

Study of Philosophical Teachings Given by Sant Dnyaneshwar in Dnyaneshwari, Amrutanubhav and Changdev Pasashti.

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Abstract

Sant Dnyaneshwar (1275–1296 CE) was a revered saint, poet, and philosopher of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra, India. He is best known for his monumental work, the Dnyaneshwari (also called Bhavarth Deepika), a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita written in Marathi. This masterpiece made the profound spiritual teachings of the Gita accessible to the common people by presenting them in their native language and in a simple yet poetic style. He also wrote Amrutanubhav and Changdev pasashti. Amrutanubhav is a philosophical treatise exploring the nature of existence, self-realization, and the ultimate reality. It delves into profound concepts like non-duality (Advaita), the unity of the soul with the divine, and the transcendence of dualistic thought, using simple yet evocative language. On the other hand, Changdev Pasashti is a collection of 65 verses composed in response to Changdev, a yogi with extraordinary powers but limited spiritual understanding. Through these verses, Dnyaneshwar emphasizes the supremacy of inner wisdom over external accomplishments, highlighting that true knowledge lies in self-awareness and surrender to the divine. Together, these works exemplify Dnyaneshwar's ability to articulate complex spiritual truths in a manner accessible to seekers, blending philosophy, devotion, and poetic expression seamlessly.

Sant Dnyaneshwar, a revered 13th-century Marathi saint, philosopher, and poet, composed the *Dnyaneshwari*, a detailed commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*. In this work, he masterfully intertwines profound spiritual teachings with insights into physical and mental well-being. Here are 30 detailed philosophical teachings from the *Dnyaneshwari*, exploring themes of physical health, mental well-being, spirituality, and the divine connection between the soul and God:

- Integration of Body and Soul:** Dnyaneshwar emphasizes the importance of balancing the body and soul to attain spiritual awakening. He teaches that caring for the body through proper practices prepares the vessel for deeper spiritual pursuits. Without a strong, healthy body, the soul's journey toward enlightenment can be hindered.
- The Inner Temple:** He draws an analogy between the human body and a temple, urging practitioners to respect their physical form as the dwelling place of the divine. He suggests that a disciplined lifestyle, encompassing healthy eating and yogic postures, honors the sacredness of the body.
- Mental Purity as a Path to Divinity:** The *Dnyaneshwari* asserts that a pure mind is essential for spiritual progress. Dnyaneshwar teaches that by purging negative emotions like anger and jealousy, individuals create space for divine grace and inner peace.

4. **Equanimity in Pleasure and Pain:** Dnyaneshwar presents the concept of maintaining equanimity in both joy and suffering. He describes this mental state as vital for spiritual growth, as it allows individuals to transcend dualities and see life from a broader, divine perspective.
5. **The Power of Contemplation:** He advocates for regular meditation and introspection as a means to cultivate inner wisdom. Through contemplation, the seeker can transcend superficial thoughts and reach deeper truths that align with the eternal nature of the soul.
6. **Detachment and the Illusion of the World:** One of the core teachings in the *Dnyaneshwari* is *Maya* or illusion. Dnyaneshwar explains that attachment to material possessions and worldly pleasures binds the soul, hindering spiritual liberation. Detachment, therefore, is a key practice for attaining higher consciousness.
7. **The Path of Devotion (Bhakti Yoga):** Dnyaneshwar speaks highly of *bhakti*, the path of love and devotion toward God. He suggests that true devotion purifies the heart, allowing one to experience the bliss of divine union, irrespective of caste, creed, or social standing.
8. **The Universal Presence of God:** He emphasizes that God is omnipresent, dwelling within every being. This teaching encourages followers to recognize the divine spark in themselves and others, fostering compassion and unity.
9. **Harmony of Knowledge and Action:** In his commentary, Dnyaneshwar elucidates the integration of *Jnana Yoga* (path of knowledge) and *Karma Yoga* (path of action). He argues that true wisdom is demonstrated through righteous actions performed without attachment to the results.
10. **Spiritual Discipline and Self-Control:** The saint underscores the importance of self-regulation in life. He believes that mastery over one's impulses leads to mastery over one's mind, which is crucial for spiritual progress.
11. **The Nature of the Self (Atman):** Dnyaneshwar delves into the concept of the *Atman* (soul), describing it as eternal, unchanging, and beyond the physical body. He teaches that recognizing the soul's divine essence is key to overcoming fear of death and attaining liberation.
12. **The Eternal Bond between the Soul and God:** He beautifully describes the relationship between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul as that of a wave and the ocean. Just as the wave is part of the ocean, every soul is inherently connected to God.
13. **Meditation as the Gateway to God:** Dnyaneshwar places great importance on meditation, stating that it stills the mind and allows for divine communion. The practice helps dissolve the ego and merge the individual consciousness with the universal consciousness.
14. **The Role of Guru (Spiritual Teacher):** He highlights the necessity of a guru to guide seekers on the path of self-realization. The guru acts as a beacon, dispelling the darkness of ignorance and illuminating the path to enlightenment.
15. **Mental Resilience and Surrender:** In his teachings, Dnyaneshwar promotes the idea of surrendering to God's will. By placing trust in the divine, one develops resilience against life's adversities, understanding that each challenge is part of a larger cosmic plan.
16. **Transformation through Humility:** He stresses that true spiritual growth occurs through humility. Pride and ego are barriers that prevent one from experiencing divine love. Humility opens the heart to higher wisdom and grace.
17. **The Role of Pranayama:** The *Dnyaneshwari* touches on the importance of breath control for mental and spiritual well-being. Pranayama practices help balance the mind and body, acting as a bridge between the physical and spiritual realms.

