole mind at her feet. He holds two truths together, the close and the vast: he can describe her tender feet, her tulsi garland, her gleaming teeth and the conch and discus in her hands, yet she is also formless and beyond all attributes, past the reach of the Vedas and the great serpent Shesha. The poem closes in gratitude: drawn by the devotees' love, she poured out nectar and fed him, her servant, with the very milk of divine love.

GATHA 0444

Devotion to Vitthal

The Gondhal of the soul for Vithabai

मराठी मूळ

सुदिन सुवेळ । तुझा गोंधळ वो । पंच प्राण दिवटे । दोनी नेत्रांचे हिलाल वो ॥१॥
 पंढरपुरनिवासे । तुझे रंगी नाचत असें वो । नवस पुरवीं माझा । मनिंची जाणोनियां इच्छा वो ॥२॥
 मांडिला देव्हारा । तुझा त्रिभुवनामाझारी वो । चौक साधियेला । नाभिकळस ठेविला वरी वो ॥३॥
 बैसली देवता । पुढें वैष्णवाचें गाणें वो । उदारे गर्जती । कंठीं तुळसीचीं दर्शनें वो ॥४॥
 स्वानंदाचे ताटीं । धूप दीप पंचारती वो । ओवाळिली माता । विठाबाई पंचभूतीं वो ॥५॥
 तुझें तुज पावलें । माझा नवस पुरवीं आतां वो । तुका म्हणे राखें । आपुलिया शरणागता वो ॥६॥
 सुंदर मुख साजिरें । कुंडलें मनोहर गोमटीं वो । नागर नाग खोपा । केशर कस्तुरी मळवटीं वो ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

This is an auspicious day and hour for your Gondhal. The five vital breaths serve as torchbearers and the two eyes are the crescent lamps.

O dweller of Pandharpur, I dance in your joy. Fulfill my vow, knowing the wish hidden in my heart.

Your shrine is established in the midst of the three worlds; the sacred square is prepared and the water-vessel is placed at the crown of the navel-center. The deity is seated, and before her the devotees sing; they roar with fervor, wearing the rosary of tulsi at their throats.

On the tray of innate bliss, the incense, lamp, and fivefold worship are offered. The mother Vithabai is waved over with the light of the five elements.

Says Tuka, what belongs to you has returned to you; now fulfill my vow and protect this one who has surrendered.

IN PLAIN WORDS

It is an auspicious day and hour for your Gondhal. The five breaths are the torchbearers, and my two eyes are the crescent lamps. O dweller of Pandharpur, I dance in your joy. Fulfill my vow, knowing the wish hidden in my heart. Your shrine is set up within the three worlds; the sacred square is drawn, and the water-pot is placed above, at the navel-center. The deity is seated, and before her the devotees sing; they cry out with fervor, the tulsi rosary at their throats. On the tray of inner bliss, incense and lamp and the fivefold flame are offered. The mother Vithabai is waved over with the light of the five elements. What is yours has come back to you; now fulfill my vow. Tuka says: protect this one who has surrendered to you.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns a Gondhal, the night ritual of lamps and song for the Mother goddess, into an inward act of worship of Vithabai. Every outward object becomes part of the worshipper's own body and being: the five vital breaths are the torches, the two eyes are the crescent lamps, the shrine stands within the three worlds, and the sacred pot sits at the navel-center. The deity is enthroned in the heart while devotees sing with the tulsi at their throats, and she is honored on the tray of innate bliss with the light of the five elements. The prayer underneath the festival is plain: he offers back to her only what was always hers and asks her to fulfill his vow and keep safe the one who has surrendered.

GATHA 0445

Devotion to Vitthal

Adoration, the Primal Shakti at Pandhari

मराठी मूळ

विशाळ व्यंकट नेत्र । वैजयंती तळपे कंठीं वो । कास पीतांबराची । चंदन सुगंध साजे उटी वो ॥१॥
 अतिबरवंटा बाळा । आली सुलक्षणीं गोंधळा वो । राजस तेजोराशी । मिरवी शिरोमणी वेल्हाळा वो ।
 कोटि रविशशिप्रभा । लोपल्या सकळा वो । न कळे ब्रम्हादिकां । अनुपम्य इची लीळा वो ॥२॥
 सावळी सकुमार । गोरी भुजा शोभती चारी वो । सखोल वक्षस्थळ । सुढाळ पदक झळके वरी वो ।
 कटीं क्षुद्र घंटिका । शब्द करिताती माधुरी वो । गर्जत चरणीं वाकी । अभिनव संगीत नृत्य करी वो ॥३॥
 अष्टांगें मंडित काय । वर्णावी रूपठेवणी वो । शोधिव सुंदर रसाची ओतिली । सुगंध लावण्यखाणी वो ।
 सर्वकळासंपन्न । मंजुळ बोले हास्यवदनीं वो । बहु रूपें नटली । आदिशक्ति नारायणी वो ॥४॥
 घटस्थापना केली । पंढरपुरमहानगरीं वो । अस्मानी मंडप दिला । तिन्ही ताळांवरी वो ।
 आरंभिला गोंधळ इनें । चंद्रभागेतिरीं वो । आली भक्तिकाजा । कृष्णाबाई योगेश्वरी वो ॥५॥
 तेहतिस कोटि देव । चौडा अष्ट कोटि भैरव वो । आरत्या कुरवंड्या । करिती पुष्पांचा वरुषाव वो ।
 नारद तुंबर गायन । ब्रम्हानंद करिती गंधर्व वो । वंदी चरणरज तेथें । तुक्याचा बंधव वो ॥६॥
 शंख करिशी ज्याच्या नांवें । त्याचें तुज नाहीं ठावें ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Wide and beautiful are her Venkata-eyes, and the Vijayanti garland gleams at her throat. She wears a sash of yellow silk, and the sandal-paste fragrance adorns her body.

The beauteous child has come to the sacred ceremony, a treasure of radiance, a crown-jewel among the graceful. Her splendor eclipses ten million suns and moons.

Even Brahma and the other gods cannot fathom her incomparable play. She is dusky-hued and tender, fair; her four arms are resplendent.

Her broad chest shines, and a fine pendant glistens above it. Small bells tinkle at her waist in sweet tones, and anklets ring at her feet as she performs an exquisite dance.

Her entire form is adorned with the eight ornaments; she is a perfumed mine of beauty, gracious and sweet-spoken. In countless forms she appears, the primal Shakti, Narayani herself.

The sacred pot is installed in the great city of Pandharpur; a canopy stretches over the three realms. The ceremony begins on the bank of the Chandrabhaga.

She has come for the sake of devotion: Krishnabai, the supreme yogini. Thirty-three crore gods and countless Bhairavas attend, performing worship and showering flowers.

Narada and Tumbara sing, and the Gandharvas make music of divine bliss. Says Tuka's brother, I bow to the dust of those feet.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Wide and lovely are her eyes; the Vijayanti garland gleams at her throat. She wears a sash of yellow silk, and fragrant sandal-paste adorns her. The beautiful child has come to the sacred ceremony, a heap of radiance, a crown-jewel among the graceful; her splendor swallows ten million suns and moons, and even Brahma and the gods cannot grasp her matchless play. Dusky and tender, fair, her four arms shine; her broad chest gleams, and a fine pendant glistens upon it. Small bells ring sweetly at her waist, anklets sound at her feet, and she dances a wondrous dance. Her whole form is adorned with the eight ornaments; she is a perfumed mine of beauty, gracious and sweet of speech. In countless forms she appears, the primal Shakti, Narayani herself. The sacred pot is set up in the great city of Pandharpur; a canopy spreads over the three realms. The ceremony begins on the bank of the Chandrabhaga. She has come for the sake of devotion: Krishnabai, the supreme yogini. Thirty-three crore gods and countless Bhairavas attend, performing worship and showering flowers. Narada and Tumbara sing, and the Gandharvas make music of bliss. Tuka's brother says: I bow to the dust of those feet.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a long hymn of praise to God at Pandharpur worshipped as the Goddess, the primal Shakti who is also Narayani. Tukaram piles up the lovely particulars, the wide eyes, the Vijayanti garland, the four shining arms, the ringing anklets and the wondrous dance, yet keeps insisting she is beyond reckoning: her light eclipses ten million suns and moons, and Brahma and the gods cannot follow her play. He frames the whole vision as a great ceremony at Pandharpur, the sacred pot installed, a canopy over the three worlds, the rite begun on the Chandrabhaga's bank. All the heavens attend, gods and Bhairavas and the singing Gandharvas, and at the end the poet bows simply to the dust of her feet.

GATHA 0446

True Worship

Satire, the fakery of false ascetics

मराठी मूळ

ऐक सांगतों एका भावें । सांपडे घरीं तें जीवउनि खावें । रे विठ्ठल ॥१॥
 टिळे माळा करंडी सोंग । धरुनि चाळविलें जग ।
 पसरी हात नाहीं त्याग । दावी दगड पुजी भग । रे विठ्ठल ॥२॥
 राख लावुनि अंग मळी । वाये ठोके मी एक बळी ।
 वासने हातीं बांधवी नळी । त्यासि येउनि गाळी । रे विठ्ठल ॥३॥
 कोण तें राहडीचें सुख । वरते पाय हारतें मुख ।
 करवी पीडा भोगवी दुःख । पडे नरकीं परी न पळे चि मूर्ख । रे विठ्ठल ॥४॥
 सिकला फाक मारी हाका । रांडा पोरें मेळवी लोकां ।
 विटंबी शरीर मागे रुका । केलें तें गेलें अवघें चि फुका । रे विठ्ठल ॥५॥
 कळावें जनां मी एक बळी । उभा राहोनि मांडी फळी ।
 फोडोनि गुडघे कोंपर चोळी । आपला घात करोनि आपण चि तळमळे । रे विठ्ठल ॥६॥
 फुकट खेळें ठकलीं वांयां । धरुनि सोंग बोडक्या डोया ।
 शिवों नये ती अंतरीं माया । संपादणीविण विटंबिली काया । रे विठ्ठल ॥७॥
 धुळी माती कांहीं खेळों च नका । जवादी चंदन घ्यावा बुका ।
 आपणा परिमळ आणिकां लोकां । मोलाची महिमा फजिती फुका । रे विठ्ठल ॥८॥
 बहुत दुःखी जालियां खेळें । अंगीं बुद्धि नाहीत बळें ।
 पाठीवरी तोबा तोंड काळें । रसना द्रवे उपस्थाच्या मुळें । रे विठ्ठल ॥९॥
 काय सांगतो तें ऐका तुका । मोडा खेळ कांहीं अवगों च नका ।
 चला जेवूं आधीं पोटीं लागल्या भुका । धाल्यावरी बरा टाकमटिका । रे विठ्ठल ॥१०॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Listen, I tell you plainly: eat to sustain life whatever falls into your hands at home. Tilak-marks, rosaries, and saintly costumes are all mere show; the hand stretches out to beg, yet there is no real renunciation, and one worships a stone while serving the body.

Smearing ash on the body, one boasts of being a great champion, yet remains enslaved to desire. What happiness is there in hanging upside down with feet above and head below? Such practices only inflict pain and lead to hell, yet the fool will not flee them.

The clever trickster shouts and gathers crowds of women and children, torments the body for a coin, and in the end it all comes to nothing. To prove himself mighty, a man stands and displays his feats, bruising his own knees and elbows, ruining himself while writhing in agony.

Do not play these empty games of dust and dirt. Instead, take the fragrance of sandal-paste: it benefits you and everyone around you, while hollow spectacles only bring disgrace.

Says Tuka, listen to what I say: stop the game, do not pretend to understand anything. Let us first eat, for hunger gnaws at the belly; after being satisfied, everything else can be a pleasant pastime.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Listen, I tell you plainly: whatever comes to your house, eat it to keep yourself alive. O Vithal. Tilak-marks, rosaries, the little box, the costume, holding all this, he leads the world astray; he stretches out his hand, there is no renunciation in him, he shows a stone and worships his own body. O Vithal. Smearing ash on his dirty body, he beats his chest, I am a great champion, while his hands stay tied to desire, and then he comes begging. O Vithal. What pleasure is there hanging upside down, feet up and face down? He brings on his own pain and tastes his own misery; he falls into hell, yet the fool will not run from it. O Vithal. The trained one shouts his cries, gathers women and children and crowds, torments his body for a coin, and all he did is gone for nothing. O Vithal. To show the people he is a great champion, he stands and spreads out his feats, splits his knees and rubs his elbows, ruins himself and then writhes in his own pain. O Vithal. These empty games cheat people for nothing; holding the pose with a shaved head, the untouchable illusion is in his heart; without earning anything he has only disgraced his body. O Vithal. Do not play these games of dust and dirt at all. Take instead the fragrance of sandal-paste, of musk and scented powder: the perfume is for you and for others too; a thing of worth, while the hollow show is free disgrace. O Vithal. He grows very wretched from the game; there is no real strength of mind in him; blows on his back, his face black, his tongue waters at the root of lust. O Vithal. Tuka says: listen to what I say. Break off the game, do not pretend to anything. Come, let us eat first, hunger is gnawing the belly; once we are full, the rest can be a pleasant pastime. O Vithal.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram tears into the showman ascetic whose marks, rosaries, ash, and contortions are pure theater, a costume to lead the world astray while the hand still begs and the heart stays bound to desire. He keeps pointing at the pattern, not just one man: hanging upside down, splitting one's knees, shouting to gather a crowd of women and children for a coin, these self-inflicted torments lead to hell and ruin, and the poet calls them dust-and-dirt games that earn nothing but disgrace. Against this he sets a real fragrance, the sandal and musk of true devotion that blesses both you and those around you, worth something where the spectacle is worthless. The closing turn is deliberately earthy and sane: stop the act, do not pretend to a wisdom you lack; first eat and meet the body's plain hunger, and let everything else fall into proper, humble place. The repeated cry O Vithal keeps the whole satire turned back toward God.

GATHA 0447

Appeals and Exhortations

The fortune-teller, the forgotten goddess

मराठी मूळ

ऐक बाई तुज वो कांहीं सांगतें शकुन । निजलिया भुर होसी जागें म्हणउन ॥१॥
 मान्य माझें केलें सांगतें एका बोलें । न येतां हे भलें कळों कोणा लोकांसि ॥२॥
 सांगतें गुण जीवीची खुण ऐक माझी मात । बैस एका भावें माझे हातीं दे वो हात ॥३॥
 बरवा घरचार तुज सांपडला ठाव । फळ नाहीं पोटीं येथें दिसे खोटा भाव ॥४॥
 आहे तुझे हातीं एका नवसाचें फळ । भावा करीं साहए चहूं अठरांच्या बळें ॥५॥
 करीं लागपाठ चित्त वित्त नको पाहों । अखई तो चुडा तुज भोगईल ना हो ॥६॥
 कुळींची हे मुळी तुझे लागलीसे देवी । पडिला विसर नेदी फळ नाहीं ठावी ॥७॥
 तुका म्हणे नांद सुखें धरीं आठवण । माझ्या येती कोणी त्यांचा राख बरा मान ॥८॥

कावडे - अभंग ५

आहा रे भाई । प्रथम नमूं तो विनायक ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Listen, sister, I will tell you your fortune. You who have been sleeping, wake up, for that is why I speak.

Honor my word; I tell it in a single sentence. What I see will not be understood by anyone else.

I read the lines of the soul; hear my counsel. Sit down with one mind and place your hand in mine.

Your household life is good and you have found your place, yet no fruit has come, for there is some falseness in your devotion. The fruit of a vow already lies in your hand; take the strength of the four and the eighteen and make devotion your ally.

Pursue it with persistence; do not look to the cost of heart and wealth. The eternal ornament of grace will never fail you.

