

# AN EXPLORATION INTO THE SIMPLIFICATION OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY BY MARATHI WOMEN SAINTS

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## Abstract

*This paper deals with the interpretation of Indian Philosophy by the Marathi women saints. Indian Philosophy has been a subject of attraction for global scholars. It is a very complex pattern of ideas of metaphysics. There are two divisions of Indian Philosophy. They are āstika and nāstika. The foundations of Astika are based on scriptures like the Vedas, Puranas, and Upanishads. Whereas Nāstika does not believe in these scriptures. This research article adopts a qualitative approach. It focuses on the Abhangas (devotional poetry) written by women saints during the 13th and 14th centuries and analyzes the feminist perceptions and perspectives of Indian Philosophy. In patriarchal societies like India, women are marginalized. The Marathi women saints simplified the complex phenomenon of Metaphysics in their Abhangas. Devotion, direct communion with the divine, social justice, faith, resilience, and the quest for liberation are main themes which they simplified and made spirituality available to all. In the conclusion, the timeless wisdom in Indian Philosophy through feminist perceptions and perspectives is discussed at length in this research article.*

**Keywords:** Marathi women saints, Indian Philosophy, Abhang, Astik, Nastik, devotion, simplification.

## INTRODUCTION

For global scholars, Indian philosophy, with its complex theories and deep concepts of metaphysics, has been a subject of attraction and investigation. Indian philosophical concepts are rooted in ancient scriptures and encompass a very vast multitude of perspectives on existence, consciousness, and the nature of reality. The most distinguished feature of Indian philosophy is its consideration and tolerance for multiple viewpoints. Indian philosophical systems embrace a plurality of viewpoints rather than seeking a single, absolute truth. Indian philosophy, due to its feature of inclusivity, has given rise to a dynamic intellectual tradition. It allows different schools of thought for the exchange of dialogue, debate, and vibrant discussion.

During the Iron Age, or classical age, an Indian philosophical system was established in collaboration with Hinduism. "Darshana" (viewpoint or perspective), derived from Sanskrit "Drish" (to see or to experience), is the word used for philosophy in Indian tradition. Indian philosophy is classified into two types of perspectives. Astika and Nastika are the schools of Indian philosophy depending on one of the three alternate criteria: whether the school believes Vedas as a valid source of knowledge, whether the school believes in the premises of Brahman and Atman, and whether the school believes in the afterlife and Devas. Despite this, there are other methods of classification, and Madhavacharya identified sixteen schools of Indian philosophy, including Saiva and Rasesvara traditions. The foundations of Astika (orthodox) are based on scriptures like the Vedas, Puranas, and Upanishads. There are six major schools of Astika or Vedik philosophy has six schools of thought (Shad-darshana) Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, and Vedanta. Whereas Nāstika (hererodox or non-orthodox) does not believe in these scriptures, these schools are classified under Indian philosophy and not under Hindu philosophy. They include: Buddhism, Jainism, Charvaka, Ajivika, and others.

For understanding the nature of reality and the human condition, these different schools of thought offer distinct metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical frameworks. These schools of thought revolve around the ideologies of Dwaita (dualism) and Adwaita (non-dualism). These ideologies are based on the atomistic and monistic theories of metaphysics. Indian philosophy is deeply entwined with spirituality and religious traditions. The contexts of spiritual practices such as yoga, meditation, and devotion are explored within many philosophical studies. Indian philosophical treatises demystify concepts of karma, dharma, and moksha by reflecting a holistic approach that integrates metaphysical speculation with ethical and spiritual realization. Indian philosophy has shaped not only intellectual discourse but has also influenced various aspects of Indian society and culture throughout history. Indian philosophy has influenced literature, art, music, and social movements by leaving a lasting impression on the collective consciousness of Indian society. Indian philosophy stands as a testament to the enduring quest for truth, wisdom, and understanding that has characterised

human civilization for centuries and continues to inspire seekers of truth and scholars around the world to engage with basic questions of existence and the nature of reality.