18. **The Illusion of Time:** Dnyaneshwar explores the nature of time, explaining that past and future are constructs of the mind. Only the present moment holds reality, and living fully in it aligns us with the eternal now of divine consciousness.
19. **Inner Silence:** He advocates for periods of silence and solitude, which allow individuals to disconnect from external distractions and attune to the inner voice of the divine.
20. **Unity in Diversity:** One profound teaching of the *Dnyaneshwari* is the idea that all creation is an expression of the same divine energy. Differences in appearance, behavior, and beliefs are part of the cosmic dance but do not separate the essence that binds all beings.
21. **Acceptance of Life's Cycles:** Dnyaneshwar reminds readers that life is a series of cycles, including birth, growth, decay, and death. Embracing these cycles without resistance brings peace and prepares the soul for liberation.
22. **Compassion as Divine Practice:** He describes compassion as not just an emotion but a divine practice. By being compassionate, we align ourselves with the qualities of God and create harmony in the world around us.
23. **The Power of Mantras:** Dnyaneshwar highlights the chanting of holy mantras as a tool for focus, purification, and divine connection. The vibrations of sacred sounds help cleanse the mind and elevate spiritual consciousness.
24. **Egoless Service:** The *Dnyaneshwari* teaches that selfless service is a form of worship. Serving others without expecting anything in return purifies the heart and deepens the connection to God.
25. **The Bliss of God-Realization:** Dnyaneshwar describes the state of God-realization as an unending state of bliss and peace. In this state, all dualities dissolve, and the seeker becomes one with the divine.
26. **Living as the Witness:** One of his teachings is to live life as an observer or witness, understanding that the self is not bound by actions but remains untouched as the eternal consciousness.
27. **Overcoming the Mind's Turmoil:** He advises techniques such as focusing on the breath, chanting, and meditation to overcome the restless nature of the mind, thereby allowing deeper states of peace and realization.
28. **Spiritual Joy over Material Pleasure:** Dnyaneshwar argues that while material pleasures are fleeting, spiritual joy is lasting and fulfilling. Seeking the divine brings a sense of joy that transcends physical and mental satisfaction.
29. **Trust in Divine Timing:** The saint reassures that everything in life happens according to divine timing. Patience and faith are essential virtues, as they help the seeker trust that the universe unfolds as it should.
30. **The Ultimate Unity of Knowledge, Love, and Devotion:** He concludes that the paths of knowledge, love, and devotion are all intertwined and lead to the same goal of union with the divine. True wisdom is knowing that these paths complement each other and lead to the ultimate realization of the self as one with God.

These teachings collectively illuminate Sant Dnyaneshwar's profound insights into the harmony between physical health, mental peace, spiritual devotion, and the journey to recognizing the eternal connection between the soul and the divine.