The original goddess of your lineage has been forgotten, and that is why no fruit has appeared. Says Tuka, live in happiness and hold this remembrance; whoever comes from my house, treat them with the highest respect.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Listen, sister, I will tell you your fortune. You have been asleep; I speak so that you will wake. Honor my word; I tell it in a single sentence. If it does not come true, let it be known to everyone. I will tell the marks of the soul; hear my counsel. Sit down with one mind and place your hand in mine. Your household life is good, you have found your place, yet no fruit has come into your lap, and I see a falseness here in your devotion. The fruit of a vow already lies in your hand; with the strength of the four and the eighteen, make devotion your ally. Keep at it steadily; do not count the cost to heart or purse. The unbroken bangle of grace will never fail to be yours. The first goddess of your own lineage has fastened on you and has been forgotten; you do not know it, and that is why no fruit appears. Tuka says: live in happiness and hold this in memory; whoever comes from my house, treat them with good respect.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram takes the voice of a wandering fortune-teller reading a sleeping woman's palm, and the reading turns into a teaching about the soul. Her outward life is fine, yet nothing bears fruit, and the diviner names the reason plainly: there is a falseness in her devotion. The cure is not more striving for gain but steady, wholehearted practice that does not stop to count its cost, for the unbreakable bangle of grace is already within reach. The heart of the prophecy is a forgotten allegiance, the original deity of her own line, the truth she was born to, has been neglected and so the fruit cannot come. He sends her off to live happily, only remembering what she had forgotten, and to honor those who come in his name.

GATHA 0448

Devotion to Vitthal

The minstrel's call, sing Hari-Hara

मराठी मूळ

ठेवुनि गुरुचरणीं मस्तक । वदेल प्रसादिक वाणी । हरिहरांचे पवाडे ॥१॥
 माझी ऐसी ब्रीदावळी । दासें दासत्वे आगळी ।
 पान्हेरीनें मार्ग मळी । जीवन घ्या रे कापडि हो ॥२॥
 जें या सीतळाहुनि सीतळ । पातळाहुनि जें पातळ ।
 प्रेमामृत रसाळ । तें हें सेवा अहो भाग्याचे ॥३॥
 जिंकाल तरी जिंका रे अभिमान । दवडाल तरी दवडा लज्जा आणि मान ।
 धराल ते धरा शंभूचे चरण । दावाल पण ऐसा दावा तो ॥४॥
 काळा घेऊं नेदीं वाव । आला तो राखें घावडाव ।
 शुद्ध सत्वीं राखोनि भाव । म्हणा महादेव हरिहर वाणी गर्जो द्या ॥५॥
 पराविया नारी माउली समान । परधनीं बाटो नेदीं मन ।
 जीवित्व तें तृणासमान । स्वामिकाजीं जाण शूर म्हणों तया ॥६॥
 शक्ति वेचाविया परउपकारा । खोटें खोट्याचा पसारा ।
 सत्य तें भवनदीचा तारा । आळस तो न करा येथे अहो सांगतों ॥७॥
 व्रत करा एकादशी सोमवार । कथा पूजन हरिजागर ।
 पुण्य तें असे गातां नाचतां बहु फार । पुन्हा बोलिला संसार नाहीं नाहीं सत्यत्वे ॥८॥
 संग संतांचा करितां बरवा । उत्तमोत्तम कीर्तीचा ठेवा ।
 पंथ तो सुपंथें चालावा । उगवा वासना लिगाड ॥९॥
 तुका चालवितो कावडी । प्रवृत्ति निवृत्ति चोखडी ।
 पुढती पुढती अधिक गोडी । भरुनि कळस भजन आवडी केशवदास नटतसे ॥१०॥
 आहा आहा रे भाई । हें अन्नदानाचें सत्र ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Bowing my head at the guru's feet, I will speak the words that flow by his grace, singing the heroic deeds of Hari and Hara. My proclamation is this: servitude to the servant is the highest distinction.

The forerunner clears the path; drink this water of life, O fortunate ones. That which is cooler than the cool, subtler than the subtle, that nectarous juice of love, partake of it.

If you would conquer, conquer pride. If you would banish anything, banish shame and vanity.

If you would hold to something, hold to Shambhu's feet. Do not give Death any room; seize the advantage the moment it comes.

Keep your faith rooted in pure goodness, and let the cry of 'Mahadeva, Hari-Hara' thunder from your lips. Regard another man's wife as your own mother; do not let the mind stray toward another's wealth.

Hold life as cheap as grass in the cause of your master. Spend your strength in service to others; the display of the false is nothing but a sham.

Truth alone ferries you across the river of existence; do not be lazy in this. Observe the vow of Ekadashi and Monday, practice worship and the vigil of Hari.

Great merit lies in singing and dancing his name; worldly life, in truth, does not return. The company of saints is a treasury of the finest fame.

Walk the right path and uproot the tangle of desire. Says Tuka, I carry this balanced load of worldly duty and inner freedom; the sweetness grows with every step, and the vessel of devotion brims over as the servant of Keshava dances on.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I lay my head at the guru's feet, and the words come by his grace. I sing the great deeds of Hari and Hara. This is my proclamation: to be the servant of the servant is the highest thing. The one who goes ahead clears the road. Drink this water of life, O fortunate ones. It is cooler than the cool, finer than the fine: the sweet nectar of love. Take it; you are blessed. If you would conquer, conquer your pride. If you would throw something away, throw away shame and vanity. If you would hold on to something, hold the feet of Shambhu. Give Death no room. The moment he comes, take the upper hand. Keep your heart in pure goodness. Cry out Mahadeva, Hari-Hara; let the words thunder. Look on another man's wife as your mother. Do not let your mind go toward another's wealth. Hold your life as cheap as grass in your master's service. Then you may be called brave. Spend your strength in helping others. The display of the false is only a sham. Truth alone carries you across the river of this world. Do not be lazy in this; I tell you so. Keep the vow of Ekadashi and Monday. Do worship, the telling of the story, the vigil of Hari. There is great merit in singing and dancing his name. Worldly life does not come back; in truth, it does not. Keep good company with the saints; that is a treasury of the finest fame. Walk the path by the good road. Uproot the tangle of desire. Tuka says: I carry this balanced load, action on one side, freedom on the other. The sweetness grows with every step. The vessel of worship brims over, and the servant of Keshava dances on.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks here as a singing pilgrim summoning everyone to a shared feast of the Name. He sets the whole road of practice in order: conquer pride, throw away shame and vanity, hold only to God's feet, and serve others as if your own life were worth nothing. Each line names a discipline, regarding another's wife as your mother, never coveting another's wealth, never being lazy in truth, because these are the rungs by which a person actually crosses the river of worldly life. The vows and the singing are not decorations; they are the load he carries, with worldly duty on one side and inner freedom on the other, balanced like a water-bearer's pole. He ends on the image he has built throughout: the pot of devotion brims over, and the sweetness only grows the further you walk.

GATHA 0449

The Nature of God

Open table, the Name for all castes

मराठी मूळ

पव्हे घातली सर्वत्र । पंथीं अवघे पंथ मात्र । इच्छाभोजनाचें आर्त पुरवावया ॥१॥
 यावें तेणें घ्यावें । न सरेसैं केलें सदाशिवें ।
 पात्र शुद्ध पाहिजे बरवें । मंगळभावें सकळ हरि म्हणा रे ॥२॥
 नव्हे हें कांहीं मोकळें । साक्षी चौघांचिया वेगळें ।
 नेदी नाचों मताचिया बळें । अणु अणोरणीया आगळें । महदि महदा साक्षित्वें हरि म्हणा रे ॥३॥
 हे हरि नामाची आंबिली । जगा पोटभरी केली ।
 विश्रांति कल्पतरूची साउली । सकळं वर्णां सेवितां भली । म्हणा हर हर महादेव ॥४॥
 तुका हरिदास तराळ । अवघे हाकारी सकळ ।
 या रे वंदूं शिखरातळ । चैत्रमास पर्वकाळ महादेवदर्शनें ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Rest-houses are set along every road, and all paths are merely paths, to fulfill the longing of the heart's desire is spread for all. Let whoever comes partake; the inexhaustible Lord Sadashiva has prepared it all.

Only the vessel must be clean; with an auspicious spirit, say the name of Hari. This is no unguarded affair; its witness stands apart from any faction.

It will not let anyone dance by the force of mere opinion, for it is subtler than the subtlest and greater than the greatest. This porridge of Hari's name has filled the belly of the world.

The shade of the wish-fulfilling tree gives rest to all, and all castes may partake of it freely. Say Hara Hara Mahadeva.

Says Tuka, the servant of Hari summons everyone. Come, let us bow from peak to foundation; in this festival month of Chaitra, may the sight of Mahadeva be ours.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Rest-houses are set along every road. All the paths are only paths. They are laid out to satisfy the heart's longing for food. Let whoever comes take what they need. Sadashiva, who never runs short, has prepared it all. Only the bowl must be clean and good. With an auspicious heart, all of you say the name of Hari. This is no loose, careless thing. Its witness stands apart from every faction. It will not let anyone dance on the strength of mere opinion. It is finer than the finest, greater than the greatest, the witness in all that is small and all that is large. Say the name of Hari. This porridge of Hari's name has filled the belly of the world. It is the shade of the wish-granting tree, where all may rest. All castes may take it, and it is good. Say Hara, Hara, Mahadeva. Tuka says: the servant of Hari calls out to everyone. Come, let us bow from the peak to the foot of the hill. In this festival month of Chaitra, let us have the sight of Mahadeva.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns the Name into a free public kitchen open to the whole world. The roads and rest-houses are the practices; the food is the longing of the heart; and the host is Sadashiva, who never runs out, so no one need be turned away. The single condition is an inner one: the bowl, the heart, must be clean, because this is not a loose affair that bends to anyone's faction or clever opinion. By calling it porridge that has filled the belly of the world and the shade of the wish-granting tree open to all castes, he insists the Name is for everyone, not the property of one rank. He ends as the crier of the feast, summoning all people to the festival sight of God.

GATHA 0450

The Saints

Litany of bows to the godly

मराठी मूळ

आहा रे भाई । नमो उदासीन जाले देहभावा । आळविती देवा तया नमो ॥१॥
 नमो तीर्थपंथें चालती तयांसी । येती त्यांसी बोळविती त्यां नमो ॥२॥
 नमो तयां संतवचनीं विश्वास । नमो भावें दास्य गुरुचें त्यां ॥३॥
 नमो तया मातापित्यांचें पाळण । नमो त्या वचन सत्य वदे ॥४॥
 नमो तया जाणे आणिकाचें सुखदुःख । राखे तान भुक् तया नमो ॥५॥
 परोपकारी नमो पुण्यवंता । नमो त्या दमित्या इंद्रियांसि ॥६॥
 तुका म्हणे नमो हरिचिया दासा । तेथें सर्व इच्छा पुरलीसे ॥७॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I bow to those who have become indifferent to the body and who call upon God. I bow to those who walk the pilgrim paths and to those who welcome the coming and see off the going.

I bow to those who trust the words of the saints and who serve the guru with devotion. I bow to those who honor their mother and father.

I bow to those who speak only truth. I bow to those who understand another's joy and grief and who endure their own hunger and thirst.

I bow to those who do good for others. I bow to those who have mastered their senses.

Says Tuka, I bow to the servants of Hari; in their presence every desire is fulfilled.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Ah, brother. I bow to those who have grown cool toward the body and who call upon God. I bow to them. I bow to those who walk the pilgrim roads, who welcome those who come and see off those who go. I bow to them. I bow to those who trust the words of the saints. I bow to those who serve the guru with a true heart. I bow to those who care for their mother and father. I bow to those who speak only the truth. I bow to those who feel another's joy and grief, who bear their own hunger and thirst. I bow to them. I bow to those who do good for others, the people of merit. I bow to those who have mastered their senses. Tuka says: I bow to the servants of Hari. There, every wish is fulfilled.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a litany of reverence: Tukaram bows, line after line, to the marks of a truly godly person. The traits he honors are plain and practical, not showy: indifference to the body, trust in the saints, care for one's parents, truthful speech, feeling another's joy and grief, doing good, and mastering the senses. By repeating the bow he makes clear that holiness is recognized in conduct, not in claims. The closing line gathers all of these under one name, the servant of Hari, and says that in such company there is nothing left to want.

GATHA 0451

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the hollow pretender

मराठी मूळ

आहा रे भाई । तयावरी माझी ब्रीदावळी । भ्रष्ट ये कळी क्रियाहीन ॥१॥
 थुंका थुंका रे त्याच्या तोंडावरी । वाणिली ते थोरी दवडा वायां बाहेरी ॥२॥
 बाइलेचा दास पित्रांस उदास । भीक भिकार्यांस नये दारा ॥३॥
 विद्याबळें वाद सांगोनियां छळी । आणिकांसि फळी मांडोनियां ॥४॥
 गांविंचिया देवा नाहीं दंडवत । ब्राम्हण अतीत घडे चि ना ॥५॥
 सदा सर्वकाळ करितो चि निंदा । स्वप्नीं ही गोविंदा आठवीना ॥६॥
 खासेमध्ये धन पोटासि बंधन । नेणें ऐसा दानधर्म कांहीं ॥७॥
 तुका म्हणे नटे दावुनियां सोंग । लवों नेदी अंग भक्तिभावें ॥८॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Now hear my proclamation against the corrupt ones without practice of this dark age. Spit upon the face of such a person; cast out and discard the greatness he has claimed.

He is a slave to his wife yet neglects his own parents; no beggar finds charity at his door. He wields the weapon of learning only to argue and torment others.

He never bows to the village deity; he never serves a priest or a guest. Day and night he indulges in slander and never remembers Govinda even in a dream.

He hoards his money and starves his own belly, knowing nothing of charity or righteousness. Says Tuka, he puts on a costume and displays a pose, yet never lets his body bend in genuine devotion.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Ah, brother. My proclamation falls on this man: corrupt in this dark age, empty of all good practice. Spit, spit upon his face. The greatness he has claimed, cast it out, throw it away as worthless. He is a slave to his wife and cold toward his parents. No beggar finds anything at his door. With the strength of his learning he only argues and torments others, setting traps for them. He never bows to the village god. He never serves a priest or a guest, not once. All day, every day, he does nothing but slander. Even in a dream he does not remember Govinda. He hoards his money in a chest and starves his own belly. He knows nothing of giving or of right conduct. Tuka says: he puts on a costume and strikes a pose, but he never lets his body bend in real devotion.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram aims his proclamation at a recognizable type: the man who keeps the outward forms of religion while emptied of every inward good. The harsh cry, spit on his face, throw out his claimed greatness, is pointed at the pattern, not at any one soul: the pattern of using learning to win arguments, hoarding wealth while doing no charity, slandering constantly, and never truly bowing. The list works as a mirror; each fault, neglecting parents, ignoring guest and priest, forgetting God even in sleep, is a place to examine oneself. The closing line names the core of the indictment: he wears the costume of devotion and strikes the pose, but the body never actually bends, and that pretense is what Tukaram refuses to honor.