Despite this fact, there is a remarkable contribution from the Bhakti Movement and the saints or devotees of different gods and goddesses. The word “Bhakti” originated from the Sanskrit word “Bhaj” which means divine, share, to belong to, partake, worship, attachment, faith, and love, and one who practices Bhakti is called Bhakta. The Bhakti movement that emerged in the mediaeval era refers to ideas like engagement, love, and devotion to religious concepts built around one or more gods and goddesses. There were sub-sects of this Bhakti Movement, and they are Vaishnavism (Lord Vishnu), Shavism (Lord Shiva), Shaktism (Shakti, the goddesses), and Smartism. The Bhakti Movement was started in regional languages, and many saints and devotees were inspired.

However, amidst this rich tapestry of philosophical discourse, there exists a remarkable phenomenon of the simplification of these complex doctrines by Varkari Movement, a remarkable Bhakti Movement in Maharashtra. The Varkari Movement is associated with the worship of Vithoba, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu at Pandharpur. Mimportantly,ntly the contribution of Marathi women saints is exceptional. In India, Maharashtra is fertile land for the emergence of spiritual masters, despite often being marginalized within the social structures, who, through their lived experiences and devotion, have illuminated the pathways of Indian philosophy for generations to come. Out of these saints or spiritual masters, women saints, even after twofold marginalization within patriarchal society, have held profound impact through their teachings, abhanga (poems that are sung unceasingly by devotees of the god), and spiritual practices.

This research paper aims to delve into the lives and teachings of Marathi women saints in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with a particular focus on their role in simplifying and elucidating the intricacies of Indian philosophy. This study seeks to uncover the methodologies employed to make profound philosophical concepts accessible to a wider audience by Sant Muktabai, Sant Soyarabai, and Janabai. This will be achieved through a meticulous examination of their writings, such as bhajans (devotional songs), and their biographical accounts. Furthermore, this paper attempts to explore the socio-cultural and historical contexts within which these women operated, shedding light on the challenges they faced and the strategies they employed to navigate and transcend gendered constraints. By doing so, we hope to gain deeper insights into the transformative power of spirituality and the ways in which it can transcend boundaries of gender, caste, and class. This research article seeks to understand and highlight the often unnoticed contributions of Marathi women saints in shaping spiritual discourse and social transformation. These women saints have left a lasting impression on spirituality through their profound wisdom, and intense devotion and have offered enduring guidance that still continues to inspire and resonate with seekers of truth.

## NOTABLE WOMEN SAINTS

In the following discussion, the historical background and contribution of select women saints are analysed. The paper delves into the lives of three women saints and highlights the situation that made them move ahead on the path of spirituality. Further, it also analyses their contributions to spirituality and social reform. Further to understand the socio-cultural, religious aspects prevalent at the time and how these aspects shaped the perspectives of these women saints, a brief overview of the historical background, providing information about when they were born, where they were born, and whom they were associated with, and their contribution in the philosophy will be discussed in the following section.

## SANT MUKTABAI

Saint Muktabai, revered saint in Varikari Movement and was born in the thirteenth century, around 1279 CE, to a couple, Vitthal Govind Kulkarni and Rukmini, in Apegaon, near Paithan, in Maharashtra state. They had four children Nivrutti (1273), Dnyaneeshwar (1275), Sopan (1277) and Muktabai (1279). Muktabai was youngest of their four children Vitthal, after his marriage with Rukmini, went to Varanashi and met Ramananda Swami. He requested Ramananda Swami to initiate him into Sannyas, final ashram. Ramananda initiated him into sannyas but compelled to return home when he discovered about Vitthal's marriage with Rukmini. Later the couple faced condemnation when Vitthal had renounced sannyas. Inspite of their misfortune, they had four children, including Muktabai. The family went on pilgrimage to Tryambakeshwar, where Nivrutti, their elder son was initiated into Nath tradition by Gahaninath. The children were left to stand for themselves, when this couple embraced death as punishment and to rescue themselves and their children from social condemnation. Initially these children were refused by the community but they were accepted due to these children's righteousness, virtue, intelligence, and knowledge and eventually they earned respect and fame. Along with her siblings, Muktabai became a disciple of Nivruttinath at a young age. They mastered the philosophy and teachings of Kundalini yoga under their brother's guidance. They all contributed into the Hindu philosophy and gained

recognition as saints. Muktabai wrote forty abhangas, including “Tatiche Abhang”, “Haripath” and other abhangas. Muktabai’s contribution into the Indian Philosophy through her abhangas can be understood the explorations into few of her Abhangas as below:

प्रकृति निर्गुण प्रकृति सगुण । दीपे दीप पूर्ण एका तत्त्वे ॥ १ ॥  
देखिलेंगे माये पंढरिपाटणी । पुंडलिका आंगणी विठ्ठलराज ॥ २ ॥  
विज्ञानेंसी तेज सजानेसी निज । निर्गुणेंसी चोज केले सयें ॥ ३ ॥  
मुक्ताई तारक सम्यक विठ्ठल । निवृत्तीनें चोखाळ दाखविलें ॥ ४ ॥

(Prakriti nirguna, prakriti saguna, Dipe dipa purna eka tattve.  
Dekhilenge maye Pandharipatani, Pundalika angani Vitthalraj.  
Vijnanense teja, sajanense nija, Nirgunense choj kele saye.  
Muktai taraka samyak Vitthal, Nivruttinene Chokhal dakhavele.)

In the above abhanga, Muktabai engages in philosophical postulation and simplifies a complex phenomenon of the cosmos, Prakruti and Purusha. She reflects on the duality of cosmic elements that are both formed and formless. She simplified the complex idea by giving an example of a lamp, which is both formed and formless at the same time. The visual image of a lamp is formed, but it symbolizes formless concepts such as truth, knowledge, and the light within oneself, which is consciousness. She claims that she has seen it in the courtyard of Pundalik, who was a devotee of the Lord of Vitthal at Pandharpur. Further, she elucidates the idea of cosmos is a perception of human beings on the basis of the five senses. This is called science, which embraces what is perceivable or perceptible. But which is not perceivable can only be only experienced by consciousness. Nivrutti, her brother, who was her spiritual guide had shown her that Vitthal is exactly inside her. Sant Muktabai explains the complex idea of the “existence of God”.

Muktabai starts by juxtaposing the concepts of nirguna (without attributes) and saguna (with attributes) forms of the divine. She suggests that both forms are manifestations of the same fundamental reality (eka tattve), which is complete and whole (dipe dipa purna). This line highlights the unity underlying the diverse manifestations of the divine. Muktabai describes the divine vision she experiences at Pandharpur, the sacred abode of Lord Vithoba. She metaphorically portrays herself as seeing the divine presence of Vithoba (Vitthalraj) in every aspect of Pandharpur, including the household of Pundalika, a devotee of Vithoba. This line emphasizes the omnipresence of the divine in the sacred pilgrimage site. Muktabai then delves into the attributes of true knowledge (vijnane) and self-awareness (sajnane). She suggests that through true knowledge and self-realization, one can experience the brilliance (teja) of spiritual illumination. Additionally, she reflects on the contemplation (choj) of the formless (nirguna) aspect of divinity, suggesting that deep introspection leads to understanding the formless nature of the divine.

In the final line, Muktabai refers to the liberating (muktai) and salvific (taraka) power of Lord Vithoba. She suggests that true liberation (samyak) is attained by surrendering to Lord Vithoba completely. Additionally, she mentions that through renunciation (nivruttinene), one can achieve the state of blissful detachment (chokhal), indicating the path to spiritual liberation and ultimate union with the divine. Overall, this abhanga encapsulates Muktabai's deep spiritual insights and her profound devotion to Lord Vithoba, emphasizing the unity of all manifestations of the divine and the path to spiritual realization and liberation.

Saint Nivruttinath and Saint Dnyaneshwar used to go to the village and ask for alms and bring home what they got. Their livelihood was based on that. One day, Dnyaneshwar was very insulted in the village. Everyone, no matter how sane, runs out of patience at some point. Dnyaneshwar was also young. He was very distressed. He was irritated by this constant humiliation. He came home angry. He went into the house and closed the door of the hut and sat inside alone. When Muktabai noticed, asked Dnyaneshwar to come out, but Dnyaneshwar's mood was very bad; he were not listening, not responding. Despite being a younger sister, Mukta that day stepped into the role of elder sister or mother to her elder brother. She started singing, following Abhang, to console and explain Dnyaneshwar:

योगी पावन मनाचा। साहे अपराध जनाचा ॥१॥  
विश्व रागे झाले वन्ही। संती सुखे व्हावे पाणी॥२॥  
शब्दशस्त्रे झाले क्लेश। संती मानावा उपदेश ॥३॥  
विश्वपट ब्रह्मदोरा। ताटी उघडा ज्ञानेश्वरा ॥४॥