Teachings from *Amrutanubhav*:

1. **On the Nature of Self-Realization:** In *Amrutanubhav*, Dnyaneshwar explains that self-realization is the merging of the individual soul (jiva) with the universal consciousness (Brahman). He portrays this experience as transcendent, beyond dualities, where the seeker and the sought become one.
2. **The Illusory World (Maya):** Dnyaneshwar delves into the concept of *Maya* and describes how the world is a manifestation of divine illusion. He teaches that while the world appears real, it is ultimately transient and should be perceived as an expression of God's play.
3. **The Limitless Nature of the Divine:** Dnyaneshwar emphasizes that God is beyond description and form. In *Amrutanubhav*, he uses poetic metaphors to illustrate that the divine cannot be confined to any single attribute, being boundless and omnipresent.
4. **Union of Shiva and Shakti:** One of the central teachings is the unity of Shiva (pure consciousness) and Shakti (divine energy). Dnyaneshwar explains that their union is the source of all creation, emphasizing the non-dualistic philosophy where consciousness and energy are inseparable.
5. **Beyond the Mind's Comprehension:** He states that true understanding of the divine cannot be grasped through intellectual analysis alone. Spiritual experience, cultivated through deep meditation and devotion, transcends the limitations of the rational mind.
6. **Renouncing Duality:** Dnyaneshwar stresses the importance of transcending dualities such as good and evil, pleasure and pain, to achieve a higher state of consciousness. By seeing all as part of the divine, a seeker moves beyond conflict to inner peace.
7. **Pure Bliss (Ananda):** The saint speaks of the state of *Ananda*, or pure, unadulterated joy that arises when one is in harmony with the divine. He suggests that this bliss is innate to the soul but obscured by ignorance.
8. **Symbolism of Light and Darkness:** Dnyaneshwar uses the metaphor of light representing divine knowledge and darkness symbolizing ignorance. He teaches that through spiritual practice, the light of self-knowledge dispels the darkness of ego and illusion.
9. **The Inexpressibility of Truth:** In *Amrutanubhav*, Dnyaneshwar reflects on how the ultimate truth defies human language. While teachings and scriptures can point to it, true understanding comes only through direct experience.
10. **The Non-Separation of the Seeker and the Sought:** He explains that the journey of seeking God is like a river merging with the ocean; there is no difference between the seeker and the divine at the culmination of the journey.
11. **Divine Play (Leela):** Dnyaneshwar introduces the idea of creation as a divine play, where life is an expression of God's joy and creativity. This perspective encourages detachment from worldly outcomes and a recognition of the greater divine plan.
12. **Love as the Pathway:** Love is portrayed as the most powerful tool for realizing the divine. Dnyaneshwar asserts that through pure love and surrender, one can attain the highest spiritual state effortlessly.
13. **Inner Silence:** He teaches the importance of silence not just in speech, but as an inner state of being where the mind is quiet, allowing the divine voice to be heard within.
14. **The Illumination of Wisdom:** Dnyaneshwar underscores the transformative power of wisdom (*Jnana*). He explains that true wisdom is the realization of the unity of all existence, leading to liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

15. **Freedom from Ego:** The saint emphasizes that the ego is the greatest obstacle to spiritual growth. In *Amrutanubhav*, he advises dissolving the ego through humility and devotion to experience unity with the divine.
16. **Beyond Rituals:** While not dismissing traditional practices, Dnyaneshwar suggests that true spirituality lies in the essence rather than the form. Mere rituals, without inner transformation, are likened to an empty shell.
17. **Embracing Oneness:** He teaches that recognizing the divine in everything leads to a state where one sees no distinction between oneself and others, fostering a sense of universal love and compassion.
18. **Intuition over Reason:** Dnyaneshwar places higher value on intuitive knowledge over purely intellectual reasoning. He describes intuition as a direct connection to divine truth, accessible through meditation and inner stillness.
19. **The Power of Faith:** In *Amrutanubhav*, faith is depicted as a force that moves mountains. Dnyaneshwar explains that unwavering faith can guide the seeker through all trials on the spiritual path.
20. **The Ever-Present Divine:** He teaches that God is not separate from creation but exists in every particle. This understanding helps dissolve the illusion of separation and cultivates a sense of divine presence in every moment.