GATHA 0452

True Worship

Nothing here is merely ordinary

मराठी मूळ

आहा रे भाई । गंगा नव्हे जळ । वृक्ष नव्हे वड पिंपळ । तुळसी रुद्राक्ष नव्हे माळ । श्रेष्ठ तनु देवाचिया ॥१॥
 समुद्र नदी नव्हे पै गा । पाषाण म्हणों नये लिंगा । संत नव्हेती जगा । मानसा त्या सारिखे ॥२॥
 काठी म्हणों नये वेतु । अन्न म्हणों नये सांतु । राम राम हे मातु । नये म्हणों शब्द हे ॥३॥
 चंद्र सूर्य नव्हेती तारांगणें । मेरु तो नव्हे पर्वता समान । शेष वासुकी नव्हे सर्प जाण । विखाराच्या सारिखे ॥४॥
 गरुड नव्हे पाखरुं । ढोर नव्हे नंदिकेश्वरु । झाड नव्हे कल्पतरु । कामधेनु गाय न म्हणावी ॥५॥
 कूर्म नव्हे कासव । डुकर नव्हे वराह । ब्रम्हा नव्हे जीव । स्त्री नव्हे लक्ष्मी ॥६॥
 गवाक्ष नव्हे हाड । पाटाव नव्हे कापड । परीस नव्हे दगड । सगुण ते ईश्वरीचे ॥७॥
 सोनें नव्हे धातु । मीठ नव्हे रेतु । नाहीं नाहीं चर्मातु । कृष्णजिन व्याघ्रांबर ॥८॥
 मुक्ताफळें नव्हेति गारा । खड्याऐसा नव्हे हिरा । जीव नव्हे सोडरा । बोळवीजे स्वइच्छेनें ॥९॥
 गांव नव्हे द्वारावती । रणसोड नव्हे मूर्ति । तीर्थ नव्हे गोमती । मोक्ष घडे दर्शनें ॥१०॥
 कृष्ण नव्हे भोगी । शंकर नव्हे जोगी । तुका पांडुरंगीं । हा प्रसाद लाधला ॥११॥
 सौर्यानि - अभंग ११

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The Ganga is not mere water. The banyan and the pipal are not ordinary trees.

The rosary of tulsi or rudraksha is not a common necklace; they are the sacred body of God. The ocean and rivers are not the same, and one must not call the Shiva-linga a mere stone.

The saints are not ordinary people. A staff is not just a stick; consecrated food is not common grain.

The words 'Rama Rama' are not idle syllables. The sun, moon, and stars are not mere lamps; Mount Meru is not an ordinary hill.

Shesha and Vasuki are not common serpents. Garuda is not an ordinary bird; Nandikeshvara is not a beast of burden.

The wish-fulfilling tree is not firewood; the divine cow Kamadhenu must not be called a common cow. The cosmic tortoise is not a mere turtle; the divine boar is not a pig.

Brahma is not an ordinary soul; Lakshmi is not an ordinary woman. A window-frame is not a bone; fine silk is not common cloth; the touchstone is not a rock; all these are attributes of the divine.

Gold is not base metal; salt is not sand; the hides of the black deer and the tiger are not mere leather. Pearls are not pebbles; the diamond is not like an ordinary stone.

The soul is not a relative to be bade farewell at one's own whim. Dwaraka is not a common town; the idol in the battlefield is not a mere image; the Gomati is not an ordinary stream; liberation is won by their sight.

Krishna is not a worldly lover; Shankara is not a common ascetic. Says Tuka, in Panduranga's presence I have received this understanding as grace.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Ah, brother. The Ganga is not just water. The banyan and the pipal are not just trees. Tulsi and rudraksha are not just a string of beads. They are the high body of God. The ocean and the river are not the same. Do not call the linga a mere stone. The saints are not like the rest of the world; they are not like ordinary people. Do not call the staff a mere stick. Do not call the offered food common grain. The words Rama, Rama are not just sounds; do not call them mere words. The sun and moon are not the same as the stars. Meru is not like other mountains. Know that Shesha and Vasuki are not like common snakes; they are not like ordinary serpents. Garuda is not just a bird. The bull Nandikeshvara is not a mere beast. The tree is not just a tree; it is the wish-granting tree. Do not call Kamadhenu an ordinary cow. The Kurma is not just a tortoise. The boar is not just a pig. Brahma is not just a creature. The woman is not just a woman; she is Lakshmi. The window is not just a bone. The fine silk is not just cloth. The touchstone is not just a stone. These are the forms of God with attributes. Gold is not just a metal. Salt is not just sand. No, it is not mere hide: the black-deer skin, the tiger skin. Pearls are not pebbles. The diamond is not like an ordinary stone. The soul is not a relative you can send off as you please. The town is not just a town; it is Dwaraka. Ranchhod is not just an image. The river is not just the Gomati; liberation comes from their sight. Krishna is not a worldly pleasure-seeker. Shankara is not a common ascetic. Tuka says: at Panduranga's feet I have received this grace.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram chants a long string of denials to wake the eye that sees only surfaces. River, tree, stone, beads, food, the very syllables Rama Rama: he insists each one is not the mere object it appears to be, because the divine has entered it. The litany sweeps from sacred places and emblems to gods, animals, metals, and at last to the soul itself, which is not a relative you can dismiss at will. The point is not that these things are magical, but that nothing touched by God can be reduced to its plain material; to call the linga a stone or the Name idle sound is to miss what is truly present. He closes by tracing this changed sight to a gift: standing before Panduranga, he received the grace to see the holy in everything.

GATHA 0453

Renunciation

Renunciation, the holy minstrel's ecstasy

मराठी मूळ

वेसन गेलें निष्काम जालें नर नव्हे नारी । आपल्या तुटी पारख्या भेटी सौरियांचे फेरी ॥१॥
 त्याचा वेध लागला छंद हरि गोविंद वेळोवेळीं । आपुलेमार्गे हासत रागें सावले घालिती गळीं ॥२॥
 जन वेषा भीतें तोंडा आमुच्या भांडपणा । कर कटीं भीमा तटीं पंढरीचा राणा ॥३॥
 वेगळ्या याति पडिलों खंतीं अवघ्या एका भावें । टाकियेली चाड देहभाव जीवें शिवें ॥४॥
 सकळांमधीं आगळी बुद्धि तिची करुं सेवा । वाय तुंभामूढासवें भक्ति नाचों भावा ॥५॥
 म्हणे तुका टाक रुका नाचों निर्लज्जा । बहु जालें सुख काम चुकलों या काजा ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

All worldly costume has fallen away, and what remains is neither man nor woman, free of desire. Cut off from one's own, meeting only with strangers, this is the round of the holy minstrels.

The passion for Hari Govinda has taken hold at every moment. Those attached to their old ways laugh and mock, throwing garlands of scorn around our necks.

The world fears our strange appearance, but our king stands with hands on hips on the bank of the Bhima at Pandharpur. We have fallen into a separate caste, troubled yet united in a single devotion.

We have abandoned all longing for the body and its comforts. The one wisdom that surpasses all others: let us serve that and dance for our Beloved, shaking the gourd-rattle like fools in love.

Says Tuka, toss a coin and let us dance without shame; great happiness has come, and the old business of desire is finished.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The worldly costume has fallen away. Desire is gone. I am neither man nor woman now. Cut off from my own people, meeting only strangers, this is the round of the holy minstrels. The longing for Hari Govinda has gripped me, again and again. Those behind me laugh in scorn and hang garlands of mockery around my neck. People are afraid of our strange look, of our brawling ways. But our king stands with hands on hips on the bank of the Bhima, at Pandhari. I have fallen into a caste of my own, sorrowing, yet held together by one single love. I have thrown away all care for the body. The one wisdom that rises above all others, let me serve that. Shaking the gourd-rattle like a fool in love, let me dance the devotion of the heart. Tuka says: toss down a coin and let us dance, without shame. Great happiness has come. The old business of desire is finished.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes the life of the wandering devotee as a kind of holy madness that the world cannot place. Having dropped worldly identity, even the markers of man and woman, he is cut off from his own people and ridiculed, garlands of scorn thrown around his neck. He accepts the mockery because his eyes are fixed on God standing at Pandharpur, and because one single love now holds his whole life together. The gourd-rattle, the shameless dancing, the tossed coin are signs that he has traded the entire economy of desire for this joy. What looks like foolishness from outside is, for him, the finished end of craving and the arrival of great happiness.

GATHA 0454

Autobiography

Self-examination, costume versus pure heart

मराठी मूळ

आणिकां उपदेशूं नेणें नाचों आपण । मुंडा वांयां मारगेली वांयां हांसे जन ॥१॥
 तैसा नव्हे चाळा आवरीं मन डोळा । पुढिलांच्या कळा कवतुक जाणोनी ॥धु.॥
 बाहिरल्या वेषें आंत जसें तसें । झाकलें तों बरें पोट भरे तेणें मिसें ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे केला तरी करीं शुद्ध भाव । नाहीं तरी जासी वांयां हा ना तोसा ठाव ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I do not know how to preach to others; I simply dance for myself. The shaven-headed one may wander in vain, and the people may laugh in vain.

But this is no idle amusement; restrain your mind and eyes. Observe the tricks of those ahead and understand them for what they are.

Beneath the outer costume, the inside remains as it is; so long as it is covered, all is well, and the belly gets filled under that pretense. Says Tuka, if you have taken up this role, then hold a pure intent within. Otherwise you go to waste, belonging neither here nor there.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I do not know how to preach to others; I just dance for myself. The shaven-headed one may wander for nothing, and people may laugh for nothing. But this is no idle game. Hold your mind and eyes in check. Watch the tricks of those ahead of you, and understand them for what they are. Under the outward costume, the inside stays as it is. As long as it is covered, all looks fine, and the belly gets filled by that pretense. Tuka says: if you have taken up this role, then keep a pure heart within. If not, you go to waste, belonging neither here nor there.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram turns the warning inward, onto the very life of the wandering devotee. He admits he is no preacher; he simply dances, and he knows the role can be faked, a shaved head and a costume that fills the belly while the inside stays unchanged. So he tells himself and his hearers to restrain mind and eye and to see clearly through the tricks of those who go through the motions. The danger is not the outward form but a hidden hollowness, which is hidden only as long as it is covered. The plain test he names at the end is decisive: take up the role with a pure heart, or you end up belonging nowhere, neither in the world nor in God.

GATHA 0455

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, breaking the soul's bondage

मराठी मूळ

टाक रुका चाल रांडे कां गे केली गोवी । पुसोनियां आलें ठाव म्हणोनि देतें सिवी ॥१॥
 आतां येणें छंदें नाचों विनोदें । नाहीं या गोविंदें माझें मजसी केलें ॥ध्रु॥
 कोरडे ते बोल कांगे वेचितेसी वांयां । वर्ते करुनि दावीं तुझ्या मुळीचिया ठाया ॥२॥
 याजसाठीं म्या डौर धरियेला हातीं । तुका म्हणे तुम्हा गांठी सोडायची खंती ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Toss a coin and move on, you wretch; why have you tangled yourself? I have wiped the old slate clean and will stitch a new border in its place. Now let us dance in this rapture of play.

Govinda has made me a stranger to myself. Why do you waste those dry, empty words? Show me by your actions where your real origin lies.

Says Tuka, it is for this very reason I have taken the drum in my hand: to untie the knot that binds you.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Toss down the coin and move on, you wretch; why have you tangled yourself up? I have wiped the old slate clean, so I scold you and tell you to be gone. Now let us dance in this rapture of play. Govinda has made me a stranger to my own self. Why do you spend those dry, empty words for nothing? Show it by your deeds; go back to where you first came from. It is for this very reason that I took the drum in my hand. Tuka says: it is your grief that I mean to loosen, the knot that binds you.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram speaks in the voice of the minstrel scolding a clinging, complaining self, addressed harshly as the wretch who keeps tangling herself in worldly attachment. He has wiped his own slate clean because Govinda has made him a stranger to his old self, so he has no patience for dry words that are never matched by deeds. The blunt command, toss the coin, be gone, go back to your origin, is aimed at the habit of clinging, not at a person to be despised. The drum in his hand is the whole purpose: he took it up to untie the knot of grief and bondage, both his own and his hearers'.

GATHA 0456

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the unfaithful soul

मराठी मूळ

मोकळी गुंते रिती कुंथे नाहीं भार दावें । धेडवाडा बैसली खोडा घेतली आपुल्या भावें ॥१॥
 ऐका बाई लाज नाहीं आणिकां त्या गरतीची । समाधानीं उंच स्थानीं जाणे सेवा पतीची ॥ध्रु॥
 न बोलतां करी चिंता न मारिता पळे । दादला सेज नावडे निजे जगझोडीचे चाळे ॥२॥
 देखत आंध बहिर कार्नी बोल बोलतां मुकें । तुका म्हणे पतन सोयरीं ऐसीं जालीं एकें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

She is free yet entangles herself, empty yet groans as if carrying a burden. She has sat down in the quarter where the shunned dwell, willingly taking the stocks upon herself in the stocks of low habits, bound by her own nature.

Listen, sisters: a truly worthy woman feels no shame before others, for she is content in the high seat of faithful service to her husband. Without speaking she broods in worry, and without being struck she runs away.

She does not love her husband's bed but sleeps amid the storms of worldly distraction. She has eyes yet is blind, ears yet is deaf, a tongue yet is mute.

Says Tuka, her downfall and her companions have all become one.

IN PLAIN WORDS

She is free, yet she ties herself up. She is empty-handed, yet she groans as if loaded down, though there is no burden on her back. She has gone to sit in the quarter of the outcasts and has put her own feet in the stocks, by her own will. Listen, sister. She feels no shame before other worthy women. The good wife is content; she keeps the high seat and knows how to serve her husband. This one frets without saying a word, and runs off though no one strikes her. She does not love her husband's bed; she sleeps amid the storms of worldly distraction. She has eyes, yet is blind; ears, yet is deaf; a tongue, yet is mute. Tuka says: her ruin and the company she keeps have all become one and the same.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram uses the figure of an unfaithful, self-defeating wife to picture the soul that turns away from God. She is free, yet she binds herself; carries no real load, yet groans; and willingly puts her own feet in the stocks by choosing low company and worldly distraction over her true husband. Against her he sets the faithful wife who is content and serves with devotion, the picture of a soul fixed on the Lord. The senses she misuses, eyes that are blind, ears that are deaf, a tongue that is mute, are the powers wasted when one ignores God. The closing line is the verdict on the pattern: her downfall and the company she keeps have become indistinguishable, a warning to examine the company and habits we choose.

GATHA 0457

Worldly Metaphors

Metaphor, the debt is paid, dance

मराठी मूळ

सातें चला काजळ घाला तेल फणी करा । दिवाणदारीं बैसले पारीं नाचों फेर धरा ॥१॥
या साहेबाचें जालें देणें वेळोवेळां न लगे येणें । आतां हाटीं काशासाठीं हिंडों पाटी दुकानें ॥२॥
अवघ्या जणी मुंढा धणी नाचों एकें घाई । सरसावलें सुख कैसा चाळा एके ठायीं ॥३॥
तुका म्हणे वोळगों एका तोड चिंता माया । देऊं उद्गार आतां जाऊं मुळीचिया ठाया ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Come, all of you, apply the collyrium, oil your hair, and take your combs. The court is in session; let us form a circle and dance.

The Master's payment has been made in full; we need not come begging again and again. No more wandering through market stalls and shops.

All the women together, with one Lord over all, let us dance in a single surge. The joy has arrived; what a wonderful game in one place.

Says Tuka, let us devote ourselves to the One alone. Cut away the tangle of worry and illusion, raise a shout, and go to the place of our true origin.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Come, all of you, put on the kohl, oil your hair, take up the comb. The court is in session at the meeting-place; let us hold a circle and dance. This Master's payment has been made; there is no need to come back again and again. So why wander the market now, from stall to shop and back? All the women together, with one Lord over them all, let us dance in a single rush. The joy has come close; what a game it is, all in one place. Tuka says: let us serve the One alone. Cut away worry and illusion. Let us raise a shout and go now to the place we first came from.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram dresses up the soul like a woman adorning herself for a festival dance, then declares that the long debt has already been paid in full. Because the Master has settled the account, there is no need to keep coming back as a beggar or to wander endlessly through the market, the image of restless worldly seeking. The call is to gather as one, under the one Lord, and pour everything into a single surge of joyful devotion. The closing turn names the goal plainly: serve the One, cut away worry and illusion, and return to the original home of the soul.

