



## Devdoot : The Angel Sudhakar Gaidhani

Translated from Marathi by Om Biyani  
Translation of **Canto - I** of **Mahavaakya** (The Great Utterance),  
original Marathi Epic Poem in five cantos (555 pages)

O seafaring birds hunting for pearl-feed!

Fill up your beaks  
with the eternal youth of my wings  
because I'll soon be flown off  
by messenger-fakirs that weep while they laugh.

On this isle just a few buds remain  
of intoxicating flowers;  
so before I too shed my petals  
search out and keep my eyes -  
because I'll soon be flown off  
by messenger-fakirs that weep while they laugh.

One hasn't yet found the caravans  
of Sindbads with golden dreams  
that were on this same way misled;  
nor has one yet wiped  
the stains,  
on the stones,  
of the jewels that the stars here shed.

The ruined pavilions  
within a score of miles,  
in this phantom's domain,  
were undone by their love of tombs,  
their passions yet unquenched.

It's a valley of tyrants where  
all hell has broken loose and where  
a war is on-a veritable wildfire -  
while the waves that girdle me in chains  
fornicate freely with the shore.

Fledglings!  
Since He does not find on my riot-torn face  
the glow befitting a prisoner  
God himself is pained.

I too can hide this earth  
under my wings outspread;  
I too can soar can flap my wings  
Like you and you; every branch here bears  
The marks of my claws

It was I that gifted  
This graveyard to those fakirs

To this day I cherish in my wings  
the eyes of Christ  
and the Buddha's smile  
That's why this sea has made a captive of me.

Birds,  
out at sea the boats of my agonies  
are singing their sea-songs;  
go and receive them please,  
because even they will be flown off  
by messenger-fakirs that weep while they laugh.

Friends,  
the tribes of hangmen-weavers  
that pleat the ropes for their job  
have earned a bad name here;  
their only crime is this;  
they are slaves to hunger.

There is so much fire still  
in the kiln of their eyes  
that no sooner do the rulers become oppressive  
than will they reduce to ash  
every dictatorial structure.

Hey, is it that you, too,  
consider me a madman?

So, count your feathers in the dark,  
quietly sharpen your beaks  
by rubbing them on each other's  
and let the night pass  
And pester daylight

so much with your beaks  
that night should come back fast.

It is only now that the sky  
is feeling choiced with compassion  
and is sending down rains -  
at first drop by drop  
and then in torrents

The benevolent cataclysmic forces  
of the universe, have burst out  
shaking up all that is quick or dead.  
The sun, spangled with stars  
is shivering, seeking alms,  
with his begging-bowl of horizon  
at the gentle evening's gate.

And says in a piteous voice:  
"Mother, O mother,  
God will bless you -  
let me spend here this night.  
I'll be on my way  
by break of daylight."

Beware all  
A mighty rain is about to fall.  
The river will be in full flood again  
and my deep, lake-deep eyes

that quest for the shore  
will be carried by the current  
with my oyster-trapped soul.  
Before this calm in me that  
anticipates an earthquake  
breaks loose, come, death,  
and set me free.

The cry of the virgin night  
scorched in a forest-fire  
in now more than I can bear  
The jungle of sufferings on my body  
is ablaze, every cell in me  
is cracking, bursting,  
so remove at once these houses on the shore -  
the world is in flames,

the world is in flames.

Hurry up, wash these wounds  
on the earth's heart,  
lest it split into two -  
because this planet is all  
that we mortals have got

You who can make out  
a bird from a nest,  
who don't my eardrums shudder,  
why can't I hear the anguished chirping  
of baby birds that can't find their mother?  
How is it that the spirit  
that pervades the five elements  
has gone entirely deaf?  
Or is it bootless -  
the resurrection of us angels?

O merchants,  
beware when you tear off the armour  
on my vast captive body.  
Terrified, everybody will scream and shout,  
jungles of trees will rush, roots and all,  
ice-forts will crumble like houses of cards,  
the rivers, like cobras, will slither here and there  
and the earth, like a frightened cow,  
will tremble in every limb.

O oracles,  
don't be so prodigal of declarations.  
One has to bail a whole ocean  
from its fathomless depths:  
a mother has to wrench her belly  
to earn her relief and to see her babe.

