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**PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION OF PASAYDAN**

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**Abstract:**

*Saint Dnyaneshwar, one of the greatest supporters of Vedic culture and Hindu religion and the youngest sages in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Maharashtra wrote a very powerful and mind blowing prayer Pasaydan with the objective to create an ideal society in which all people despite religious differences, caste discrimination and language barrier would come together and form a loving, harmonious and peaceful society. Peaceful coexistence and humanism go a long way to sustain healthy relations. Pasaydan is a beautiful lyrical religious song which is sung on the auspicious occasions by the Hindus in India and abroad. Most of the schools and colleges in Maharashtra begin their daily functioning by singing this prayer in chorus. Public functions organized by the Hindus also end with the Pasaydan. The present article is devoted to the pragmatic interpretation of Pasaydan.*

**Keywords:** *Saint Dnyaneshwar, Vedic Culture, Hindu Religion, Pasaydan, Peaceful Coexistence, Humanism, Auspicious Occasions, etc.*

**Introduction:**

*Pasaydan is a beautiful lyrical Hindu prayer written by Dnyaneshwar, the youngest saint poet of Maharashtra originally in Prakrit, a dialect of Sanskrit language and informal regional language. It is an invocation for the supreme God for creating, nurturing and sustaining the beautiful world with animals, human beings, flora and fauna. In fact, Pasaydan is a thought-provoking lyrical poem which has universal appeal in it and often been sung by the Hindus on the public platforms before or end of the auspicious congregations or gatherings. Generally speaking, it is a universal prayer for the wellbeing of the peoples of the world. The Platonic world created in this lyrical prayer was a much coveted dream of the famous youngest Marathi sage Saint Dnyaneshwara.*

**Maharashtra and its Tradition of Saint Poets:**

*The state of Maharashtra in India is regarded as the land of great tradition of saint poets, social reformers and social activists. A number of saint poets from Maharashtra such as Saint Dnyaneshwar, Saint Tukaram Maharaj, saint Chhokha Mela, Saint Sawata Mali, Saint Gora Kumbhar, Saint Gadagebaba, Saint Muktabai, Saint Bahinabai and others through their hymns and psalms wanted to abolish the evil practices and superstitions in the Orthodox Hindu society and create a healthy society based on religious tolerance, high ideals and rationale thinking above all humanism. All the saint poets in Maharashtra are worth referred to as the sons and daughters of the soil with their power of words*



who tried to imbibe the human values and principles of morally sound life with goodness and social responsibility in the people.

### **Making of Saint Dnyaneshwara:**

Saint Dnyaneshwara, popularly known as Mauli, was born to the parents Vitthalpant and Rakhumabai Kulkarni on the auspicious day of Krishna Janmashthami in the deshasth Brahmin family at Apegaon near Paithan which is situated on the bank of the river Godavari in the year 1275. That time, the reign of the Yadavas especially King Ramdevarava was in existence. Since Vitthalpant was interested in spiritualism, he left his wife with her consent at Alandi and went on the pilgrimage to Varanasi which is popularly known as Kashi by the Hindus in India. On the advice of his Guru Ramamnanda, he returned to Alandi where his wife Rakhumabai was staying. Then, the couple had four children named Nivrutti, Dnya neshwar, Sopan and Muktabai. When the orthodox Brahmins noticed that Vitthalpant had become a householder after renunciation of his life, they treated this act as a sacrilege. Consequently, the entire family was ostracized by the orthodox Brahmins. The children of Vitthalpant were denied the right to have a sacred thread ceremony. The family had to leave Alandi for Nashik as a result of excommunication. After a year, they came to Alandi again with the intention to beg for his atonement of the sin he had committed. The orthodox Brahmins suggested both wife and husband to end their lives by jumping into the Indrayani River near Alandi as a penance. After the death of his parents, Dnyaneshwar, his brothers and sister had to live a very hard life as they became homeless and impoverished.

Saint Dnyaneshwar's biographical details reveal that he lived for a short period of life i.e. 21 years. It is believed that during this short span of life he performed many miracles such as making the he-buffalo chant the Vedas and a lifeless wall move. He and his brothers and sister went to Pandharpur where they met saint Namdev. He was greatly influenced by the spiritual discourses of saint Namdev. All of them went on pilgrimage and visited many temples and holy places in India. They initiated many people into the Varkari sect of the Hindu religion which does not believe in any kind of discrimination. During this period, Dnyaneshwar wrote many devotional songs and hymns which became popular among the Varkari sect. After obtaining his spiritual goal, he decided to go into Sanjeevan Samadhi. He followed the path set by the NathSampradaya for the last trajectory and terminated his mortal life.