GATHA 0458

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, one coin severs the world

मराठी मूळ

सौरी सुर जालें दुर डौर घेतला हातीं । माया मोह सांडवलें तीही लोकीं जालें सरती ॥१॥
 चाल विठाबाई अवघी पांज देई । न धरीं गुज कांहीं वाळवंटीं सांपडतां ॥२॥
 हिंदोनि चौर्यांशी घरें आलें तुझ्या दारा । एक्या रुक्यासाठीं आंचवलें संसारा ॥३॥
 लाज मेली शंका गेली नाचों महाद्वारीं । भ्रांति सावलें फिटोनि गेलें आतां कैची उरी ॥४॥
 जालें भांडी जगा सांडी नाहीं भीड चाड । घालीन चरणीं मिठी पुरविन जीविचें तें कोड ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे रुका करी संसारतुटी । आतां तुम्हां आम्हां कैसी जाली जीवे साटीं ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The minstrel-song is done, the tune is cast away, and the drum is in hand. Attachment and delusion have fallen away, and the conquest has spread through all three worlds.

Come, Vithabai, give us the full feast. I hold back nothing when I find you on the open sands of the riverbank.

Having wandered through eighty-four hundred thousand houses, I have come at last to your door, and for the sake of one coin I have renounced the entire world. Shame is dead, doubt is gone; let me dance at the great gate.

Illusion and its shadow have been stripped away; no remnant remains. I have become a quarreler with the world, abandoned all constraint, and thrown aside all timidity.

I will clasp your feet and fulfill the longing of my heart. Says Tuka, one small coin severs the bonds of worldly life; now we have traded our very lives for each other.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The minstrel-song is done, the tune set aside, the drum is in my hand. Maya and delusion have been made to fall away, and I have prevailed in all three worlds. Come, Vithabai, lay out the whole feast. I hold nothing back now that I have caught you here on the open sands. I have wandered through eighty-four lakh houses, and at last I have come to your door. For the sake of one coin I have given up the whole world. Shame is dead, doubt is gone; let me dance at the great gate. Illusion and its shadow have been wiped away; what is left over now? I have become a quarreler with the world; I have dropped all timidity, all anxious holding-back. I will clasp your feet and fill the longing of my heart. Tuka says: one small coin cuts the bonds of worldly life. Now you and I have traded our very lives for each other.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a song of arrival, sung at the moment the seeking is over and the drum is in hand. Tukaram declares that maya and delusion have fallen away and he has won through all three worlds, so he can call boldly on Vithabai, Vithoba as mother, to spread the whole feast. The long wandering through eighty-four lakh births has ended at her door, and for one small coin, the single act of total surrender, he has let go of the entire world. Shame, doubt, and timidity are dead, so he can dance shamelessly at the temple gate and clasp God's feet. The last line names the exchange at the heart of it: the bond of worldly life is cut, and devotee and Lord have traded their very lives for each other.

GATHA 0459

Renunciation

Renunciation, the body reclaimed for God

मराठी मूळ

सम सपाट वेसनकाट निःसंग जालें सौरी । कुडपीयेला देश आतां येऊं नेदीं दुसरी ॥१॥
 गाऊं रघुरामा हें चि उरलें आम्हां । नाहीं जीवतमा वित्तगोतासहीत ॥२॥
 ठाव जाला रिता झाकुनि काय आतां । कोणासवें लाज कोण दुजा पाहता ॥३॥
 सौरीयांचा संग आम्हां दुरावलें जग । भिन्न जालें सुख भाव पालटला रंग ॥४॥
 लाज भय झणी नाहीं तजियेलीं दोन्ही । फिराविला वेष नव्हों कोणाचीं च कोणी ॥५॥
 तुका म्हणे हा आम्हां वेष दिला जेणें । जनाप्रचित सवें असों एकपणें ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Level and smooth, with all desire cut away, I have become a detached minstrel. The territory of the body has been reclaimed, and I will let no rival enter.

Singing of Raghuram is all that remains for us now; the clinging to life, wealth, and kin is finished. The place has been emptied; what is there left to cover? There is no one to be ashamed before, no second person watching.

The company of minstrels has estranged us from the world; the old pleasures are gone and the color of devotion has changed entirely. Shame and fear have both been abandoned; the costume is transformed, and we belong to no one.

Says Tuka, the One who gave us this garb walks with us, and in the presence of all we stand as one.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Level and smooth, with desire cut clean away, I have become a detached minstrel. I have fenced off this whole country; now I will let no other enter. To sing of Raghuram is all that is left for us. The clinging to life, to wealth and kin, is gone. The place has been emptied. What is there to cover now? Before whom should I feel shame; who is the second person watching? The company of the minstrels has set the world far from us. The old pleasure is gone; its taste is now a different thing, and the color of devotion has changed. Shame and fear, I have let both of them go. The costume is turned around; we belong to no one, and no one belongs to us. Tuka says: the One who gave us this garb walks with us. Before all people we stand as one.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram pictures the renounced life as a cleared, leveled field that he has fenced off for God alone, letting no rival desire back in. With clinging to life, wealth, and kin gone, only one thing remains to do: sing of Raghuram. Because the inner place is now emptied, there is nothing left to hide and no second person to feel ashamed before, so shame and fear are simply dropped. The strange garb of the minstrel marks his separation from the world; he belongs to no one and no one to him. Yet he is not alone: the God who gave him this garb walks beside him, and in the sight of all people the two stand as one.

GATHA 0460

Renunciation

Renunciation, leaving for God's country

मराठी मूळ

नव्हे नरनारी संवसारीं अंतरलों । निर्लज्ज निष्काम जना वेगळे चि ठेलों ॥१॥
 चाल रघुरामा न आपुल्या गांवा । तुजविण आम्हां कोण सोयरा सांगाती ॥२॥
 जनवाद लोकनिंघ पिशुनाचे चरे । साहं तुजसाठीं अंतरलीं सहोदरें ॥३॥
 बहुता पाठीं निरोप हाटीं पाठविला तुज । तुका म्हणे आतां सांडुनि लौकिक लाज ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I am neither man nor woman in this world; I have become estranged from all, shameless and desireless, set apart from everyone. Come, Raghuram, let us go to our own homeland.

Who is our companion and friend but you? We will bear the people's taunts and the slander of the malicious; for your sake even brothers and sisters have become strangers. Many times I have sent word to you through the marketplace.

Says Tuka, I have now cast aside all worldly reputation and shame.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I am neither man nor woman in this world. I have grown apart from all. I am shameless now, I want nothing, I stand off by myself, away from everyone. Come, Raghuram, let us go away to our own country. Who is our friend, who is our kin, if not you? People will mock us; the spiteful will spread their slander. I will bear all of it for your sake. For you, even brothers and sisters have become strangers to me. Many times I have sent word to you through the marketplace. Tuka says: now I have thrown away my good name, and all my shame before the world.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram declares that he has stepped outside every worldly category and bond. He is no longer man or woman in the world's reckoning, no longer kin to his own family; he is shameless and free of want, deliberately set apart. The whole point is that one tie now holds everything; Raghuram is his only friend and family, and he is ready to bear public mockery and the slander of malicious people for that one bond. He has cast off reputation and shame, which is the very thing that usually keeps a person inside the world. The cost of belonging wholly to God is being willing to be nothing to everyone else.

GATHA 0461

Social Criticism

Social criticism, the dancing pretender

मराठी मूळ

नीट पाट करुनि थाट । दावीतसे तोरा । आपणाकडे पाहो कोणी । निघाली बाजारा ॥१॥
 ते सौरी नव्हे निकी । भक्तीविण फिकी ॥धु.॥
 चांग भांग करुनि सोंग । दावी माळा मुदी । रुक्याची आस धरुनि । हालवी ती फुदी ॥२॥
 थोरे घरीं करी फेरी । तेथें नाचे बरी । जेथें निघे रुका । तेथें हालवी टिरी ॥३॥
 आंत मांग बाहेर चांग । सौरी ती नव्हे तेग । तुका दास नटतसे । न करी त्याचा संग ॥४॥
 चाल माझ्या राघो । डोंगरीं दिवा लागो ॥धु.॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

She dresses herself neatly and parades with airs, hoping someone will notice her as she heads to the marketplace. But that minstrel-woman is not a true one; without devotion she is tasteless.

She puts on a fine appearance, displays rosaries and rings, and driven by the hope of a coin she sways her hips. She makes her rounds to wealthy houses and dances well there; wherever a coin emerges, she wiggles her skirt.

Outwardly she looks splendid, but inside she is base; she is no genuine minstrel but a sham. Says Tuka, the true servant dances for God and keeps no company with such pretenders.

IN PLAIN WORDS

She dresses herself up just so, struts about, puts on airs. She wants someone to look at her as she sets out for the marketplace. That dancing-woman is no true one. Without devotion she is tasteless. She makes herself up, puts on a show, displays her rosaries and rings. Hungry for a coin, she sways her hips. She does her rounds at the houses of the rich, and there she dances well. Wherever a coin appears, she wags her behind. Foul within, fine without: she is no real dancer, only a fake. Tuka says: the true servant dances for God. Keep no company with one like her. Come, my Ragho; let a lamp be lit on the mountain.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram attacks the pattern of performed piety, picturing a dancing-woman who has all the props of devotion and none of the substance. She wears rosaries and rings, she dances well, but every move is aimed at being noticed and at the coin she can squeeze from rich houses; without real devotion the whole display is flavorless. The sharp line is foul within, fine without: the outward holiness only hides an inward greed. He sets against her

the true servant, who dances for God alone and not for an audience or a payment, and warns the listener to keep clear of pretenders. The test he points us to is our own motive: are we performing for eyes and coins, or turned toward God.

GATHA 0462

Worldly Metaphors

Satire, the empty house without God

मराठी मूळ

घर केलें दार केलें । घरीं नाहीं वरो । सेजारणी पापिणीचीं पांच पोरें मरो ॥१॥
 घरीं पांच पोरें । तीं मजहुनि आहेत थोरें । पांचांच्या बळें । खादलीं बावन केळें ॥२॥
 घर केलें दार केलें । दुकान केला मोटा । पाटाची राणी धांगडधिगा तिचा मोटा ॥३॥
 दुकान केला मोटा । तर पदरीं रुका खोटा । हिजडा म्हणसी जोगी ।
 तर सोळा सहस्र भोगी । तुका म्हणे वेगीं । तर हरि म्हणा जगीं ॥४॥
 जन्मा आलिया गेलिया परी । भक्ति नाहीं केली ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

She built a house and made a door, but there is no bridegroom within. May the five children of that sinful neighbor perish.

She has five children, yet they are bigger than she is; by the strength of those five they devoured fifty-two bananas. She built a house and made a door and opened a grand shop, yet the coin in her lap is counterfeit.

You call the eunuch a yogi, yet he enjoys sixteen thousand. Says Tuka, say the name of Hari in this world without delay.

IN PLAIN WORDS

She built a house, she made a door, but there is no husband inside. Let the five children of that sinful neighbor woman die off. There are five children in the house, and they are bigger than she is. By the strength of those five, fifty-two bananas were eaten up. She built a house, she made a door, she set up a grand shop. The wedded queen makes her noisy uproar, and her racket is loud. She set up a grand shop, but the coin in her lap is counterfeit. You call the eunuch a yogi, yet he takes his pleasure with sixteen thousand. Tuka says: be quick, say the name of Hari in this world. Births come and go, but devotion was never done.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram uses a riddling, satirical picture of a household to expose a life that is all structure and no God. The woman builds the house and even opens a grand shop, but there is no husband within and the coin she holds is counterfeit, so all the activity is hollow. The five children who are bigger than she is and devour fifty-two bananas point to the senses and appetites that grow stronger than the self and consume everything. The closing turn names the real failure plainly: lifetimes come and go and the only thing that was never done is devotion. So he urges the one remedy, to say the name of Hari now, before another birth is wasted on counterfeit business.

GATHA 0463

Appeals and Exhortations

Exhortation, false saints unmasked

मराठी मूळ

माझें माझें म्हणोनियां । गुंतगुंतों मेलीं ॥१॥
 येथें कांहीं नाहीं । लव गुरूच्या पायीं । चाल रांडें टाकी रुका ।
 नकों करूं बोल । गुरुविण मार्ग नाहीं । करिसी तें फोल ॥२॥
 खाउनी जेउनि लेउनि नेसुनि । म्हणती आम्ही बर्यो । साधु संत घरा आल्या । होती पाठमोर्या ॥३॥
 वाचोनि पढोनि जाले शाहणे । म्हणती आम्ही संत । परनारी देखोनि त्यांचें । चंचळ जालें चित्त ॥४॥
 टिळा टोपी घालुनि माळा । म्हणती आम्ही साधु । दयाधर्म चित्तीं नाहीं । ते जाणावे भोंदु ॥५॥
 कलियुगीं घरोघरीं । संत जाले फार । वीतिभरी पोटासाठीं । हिंडती दारोदार ॥६॥
 संत म्हणती केली निंदा । निंदा नव्हे भाई । तुका असे अनन्ये भावें शरण संतां पायीं ॥७॥
 वाघा - अभंग १
 हृदय कोटंबा सांगातें । घोळ वाजवूं अनुहातें । ज्ञानभांडाराचें पोतें । रितें नव्हे कल्पांतीं ॥३॥
 लक्ष चौर्यां शी घरें चारी । या जन्माची केली वारी । प्रसन्न जाला देव मल्लारी । सोहंभावीं राहिलों ॥४॥
 या देवाचें भरतां वारें । अंगीं प्रेमाचें फेंपरें । गुरुगुरु करी वेडे चारें । पाहा तुकें भुंकविलें ॥५॥
 लळित - अभंग ११

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Saying 'mine, mine,' they got hopelessly entangled and perished. Nothing here is real; bow at the guru's feet.

Come, toss a coin, woman, and stop this idle talk; without a guru there is no true path, and whatever else you do is wasted. They eat, drink, dress, and adorn themselves, saying 'we are fine,' but when a saint comes to their door they turn their backs.

Having read and studied, they call themselves saints, yet at the sight of another's wife their minds grow restless. They wear tilak-marks, caps, and rosaries and proclaim themselves holy, but without compassion and righteousness in the heart they are nothing but frauds.

In this dark age, saints have multiplied in every house, wandering from door to door for a mouthful of food. If the saints say I have slandered them, I answer: this is not slander, brothers.

Says Tuka, I remain with undivided devotion at the feet of the true saints.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Saying 'mine, mine,' they got tangled up and died. Nothing here is real. Bow at the guru's feet. Come, woman, toss down your coin, stop the idle talk. Without a guru there is no path; whatever else you do is empty. They eat and drink and dress and adorn themselves and say, 'we are doing well.' But when saints and holy men come to the door, they turn their backs. They have read and studied and grown clever, and they call themselves saints. Yet at the sight of another man's wife their minds go restless. They put on tilak and cap and rosary and call themselves holy men. With no mercy and no right conduct in the heart, know them for frauds. In this dark age, in house after house, saints have sprung up in great numbers. For a bellyful of food they wander door to door. If these so-called saints say I have slandered them, brothers, this is not slander. Tuka says: with undivided love I take refuge at the feet of the true saints.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram tears the costume off counterfeit holiness in the Kali age, where the marks of a saint are everywhere but the substance is rare. He names the symptoms one by one: those who feast and preen yet turn their backs on real saints, the learned who call themselves holy but grow restless at the sight of another's wife, the wearers of tilak and rosary who have no mercy or right conduct in the heart. These, he says, are frauds, and the swarm of food-begging 'saints' going door to door is part of the same disease. He answers the obvious charge head on: this is not slander but plain naming of the pattern. The poem closes by turning the listener toward what is real, the guru's feet and the true saints, since without that refuge all study, marks, and reputation are empty.

