

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Sant Tukaram**

**- poems -**

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## Abhangs (A Short Collection)

I was sleeping when Namdeo and Vitthal Stepped into my dream.  
"Your job is to make poems. Stop wasting time," Namdeo said.  
Vitthal gave me the measure and gently aroused me from a dream inside a dream.  
Namdeo vowed to write one billion poems.  
"Tuka, all the unwritten ones are your responsibility."

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To repeat Your name is to string pearls together.  
The pleasure in your manifested form is always new.  
I have ceased to desire the unembodied God.  
Your worshippers do not seek liberation.  
With You, it is still possible to give and to receive.  
What use is the place where a dish sat when it is taken away?  
Tuka says, "Give me the gift of freedom from fear.  
After all, O Lord who pervades the world, I have given the world You."

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Without a worshipper, how can God assume a form and accept service?  
The one makes the other beautiful, as a gold setting shows off a jewel.  
Who but God can make the worshipper free from desires?  
Tuka says, "They are drawn to each other like mother and child."

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I am not starved for want of food, but it is Janardana who deserves my reverence.  
I have looked on God as one who sees everything, on bright and dark days, alike.  
God is like a father with his child,  
who both feels and gives pleasure at the same time.  
Good acts and bad acts vanish.  
Tuka says, "God's glory alone is left."

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This is why I have left my house and gone to the forest.  
My love will be spoiled by the evil eye.  
I will lose my love for Him.  
I will not listen to this doctrine of unity.  
Tuka says, "This doctrine that God and I are one is false.  
I will not let it interfere with me."

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Just beyond us we see that purple luster - how glorious!  
With His noble crown of peacock feathers stitched together.  
As you look upon Him, fever and illusion vanish  
Adore then the Prince of the Yadavas, the Lord of Yogis.  
He who filled with passion the sixteen thousand royal damsels,

Fair Creatures, divine maidens.  
He stands upon the river bank with the luster of one million moons.  
It is fastened in jewels on His neck  
And merges into the luster of His form.

This God who bears the wheel is the chief of the Yadavas.  
Him the thirty three crores of demigods adore.  
The demons tremble before Him.  
His dark blue countenance destroys sin.  
How fair are His feet with saffron stained!  
How fortunate is the brick that is grasped by His feet!  
The very thought of Him makes fire cool.  
Therefore embrace Him with experience of your own.  
The sages, as they see His face, contemplate Him in the spirit,  
The Father of the World stands before them in bodily shape.  
Tuka is frenzied after Him; His purple form ravages the mind

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If men are habitations of God, we should fall at their feet  
But we should leave alone their habits and goals.  
Fire is good to drive away cold  
But you must not tie it up  
And carry it around in a cloth.  
Tuka says, "A scorpion or a snake is a habitation of Narayana;  
You may worship Him from afar, but you must not touch Him."

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