The parti-coloured lamps on this isle  
are not decorative lighting -  
they are the dropped-out eyes  
of travellers who lost their way.

O you who dig up cobra holes<sup>2</sup>  
in search of cobra-gems  
look how they sway  
entwining sandal trees.  
These reptiles with their passion-poison  
dare not touch me:  
the stink of my flesh and bones  
is much too strong for them.

Like the earth cracked in the hot dry season  
like a tree with chopped off branches  
prominent in a bare wintry wood,  
a terror grips your whole body,

it grips the whole jungle, all of life  
the terror of shedding off the member.  
Children of rishis, listen.  
Don't remove the bark of these ivies,  
do not undrape them:  
every limb of theirs will rob you  
of the power gained through penance.  
Who will be accounted guilty then,  
no one knows.

"The sun is my coeval",  
the planets assert  
I don't really know,  
because an Overview of the source  
is impossible to the flow.

Each cloud like lachrymose eyes  
speeding along like loosening life;  
this country, aged witness,  
that relates entrancing tales of nights  
that probe the wombs while ensuring their pleasure:  
such things, you say,  
should be guarded like a germinated sore.  
Then why this vain temptation  
to hide, under the wings, that fledgling bird?

The answers to these questions  
will remain hanging like limbs  
split open and filled with sand.  
Long live, therefore,  
the potency of my questions.

How quickly is the day ripped off ... !  
How swiftly do creatures come and go ... !  
Some with desires unsatisfied,  
some with sorrows unconsolated.

Every conch is blowing  
The tears that fly off under cover  
freeze and crowd in the sky.  
The molehill-mountains that chop off  
the wings of the clouds  
go up in flames halfway,

So friends,  
when my soul was rotting in the earth's womb  
I tore off deliverance and destiny,  
scattering them like petals.  
The vigilant guards of heaven  
I transfixed on the spot.

That's how my sojourn has been happy.  
In the season of ripe feathers  
my face is in bloom.

Suppose you pushed the earth on-  
where would you park it in space ?  
Suppose you captured the sun and the moon-  
where would you make their jail?

While fording the immense solitude  
of a vast primeval desert  
I have seen gentle waves of sand crumble.  
And later, from the age of the earth  
I have witnessed the murders  
of those who cherished the sight  
of monsoon winds  
traversing a thirst-burnt desert

I dismissed in a superannuated dirge  
all those defunct prayers;  
while the forlorn footprints

of the directionless sailors of old  
were being gently buried  
in a massive drift of sand.

In the shadow of the cracked scaffold,  
sitting in the criminals' tomb  
when I recounted heroic sagas  
they drew their swords  
at my every pause.

And then when the aged vultures  
patrolling the scaffold  
and convulsing with hunger

made a sortie on me  
I just didn't know where their feathers were  
dropping in the shade.

You could see the evening thickening  
in the owl's eyes -  
I had no choice but to move on.  
My pregnant wounds were yearning for the sun -  
I had no choice but to move on.

Fledglings,  
he who marches  
should never lose heart.  
At a certain moment  
just because the Creator has stopped  
he shouldn't pitch his tent.

So, friends,  
here we enter, the metropolis  
of Venus-eyed lust.  
While crossing the thick vineyard beyond  
you will succumb to the caprice of chasing  
the enchantresses there.

And when birds interbreed  
somehow it is the male that conceives,  
so look out when you fly  
over this territory.  
Even now I can hear  
the lip-to-ear dialogues,  
from alien planets,  
of rishis and of saints.

"O you who are sitting alone  
here in the celestial lake in this grape-garden  
quietly washing your body,  
O bewitching apsaras<sup>3</sup> of Indra's<sup>4</sup> forest  
won't you let me collect  
in a cone of thorn-apple leaves  
the sandal-rich water  
trickling off your soft skin?  
O lady, my wings are weary -  
won't you let me land on your grounds?"

"O best among birds,  
your fluttering promiscuous glance  
has stung my gentle heart.  
Don't you pity

this wounded lady-bird?"