GATHA 0464

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, the saints' shared feast

मराठी मूळ

आजी दिवस जाला । धन्य सोनियाचा भला ॥१॥
 जालें संताचे पंगती । बरवें भोजन निगुती ॥२॥
 रामकृष्णनामं । बरवीं मोहियेलीं प्रेमें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे आला । चवी रसाळ हा काला ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Today has been a blessed day, a golden, splendid day. The saints have gathered in the communal dining row, and the meal has been prepared with care.

The names of Rama and Krishna are the finest dishes, seasoned with love. Says Tuka, this delicacy has arrived with the most exquisite flavor.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Today has been a day, a blessed, golden, good day. There was a row of saints sitting to eat, and the meal was set out with care. The names of Rama and Krishna were stirred sweetly into it with love. Tuka says: it has come, this savory, juicy mixture.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram is celebrating the joy of singing God's name in the company of the saints, and he frames it as a shared meal. The day is golden because the devotees have gathered in a dining row and a feast has been laid out with care. The real food is the names of Rama and Krishna, seasoned with love, so the eating is the chanting itself. The kala, the mixed offering of curds and rice, becomes his image for that sweet, communal taste of the Name. The point is that fellowship in devotion is itself nourishment, a flavor more delicious than any literal meal.

GATHA 0465

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, pleading for one morsel

मराठी मूळ

तुम्ही तरी सांगा कांहीं । आम्हांविशीं रखुमाबाई ॥१॥
 कांहीं उरलें तें ठायीं । वेगीं पाठवुनी देई ॥२॥
 टोकत बैसलों देखा । इच्छीतसें ग्रासा एका ॥३॥
 प्रेम देउनि बहुडा जाला । तुका म्हणे विठ्ठल बोला ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Will you not speak to Him about us, Rukhmabai, on our behalf? If any remnant has been left over, send it to me quickly. I sit here gazing, longing for just one morsel.

Says Tuka, speak the word 'Vitthal' and send me on my way with your love.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Will you not say something to Him about us, Rakhumai? If anything has been left over there, send it to me quickly. Look, I sit here waiting, longing for just one mouthful. Tuka says: give me your love and send me on my way; only say the word, Vitthal.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram approaches Rukhmini, Vitthal's consort, as the one who can put in a word for him with God. The image is a humble petitioner at the table's edge, begging not for plenty but for a single leftover morsel. That morsel is grace and the taste of the Lord's love; he is content with even a scrap of it. He asks her to intercede, to send him away satisfied with that love, and the one thing he wants spoken is the name Vitthal. It is a posture of total smallness before God, asking for the least and trusting that the least from Him is enough.

GATHA 0466

Longing and Separation

Longing, watching the road to Pandhari

मराठी मूळ

वाट पाहें बाहे निडळीं ठेवुनियां हात । पंढरीचे वाटे दृष्टी लागलें चित्त ॥१॥
 कई येतां देखें माझा मायबाप । घटिका बोटें दिवस लेखीं धरुनियां माप ॥२॥
 डावा डोळा लवे उजवी स्फुरते बाहे । मन उतावळि भाव सांडुनियां देहे ॥३॥
 सुखसेजे गोडचितीं न लगे आणीक । नाठवे घर दार तान पळाली भूक ॥४॥
 तुका म्हणे धन्य दिवस ऐसा तो कोण । पंढरीचे वाटे येतां मूळ देखेन ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*I stand watching the road, hand raised to my forehead, my eyes and chitta fixed upon the path to Pandharpur.
 When will I see my mother and father coming? I count the hours, measuring each day as it passes.*

*My left eye flutters, my right arm throbs; my mind races ahead, leaving the body behind. No comfort of bed or
 sweetness of heart can hold me.*

*I have forgotten home and door; hunger and thirst have fled. Says Tuka, blessed will be that day when I see my
 Beloved approaching on the road to Pandharpur.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

I watch the road, my hand raised to my brow. My eyes, my whole mind, are fixed on the road to Pandhari.
 When will I see my mother and father coming? I count the hours on my fingers, measuring out each day. My
 left eye flutters, my right arm throbs. My mind runs ahead, leaving the body behind. No soft bed, no
 sweetness pleases me; I want nothing else. I have forgotten house and door. Thirst has fled, hunger has run
 off. Tuka says: which day will it be, that blessed day, when on the road to Pandhari I see my Beloved coming.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram paints the ache of waiting for God as a lover or child watching the road for someone dear. He stands
 with his hand shading his eyes, counting the hours, his whole mind fixed on the path to Pandharpur where Vitthal
 dwells. The body's omens and his racing mind show how the longing overruns him; he forgets home, and even
 hunger and thirst fall away. Nothing comfortable can satisfy him because only one thing will: the sight of his
 Beloved, whom he calls his mother and father, coming up that road. The poem makes desire for God concrete and
 bodily, and names the blessed day he lives for as the day that wait ends.

GATHA 0467

Prayers

Prayer, the shame of begging elsewhere

मराठी मूळ

तुझें दास्य करुं आणिका मागों खावया । धिग् जालें जिणें माझें पंढरीराया ॥१॥
 काय गा विठोबा तुज म्हणावें । थोराच्या दैवें गोड शुभअशुभ ॥२॥
 संसाराचा धाक निरंतर आम्हांसी । मरण भलें परि काय अवकळा तैसी ॥३॥
 तुझे शरणागत शरण जाऊं आणिकांसी । तुका म्हणे कवणा लाज हें कां नेणसी ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Shall I serve you and then beg from others for my food? Cursed is such a life, O Lord of Pandhari. What shall I say to you, Vithoba? By the fortune of the great, both good and ill become sweet.

The dread of worldly existence haunts us ceaselessly; death would be welcome, but even that comes with its own disgrace. Says Tuka, if those who have surrendered to you must go begging at another's door, whose shame is that? Why do you not understand?.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Shall I serve you, and then beg my food from others? Shame on such a life of mine, Lord of Pandhari. What is there to say to you, Vithoba? When fortune is great, both good and ill taste sweet. The fear of this worldly life never leaves us. Death would be better, but must it come in such disgrace? Those who have taken refuge in you, must they take refuge with others too? Tuka says: whose is the shame in that? Why do you not understand this?

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram makes a blunt complaint to Vitthal that doubles as an appeal. If he is the Lord's servant, it is a disgrace that he should still have to beg his living from other people; that life feels cursed to him. The constant dread of worldly existence wears on him so that even death seems welcome, except that it too would come with humiliation. The pointed argument is that one who has surrendered to God should not have to seek refuge anywhere else, and if such a devotee is reduced to begging at strangers' doors, the shame falls on the Lord, not the devotee. He presses God to feel the dishonor of letting His own surrendered ones go unprovided for.

GATHA 0468

The Nature of God

Nature of God, God as mother

मराठी मूळ

पुरविली आळी । जे जे केली ते ते काळीं ॥१॥
 माय तरी ऐसी सांगा । कृपाळुवा पांडुरंगा ॥२॥
 घेतलें नुतरी । उचलोनि कडियेवरी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे घांस । मुखीं घाली ब्रम्हरस ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Every wish I ever made, he fulfilled at the right time. Tell me, is there any mother like this, O compassionate Panduranga? When I could not stand on my own, he lifted me onto his hip.

Says Tuka, he places morsels of the supreme nectar in my mouth with his own hand.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Every demand I made, he met it, each one in its own time. Tell me, is there any mother like this, merciful Panduranga? When I could not get up by myself, he lifted me onto his hip. Tuka says: he puts the morsel in my mouth, the morsel of the nectar of Brahman.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes God's care through the plainest of images, the tenderness of a mother. Every wish the devotee ever made was granted, and granted at the right time, so the giving is wise and not merely indulgent. When he could not even stand on his own, God lifted him up and carried him on the hip as a mother carries a child. And the food this mother feeds is no ordinary food but the nectar of Brahman, the taste of God himself, placed into the mouth by his own hand. The point is that the supreme reality is not distant or austere but intimately, maternally caring, raising and feeding the helpless devotee.

GATHA 0469

Prayers

Prayer, keep me singing to the end

मराठी मूळ

कथेची सामुग्री । देह अवसानावरी ॥१॥
 नको जाऊं देऊं भंगा । गात्रें माझीं पांडुरंगा ॥२॥
 आयुष्य करीं उणें । परी मज आवडो कीर्तन ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे हाणी । या वेगळी मना नाणीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let the materials for the sacred story last as long as this body endures. Do not let my limbs give way, O Panduranga.

Shorten my lifespan if you must, but let me love the singing of your glory until the end. Says Tuka, apart from this one longing, let nothing else enter my mind.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let the things I need for telling your story last as long as this body lasts. Do not let my limbs fail me, Panduranga. Cut my life short if you must, but let me keep loving the singing of your praise. Tuka says: strike that down, but bring nothing into my mind but this.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram prays not for long life or comfort but for the capacity to keep praising God to the very end. He asks that his body and limbs hold together only so far as they serve the telling of the sacred story; their worth is measured by that use. He will even trade away length of life, asking God to shorten his days if need be, as long as the love of

kirtan stays with him. The single petition is that nothing else be allowed to enter his mind, that no other desire crowd out this one. It is a request to be kept single-pointed, with devotion as the one thing he refuses to lose.

GATHA 0470

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the body's last sweet hour

मराठी मूळ

गळित जाली काया । हें चि लळित पंढरिराया ॥१॥
 आलें अवसानापासीं । रूप राहिलें मानसीं ॥२॥
 वाडला कळस । तेथें स्थिरावला रस ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे गोड जालें । नारायणीं पोट धालें ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The body has grown frail, and this itself is the final play, O Lord of Pandhari. Life has come to its closing hour, yet your form remains settled in my heart.

The pinnacle has been raised, and there the essence has become still. Says Tuka, it has all turned sweet; my belly is filled with Narayana.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The body has worn away. This itself is the final play, Lord of Pandhari. It has come to the last breath, yet your form stays settled in my mind. The pinnacle has been raised, and there the sweetness has come to rest. Tuka says: it has all turned sweet; my belly is filled with Narayana.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram looks on his own dying body and finds it not a loss but the closing scene of a play. As the flesh wears away and the last breath nears, what matters is that God's form stays fixed in his mind and does not waver. He uses the image of a temple finished and its crowning pinnacle raised: the work is complete, and the sweet essence of devotion has come to rest at the top. So death arrives as fulfillment, not fear. His belly is filled with Narayana, meaning he is wholly satisfied by God, and at the end everything has turned to sweetness.

GATHA 0471

Devotion to Vitthal

Adoration, the king on his throne

मराठी मूळ

रत्नजडित सिंहासन । वरी बैसले आपण ॥१॥
 कुंचे ढळती दोहीं बाहीं । जवळी रखुमाई राही ॥२॥
 नाना उपचारीं । सिद्धि वोळगती कामारी ॥३॥
 हातीं घेऊनि पादुका । उभा बंदिजन तुका ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Upon a jewel-studded throne he sits in person. Royal fans wave on either side, and Rukhmabai and Rahi stand close by.

Innumerable powers attend him like servants, bringing every manner of offering. Says Tuka, I stand holding his sandals, a bard at his door.

IN PLAIN WORDS

On a jewel-studded throne he himself sits. Royal whisks wave on both sides. Rakhumai and Rahi stay close beside him. All the powers and perfections wait on him like serving-maids, with every kind of offering. Tuka says: holding his sandals in my hands, I stand, a servant at his gate.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram pictures Vitthal in full royal majesty, a king enthroned and attended. He sits on a jewel-studded throne with fans waving on either side and his consorts Rakhumai and Rahi beside him. Even the siddhis, the supernatural powers that yogis chase after, are reduced here to handmaids waiting on him with their offerings; nothing is greater than the Lord himself. Against all that grandeur Tukaram chooses the lowest place for himself: holding the Lord's sandals, standing as a doorkeeper or attendant. The contrast is the point, that the highest honor a devotee desires is simply to serve at the feet of the King of kings.

GATHA 0472

Devotion to Vitthal

Beholding God, confession of unworthiness

मराठी मूळ

हिरा शोभला कोंदणीं । जडित माणिकांची खाणी ॥१॥
 तैसा दिसे नारायण । मुख सुखाचे मंडण ॥२॥
 कोटि चंद्रलीळा । पूर्णिमेच्या पूर्णकळा ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे दृष्टि धाये । परतोनि माघारी ते न ये ॥३॥
 परी तूं आपुलिया सत्ता । मज करावें सरता ॥४॥
 नाहीं चित्तशुद्धि । स्थिर पायांपाशीं बुद्धि ॥२॥
 अपराधाचा केलों । तुका म्हणे किती बोलों ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A diamond shines in its setting, embedded in a mine of rubies. Just so does Narayana appear, his face the very ornament of bliss.

His splendor surpasses ten million moons at their fullest brilliance. Says Tuka, once the eyes behold him, the gaze does not turn back. Yet by your own sovereign will, make me complete.

My mind is not yet pure, nor is my understanding steady at your feet. Says Tuka, I am nothing but a mass of offenses; how much more can I confess?.

IN PLAIN WORDS

A diamond shines in its setting, like a mine studded with rubies. Narayana looks just like that. His face is the ornament of all joy. He is brighter than ten million moons, full as the full moon. Tuka says: once the eyes look at him, the gaze drinks its fill and does not turn back. But you, by your own power, make me whole. My mind is not pure. My thoughts will not stay still at your feet. I am made of nothing but faults. Tuka says: how much can I confess?

WHAT IT MEANS

The poem moves from sight to plea. First Tukaram describes Narayana's beauty in heaped images, a diamond in its setting, a mine of rubies, the brilliance of ten million full moons, and says that once the eye sees this it cannot look away. Then the praise turns into prayer: he asks God to complete him by sovereign grace, because he cannot do it himself. He confesses plainly that his mind is impure and his attention will not hold steady at God's feet. The honesty is the point; he names himself a mass of faults and admits there is no end to what he could confess, so he leaves the making-whole to God alone.

GATHA 0473

The Nature of God

God on the throne, refuge of all who come

मराठी मूळ

उभारिला हात । जगीं जाणविली मात ॥१॥
 देव बैसले सिंहासनीं । आल्या याचका होय धनी ॥२॥
 एकाच्या कैवाडें । उगवे बहुतांचें कोडें ॥३॥
 दोहीं ठायीं तुका । नाहीं पडों देत चुका ॥४॥
 आशीर्वाद - अभंग ५

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

He raised his hand and declared his word to the world. God is seated upon the throne; whoever comes as a supplicant, he becomes their benefactor.

For the sake of one devotee, the puzzles of many are solved. Says Tuka, in both this world and the next, he does not let a single error remain.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He raised his hand and made his promise known to the world. God sits on the throne. Whoever comes begging, he becomes their provider. For the sake of one devotee, the troubles of many are untangled. Tuka says: here and hereafter, in both places, he lets no mistake of mine stand.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram pictures God enthroned and openly pledging refuge: the raised hand is a public declaration that anyone who approaches as a supplicant will be provided for. He widens the claim: helping one devotee, God loosens the knots of many at once, so the grace given to one overflows. The closing line states the scope of that protection. In this world and the next, God will not let a single error of his devotee remain to count against him. The mood is reassurance: the seeker is not pleading with an indifferent power but resting on a stated promise.

