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Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj

धार्मिक त्यासचि म्हणावें। सत्तेवाचूनि वागे बरवें। स्वयें आपुल्याचि स्वभावें। समरस होई सर्वाशी॥११॥

Tukdoji Maharaj Ji writes in his Gram Gita that the religious should be said to be the one who behaves well with everyone without showing any authority or supremacy, does not give up his apprehension, and lives in harmony with everyone. **Ref - Gram Gita, Chapter 1**

Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj, a modern saint, devotee, poet, and social reformer from Maharashtra was born on Vaishakh Shuddha Saptami in 1909. His full name was Manik Bandoji Ingle. He effectively used bhajans and kirtans to eradicate superstition and caste discrimination. He expressed the idea of self-restraint through Gram Gita. Tukadoji Maharaj composed poems in Marathi and Hindi languages.



Tukdoji Maharaj was born on April 30, 1909, in Yavali Shaheed village of Amravati district of Maharashtra. Vithoba of Pandharpur is the family deity of his family, so he was fond of meditation, bhajan, and worship since childhood. He dropped out of school after his 3rd class. When Varkhed had gone to his maternal grandmother's home, he made Adkuji Maharaj his guru. Later he started writing poems for Kirtan and Bhajan. One day Guru Maharaja called him

'Tukdya'. He wrote several abhangas, which end with the phrase 'tukdya mahane' (Tukdya Said). Because of this, he came to be known as Tukdoji Maharaj.

Tukdoji Maharaj also participated in the freedom struggle and national work. Because of his work, he became a national saint. Tukadoji Maharaj established Gurukunj Ashram in Mojhari in the year 1935. Khanjiri Bhajan was the main feature of his awakening. Tukadoji Maharaj has written about 50 books and also has much-unpublished literature. Tukdoji Maharaj was involved in social reforms including the construction of roads in rural Maharashtra. He wrote, "Gram Gita" in which the means of village development were described. He used his Bhajans and Kirtans to eradicate superstition and caste discrimination.

शुद्राघरीं उत्तमवर्तनी जन्मला। तो शूद्रचि कैसा राहिला? तैसा क्षत्रियाघरीं भ्रष्ट निपजला। तो क्षत्रिय कैसा?॥६९॥

Sant Tukdoji Maharaj ji says in his Gram Gita that if a Shudra is born with good qualities, how will he remain a Shudra, and if Kshatriya is born with corrupt qualities in a Kshatriya's house, how can he become a Kshatriya. **Ref - Gramgita, Chapter 5**

He spent most of his early life in the dense forests of Ramtek, Salbardi, Ramdhighi, and Gondoda. Although he was not formally educated, his philosophical abilities were immense. India is a country of villages, Tukdoji Maharaj thought that if villages develop, the country will develop automatically.

He knows every Corner and mass people of Vidarbha, Maharashtra. yet he was preaching spiritual, social Harmony, and national unity not only in Maharashtra but all over India. He also went to Japan and gave the message of world brotherhood to all. He was arrested during the Quit India Movement in 1942. The post he composed for the freedom struggle had become "Aate hi naath hamare".

As a child, Sant Tukadoji Maharaj did rigorous penance and spiritual practice for self-realization. He wrote more than 3 thousand hymns in Hindi and Marathi for His spiritual teacher Meher Baba in 1937 and 1944. He has written many articles on religion, society, nation, and education. He studied existing religious creeds and other ideologies and discussed the religious and secular issues of the devotees. He was determined to redefine socio-spirituality and revive and awaken the country.

In 1941, Tukdoji Maharaj organized an individual Satyagraha and participated in the 'Quit India' movement. He strongly opposed the inhuman treatment done by the British rulers. He was arrested in 1942 and lodged in Nagpur and Raipur Central Jail.

After independence, Sant Tukadoji Maharaj focused on rural reconstruction. He founded the All-India Shri Gurudev Seva Mandal and developed several programs for integrated rural development. His work was so impressive that the then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad conferred on him the title of 'Rashtrasant'.

He worked on several fronts for the national cause during the Bengal famine (1945), the Indo-China war (1962), the Pakistan invasion (1965), and the Koyna earthquake (1962). Rashtra Sant Tukadoji Maharaj had gone to the disruptive and organizational constructive help in his

campaign. In 1955, he participated in the World Conference on World Religions and World Peace in Japan. He mentions in his 'Gram Gita' that it inspires rural development and national reorganization. He worked hard to convert his devotion toward God into the service of mankind and the nation.

They transformed the traditional prayer organization into a broad group of disciplined, broad-minded young men and women. He criticized unhealthy traditions, casteism, superstitions, etc. anti-social elements. Inter-religious harmony was also a feature of Tukdoji Maharaj's ideology. For this, he strongly rewarded the community/interreligious prayers.

Women's advancement was also an important aspect of his thinking. She convinced society through her kirtan that how the family system, social system, and national system depend on women. He effectively demonstrated how unjust it is to keep a woman in ignorance and slavery.

The youth of the country should be the future pillars of the nation and they should be strong so that they can protect the society and the nation. Saint Tukdoji Maharaj wrote instructive articles on how to become righteous and cultured. He strongly condemned addiction in his writings. He opposed violence for **25** years, he built Dharamshala, food covers, and cowsheds.

He breathed his last on **11** October **1968** in Mojhari district, Amravati.

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