### **Dnyaneshwari: A Commentary on the Bhagvad Gita:**

The youngest saint Dnyaneshwar wrote *Dnyaneshwari*, a commentary on the *Bhagvad Gita* which is also referred to as *BhawarthDipika*, a seven hundred-verse Hindu scripture at Newasa in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. It is a part of the epic the *Mahabharata*. According to Bahirat B. P. (2006): "Dnyaneshwar was the first known philosopher who wrote in the Marathi language. At the age of sixteen, he composed *Dnyaneshwari* in the year 1290, a commentary on *Bhagvad Gita* which later became a fundamental text of the Varkari sect" (Bahirat, 2-3).

The above remarks speak volumes about the creativity inspired by spiritualism of the youngest sage of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Maharashtra. The prayer *Pasaydan* is written in the Marathi vernacular language which is understood by the common folks in the Marathi speech communities. His selection of the dialect was a very significant departure from the hegemony of the classical Sanskrit language which was only used and understood by the caste Hindus especially the Brahmins. Therefore, one is inclined to say that saint Dnyaneshwar set the trend of writing for the masses in Marathi which is one of the dominant features of Bhakti Movement of the saint poets in India. His writings could be compared to Dante, an Italian poet who preferred vernacular to Latin because the latter was only





understood by the educated class in Italy. Dante's *Divine Comedy* can be compared with Pasaydan as it contains imaginative vision of the afterlife of mortal human beings.

Pasaydan, a universal prayer to the almighty, appears towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Dnyaneshwari* which is also termed as 'Bhawarth Dipika'. This devotional lyric poem is an invocation to God to grant the welfare to the world community. There are eight couplets in this prayer song which are worth studying from the perspective of Pragmatics since they contain the democratic values which need to be inculcated in the human beings for creating the welfare state.

### **Pragmatic Analysis of Pasaydan:**

In the beginning of the prayer Pasaydan, the saint poet Dnyaneshwar urges the Divinity to annihilate the evils in human beings and bring them on the righteous path. The illocutionary fore of the poet in this couplet is to make all the men and women to choose the right path of life. If people observe the virtues in their life then they will be able to enjoy companionship and universal brotherhood in all respects. Therefore, the commissive speech act used by the poet is future oriented. It is the futuristic vision of the poet to create heaven on the earth.

In the second couplet, the poet says that the darkness in the life of evil-minded people will vanish and the sun of humanity will rise in the lives of the peoples of the world. He urges God to fulfil all the good wishes of all the living beings on the planet earth. The principle message is "May they get what they wish for". This is a commissive speech act of the poet which is committed to the future course of action. It is a promise given to the all living things in the universe.

In the third couplet, the poet appeals the theist saints to come together and form unity and create a very pious social and spiritual atmosphere among all the living creatures including human beings. Here, the poet makes use of directive speech act as there is an implicit request made to the saints.

In the fourth couplet, the saint poet compares the saints with the wish-fulfilling divine trees in the garden of humanity. Therefore, it is an assertive speech act in which he provides the factual information about the qualifications of the true saints. They have the potentials to craft a very vibrant and enlivening atmosphere. They are comparable to the pearls and gems for their words are immortal and serve as elixir or nectar. Here, the firm belief of saint Dnyaneshwar about the functional role of the sages and saints speaks profusely about his positive and pragmatic attitude towards the spiritual Gurus.

In the fifth couplet, the poet makes use of assertive speech acts regarding the pragmatic role of the saints. He says that the saints whose qualifications are as stated in the fourth stanza are similar to the pleasant moon in the dark-night-sky without a blot on it. They are like the pleasant early morning sunrays and are the honest friends of all amiable human beings and creatures.

In the sixth stanza, the poet expects the peoples in all the three worlds- earth, heaven and hell to be in the relentless service of the omnipotent (God) after attaining everlasting happiness on the planet earth. This a commissive speech act in which the poet hopes for the bright future of all the creatures.

In the seventh stanza, the poet makes a humble request to the people to get victory over evils by worshipping this pious book *Dnyaneshwari* considering it as a life and light giving force. The speech acts employed in this stanza are expressive speech acts as they are full of emotional appeal to the living beings in the universe.

In the last stanza, the poet makes use of commissive speech acts as he says after listening to this prayer of him, the God will bestow on Dnyaneshwar the reactive power and he will become the ever happiest individual.



To conclude, mere recitation of *Pasaydan*, a pious poem of divine blessings, is not enough. We need to change our mind-set if we really believe in what saint Dnyaneshwar proclaimed in the collective prayer *Pasaydan* and practice the principle “the entire world is truly one family” by discarding our own wicked thoughts and by giving up our vices. The sun will be able to see glorious light of action (swadharna) only when everyone performs his/her duties in the most desirable manner and internalize the virtues depicted in the *Pasaydan*. Saint Dnyaneshwar will only become happy if people all over the world follow the principles of equality, fraternity and universal brotherhood.

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**To Cite the Article: Ramtirthe, Prasannata, Pawar, sadashiv, “Pragmatic Interpretation of *Pasaydan*”. Literary Cognizance, III-1 (June, 2022): 10-13. Web.**