

Classic Poetry Series

Akha Bhagat
- poems -

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Akha Bhagat(1591–1656)

Akha Bhagat (or commonly known as Akho) (Gujarati: અખા ભગત, અખો) was a medieval period poet in Gujarati literature who wrote in the tradition of the Bhakti movement. He kept Gujarati literature alive and wrote his poems in pattern which is called "chhappa" (satirical poems).

History

He came to Ahmedabad from Jetalpur in the 17th Century. He was goldsmith by profession. His residence in Ahmedabad which is small room in Desaini Pol at Khadia is known as Akha no Ordo (literally meaning A room of Akha). Akho was Hindu- soni by cast and sub cast is pasawala (dhanpat). Soni means gold smith. one lane in desaini pol (street) is named as 'akha bhagatno khancho'. He got inspiration to go towards the way of Bhakti from Saint Gokulnath. He shared his experience and knowledge in poetry writing style he followed for lending his philosophy in verse.

Samjana Vina Re Shukh Nahin Jantane Re

Akha Bhagat

Tilaka Karatam Trepana Thayam

Akha Bhagat

Verbal Whips

1.

Still applying tilak¹ have turned fifty-three
and worn out are the holes of the rosary.
Exhausted are feet from pilgrimage
but not seen yet the Lord's visage.
Hearing religious discourses ears burst
Akha, received no enlightenment yet.

2.

Such was the habit of a dunce
worshipped as many gods as stones.
Would start bathing at water's sight
pluck leaves on seeing tulsi plant².
This talk of countless gods from whence?
That Akha, is the chief menace.

3.

A fire has erupted in the city -
what danger to those that fly?
Rats poor things make such noise
since no power to fly have those.
What birth's fear Akha have the wise
whose experience-wing spans the skies?

4.

Trust not the talk of a big-wig
its like drum-beat in a desolate place.
Like sesame seed mingled with kodara grain
the blind congregate in darkness.
Can't cook gruel nor cook dhani³
says Akha I now fully realize this.

5.

Blind man and his veiled daughter-in-law
such set out for a religious discourse.
Hearing was disconnected from preaching
like eyeliner for eyes rubbed on cheek.
Like a deep well and leaking pail
learning-listening was all worthless.

6.

Body's vanity weighed a quarter seer⁴
on getting education it quadrupled to a seer.
During scholarly dispute turned heavier
on becoming a preceptor, weighed much greater.
Akha, if from chaff weight is thus got
then one loses all self-insight.

7.

Wherever one looks one sees deceivers
like owls squatting opposite one another.
If one raises the sun's topic
the others oppose raising their beak:
'In darkness we spent a thousand years
how did you turn so wise O youngster? '
Akha, the big people are of such sort
they discard diamond and pick up rock.

8.

As the hunter hides behind foliage
to seize beasts that are unwary
so sheltering behind the Lord are cheats
for gold and women they play their tricks.
Akha, how can a guru ferry you across
whose mentor is a potter and pupils are asses?

[Note:

1 An auspicious mark made on the forehead by the religiously inclined.

2 Basil

3 Roasted grain

4 A seer is about a kilo]

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