GATHA 0474

Faith and Trust

Faith as a sturdy boat across existence

मराठी मूळ

जीवेंसाठीं यत्नभाव । त्याची नाव बळकट ॥१॥
 पैल तीरा जातां कांहीं । संदेह नाहीं भवनदी ॥२॥
 विश्वासाची धन्य जाती । तेथें वस्ती देवाची ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे भोळ्यांचा । देव साचा अंकित ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The one who strives with whole-hearted devotion has a sturdy boat. There is no doubt about crossing the river of existence and reaching the far shore.

Blessed is the lineage of faith, for God himself dwells there. Says Tuka, the Lord is truly bound to the simple and sincere.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The one who tries with his whole heart has a strong boat. There is no doubt about crossing the river of the world and reaching the far shore. Blessed is the family of faith; God lives there. Tuka says: to the simple and sincere, God truly belongs.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram answers the fear of being lost in worldly existence with a single image: whole-hearted devotion is a sturdy boat, and with it the far shore is not in doubt. He honors faith as a lineage, a household, blessed because God himself dwells where faith is. The last line is the heart of it and the most radical: God is the bonded servant of the simple and sincere, owned by their trust. So the crossing depends not on cleverness or ritual mastery but on plain, undivided faith, which God answers by belonging wholly to it.

GATHA 0475

Devotion to Vitthal

Blessing on the lovers of God

मराठी मूळ

आशीर्वाद तया जाती । आवडी चित्तीं देवाची ॥१॥
 कल्याण ती असो क्षेम । वाढे प्रेम आगळें ॥२॥
 भक्तिभाग्यगांठी धन । त्या नमन जीवासी ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे हरिचे दास । तेथें आस सकळ ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Blessings upon those in whose chitta the love of God abides. May their well-being endure, and may their love grow ever greater.

They whose treasury is the wealth of devotion deserve the homage of every soul. Says Tuka, all hopes rest at the feet of Hari's servants.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Blessings on those whose hearts hold love for God. May their welfare last; may their love keep growing greater. Their treasure is the wealth of devotion; every soul should bow to them. Tuka says: at the feet of Hari's servants, all my hope rests.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a benediction spoken over those who love God. Tukaram wishes their well-being to endure and their love to keep increasing, treating devotion itself as their real wealth, a fortune that makes them worthy of everyone's homage. He then places himself among them as a supplicant: all his own hope lies at the feet of Hari's servants, not only at God's. The poem quietly raises the devotees of God to the level of God's own presence, so that honoring them and trusting them is part of the devotional path.

GATHA 0476

The Saints

Love of the saints, caste set aside

मराठी मूळ

तया सार्तीं वेचूं वाणी । अडकों कानीं वारता ॥१॥
 क्षेम माझे हरिजन । समाधान पुसतां त्यां ॥२॥
 परत्रींचे जे सांगाती । त्यांची याती न विचारीं ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे धैर्यवंतें । निर्मळचित्तें सरवीं तीं ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

For their sake I spend my voice, and with my ears I drink in any news of them. I ask after the welfare of my fellow devotees of Hari, and their well-being is my peace of mind.

They are the true companions for the life beyond; I do not consider their caste. Says Tuka, those valiant ones of pure heart are the best of all.

IN PLAIN WORDS

For their sake I spend my voice, and I listen for any news of them with both ears. The welfare of Hari's people is my own peace; I ask after how they are. They are my companions for the world beyond. I do not ask about their caste. Tuka says: those steady ones, the pure of heart, are the best of all.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram describes how he holds the company of devotees: his speech is spent for them and his ears strain for news of them, and their welfare is his own peace of mind. Then comes the sharp line that breaks a deep social rule. These are his companions for the life beyond, and he refuses to ask their caste. The bond of devotion overrides birth entirely. He closes by naming what does count, courage and a pure heart, and calls such people the best of all, putting inner steadiness above any inherited rank.

GATHA 0477

Prayers

Prayer, the gift of fearlessness

मराठी मूळ

अभय उत्तर संतीं केलें दान । जालें समाधान चित्त तेणें ॥१॥
 आतां प्रेमरसें न घडे खंडण । द्यावें कृपादान नारायणा ॥२॥
 आलें जें उचित देहविभागासी । तेणें पायांपासीं उभी असों ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे करी पूजन वैखरी । बोबडा उत्तरीं गातों गीत ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The saints have given the gift of fearless assurance, and by that my chitta is at peace. Now, O Narayana, grant me the gift of your grace so that this stream of love may never be broken.

Whatever is due to this body, let me offer it standing at your feet. Says Tuka, I worship with my stammering voice, singing your song in broken words.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The saints gave me the gift of fearlessness, and my heart found peace by it. Now let this sweetness of love never be broken. Grant me the gift of your grace, Narayana. Whatever is owed by this body, let me offer it standing at your feet. Tuka says: I worship you with my stammering voice; in broken words I sing your song.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram traces a chain of gifts. The saints first gave him freedom from fear, and that settled his heart; now he asks God to keep the stream of love unbroken with further grace. He offers his whole bodily life as service rendered standing at God's feet, holding nothing back. The closing image is deliberately humble: he worships not with polished eloquence but with a stammering, faltering voice, singing in broken words. The poem says that the worth of worship lies in the love behind it, not in the skill of the tongue, so even clumsy praise is accepted.

GATHA 0478

Prayers

Surrender, beyond ritual and hurry

मराठी मूळ

असो मंत्रहीन क्रिया । नका चर्या विचारुं ॥१॥
 सेवेमधीं जमा धरा । कृपा करा शेवटीं ॥२॥
 विचारुनि ठाया ठाव । येथें भाव राहिला ॥३॥
 आतां तुक्यापाशीं हेवा । नाही देवा तांतडी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let the rites be imperfect, the mantras incomplete; do not scrutinize the formalities. Count it all as service, and grant your grace at the end.

Having considered every ground and place, my devotion has settled here. Says Tuka, there is no envy left in me now, O God, and no impatience.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let my rites be without mantras, my actions flawed. Do not examine the formalities. Count it all as service, and at the end, show me grace. I have looked everywhere, and my devotion has settled here. Tuka says: now there is no craving left in me, no impatience, O God.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram asks God to set aside the ritual scorecard: his ceremonies lack the proper mantras and his conduct is imperfect, and he begs that these defects not be inspected. Instead he asks that the whole effort be counted simply as service, with grace granted at the end. Having searched every other ground, his trust has come to rest in this one place. The poem closes in a settled calm that is its real subject: no more grasping, no more impatient demand for results. He has handed the timing over to God and is content to wait.

GATHA 0479

Prayers

Prayer, one request only

मराठी मूळ

ऐकें वचन कमळापती । मज रंकाची विनंती ॥१॥
कर जोडितों कथाकाळीं । आपण असावें जवळी ॥२॥
घेई ऐसी भाक । मागेन जरि कांहीं आणिक ॥३॥
तुकयाबंधु म्हणे देवा । शब्द इतुका राखावा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Hear this plea, O Lord of Lakshmi: it is the petition of a poor man. I join my hands at the hour of the sacred story and ask only that you remain close beside me.

Take this vow from me: if ever I ask for anything else, hold me to account. Says Tuka's brother, O God, keep just this one word of mine.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Hear my words, Lord of Lakshmi: this is a poor man's request. I fold my hands at the time of the sacred story and ask only that you stay near me. Take this as my vow: if I ever ask you for anything else, hold me to it. Tuka's brother says: God, keep just this one word of mine.

WHAT IT MEANS

The prayer narrows everything down to a single petition. Calling himself a poor man before the Lord of Lakshmi, the speaker asks for only one thing: that God remain close during the kirtan, the telling of the sacred story. To prove it is the only thing he wants, he makes it a binding vow, inviting God to call him to account if he ever begs for anything more. The closing line drives the point home: keep just this one word. The poem is signed by Tuka's brother, and its discipline is in the refusal to ask for anything beyond God's nearness.

GATHA 0480

Appeals and Exhortations

Final hour, total surrender to Hari

मराठी मूळ

आली लळिताची वेळ । असा सावध सकळ ॥१॥
 लाहो करा वेगीं स्मरा । टाळी वाउनि विश्वंभरा ॥२॥
 जालिया अवसान । न संपडती चरण ॥२॥
 तुकयाबंधु म्हणे थोडें । अवधि उरली आहे पुढें ॥३॥
 करीं अंगीकार नको मोकलूं हरी । पतितपावन ब्रिदें करावीं खरीं ॥४॥
 नेणें भक्तिभाव तुझा म्हणवितों दास । जरि देसी अंतर तरि लज्जा कोणास ॥२॥
 म्हणे तुकयाबंधु तुझे धरियेले पाये । आतां कोण दुजा ऐसा आम्हांसी आहे ॥३॥
 आणीक प्रमाण नाहीं दुसरें आतां । योगक्षेमभार तुझे घातला माथां ॥४॥
 तूं च क्रियाकर्म धर्म देव तूं कुळ । तूं च तप तीर्थ व्रत गुरु सकळ ॥२॥
 म्हणे तुकयाबंधु करिता कार्यता देवा । तूं च भाव भक्ति पूजा पुनस्कार आघवा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The hour of the final play has come; let everyone be alert. Hurry, remember the Lord of the universe and clap your hands in praise.

Once life departs, these feet will not be found again. Says Tuka's brother, only a little time remains ahead. Accept me, O Hari; do not let me go.

Make good your title of Redeemer of the fallen. I know nothing of devotion, yet I call myself your servant; if you abandon me, whose shame will it be? Says Tuka's brother, I have grasped your feet; who else is there for me now? There is no other proof or refuge remaining. I have placed the burden of my welfare upon your head.

You are my action, my duty, my righteousness, my deity, my family. You are my penance, my pilgrimage, my vow, my guru, my all.

Says Tuka's brother, O God who accomplishes all things, you alone are my devotion, my worship, my ritual, and my every offering.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The hour of the closing play has come. Everyone, be alert. Hurry, remember the Lord of the universe at once, clapping your hands. Once the breath is gone, these feet will not be found. Tuka's brother says: only a little time is left ahead. Take me as your own; do not let me go, Hari. Make your name, Savior of the fallen, come true. I know nothing of true devotion, yet I call myself your servant. If you turn me away, whose is the shame? Tuka's brother says: I have held your feet; who else is there for me now? There is no other proof, no other refuge left. I have laid the whole burden of my keeping on your head. You are my act and my duty, my religion, my God, my family. You are my penance, my pilgrimage, my vow, my guru, my everything. Tuka's brother says: God who does all things, you yourself are my faith, my devotion, my worship, and my every offering.

WHAT IT MEANS

This composite prayer is spoken under the pressure of the last hour, the closing scene of life, and its watchword is be alert and remember God now, while a little time remains, because once the breath leaves, the feet cannot be reached. From that urgency the surrender deepens by stages. First the speaker reminds God of his own title, Savior of the fallen, and turns his own ignorance of true devotion into a claim on God: if a confessed servant is abandoned, the shame falls on the Lord, not the servant. Then he renounces every other support, placing the entire burden of his welfare on God's head alone. The final movement collapses all the usual props of religion into God himself: duty, penance, pilgrimage, vow, guru, family, even the worship and the offering are God and nothing apart from God. Signed by Tuka's brother, it leaves the devotee with no separate self-effort to lean on, only God doing everything.

GATHA 0481

Prayers

Prayer, asking for love and service

मराठी मूळ

करुनि उचित । प्रेम घालीं हृदयांत ॥१॥
 आलों दान मागायास । थोरी करुनियां आस ॥२॥
 चिंतन समयीं । सेवा आपुली च देई ॥३॥
 तुक्याबंधु म्हणे भावा । मज निरवावें देवा ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Receive what is proper from me and place your love within my heart. I have come to beg a gift, carrying a great hope.

At the hour of remembrance, grant me the privilege of your own service. Says Tuka's brother, entrust me to the care of God.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Do what is fitting, and place your love inside my heart. I have come to beg a gift, carrying a great hope. At the time of remembrance, give me your own service. Tuka's brother says: entrust me to your care, O God.

WHAT IT MEANS

The prayer asks for two inward gifts rather than any outward thing. First, that God set his own love within the heart; second, that at the hour of remembrance the speaker be given the privilege of serving God. He comes openly as a beggar, but the great hope he carries is for nearness and devotion, not goods. The closing line, signed by Tuka's brother, asks God to take charge of him, to entrust him to his own keeping. The whole movement is a handing-over: let God supply the love, the service, and the safekeeping.

GATHA 0482

Ecstasy and Joy

Ecstasy, defiance of Death

मराठी मूळ

गाऊं वाऊं टाळी रंगीं नाचों उदास । सांडोनि भय लज्जा शंका आस निरास ॥१॥
 बळियाचा बळी तो कैवारी आमुचा । भुक्तिमुक्तिदाता सकळां ही सिद्धीचा ॥२॥
 मारुं शब्दशस्त्रबाण निःशंक अनिवार । कंटकाचा चुर शिर फोडूं काळाचें ॥३॥
 म्हणे तुकयाबंधु नाही जीवाची चाड । आपुलिया तेथें काय आणिकांची भीड ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Let us sing, let us play, let us clap and dance freely in detachment, casting off fear, shame, doubt, hope, and despair. Our champion is the Mighty One himself, the giver of both worldly enjoyment and final liberation, the lord of all powers.

We will hurl the arrows of the spoken word, unstoppable and without hesitation, crushing the thorny enemy and splitting the skull of Death. Says Tuka's brother, I care nothing for this life; where my Lord stands, what room is there for anyone else's claims?.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Let us sing, let us play, let us clap and dance free, beyond care, throwing off fear, shame, doubt, hope, and despair. Our champion is the Mighty One himself, who gives both worldly joy and final freedom, the lord of all powers. We will shoot the arrows of the spoken word, fearless and unstoppable, grind the thorny enemy to dust, and split open the skull of Death. Tuka's brother says: I have no care for this life. Where my Lord stands, what room is there for anyone else's claim?

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a war song of devotion sung in ecstatic release. The dance throws off the five inner weights named outright, fear, shame, doubt, hope, and despair, because the singer's champion is the Almighty himself, giver of both enjoyment and liberation and lord of every spiritual power. The weapons are words: the spoken Name and praise become arrows that crush the thorny enemy of obstacles and split the very skull of Death. The closing line, signed by Tuka's brother, shows where the fearlessness comes from. He has stopped caring about his own life, so where God stands no rival claim can crowd in. The mood is bold rather than cruel; the violence is aimed at Death and at whatever blocks the path, not at any person.

GATHA 0483

Devotion to Vitthal

Vithoba on the brick, the Lord has come

मराठी मूळ

सांडूनि वैकुंठ । उभा विटेवरी नीट ॥१॥
 आला आला रे जगजेठी । भक्ता पुंडलिकाचे भेटी ॥२॥
 पैल चंद्रभागे तिरीं । कट धरुनियां करीं ॥३॥
 तुकयाबंधु म्हणे अंबर । गजर होतो जयजयकार ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Leaving Vaikuntha behind, he stands upright upon the brick. He has come, the Lord of the world has come, to meet his devotee Pundalik.

There on the bank of the Chandrabhaga, he stands with hands upon his waist. Says Tuka's brother, the sky resounds with the thundering cry of victory.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Leaving Vaikuntha behind, he stands straight upon the brick. He has come, he has come, the Lord of the world, to meet his devotee Pundalik. There on the bank of the Chandrabhaga, he stands with his hands upon his waist. Tuka's brother says: the sky rings with the thundering cry of victory.

WHAT IT MEANS

The poem retells why Vitthal stands at Pandharpur. He left Vaikuntha, his own heaven, to come down and stand upright on a brick for the sake of his devotee Pundalik, and the cry He has come carries the joy of that arrival. The familiar posture is named, the Lord on the bank of the Chandrabhaga with hands resting on his waist, the very image pilgrims go to see. The closing line, signed by Tuka's brother, fills the whole sky with shouts of victory. The point is the tenderness behind it: the Lord of the world preferred standing on a brick beside his devotee to remaining in heaven.

