

Classic Poetry Series

**Balakrishna Bhagwant  
Borkar  
- poems -**

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# Balakrishna Bhagwant Borkar(1910 – 1984)

Balkrishna Bhagwant Borkar (Bakibab Borkar or Ba Bha Borkar) (Hindi: ?????????? ?????? ??????), was an eminent Marathi and Konkani poet born in Curchorem village in Goa. He studied only up to 2nd grade in Marathi medium and completed his further education in Portuguese medium. He acquired a Portuguese Teachers Diploma certificate.

Konkani was his mother tongue spoken in the household. He lived in a joint family and the atmosphere in the house was very religious. The mornings began early with Bhupali, Stotra, religious songs and Aartis. The evenings too would ring with different forms of religious poems like Abhanga, Viranya, Goulani, Bharud and Bhajan, all sung in different tunes and melodies. All this culture moulded him from his childhood.

There was a rule in his household that every child had to learn a new Abhanga by rote and sing it during the Bhajan session. Once, Borkar forgot to learn a new Abhanga. When his turn to sing came, he sang an Abhanga that he created extempore and as was the practice of Saint Poets, he ended his Abhanga with the verse Baaki Mhane (So says Baaki; Baaki was his pet name, and was fondly called Baakibaab, baab = child). But when none could believe that he had created the Abhanga, he created yet another Abhanga extempore and sang it immediately.

He could not pursue his education beyond matriculation due to paucity of funds. With a Teachers Diploma, he landed a job as a Teacher in a Marathi Portuguese school and taught in various schools in Goa from 1930 to 1945. Soon after the Goa Liberation Movement started by Dr. Lohia, he left for Bombay (today's Mumbai) where he edited the Konkani periodicals Amacha Gomatak in 1948 and Porjecho Awaj in 1955. Then from 1st November 1955 he was appointed as a Spoken Word Producer by Akashwani (All India Radio Network) at Pune (1955 – 1960), then at Panaji where he worked till his retirement in 1970.

His first collection of poems Pratima was published in 1930 at the young age of twenty. One can see the influence of great Marathi poets like Keshavsut, <a href="http://www.poemhunter.com/tryambak-bapuji-thombre/">Balkavi</a>, <a href="http://www.poemhunter.com/ram-ganesh-gadkari/">Govindaagraj</a> on these poems, as also the deep influence of the religious atmosphere in his house, loving family, the culture that he imbibed during his childhood, and Goa's picturesque nature.

He was entranced with the beauty of nature. Nature became his language and the medium of his creation. In describing Goa's natural beauty he says:

In this Goan land, there are honeyed coconuts. Milk vats burst through every hill and dale; there are heaps of mangoes and jackfruit. The moon beam returns to her paternal house here and gold-silver droplets play in the front yard during the monsoon...'. How simplistically beautiful and creative yet loving is this narrative! Nature peeps in regularly in all his writings, especially his poems. The language of Nature is his uniqueness.

The senior poet [B. R. Tambe](http://www.poemhunter.com/bhaskar-ramchandra-tambe/) was so overwhelmed by his poems that in 1932 he publicly appreciated Borkar by pronouncing Here is a new star on the horizon. In the Sahitya Sammelan (literary convention) held in Baroda in 1934, he received a Gold medal for his poem Tethe Kar Mazhe Julti (My join my hands there).

He was greatly influenced by the ideology and poetic style of the great poet [B. R. Tambe](http://www.poemhunter.com/bhaskar-ramchandra-tambe/). He self-accepted [Tambe](http://www.poemhunter.com/bhaskar-ramchandra-tambe/) as his Guru and proudly proclaimed it too. He therefore became known as the poet who would carry on the legacy of [Tambe](http://www.poemhunter.com/bhaskar-ramchandra-tambe/). Borkar had cherished relationships with great personalities in different fields like V. S. Khandekar, Kakasaheb Kalekar, Kumar Gandharva, [Pu La Deshpande](http://www.poemhunter.com/purushottam-laxman-deshpande/), Artist Dalal, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Lohiya, Pandit Nehru, Yogi Arvind Babu. His life was enriched and influenced by all these great people.

One can see his increasing maturity and changing lifestyle through his poems in his entire poetic journey. He was a poet with an affinity for beauty. From this beauty he was enlightened of divine grace and non-materialism.

Divyatwahi Jeth pratichi, tethe kar mazhe julti  
Yadni Jyani Deoni Nij Shir, ghadile manvateche mandir  
Pari jayanchya dahanbhumivar – nahi chira nahi panti –  
Tethe kar mazhi julti.

(where the flame of divinity glows, there I join my hands in prayer,  
those who sacrificed their head everyday, created a humanitarian temple,  
but at whose funeral site, no great stone was overturned nor even a candle  
burnt,  
there I join my hands in prayer)

The genuineness behind the humanitarian touch of this poem is felt even today. This poem has become a milestone due to its deeply meaningful wordplay. He wrote magnificent poems like Dyandeo gele tevha, Dekhne te chehare, jeevan tyanna kalale ho. Feminine beauty and romance were also primary subjects of his poems.

Extreme sensitivity was his personality and lyricism was the uniqueness of his poems. His poems have captured the Marathi poetry audience for over five decades with his rich usage of words, mastery over Akshargan, Matra compositions and different poetic metres, delicate, Nadmay and Chandobaddha compilations.