संत तोचि जाणा ज गी। दया क्षमा ज्याचे अंगी ॥१॥  
लोभ अहंता नये मना। जगी विरक्त तोचि जाणा ॥२॥  
इहपर लोकी सुखी। शुद्ध ज्ञान ज्याचे मुखी ॥३॥

मिथ्या कल्पना मागे सारा। ताटी उघडा ज्ञानेश्वरा ॥४॥

(Yogi pavan manacha, Sahe aparadha janacha.  
Vishwa rage jhale vanhi, Santi sukhe vhave pani.  
Shabdashastra jhale klesh, Santi manava upadesh.  
Vishwapata Brahmadora, Tati ughada Gyaneshwara.  
Sant tochi jana ja gi, Daya kshama jyache angi.  
Lobha ahanta naye mana, Jagi virakta tochi jana.  
Ihpara loke sukhi, Shuddha gyan jyache mukhi.  
Mithya kalpana mage sara, Tati ughada Gyaneshwara.)

In “Tatiche Abhang” Muktabai begins by glorifying the nature saints. She explains to her brother about the nature of sainthood. In the above lines, she explains the real meaning of sainthood. She said that saints are very pure souls, they never feel bad even if people behave badly with them. Because of anger, the whole world will be burned. But with the company of saints, it will be extinguished. Words are like arrows, with words, people can be harmed. But saint should consider bad words as preaching. Though you are on the cosmic stage, you are in connected to Brahma. Please open the door. The one who has compassion and forgiveness, should be considered as Sanit. The one who is above greed and ego; is really detached. The individual, who has wisdom becomes happy in this world. You should leave aside all the myths. Please open the door. Sanit Muktabai reflects on the nature of spiritual enlightenment and the qualities of a true saint. She begins by describing the mind of a true yogi, which is pure and filled with devotion. The yogi is forgiving (sahe aparadha janacha), showing patience and understanding towards the faults of others. She further reflects on how the world is consumed by the fire of desires (vishwa rage jhale vanhi), causing suffering and turmoil. However, the saint (sant) remains calm and peaceful (santi sukhe) amidst the chaos, symbolized by water, which brings tranquility and solace. She highlights the power of words and scriptures (shabdashastra), which can sometimes lead to confusion and suffering (jhale klesh) if not properly understood. However, the teachings of the saint (Santi Manava upadesh) bring peace and clarity, guiding individuals towards spiritual growth and understanding. She describes the qualities of a true saint, emphasizing their compassion (daya) and forgiveness (kshama) towards all beings. True saints possess a heart filled with kindness and understanding (jyache angi). A saint is characterized by their lack of greed (lobha) and ego (ahanta), demonstrating detachment (virakta) from worldly desires. They remain unaffected by the temptations of the material world. She suggests that true happiness is found in the spiritual realm (ihpara loke), where one attains pure knowledge (shuddha gyan) and enlightenment. The face of such a saint shines with the radiance of divine wisdom. The abhanga concludes by cautioning against false perceptions and illusions (mithya kalpana), urging Dnyaneshwara to seek the guidance of for true enlightenment and understanding.

In summary, this abhanga explores the qualities of a true yogi and saint, highlighting their compassion, detachment, and pursuit of spiritual knowledge and enlightenment. It emphasizes the importance of seeking refuge in the divine and following the teachings of enlightened beings for spiritual growth and liberation. Though the above discussion on Muktabai’s abhanga, her contribution to spiritual literature and the Varkari Movement remains significant and enduring. Through her abhangas, she refine the essence of Indian philosophy in simple way bridging the gap between complex spiritual concepts and everyday life. Her abhang not only celebrates the divine but also reflects profound devotion, wisdom, and a deep understanding of the human condition, inspiring countless seekers on their spiritual journey. She advocates for universal love, compassion, and humanity. Her abhangas resonate with people from all walks of life, emphasizing the practical application of spiritual principles and path to inner transformation.

## SAINT SOYARABAI

Saint Soyarabai was notable saint from Varkari Movement during fourteenth century. She was deeply influenced by her husband Chokhamela, devotee of Vithoba. She became a devoted disciple of Saint Chokhamela. Though Saint Soyarabai was not a passionate devotee her contribution to Varkari, the Bhakti Movement is significant. In spite of belonging to marnalized community, both Sant Chokhmela and Saint Soyarabai left a lasting impression on spiritual literature through their profound writings.