GATHA 0484

The Nature of God

Adoration, the guileless King

मराठी मूळ

कृपालु भक्तांचा । ऐसा पति गोपिकांचा ॥१॥
 उभा न पाचारितां दारीं । न संगतां काम करी ॥२॥
 भाव देखोनि निर्मळ । रजां वोडवी कपाळ ॥३॥
 तुकयाबंधु म्हणे न भजा । कां रे ऐसा भोळा राजा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

So gracious is this Lord to the devoted, the very husband of the milkmaids. He stands at the door without being called and does your work without being told.

Seeing a pure heart, he bows his own forehead to the dust of its feet. Says Tuka's brother, why will you not worship such a guileless King?.

IN PLAIN WORDS

He is gracious to those who love him. He is the very husband of the milkmaids. He stands at your door, and you did not call him. He does your work, and you did not ask. When he sees a heart that is clean, he bows his own forehead down into the dust at its feet. Tuka's brother says: why will you not worship such a guileless King?

WHAT IT MEANS

The poem praises Vitthal by the way he serves rather than the way he is served. He comes unbidden and works unasked; he is the Lord of the gopis, near and intimate. The sharp turn is the second verse: seeing a pure heart, God lowers his own head to the dust of the devotee's feet, reversing every expectation of who bows to whom. The closing question presses the listener: a King this open and this humble is precisely the one you have no excuse to refuse.

GATHA 0485

Faith and Trust

Faith, fearless under God's care

मराठी मूळ

केला अंगीकार पंढरीच्या देवें । आतां काय करिती काळ मशक मानवें ॥१॥
 घातलीं बाहेर तीं भय होतें ज्यानें । बैसला आपण तेथें घालुनियां ठाणें ॥२॥
 लागों नेदी वारा दुजियाचा अंगासी । हा पुरता निर्धार कळों आला आम्हांसी ॥३॥
 म्हणे तुकयाबंधु न लगे करावी चिंता । कोणेविशीं आतां बैसलों हस्तीवरी माथां ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The God of Pandhari has taken me under his care. What can Death, mosquitoes, or any mortal do to me now? He has expelled every fear that once resided within and has himself taken up his station there.

He does not let even a breeze from any rival touch my body; this absolute certainty has become clear to me. Says Tuka's brother, there is no need for worry about anything; I am seated upon the head of the elephant itself.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The God of Pandhari has taken me as his own. So now what can Death do to me, or mosquitoes, or any mortal? He has thrown out the fear that used to live inside me, and he has sat down in that place himself. He will not let even a breeze from any rival touch my body. This much I now know for certain. Tuka's brother says: there is no need to worry about anything now. I am seated with my head upon the very elephant.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram's brother declares total safety once God has accepted him. He lists the threats and dismisses them together, the great and the small alike: Death itself, biting insects, any human power. The inner reversal is precise: where fear once lived inside him, God has now taken up residence, so the old occupant cannot return. The final image of riding high upon the elephant names the stakes plainly: under such protection there is nothing left to fear from any quarter.

GATHA 0486

Confession and Sin

Confession, bold speech and refuge

मराठी मूळ

अगोचरी बोलिलों आज्ञेविण आगळें । परी तें आतां न संडावें राउळें ॥१॥
 जाईल रोकडा बोल न पुसती आम्हां । तुझा तुझें म्हणविलें पाहा पुरुषोत्तमा ॥२॥
 न व्हावा न वजावा न कळतां अन्याय । न धरावें तें मनीं भलता करा उपाय ॥३॥
 म्हणे तुकयाबंधु हीन मी म्हणोनि लाजसी । वारा लागों पाहातोहे उंच्या झाडासी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I have spoken boldly, going beyond what was permitted. Yet do not cast me out of your temple for it, O Lord.

Without your notice, my words will perish and no one will heed me. I called myself yours; now see to it, Purushottama.

Let no offense occur, and if one does unknowingly, do not hold it in your heart; find whatever remedy you please. Says Tuka's brother, if you feel ashamed because I am lowly, know this: it is always the tallest tree that the wind tries hardest to reach.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I spoke of hidden things, boldly, more than I was allowed. But do not cast me out of your temple for it now. My words will perish at once and no one will heed me. I have called myself yours; now see to it, Purushottama. Let no offense stand, and if one slips out without my knowing, do not hold it in your heart; use whatever remedy you please. Tuka's brother says: if you are ashamed of me because I am lowly, remember this: the wind always tries hardest to reach the tallest tree.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a confession folded into a plea. He admits he has spoken past his license about things beyond speaking, then asks not to be expelled from God's house for the overreach. The hinge is ownership: having called himself God's own, he hands the matter back to God to settle. The closing image turns the shame around. If God hesitates because the devotee is lowly, Tukaram answers that storms strike the highest trees, so it is exactly the great who are tested, and lowliness is no reason to be cast off.

GATHA 0487

Devotion to Vitthal

Service, calling the Lord to dine

मराठी मूळ

जाली पाकसिद्धि वाट पाहे रखुमाई । उदक तापलें डेरां चीकसा मर्दुनी अई ॥१॥
 उठा पांडुरंगा उशीर जाला भोजनीं । उभ्या आंचवणा गोपी कळस घेउनी ॥२॥
 अवध्या सावचित्त सेवेलागीं सकळा । उद्धव अक्रूर आले पाचारुं मुळा ॥३॥
 सावरिली सेज सुमनयाति सुगंधा । रत्नदीप ताटीं वाळा विडिया विनोदा ॥४॥
 तुका विनंती करी पाहे पंढरीराणा । असा सावचित्त सांगे सकळा जना ॥५॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The meal is ready and Rukhmabai waits. The water is heated, and the herbal paste has been ground and prepared.

Rise, O Panduranga; the hour for dining has grown late. The milkmaids stand ready with vessels for the rinsing of hands.

All are attentive and eager to serve. Uddhava and Akrura have come to call the Lord.

The bed is made with fragrant flowers, and the tray holds betel, spices, and sweet amusement beside the jeweled lamp. Says Tuka, I make my plea; look this way, O King of Pandhari, and tell all the people to be ready.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The meal is ready, and Rukhmabai is waiting. The water is heated in the pot, and the herbal paste has been ground. Rise, Panduranga; it has grown late for your dinner. The milkmaids stand ready with vessels to rinse your hands. Everyone is attentive, eager to serve. Uddhava and Akrura have come to call you. The bed is made with fragrant flowers; the tray holds betel, spices, and sweet delights beside the jeweled lamp. Tuka says: I make my plea. Look this way, King of Pandhari, and tell all the people to be ready.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram serves God as if God were a beloved householder, and the whole poem is a household summoned to attend him. The meal, the heated water, the ground paste, the waiting wife Rukhmabai, the milkmaids with rinsing vessels: every domestic detail is real care offered to Vitthal. By naming Uddhava and Akrura come to call him, the poet folds devotee and Lord into one intimate home. The point is that love does not worship from a distance; it cooks, prepares the bed, and waits at the door for the Lord to turn and look.

GATHA 0488

Devotion to Vitthal

Awakening, rouse the Lord with song

मराठी मूळ

उठा सकळ जन उठिले नारायण । आनंदले मुनिजन तिन्ही लोक ॥१॥
 करा जयजयकार वाद्यांचा गजर । मृदंग विणे अपार टाळ घोळ ॥२॥
 जोडोनि दोन्ही कर मुख पाहा सादर । पायावरी शिर ठेवूनियां ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे काय पढियंतें तें मागा । आपुलालें सांगा सुख दुःखें ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*Rise, all people! Narayana has risen. The sages rejoice, and all three worlds are filled with gladness.**Raise the cry of victory, let instruments thunder: drums, lutes, cymbals, and bells beyond counting. Join your palms, gaze upon his face with reverence, and lay your head upon his feet.**Says Tuka, ask now for whatever you need; tell him your joys and your sorrows.*

IN PLAIN WORDS

Rise, all of you! Narayana has risen. The sages rejoice, and all three worlds are filled with gladness. Raise the cry of victory; let the instruments thunder: drums, lutes, cymbals, and bells beyond counting. Join your two palms, gaze at his face with reverence, and lay your head upon his feet. Tuka says: now ask for whatever you long for; tell him your joys and your sorrows.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a morning waking-song, calling the whole world to rise because God has risen. The waking of Narayana is the waking of everything; the sages and all three worlds share the gladness, so the moment is cosmic, not private. The instruments and the cry of victory turn devotion into shared celebration rather than solitary prayer. The closing line names the chance the morning opens: now that the Lord is awake and present, lay your head at his feet and pour out everything, both the joys and the sorrows you carry.

GATHA 0489

Prayers

Prayer, a small place at the feet

मराठी मूळ

करूनी विनवणी पायीं ठेवीं माथा । परिसावी विनवणी माझी पंढरीनाथा ॥१॥
 अखंडित असावेसें वाटतें पायीं । साहोनि संकोच ठाव थोडासा देई ॥२॥
 असो नमो भाव आलों तुझिया ठाया । पाहें कृपादृष्टी मज पंढरीराया ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे आम्हीं तुझीं वेडीं वांकडीं । नामें भवपाश हातें आपुल्या तोडीं ॥४॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I lay my head at Your feet and beg You, Lord of Pandhari to hear my prayer. I wish to remain forever at these feet.

Bear with my shortcomings and grant me even a small place. I have come to your abode with whatever devotion I possess.

Look upon me with the eye of grace, O Lord of Pandhari. Says Tuka, we are your crooked, wayward ones; with your own hand, sever the noose of worldly bondage that binds us.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I make my plea and lay my head at your feet. Hear my prayer, Lord of Pandhari. I feel I should stay at these feet always, unbroken. Bear with my smallness and give me even a tiny place. With whatever love I have, I have come to your home. Look upon me with the eye of grace, Lord of Pandhari. Tuka says: we are your crooked, wayward ones. With your own hand, cut the noose of worldly bondage that binds us.

WHAT IT MEANS

The whole poem asks for one thing: to stay at God's feet without a break, and to be granted even a small space there. Tukaram does not pretend to be worthy; he asks God to bear with his shortcomings and to look on him with grace anyway. The honesty sharpens at the end. He calls himself and his fellows crooked and wayward, not straight or deserving. The closing request names the real need: only God's own hand can sever the noose of worldly bondage, so the prayer for a place at the feet is finally a prayer for release.

GATHA 0490

Devotion to Vitthal

Procession, the feet that float stones

मराठी मूळ

घडिया घालुनि तळीं चालती वनमाळी । उमटती कोमळीं कुंकुमाचीं ॥१॥
 वंदा चरणरज अवघे सकळ जन । तारियेले पाषाण उदकीं जेणें ॥२॥
 पैस धरुनी चला ठाकत ठायीं ठायीं । मौन्य धरुनी कांहीं नो बोलावें ॥३॥
 तुका अवसरु जाणवितो पुढें । उघडलीं महाल मंदिरें कवाडें ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Placing sandals beneath His feet, the Lord walks forward, and soft vermilion footprints appear wherever he steps. All people, bow to the dust of those feet, for these are the feet that made even stones float upon the water.

Follow quietly in his train, keeping silence, and do not speak. Says Tuka, I announce that the hour has come; the doors of the great palace have been opened.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Sandals placed beneath his feet, Vanamali walks forward, and soft vermilion footprints rise where he steps. All you people, bow to the dust of those feet. These are the feet that made even stones float upon the water. Keep your distance and stand in your places along the way. Hold silence; say nothing at all. Tuka says: I announce that the hour has come. The doors of the great palace and temple have been opened.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a procession song, marshalling the crowd as the Lord walks out. The vermilion footprints make his passage visible, and the call to bow to the dust of his feet sets the right posture: reverence, not jostling. The reminder that these feet floated stones on the water points to the bridge to Lanka, naming the power hidden in the gentle figure walking by. The instruction to keep back and keep silent guards the moment, and the final announcement that the palace doors have opened tells the people the long-awaited hour of darshan has finally come.

GATHA 0491

Devotion to Vitthal

Patience, waiting while God dines

मराठी मूळ

भीतरी गेले हरी राहा क्षणभरी । होईल फळ धीर करावा ॥१॥
 न करीं त्वरा ऐकें मात । क्षण एक निवांत बैसावें ॥२॥
 करूनी मर्दन सारिलें पाणी । न्हाले देव अंग पुसी भवानी ॥३॥
 नेसला सोनसळा विनवी रखुमाई । वाढिलें आतां ठायीं चलावें जी ॥४॥
 करुनियां भोजन घेतलें आंचवण । आनंदें नारायण पडुडले ॥५॥
 तुका मात जाणवी आतां । सकळां बहुतां होती ची ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Hari has gone inside; wait here a moment and the fruit will come if you are patient. Do not be hasty; hear what I say and sit quietly for a short while.

The massage is finished and the bath is done; the Lord has bathed and Bhavani dries his body. He dresses in a golden silk garment; Rukhmabai requests that the meal be served.

After eating and rinsing his hands, Narayana reclines in bliss. Says Tuka, I pass this word along to all of you: be at ease.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Hari has gone inside. Wait here a moment; the fruit will come if you are patient. Do not rush; hear what I say, and sit quietly for a little while. The massage is over, the water is poured, the Lord has bathed, and Bhavani dries his body. He puts on a golden silk garment; Rukhmabai asks that the meal be served and the Lord come to his place. After eating and rinsing his hands, Narayana lies down in bliss. Tuka says: I pass this word to all of you now: be at ease.

WHAT IT MEANS

The poem teaches waiting by narrating, step by step, what God is doing within. Hari has gone inside, so the devotee outside is told not to be hasty but to sit quietly and trust that the fruit of waiting will come. Each domestic stage, the bath, the drying, the golden garment, the served meal, the rest, marks time passing in the Lord's own house. The reassurance at the close is the lesson: the devotee need not fret or push, because God is unhurried and at ease, and patience itself is the right posture before him.

GATHA 0492

Devotion to Vitthal

Longing, begging for the leftovers

मराठी मूळ

द्या जी आम्हां कांहीं सांगा जी रखुमाई । शेष उरलें ठायीं सनकादिकांचें ॥१॥
 टोकत बाहेरी बैसलों आशा । पुराया ग्रासा एकमेकां ॥२॥
 येथवरी आलों तुझिया नांवें । आस करुनी आम्ही दातारा ॥२॥
 प्रेम देउनियां बहुडा आतां दिला । तुका म्हणे आतां विठ्ठल बोला ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Give us something, Rukhmabai; tell us, is there any remnant left over from what the sages ate? We sit outside, watching and waiting, longing for even one morsel to share among us. We have come this far in your name, placing all our hope in you, O generous one.

Says Tuka, grant us the parting gift of love, and let us go saying 'Vitthal, Vitthal.'

IN PLAIN WORDS

Give us something, Rukhmabai; tell us, is anything left over from what the sages ate? We sit outside, watching and hoping, longing for even one mouthful to share among us. We have come this far in your name, putting all our hope in you, generous one. Tuka says: give us the parting gift of love, and send us away saying Vitthal, Vitthal.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram begs at the edge of God's household, asking Rukhmabai for even the scraps the great sages left behind. The lowliness is deliberate: he does not claim a seat at the table, only a single morsel to share, because nearness to God in any measure is enough. He stakes his whole claim on having come in God's name and on hope alone. The last line raises the asking past food: the true parting gift he wants is love, and the blessing is to leave with the Name on his lips.