Teachings from *Changdev Pasashti*:

1. **Spiritual Awakening:** In his letter to Changdev, Dnyaneshwar emphasizes the need for spiritual awakening through self-inquiry. He encourages seeking the true nature of the self beyond physical existence.
2. **Humility and Wisdom:** Dnyaneshwar addresses the importance of humility in the pursuit of wisdom. He implies that Changdev's ego blocked his spiritual growth and that true wisdom arises from surrender and openness.
3. **Eternal Truth Beyond Age:** The letter is a reminder that spiritual knowledge is not bound by age or status. Dnyaneshwar, being younger, illustrates that wisdom is timeless and independent of worldly hierarchies.
4. **The Impermanence of Power:** Dnyaneshwar subtly conveys that supernatural powers (siddhis) are transient and do not equate to true spiritual accomplishment. The pursuit of these powers can distract from the ultimate goal of self-realization.
5. **Living with Awareness:** He teaches Changdev to live with awareness of the present moment and to recognize the divine within each experience. Mindful living leads to deeper understanding and connection with God.
6. **Transcending Fear:** In his teachings, Dnyaneshwar notes that fear arises from attachment and ego. By understanding the eternal nature of the soul, one transcends fear and embraces divine protection.
7. **The Strength of Inner Silence:** Dnyaneshwar highlights the potency of inner silence as a state where the mind is at rest, allowing profound spiritual realizations. Silence connects one to the higher self and divine wisdom.
8. **Transformation through Knowledge:** He conveys that true transformation comes from knowledge that changes one's perspective on life. Merely learning information is insufficient; wisdom must penetrate and shift one's being.

9. **Detachment from Success and Failure:** Dnyaneshwar advises detachment from the results of actions. By seeing life's events as part of the divine flow, one can live peacefully without being swayed by success or failure.
10. **Unity in Diversity:** A core teaching is the recognition that all apparent differences are manifestations of the same divine source. Understanding this unity dissolves discrimination and promotes a harmonious worldview.
11. **Breaking the Chains of the Mind:** He tells Changdev that true liberation comes from breaking free of the mind's conditioning and ego-driven thoughts. Spiritual practice should aim to free one from these mental confines.
12. **Devotion Beyond Practices:** Dnyaneshwar indicates that true devotion comes from the heart and cannot be limited by external practices or rituals. Changdev is taught to find devotion within the simplicity of daily life.
13. **The Inherent Divine Light:** He emphasizes that every soul carries the divine light within. The purpose of spiritual practice is to uncover this light and let it shine through actions and thoughts.
14. **Life as a Divine Teacher:** Dnyaneshwar views every experience as a lesson from the divine. Challenges are seen not as obstacles but as teachers guiding one toward growth and deeper understanding.
15. **Oneness with Nature:** He often draws parallels between human life and natural phenomena, teaching that nature itself reflects divine principles. Living in harmony with nature brings one closer to understanding the divine.
16. **The Simplicity of Truth:** Dnyaneshwar teaches that the ultimate truth is simple and accessible to all. Overcomplicating spirituality with excessive rituals or esoteric concepts can obscure the path to realization.
17. **Love as a Unifier:** He highlights love as the force that unites all beings with God. Love dissolves separation and builds a bridge between the soul and the divine.
18. **Embracing Change:** The letter encourages accepting life's changes with grace. Dnyaneshwar explains that change is part of the divine play, and resisting it only causes suffering.
19. **The Divine Presence in Action:** Dnyaneshwar advises that every action be performed with the awareness of the divine presence. This consciousness transforms mundane activities into acts of devotion.
20. **Endless Learning:** Finally, Dnyaneshwar communicates that spiritual learning is a never-ending process. He implies that even masters must remain open to new insights and maintain a spirit of continuous growth.

These teachings from *Amrutanubhav* and *Changdev Pasashti* reveal Dnyaneshwar's profound insights into spirituality, emphasizing themes of unity, devotion, humility, and inner transformation.