Sanit Soyrabai, by employing her unique style of blank verse, crafted a significant literature, although only sixty two abhangas are available. In her abhang, she referred herself as “Chokhamela’s Mahari”, expressing her dedication and devotion towards her husband. Her verses reflect a blend of devotion and social critique. She lamented for the social injustice and contemplated on the social dichotomy as below:

देहासी विटाळ म्हणती सकळ। आत्मा तो निर्मळ शुद्ध ॥१॥

देहिचा विटाळ देहीच जन्मला । सोवळा तो झाला कवण धर्म ॥२॥  
विटाळावाअंचोनी उत्पत्तीचे स्थान । कोण देह निर्माण नाही जर्गी ॥३॥  
म्हणुनी पांडुरंगा वानितसे थोरी । विटाळ देहांतरी वसतसे ॥४॥  
देहाचा विटाळ देहीच निर्धारि । म्हणतसे महारी चोखियाची ॥५॥

Dehasi Vithal mhanati sakal, Atma to nirmal shuddha-buddha.  
Dehicha Vithal dehichi janmala, Sowala to zhala kavan dharm.  
Vithalavanche utpattiche sthan, Kon deha nirman nahin jagi.  
Mhanuni Panduranga vanitase thori, Vithal dehantari vasatase.  
Dehacha Vithal dehichi nirdhari, Mhanatase mahari chokhiyachi.

In the above lines Sanit Soyarabai, contemplates on the untouchability or impurity of the human body and further on the origin of the physical body. She says the this mortal body is untouchable but the spirit or the soul has no such bounds. It is pure and it is part of whole, the Buddha. This impurity or untouchability depends on the origin of the body. This physical body can not be originated without impurity. Her poetry transcended mere religious devotion; it became a powerful medium through which she voiced her objections to societal inequalities and discrimination. She begins by stating that everyone (sakal) refers to the physical body (deha) as Vitthal, emphasizing the identification of the divine essence with the body. However, she asserts that the true essence (Atma) is pure (nirmal) and immaculate (shuddha-buddha), suggesting its transcendental nature. Janabai begins by stating that everyone (sakal) refers to the physical body (deha) as Vitthal, emphasizing the identification of the divine essence with the body. However, she asserts that the true essence (Atma) is pure (nirmal) and immaculate (shuddha-buddha), suggesting its transcendental nature. She reflects on the origin of Vitthal, stating that the place of his birth (utpattiche sthan) is within the body. She rhetorically asks if there is any body (deha) that doesn't undergo formation (nirman), suggesting the transient nature of the physical form. She continues by stating that due to these considerations, she believes that Panduranga (another name for Vitthal) dwells within (vanitase) the physical body only a little (thori). She implies that the true essence of Vitthal resides within the body, beyond mere physicality. Saint Soyarabai concludes by asserting that the true essence of Vitthal is determined (nirdhari) by the body itself. She declares that the true witness (mahari chokhiyachi) is the inner vision or insight, emphasizing the importance of spiritual realization beyond the physical form. In summary, this abhanga explores the paradoxical relationship between the physical body and the divine essence, challenging conventional notions and highlighting the importance of recognizing the transcendent nature of the self. Central to Soyarabai's writings were her expressions of devotion towards the divine, often symbolized by the simple offerings she made. Her poems served as a testament to her unwavering faith and her belief in the transformative power of spirituality.

येई येई गरुडध्वजा । विटेशहित करीन पूजा ॥१॥  
धूप दीप पुष्पमाळा । तुज समर्पू गोपाळा ॥२॥  
पुढे ठेवोनियां पान । वाढी कुटुंबी तें अन्न ॥३॥  
तुम्हां योग्य नव्हे देवा । गोड करूनियां जेवा ॥४॥  
विदुराघरच्या पातळ कण्या । खासी मायबाप धन्या ॥५॥  
द्रौपदीच्या भाजी पाना । तूमी झाली नारायणा ॥६॥  
तैसी झाली येथे परी । म्हणे चोख्याची महारी ॥७॥

(Ye yi yi Garudadhwaaja, Vitesahit karin puja.  
Dhup dip pushpamala, Tuj samarpoo Gopala.  
Pudhe thevoniya pan, Vadhi kutumbi ten anna.  
Tumha yogya navhe deva, God karuniya jeva.  
Viduragharachya patal kanya, Khasi mayabap dhanya.  
Draupadichya bhaji pana, Tripti zhali Narayana.  
Taisi zhali yethen pari, Mhane chokhiyachi mahari.)