His steady routine life received a jolt in 1946 when Dr. Lohia blew the war bugle, announcing the liberation movement of Goa by breaking the law. Without a moments thought, Borkar threw himself into the movement for the freedom of his motherland. This movement started on a Tuesday, which inspired Borkar to write the poem Triwar Mangalwar.

Triwar Mangalwar Ajala Triwar Mangalwar  
Swatantryachi Sinha Garjana Ata Ithe Uthantar

(thrice Tuesday today is thrice Tuesday  
The lion's roar of freedom will now be heard here)

Thrice – reiterated thrice to emphasize the importance of the day

His enthusiastic song Goyan Lohia Aaylore (Lohia came to Goa) was on everyone's lips in Goa. Leaving behind a household of ten supported by him and sacrificing a secure Government job, he jumped in wholeheartedly into the movement and took up the mission to spread patriotism through his poems.

India got freedom in 1947 but also got divided. This prompted Borkar to write:

Dubhanga Zhaali Vaastudevtaa  
Dubhanga Zhaali Maayaamamtaa  
Bhaavaanchyaa ghaavaatuni nighati, navya vishaachya sari  
Ghaam aapulyaa shiri – bapuji ghaav aapulyaa ghari  
Swaatnatryaachi asha diwali, kashi karu sajri

(The motherland has been divided  
Affection has been divided)

From the wounds of sentiments flow, new drops of poison  
Sweat on our brows, Bapuji our home has been wounded  
How will I celebrate, Freedom sought like this)

These lines depict the hurt souls of the common Indians.

Borkar dabbled in different kinds of literature like short stories, novels, translations, light prose etc, but essentially he remained a poet at heart. Poetry was his true forte. He would write poetry oblivious of his surroundings, and stay true to his calling.

He received a Gold medal in 1950 from the Gomantak Marathi Sahitya Sammelan (Marathi Literary Convention) for his novel Bhavin. He also received an award from the Maharashtra State Government for his books Anandbhairavi, Chitraveena, Gitar, and Anandyatri Ravindranath. He was awarded the Padmashri in 1967 by the then President of India. For his valuable wholehearted participation in the freedom struggle, he was awarded the Tamrapatra (Copper Plaque) in 1974 by the Government of India. In 1957 he chaired the Reception Committee of the Gomantak Marathi Sahitya Sammelan (1957). In 1958 he presided over the Marathi Kavi Sammelan in Solapur. He was also the member of the Indian delegation of Men of Letters to Ceylon in 1963, presided over the Konkani Convention in Bombay in 1967 and the second session of the Marathi Literary Convention at Mahabaleshwar in 1970. He was the President of Institute of Menexes Braganza, Panjim from 1964 to 1970.

He loved Goa and the Konkani language very much. Many of his books in the Konkani language have been published. Of these, his collection Saasaay received the Sahitya Academy award.

Even in the midst of harsh reality, Borkar's poetry showed unshakeable faith in the goodness of human nature. Through his dedication to beauty, the poet who wrote intensely musical and poignant poems and scrupulously followed traditional pattern of rhyme and rhythm is still respectfully recognised today as the Anandyatri poet.

#### **<b>Awards And Honors </b>**

1934 - Gold Medal Marathi Sahitya Samellan for Poetry

1950 - Gold Medal Gomantak Marathi Sahitya Samellan for Novel "Bhavin"

1950 - President - Kokani Sahitya Samellan

1957- President - MarathiKavi Samellan, Solapur

1961 - President - Tagore Centinary Sahitya Shakha

1956 - President - Gomantak Marathi Sahitya Samellan  
1963 - President Sahityakar Sansad, Allahabad  
1964 - 1970 - President- Institute Menezes Braganza, Panaji, Goa  
1963 - Member of the Sahitik Shistamandal to Sri Lanka  
1967 - Padmashri - Government of India  
1968 - President - Akhil Bharatiya Kokani Parishad  
1970- President-Second Marathi Sahitya Parishad's Sahitya Samellan,  
Mahabaleshwar  
1970-President- 20th Mumbai Subarban Sahitya Samellan  
1970 - President- 72 nd Annual Function of Mumbai Marathi Granthasangralaya

Maharashtra State Prizes:

"Anand Bhairavi" - Rs. 1000

"Chitraveena" - Rs. 500

"Guitar" - Rs. 1500

"Anandyatri Ravindranath" - Rs. 5000

# Dis Gela Khala

Balakrishna Bhagwant Borkar



# That Life Is Beauteous

That life is beauteous,  
which is a pilgrimage of contentment,  
From which flows the moonbeam,  
like pure mercury

Balakrishna Bhagwant Borkar

# The Motherland Has Been Divided

The motherland has been divided  
Affection has been divided  
From the wounds of sentiments flow,  
new drops of poison  
Sweat on our brows,  
Bapuji our home has been wounded  
How will I celebrate,  
Freedom sought like this

Balakrishna Bhagwant Borkar

# Where The Flame Of Divinity Glows

Where the flame of divinity glows,  
there I join my hands in prayer,  
those who sacrificed their head everyday,  
created a humanitarian temple,  
but at whose funeral site,  
no great stone was overturned nor even a candle burnt,  
there I join my hands in prayer

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