GATHA 0493

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, the night-service at the feet

मराठी मूळ

बहुडविलें जन मन जालें निश्चळ । चुकवूनी कोल्हाळ आला तुका ॥१॥
 पर्यकीं निद्रा करावें शयन । रखुमाई आपण समवेत ॥२॥
 घेउनियां आलों हातीं टाळ वीणा । सेवेसि चरणा स्वामीचिया ॥२॥
 तुका म्हणे आतां परिसावीं सादरें । बोबडीं उत्तरें पांडुरंगा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The crowd has been sent home, the mind has grown still, and Tuka has slipped away from the commotion. Now let the Lord take rest upon the royal bed, with Rukhmabai beside him.

I have come carrying the lute and cymbals in my hands to attend upon my Master's feet. Says Tuka, now listen kindly, O Panduranga, to my stammering words.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The crowd has been sent home, the mind has grown still, and Tuka has slipped away from the noise. Now let the Lord sleep upon the royal bed, with Rukhmabai beside him. I have come carrying cymbals and the lute in my hands, to serve at my Master's feet. Tuka says: now listen kindly, Panduranga, to my stammering words.

WHAT IT MEANS

When the day's crowd has dispersed and the mind is quiet, the devotee comes alone for the last service of the night. He readies the Lord and Rukhmabai for rest upon the royal bed, then takes up cymbals and lute to wait at the feet. The intimacy lies in this private hour, when noise has fallen away and only love remains to keep watch. He calls his own words stammering, owning that his praise is clumsy, and asks only that God listen kindly anyway, for the offering is love, not eloquence.

GATHA 0494

Devotion to Vitthal

Devotion, song as the only offering

मराठी मूळ

नाच गाणें माझा जवळील ठाव । निरोपीन भाव होईल तो ॥१॥
 तुम्हां निद्रा मज आज्ञा ते स्वभावे । उतरुनि जीवें जाईन लोण ॥२॥
 एकाएकीं बहु करीन सुस्वरें । मधुर उत्तरें आवडीनें ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे तूं जगदानी उदार । फेडशील भार एका वेळा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Song and dance are the only place I have near you. Whatever devotion arises, that I will offer.

Your sleep is my own command by nature; with my very life I will remove the evil eye from you. Alone, I will sing many sweet melodies in a loving voice.

Says Tuka, you are the generous Lord of the universe; in a single moment you will lift the entire burden.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Song and dance are the only place I have near you. Whatever devotion rises in me, that I will offer. Your sleep is my command, by my very nature; with my own life I will lift away the evil eye from you. Alone, I will sing many sweet melodies in a loving voice. Tuka says: you are the generous giver to the whole world. In a single moment you will lift the whole burden.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram names the one gift he has to bring: song and dance, the place where he can stand close to God. He has no learning or riches to offer, only the devotion that rises in him, and he gives that. The tenderness turns protective: he treats God's rest as his charge and offers his own life to ward off any harm, the evil eye, that might touch the Lord. The close trades the small gift for an immense return: the one who is generous to the whole world will, in a single moment, lift away the entire burden the devotee carries.

GATHA 0495

The Nature of God

Adoration, the tender guardian

मराठी मूळ

सिणलेती सेवकां देउनि इच्छादान । केला अभिमान अंगीकारा ॥१॥
 अहो दीनानाथा आनंदमूर्ती । तुम्हांसि शोभती ब्रीदें ऐसीं ॥२॥
 बहुतांनीं विनविलें बहुतां प्रकारीं । सकळां ठायीं हरी पुरलेती ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे अगा कुटुंबवत्सळा । कोण तुझी लीळा जाणे ऐसी ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Having granted each weary servant the gift of his heart's desire, you embraced them with the honor of your acceptance. O Lord of the lowly, O form of bliss, such titles truly become you.

Many have prayed in many ways, and in every instance you have filled them to overflowing. Says Tuka, O tender guardian of your family, who can ever fathom your play?

IN PLAIN WORDS

You gave each weary servant the gift his heart desired, and you took them up as your own with honor. O Lord of the lowly, O form of bliss, such titles truly suit you. Many have prayed to you in many ways, and in every place you have filled them to overflowing. Tuka says: O tender guardian of your family, who can know your play as it truly is?

WHAT IT MEANS

The poem praises God by what he does for the tired and the lowly: he grants each one his heart's desire and then accepts him with honor, not condescension. The titles Tukaram uses, Lord of the lowly and form of bliss, are earned by this conduct, not merely conferred. The breadth is the point: however differently people have prayed, none has gone away empty, and all have been filled past measure. The closing wonder names the mystery: a God who guards his devotees as tenderly as his own family acts by a play no one can fully fathom.

GATHA 0496

Devotion to Vitthal

Putting God to rest, tender care

मराठी मूळ

उठा भागलेती उजगरा । जाला स्वामी निद्रा करा ॥१॥
 वाट पाहाते रुक्मिणी । उभी मंचक संवारुणी ॥२॥
 केली करा क्षमा । बडबड पुरुषोत्तमा ॥३॥
 लागतो चरणा । तुक्याबंधु नारायणा ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Rise now, you who are weary from the night vigil; the Master has retired, so go and take your rest. Rukmini stands waiting, having prepared the royal bed.

Forgive the many words I have spoken, O Purushottama. Says Tuka's brother, I fall at the feet of Narayana.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Rise now, you are worn out from the long night watch. The Master has lain down, so go and take your rest. Rukmini is waiting; she has made the bed ready and stands beside it. Forgive my chatter, O Purushottama. Tuka's brother says: I fall at the feet of Narayana.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is a bedtime song for the Lord, sung as the day's worship ends and the deity is laid down to sleep. The singer turns to those who have kept the night vigil and tells them their service is done; they may rest now, for Rukmini stands waiting by the made bed. Then he asks pardon for all the words he has poured out, calling them mere chatter before God. The closing is pure surrender: the body of devotion is to fall at Narayana's feet and ask nothing more.

GATHA 0497

Devotion to Vitthal

Leave-taking, fed from God's own plate

मराठी मूळ

पावला प्रसाद आतां विटोनि जावें । आपला तो श्रम कळों येतसे जीवें ॥१॥
 आतां स्वामी सुखें निद्रा करा गोपाळा । पुरले मनोरथ जातो आपुलिया स्थळा ॥२॥
 तुम्हांसि जागवूं आम्ही आपुलिया चाडा । शुभाशुभ कर्म दोष वाराया पीडा ॥३॥
 तुका म्हणे दिलें उच्छिष्टाचें भोजन । आम्हां आपुलिया नाहीं निवडिलें भिन्न ॥३॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The consecrated offering has been received; now you may depart satisfied. I know in my heart how much labor this has cost you.

Now sleep in peace, O Gopala; all desires are fulfilled, and we go to our own places. It is for our own needs that we kept you awake, to remove the afflictions of our good and bad deeds.

Says Tuka, you fed us from your own plate and made no distinction between yourself and us.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The offering has been received; now you may go satisfied. I know in my heart how much this cost you. Now sleep in peace, O Gopala; every wish is fulfilled, and we go to our own places. We kept you awake for our own sake, to take away the harm of our good deeds and our bad. Tuka says: you fed us from your own plate, and made no difference between yourself and us.

WHAT IT MEANS

The worship is over and the devotee is taking leave, but he speaks first to God's tiredness, not his own. He admits a strange honesty: it was for his own need that he kept the Lord awake all night, to have his merits and sins alike wiped away. So the service was never charity offered to God; it was the devotee's own rescue. The last line names the wonder of it: God fed them from his own plate, *ucchishta*, the leftovers from his own mouth, drawing no line between himself and his people. That shared plate is the whole intimacy of *bhakti*.

GATHA 0498

Devotion to Vitthal

Inner worship, the body as God's temple

मराठी मूळ

शब्दांचीं रत्नें करुनी अळंकार । तेणें विश्वंभर पूजियेला ॥१॥
 भावाचे उपचार करुनि भोजन । तेणें नारायण जेवविला ॥२॥
 संसारा हातीं दिलें आंचवण । मुखशुद्धी मन समर्पिलें ॥३॥
 रंगलीं इंद्रियें सुरंग तांबूल । माथां तुळसीदळ समर्पिलें ॥४॥
 एकभावदीप करुनि निरांजन । देऊनि आसन देहाचें या ॥५॥
 न बोलोनि तुका करी चरणसेवा । निजविलें देवा माजघरीं ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I fashioned ornaments from the jewels of words and with them adorned the Lord of the universe. I prepared a meal of heartfelt devotion and with it fed Narayana.

I gave the rinsing water of worldly life to his hands and offered my mind as the final cleansing of the mouth. The senses, steeped in fragrant betel, were offered, and a tulsi leaf was placed upon his head.

Making a single lamp of undivided focus, I gave him this body as his seat. Says Tuka, in silence I serve his feet and have laid the Lord to rest in the inner chamber.

IN PLAIN WORDS

I made ornaments out of the jewels of words, and with them I adorned the Lord of the universe. I made a meal out of heartfelt feeling, and with it I fed Narayana. I gave the rinsing water of worldly life to his hands, and offered my mind as the mouth-cleansing after the meal. I dressed his senses in fragrant betel, and placed a tulsi leaf upon his head. I made a single lamp of undivided feeling and waved it, and I gave him this body as his seat. Tuka says: in silence I serve his feet, and I have laid God to rest in the inner chamber.

WHAT IT MEANS

Tukaram takes the whole ritual of temple worship and performs it inwardly, with nothing physical at all. Words become the ornaments, devotion becomes the food, the busy world becomes the hand-rinsing water, the mind itself becomes the rinse of the mouth. Each outward act of puja is matched by something offered from within. The point is that real worship needs no brass and no flowers; the body is the temple, single-pointed feeling is the lamp, and the deepest service is done in silence. He ends by laying God to rest in the innermost room, the heart, where the worshipper and the worshipped are finally alone.

GATHA 0499

Devotion to Vitthal

After worship, the temple at peace

मराठी मूळ

उठोनियां तुका गेला निजस्थळा । उरले राउळा माजी देव ॥१॥
 निउल जालें सेवका स्वामींचें । आज्ञे करुनी चित्त समाधान ॥२॥
 पहुडलिया हरी अनंतशैनावरी । तेथें नाही उरी कांहीं काम ॥३॥
 अवघी बाहेर घालूनि गेला तुका । सांगितलें लोकां निजले देव ॥३॥
 दसरा - अभंग १

पवित्र सुदिन उत्तम दिवस दसरा । सांपडला तो साधा आजि मुहूर्त बरा ।

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Having risen, Tuka went to his own place, and the Lord remained within the temple. The exchange between servant and Master is complete; the mind is at peace through obedience to his command.

Hari has reclined upon the serpent-bed of infinity; there is no further task remaining. Tuka put everyone outside as he left and told the people: the Lord is asleep.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Tuka rose and went to his own place, and God stayed behind in the temple. The service between servant and Master is finished; obeying the command, the mind is at peace. Hari has lain down on the endless serpent-bed; no task is left there now. Tuka put everyone outside and left, and told the people: God is asleep. It is a holy day, a fine day, the great day of Dasara; a good hour has been found, so make good use of it today.

WHAT IT MEANS

This closes the cycle of worship at Pandhari: the deity is settled for the night and the worshipper goes home. The peace here comes from obedience, doing what was asked and then letting go, so nothing remains to be done. Hari rests on Shesha, the serpent of infinity, the image of a God wholly at ease. Tuka clears the temple and quietly tells

the people the Lord is sleeping, the way one hushes a house around someone resting. The mention of Dasara names the auspicious moment and urges the hearer to seize the rare good hour while it lasts.

GATHA 0500

Appeals and Exhortations

The auspicious moment, seize it now

मराठी मूळ

गर्जा जेजेकार हरि हृदयीं धरा । आळस नका करुं लाहानां सांगतों थोरां ॥१॥
 या हो या हो बाइयानो निघाले हरी । सिलंगणा वेगीं घेउनि आरत्या करीं ।
 ओवाळूं श्रीमुख वंदूं पाउलें शिरीं । आम्हां दैव आलें येथें घरिच्या घरीं ॥२॥
 अक्षय मुहूर्त औठामध्यें साधे तें । मग येरी गर्जे जैसैं तैसैं होत जातें ।
 म्हणोनि मागें पुढें कोणी न पाहावें येथें । सांडा परतें काम जाऊं हरी सांगातें ॥३॥
 बहुतां बहुतां रीतीं चित्तीं धरा हें मनीं । नका गै करुं आइकाल ज्या कानीं ।
 मग हें सुख कधीं न देखाल स्वप्नीं । उरेल हायहाय मागें होईल काहाणी ॥४॥
 ऐसियास वंचती त्यांच्या अभाग्या पार । नाहीं नाहीं नाहीं सत्य जाणा निर्धार ।
 मग हे वेळ घटिका न ये अजरामर । कळलें असों द्या मग पडतील विचार ॥५॥
 जयासाठीं ब्रम्हादिक जालेति पिसे । उच्छिष्टा कारणें देव जळीं जाले मासे ।
 अद्धापगीं विश्वमाता लक्ष्मी वसे । तो हा तुकयाबंधु म्हणे आलें अनायासें ॥६॥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Raise the cry of victory and hold Hari in your heart. Do not be lazy; I say this to the young and old alike.

Come, come, O women, Hari is setting out. Hurry with your lamps for the waving of lights; let us wave the flame before his blessed face and bow our heads to his feet.

Good fortune has come to us right here at home. The imperishable moment may be seized in the space of a single breath; after that, things go on as they will.

Therefore look neither forward nor backward; drop all other work and go with Hari. Take this to heart in every possible way.

Do not let it slip, for if it reaches your ears and you still waste the chance, you will never find this joy even in a dream; only regret will remain, and it will become an old, sad tale. There is truly no measuring the misfortune of those who squander such an opportunity.

This moment will not return, deathless and undying; know this with certainty, and then let your deliberations begin. For this prize, Brahma and the other gods went mad.

For the sake of a leftover morsel, God himself became a fish in the water. Lakshmi, the mother of the universe, still dwells in the depths of the ocean for his sake.

Says Tuka's brother, he has come here of his own accord and without effort.

IN PLAIN WORDS

Shout the cry of victory and hold Hari in your heart. Do not be lazy; I say this to the young and to the old. Come, come, O women, Hari is setting out; hurry, take up your lamps for the waving of lights. Let us wave the flame before his blessed face and bow our heads to his feet. Good fortune has come to us, right here in our own home. The unfading moment can be won in the space of a single breath; after that, things go on as they will. So look neither behind you nor ahead; drop every other task and go with Hari. Hold this in your heart in every way; do not let it slip once your ears have heard it. If you waste this chance, you will never see this joy again, even in a dream; only the cry of regret will be left, and it will become an old, sad tale. There is no measuring the misfortune of those who throw such a chance away. No, no, no; know this for certain. This hour will not come back, deathless and undying. Let this be understood, and then your reasonings can begin. For this prize Brahma and the gods went mad. For the sake of a leftover morsel God became a fish in the water; and Lakshmi, mother of the world, still lives in the depths of the ocean for his sake. Tuka's brother says: he has come here on his own, and without any effort of ours.

WHAT IT MEANS

This is an urgent call to seize a rare moment of God's nearness before it passes. Hari is setting out, the lights are ready, and the singer drives everyone, young and old, women with their lamps, to drop all other business and come now. The whole force of the poem is on the smallness of the window: the imperishable instant can be caught in one breath, and then ordinary life resumes. He paints the cost of missing it bluntly, that nothing will be left but lifelong regret turned into a sad old story. Then he raises the stakes, recalling that the gods themselves longed for this, that God stooped to become a fish for a small thing, that Lakshmi waits in the deep for his sake. The relief in the last line is that this prize, so coveted, has now come to the ordinary devotee freely and without any earning.