In the above lines, Sanit Soyarabai invites Lord Vitthal to her house, and offers porridge as naivedyam with all hospitality. She compares her offerings to Draupadi's offerings. Soyarabai begins by invoking Garuda, the divine vehicle of Lord Vishnu, whose flag (Garudadhwaaja) symbolizes divine presence. She expresses her intention to perform worship (puja) along with Vithoba, indicating her desire for divine communion. She continues by mentioning the offerings of incense (dhup), lamps (deep), and flower garlands (pushpamala) as part of her worship. She dedicates (samarpu) these offerings to Gopala, another name for Lord Krishna or Vithoba, emphasizing her devotion and surrender. Soyarabai then talks about placing betel leaves (pan) ahead (pudhe) as an offering. She mentions that abundant food (anna) should be provided to the extended family (wadhi kutumbi), symbolizing the importance of hospitality and sharing in her spiritual practice. She humbly states that she is unworthy (navhe) of worshipping the gods (deva). Instead, she requests them to accept offerings (karuniya) made with humility and sincerity (God). Soyarabai then references the story of Vidura's wife

(Viduragarachya patal kanya), who offered dry leftover food (khasi) to Lord Krishna, earning divine blessings (dhanya) in return. This line highlights the importance of sincerity and devotion in worship, regardless of the offering's material value. She further illustrates the concept of divine satisfaction by referring to Draupadi's offering (bhaji pana) to Lord Narayana, which resulted in his contentment (trupti). This emphasizes the idea that true devotion leads to divine grace and fulfillment. Soyarabai concludes by suggesting that by following such acts of devotion, one can become like celestial beings (pari). She attributes such spiritual attainment to inner vision (chokhyachi), indicating the importance of spiritual insight and realization in one's journey towards divine union. Overall, this abhanga showcases Soyarabai's profound devotion and her understanding of spiritual principles, emphasizing the importance of sincerity, humility, and devotion in one's worship and spiritual practice. Her abhanga continue to resonate with readers, inspiring reflection on issues of caste discrimination and the universal pursuit of spiritual liberation. In essence, Soyarabai's legacy lies not only in her literary prowess but also in her courageous stance against social injustices.

## SANIT JANABAI

Saint Janabai was a notable figure in the Bhakti movement. She was also known as Janai, particularly in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra, India. She was born to parents Rand and Karand, a family of Matang, the lowest caste, residing in Gangakhed in the 13th century. After the death of her mother, Janabai's father brought her to Pandharpur, a site of immense religious importance for Marathi-speaking Hindus. She worked as a maid in the family of Damasheti, who was a devotee of Lord Vitthal and the father of the renowned religious poet Namdev. Janabai, who was probably older than Namdev, served him diligently for numerous years.

Janabai developed a strong devotion to Lord Vitthal from a young age, influenced by her religious surroundings in Pandharpur. Although she did not have a formal education, she exhibited exceptional creative aptitude by creating a multitude of holy lines in the Abhang style. Janabai's life exemplified devotion, resilience, and spiritual wisdom. Janabai is traditionally credited with writing more than three hundred abhanga, which are highly esteemed for their profound spirituality and poetic elegance. Janabai is highly esteemed among Marathi-speaking Hindus, especially those who follow the Varakari sect in Maharashtra, along with other respected saints such as Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Eknath, and Tukaram.

Her poetry always inspires and deeply resonates with her followers, perpetuating her legacy of unwavering dedication and profound spiritual insight. In her three hundred forty seventh abhang, she compares the path of devotion to navigating through a thorn bush, implying that the journey of bhakti is not easy. Just as walking through a thorn bush requires careful navigation to avoid getting hurt, practicing devotion demands perseverance and resilience in the face of obstacles.

