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Songs in the Praise of Guru: Ganga Sati

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There are certain doubts regarding the period in which Ganga Sati, a female Indian saint-poet of the Bhakti tradition, was born but it is widely agreed that she lived in the twelfth or the thirteen century. Ganga Sati's contributions consist of around fifty-two hymns or *bhajans* addressed to Paanbai, her daughter-in-law and disciple. Most of her hymns show how the grace of the Guru or the Satguru, the spiritual teacher, is important in achieving the *moksha*, the spiritual salvation. In her *bhajans*, the hymns like poems, she shows the character of a true devotee or a saint. Ganga Sati belonged to the *Nirgun Bhakti* tradition that stresses on the fact that the human soul could attain the salvation only through arduous discipline and self-surrender.

"In the flashes of the lightning"

In the flashes of the lightning, thread the beads o Paanbai¹
Or there would be complete darkness suddenly,
The days would pass off swiftly o Paanbai
Twenty-one thousand six hundred of your bodies would turn into ashes.

In the flashes of the lightning...

This is the unknown truth to know about o Paanbai
It can't be shared with the ignorant,
This play of secret nectar is very complex o Paanbai
Those who leave their deceit would understand.

In the flashes of the lightning...

Join us heartily o Paanbai
To know the secret of the soul,
I would show a difference between knowers and unknowers
And would change your heart o Paanbai.

In the flashes of the lightning...

The Guru is greater than the universe o Paanbai
I would show His kingdom to you,
O saints, remember these words of Ganga Sati
There is no greed in His country.

In the flashes of the lightning...

“The Meru may shake”

The Meru¹ may shake but whose mind never shakes, o Paanbai
Though the whole universe may shatter into pieces;
Amidst the ocean of troubles who never loses mind
That’s the true measure of a man of God.

The Meru may shake but...

One who is always chaste in intentions
And never expects anything from others;
One who donates without revealing the name
And has a faith in the Guru’s words.

The Meru may shake but...

One who is always unaffected by joys and sorrows
And remains blissful every moment;
One who is always busy in the praise of God
And thus breaks the chains of greed.
The Meru may shake but...

One who always offers mind and heart in the service of Guru
These are the Nijari² men and women;
Forget yourself in the name of God
And the God will come to your doors.

The Meru may shake but...

One who bravely follows the words of the true Guru
And sacrifices his life in His service;
One who has cast off all conceits and choices
And parts with greediness from the heart.

The Meru may shake but...

Befriend a person
Who always rejoices in the name of God;
Remember these words of Ganga Sati, o Paanbai
Whose eyes always flow with compassion.

The Meru may shake but...

[Glossary: 1 The Meru: The Meru is believed to be a sacred peak in the Himalayan mountain ranges. It is the sacred five-peaked mountain of Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist cosmology and is considered to be the centre of all the physical, metaphysical and spiritual universes. 2 Nijari: Nijari is title given to those who follow the Nirguna Bhakti.]

“If one thinks of getting worshipped from his heart

If one thinks of getting worshipped from his heart
How will he receive God's grace!
Never make such man your pupil
Who is not coloured in God's name.

If one thinks of getting worshipped...

One who has a filthy heart
And consider himself a great
Never give him any knowledge
Who has no control over his mind.

If one thinks of getting worshipped...

Ignorant never understands the sign
And uses thousand keys to succeed;
One who has many conceits and choices
Defamation embraces him in the end.

If one thinks of getting worshipped...

Never make a greedy man your pupil
He will invite problems to you.
Remember these words of Ganga Sati, o Paanbai
Never befriend such man.

If one thinks of getting worshipped...

“Once you are on the path of bhakti¹”

Once you are on the path of bhakti never get tempted
And never keep an amity with a biased person;
Enjoy the bliss of solitude
And have on your head the grace of the Satguru.

Once you are on the path of bhakti...

Pilgrimages and vows won't make any sense
And never do what the Satguru should only do;
Never indulge in trivial things
When you know the secret of the soul.

Once you are on the path of bhakti...

O Harimay, when you have known the world
Keep away from the deceitful ways;
Break all the chains of greed
And always busy yourself in the name of God

Once you are on the path of bhakti...

Mandap and gatherings won't make any sense
These are the signs of the ignorant
Remember these words of Ganga Sati, o Paanbai
This is the way to embrace Ram, the God.

Once you are on the path of bhakti...

[Glossary: 1 Bhakti: devotion; 2 Harimay: the devotee; 3 Mandap: the sanctum of temple; 4 Rama, an Indian God.]

"One Who is a True Saint"

One who is a true saint never deceives others
He never has greed at his heart
One who truly understands the words of Guru
He is known as the man of wisdom

One who is a true saint...

He may die but never breaks the promise
And sells himself on the words of Guru;
Even Gods come to test his faith
This hero proves the winner.

One who is a true saint...

He is always cheerful like the immortals
And is never afraid of death;
In the flames His anger the whole universe burns
But he remains unaffected.

One who is a true saint...

One who has attained the moksha
Remains unmoved by the gain and the loss;
One who has no greed and ambition in his heart
He is known as the true saint.

One who is a true saint...

One who is blissful at the heart
He gets the grace of Nakalang Rai
Remember these words of Ganga Sati, o Paanbai
He is known as the true saint.

One who is a true saint...

[Glossary: 1 Nakalang Rai: one of the names of God.]

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