Sant Dnyaneshwar's teachings in *Amrutanubhav*, *Dnyaneshwari*, and *Changdev Pasashti* encompass profound insights into spirituality, non-dual consciousness, and the path to self-realization. Here is a summary of key themes from these works:

Amrutanubhav:

1. **Non-Duality (Advaita):** *Amrutanubhav* centers on the philosophy of non-duality, emphasizing the oneness of the individual soul (*jiva*) and the universal consciousness (*Brahman*). Dnyaneshwar

describes how true self-realization transcends all dualistic distinctions, leading to a state where the seeker and the sought become one.

2. **Divine Play (Leela):** Life is portrayed as the divine play of consciousness where the material world is an illusion (*Maya*). Understanding this allows one to detach from worldly concerns and see life's events as part of a greater divine orchestration.
3. **Beyond Intellectual Comprehension:** Dnyaneshwar suggests that true spiritual knowledge goes beyond intellectual reasoning. It is a state of direct experience achieved through deep meditation and inner silence.
4. **Union of Shiva and Shakti:** He explores the inseparability of pure consciousness (Shiva) and divine energy (Shakti), symbolizing the interconnectedness of all creation.
5. **Inner Bliss (Ananda):** The work emphasizes that pure joy and bliss come from the realization of the self as one with the divine, a state obscured by ignorance but inherent to all beings.

Dnyaneshwari:

1. **Spiritual Interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita:** *Dnyaneshwari* is a comprehensive commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, elucidating its spiritual, ethical, and philosophical meanings. It presents the Gita's teachings in simple, poetic language for broader understanding.
2. **Karma Yoga and Detachment:** Dnyaneshwar emphasizes performing one's duties with detachment from results, aligning with the Gita's teaching of *Karma Yoga*. He highlights that selfless action without desire for reward leads to spiritual liberation.
3. **Pathways to Liberation:** He elaborates on various paths to spiritual growth, including *Bhakti* (devotion), *Jnana* (knowledge), and *Dhyana* (meditation), showing how each can lead to the ultimate goal of union with God.
4. **Divine Omnipresence:** A recurring theme is the presence of the divine in all beings and the interconnectedness of life. Recognizing this leads to a deeper sense of compassion and unity with others.
5. **Ego and Surrender:** The teachings stress surrendering the ego to attain true wisdom. The ego is seen as a barrier that keeps one from experiencing the divine truth.

Changdev Pasashti:

1. **Letter of Wisdom:** *Changdev Pasashti* is a poetic epistle written by Dnyaneshwar to the sage Changdev, offering him profound spiritual guidance. It addresses the need for humility, as Changdev was known for his pride in supernatural powers.
2. **Spiritual Awakening:** The teachings highlight that true spiritual awakening comes from inner realization rather than the accumulation of mystical powers or intellectual knowledge.
3. **Humility and Detachment:** Dnyaneshwar emphasizes that ego and pride prevent spiritual growth. Changdev is advised to embrace humility and detach from the allure of supernatural abilities.
4. **Beyond the Physical Realm:** The letter points to the importance of transcending the physical body and identifying with the soul's eternal nature. This shift in perspective helps overcome fear and attachment.
5. **Unity with the Divine:** The text reflects the idea that all creation is an expression of the divine, urging Changdev to see beyond dualities and recognize the oneness underlying existence.

Common Themes:

- **Oneness and Unity:** Across all three works, Dnyaneshwar's teachings center on the unity of the soul and the divine. Recognizing this unity is the essence of spiritual enlightenment.
- **Detachment and Selflessness:** He advocates for a life of detachment from material outcomes and ego-driven pursuits, promoting selfless service as a path to divine connection.
- **The Illusion of the World:** The world is seen as *Maya*, a transient illusion that distracts from the eternal truth. Dnyaneshwar encourages transcending this illusion through wisdom and meditation.
- **Love and Devotion:** The power of pure love and devotion (*Bhakti*) is emphasized as a direct and accessible path to God, embodying the idea that true devotion transcends ritualistic practices.
- **Experiential Knowledge:** Intellectual understanding is valued but is seen as insufficient without personal experience. Direct spiritual insight, achieved through meditation and inner silence, is portrayed as the true path to enlightenment.

These teachings collectively offer a path that integrates devotion, wisdom, and meditation to achieve self-realization, emphasizing the dissolution of ego and the recognition of the divine presence in all aspects of life.

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