भक्ति ते कठीण इंगळाची खाई रिपणें त्या डोहीं कठीण असे ॥१॥  
भक्ति ते कठीण विषग्रास घेणें उदास में होणें जीवें भावें ॥२॥  
भक्ति ते कठीण भक्ति ते कठीण खड्गाची धार बाण न सोसी तया ॥३॥  
भक्ति ते कठीण विचारुनि पाहे जनी भक्तियोगें संतसमागम सर्व सिद्धी ॥४॥

Bhakti te kathin ingalachi khaai, riparne tya dohi kathin ase. ||1||  
Bhakti te kathin visagras ghenen, udaas mein hone jeeven bhaaven. ||2||  
Bhakti te kathin, bhakti te kathin, khadgachi dhaara, baana na sosi taya. ||3||  
Bhakti te kathin vicharuni pahe, jani bhakti yogen santasamagam sarva siddhi. ||4||

In the second line, she explains true devotion by comparing it with poison and swords and suggests devotees have a sense of detachment. One needs to transcend worldly attachments and desires to fully immerse oneself in devotion. Being detached doesn't mean being disinterested but rather being free from ego-driven desires. Janabai extends the metaphor by likening devotion to holding onto the edge of a sword (khadgachi dhaara). Holding onto a sword's edge is precarious and requires immense focus and determination. Similarly, practicing bhakti demands unwavering commitment and resolve despite the challenges and risks involved. The final line emphasizes that despite the difficulties, those who deeply contemplate (vicharuni pahe) the essence of devotion and engage in the company of saints (santasamagam) attain all fulfillment (sarva siddhi). This implies that through sincere introspection and association with enlightened beings, one can realize the highest spiritual attainment.

ज्योत परब्रह्म होय खेचरी दर्पणीनें पाहे ॥१॥  
इडा पिंगळा तिन्ही पाहे हृदयभुवना शा ॥२॥  
हळू हळू रीघ करी सूक्ष्म हृदय अंतरीं ॥३॥  
हृदय कमळावरी जासी जनी म्हणे मुक्त होसी ॥४॥

(Jyot Parabrahma hoy khachari, darpanine pahe. ||1||

Ida Pingala tinhi pahe, hridayabhuvana sha. ||2||  
Haloo haloo regh kari, sukshma hriday antari. ||3||  
Hriday kamalavari jasi, jani mhane mukta hosi. ||4||

Janabai, in the above abhang number two hundred two, begins by stating that one can perceive the ultimate reality, Parabrahma (Supreme Brahman), within themselves, akin to seeing it reflected in a mirror (darpanie pahe). This metaphor suggests that the divine is not external but resides within every being, waiting to be realized through introspection and self-awareness. In the second line, Janabai refers to Ida and Pingala, the two main energy channels in the yogic tradition that represent the lunar and solar energies within the body. She suggests that one who delves into the depths of their inner being can perceive these subtle energy channels, symbolizing the awakening of spiritual awareness and balance. The third line speaks of refining the innermost realm of the heart (hriday antari) with gentle and gradual effort (haloo haloo regh kari). This implies the process of purifying one's innermost thoughts, emotions, and desires to attain spiritual clarity and purity. The final line describes the culmination of the spiritual journey, where one's consciousness ascends to the lotus of the heart (hriday kamalavari jasi). Janabai suggests that upon reaching this state of spiritual realization, one becomes liberated (mukta hosi). Liberation here refers to the freedom from worldly attachments and the realization of one's true divine nature.

नाहीं आकाश घडणी। पाहा स्वरूपाची खाणी ||१||  
स्वरूप हैं अगोचरा गुरु करिती गोचर ||२||  
गोचर करिताती जाणा। दृष्टि दिसे निरंजना ||३||  
नाहीं हात पाय त्यासी जनी म्हणे स्वरूपाली ||४||

(Nahi aakash ghadani, paha swarupachi khani ||1||  
Swarup hain agochar, guru kariti gochar ||2||  
Gochar karitati jana, drishti dise niranjana ||3||  
Nahi haat pay tyasi, jani mhane swarupasi ||4||