"O beautiful one, O harlot of heaven,  
your bright smile caresses  
my ascetic effulgence -  
aren't you scared of my lust and rage?  
O luscious cobress<sup>5</sup>  
of a dripping-wet lush green ivy,

why are these smelt flowers  
clinging so, again and again, to the branch?  
And like a virgin in heat  
challenging in every way  
the divine food in my bag?"

"O excellent ascetic,  
every season comes of age  
intoxicated by its sap.  
A hungering austerity  
won't beget deliverance, my dear.  
O star among penitents,  
rains don't fall from a dry sky,  
and when the stem is desiccated  
buds won't bloom.

So you say that  
as a river in flood rushes  
and clings to the sea,  
I too should,  
before these dense woods loosen the night,  
cling to you? "

"But O bewitchment alive,  
after giving away my body  
where shall I posit my soul?

Come O rishis of lust,  
sow this night in my every limb.  
O stars, give me today your mantle.

Gift away, O great Vedas,  
this penance-born virtue in my every cell  
to the wretches condemned to hell."



Fledglings,  
everybody knows  
that it is injurious to scabble a sore;  
and knowing this well  
they scabble it evermore.  
Now just as one finds a guilty pleasure  
in scratching an itch,  
so does an Adam hunger for an Eve  
and she for him.

One such beauty there was,  
very dear to me.  
The stars were like jewels in her nosering;"  
she had two autumn full moons on her two sides  
of hue they were milky white.  
Now just as she was silly  
she acted like a filly.

In every childbirth  
she laughed like a tamarind fat and green;  
and in season she again would flirt  
with admirers seventeen.  
Often I saw her  
getting stars tattooed in the open,  
I had bought her an emerald anklet  
by pledging myself with the ocean.

At last one day  
I took courage in both hands  
and saw how it felt this lady to address.  
Quickly, for that moment, she saw how  
it felt to hold me in her embrace.

*For a worm of lust  
pleasure is a must:  
A crow of dandy taste -  
ruin of himself*

O best among birds from far-off lands,  
I applaud your seducing eyes  
That injure shy maidens  
bathing by the side of perfume-runnel;  
applaud your heart-thrilling bursts of joy  
and your dream personality  
that should tickle any conceited beauty;  
all these qualities that challenge a maiden  
to a bed battle, I applaud.

O crown among birds,

I commend your superhuman charms,  
the rule you set up over the country of tits,  
and the fierce invasions of the nests  
of deep green parrots in mango forests.

But it's a pity to recall, O noblest of birds,  
that on that April full moon, during lunar eclipse  
you refused, aware that you were winning a close battle,  
those hundreds of glum but sporting ladies  
of the loser's camp.  
I wish you had put down for a moment  
your bloody swords  
and kissed them all quickly, one by *one*.

"The sparrow and his mate fight  
and this ruins their life."

*A nine days' wonder -  
they say of our life  
Even so the moon  
adores fireflies.*

"O grandfather,  
always, always, shall I act as you taught;  
I'll test the virtue of my tongue  
before I ever speak;  
your sayings shall be royal edicts;  
I shall have a sage poet  
discuss every word of yours;  
I shall have him sing  
through a song on your life  
all your dear teachings.

I shall act as I speak  
but if I stumble at some inconvenient truth  
I shall play tricks -  
how shall I otherwise  
perfect my politics?"

"Where exactly will it drop  
a wisp of perfumed cotton  
flying with political winds -  
can you tell, O royal bird?  
O royal bird,  
you can foresee a storm at some stage  
but can you forelist those who the storm will ravage?  
For years you have sat  
on your habitual throne -

but does it mean you know  
the art of government?

It's easy to rule by terror -  
hanging swords in city squares.  
This works  
as long as the people can be led  
or else there are many here who  
rise to sever their regent's head,  
Yes, man oppresses man all around -  
And it's man again that dresses his wounds.

O eminent of the land of emeralds,  
I wish you the joy of your wisdom;  
may, howbeit, you bury your deceit;  
to the cow-peg may, at times, man be tethered;  
may solace shower on burning homes;  
may twenty dine off a single plate;  
may barren women conceive overnight;  
may a lightning death descend  
on all who long for it.

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