In the above abhang number two hundred third, Sant Janabai delves into the profound concept of self-realization and the role of the Guru or teacher in guiding one towards it. The abhanga starts by stating that there's no need to search for the sky or look outwardly for the essence. Instead, one should look within to behold the true essence or nature. It emphasizes that the true essence (swarup) is beyond ordinary perception (agochar) and cannot be grasped easily. However, through the guidance and teachings of the Guru, it becomes perceptible (gochar). It emphasizes that the true essence (swarup) is beyond ordinary perception (agochar) and cannot be grasped easily. However, through the guidance and teachings of the Guru, it becomes perceptible (gochar). It emphasizes that the true essence (swarup) is beyond ordinary perception (agochar) and cannot be grasped easily. However, through the guidance and teachings of the Guru, it becomes perceptible (gochar). This abhanga underscores the importance of introspection, spiritual guidance, and the realization of one's true nature, which is beyond the physical and perceptible realm. It highlights the role of the Guru in illuminating the path towards self-realization and spiritual awakening.

Janabai found solace and purpose in her devotion to Lord Vithoba, a form of Lord Vishnu worshipped in Pandharpur, despite facing societal discrimination and hardships due to her caste. She became a disciple of Sant Namdev, a revered saint and poet of the Bhakti tradition. Janabai's devotion to Lord Vithoba found expression in her abhangas, devotional songs written in the Marathi language. Through her simple yet profound verses, she conveyed her unwavering love for the divine and her deep spiritual insights. Her abhangas often reflected themes of surrender, longing, and the divine presence in everyday life.

Despite her lack of formal education, Janabai's poetic talent and spiritual depth earned her respect and recognition among her contemporaries and subsequent generations. Her abhangas continue to be cherished for their lyrical beauty and spiritual resonance. Janabai's life serves as a testament to the transformative power of devotion and the universality of spiritual experience, transcending social barriers and inspiring seekers of all backgrounds to connect with the divine.

## CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the investigation into the streamlining of Indian philosophy by Marathi women saints Sant Janabai, Sant Muktabai, and Sant Soyabai throughout the 13th and 14th centuries reveals an extraordinary amalgamation of spirituality, wisdom, and poetic articulation. These esteemed saints, despite their modest origins and minimal formal schooling, clarified intricate philosophical ideas through their devotional poetry, particularly in the form of abhangas.

The abhangas of Sant Muktabai provide pragmatic instruction for individuals who are seeking to attain realisation and release. Her works condense complex philosophical ideas into emotionally powerful verses, highlighting the importance of inner cleansing, devotion, and the pragmatic core of Indian philosophy.

Sant Soyarabai, a follower of Sant Chokhamela, fearlessly defied societal conventions and expressed her opposition to untouchability through her powerful abhangas. Although she held a marginalised position, she made significant contributions to the spiritual and philosophical discussions of her era, emphasising the universal nature of divine love and compassion.

The lyrics of Sant Janabai demonstrate her tremendous reverence for Lord Vitthal and her profound understanding of the essence of the self and the divine. Using her abhangas, which are both simple and profound, she explores the idea of non-duality and the ultimate connection between the individual soul and the Supreme Being.

Apart from these three, there are a number of other women saints, like Saint Premabai, Saint Venabai, Saint Vithabai, Saint Ladai, Saint Gonai, Saint Rajai, Saint Nirmalabai, Saint Kanhopatra, Saint Bahinabai, Saint Mahadamba, Saint Mirabai, Saint Sakhubai, and Saint Mirabai. The combined contributions of these Marathi women saints serve as radiant guides of wisdom, leading seekers towards spiritual enlightenment and personal growth. Their abhangas persist in inspiring and resonating with individuals across multiple generations, effectively bridging the divide between intricate philosophy and mundane existence. Sant Janabai, Sant Muktabai, and Sant Soyarabai have made a lasting impact on Indian spirituality and philosophy with their deep insights and poetic interpretations. They remind us of the enduring strength of devotion, simplicity, and love in achieving spiritual enlightenment. Essentially, the teachings of Marathi women saints revolved around devotion, liberty, and social criticism. They promoted the idea of establishing a direct link with the divine, while rejecting conventional rites and mediators. Their abhangs praised the effectiveness of reciting the sacred name and emphasised steadfast belief. Furthermore, these saints courageously fought patriarchal conventions, questioning societal structures and promoting equality and freedom. Their compositions exhibit simplicity, clarity, and accessibility, skillfully condensing intricate philosophical concepts into familiar verses, so rendering spiritual truth easily understandable for everyone.

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