

Namdev, Early Life, Beliefs, Literary Works, Legacy

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Namdev was a famous saint and poet of the Bhakti movement in India. He was born in Maharashtra and is known for his deep devotion to Lord Vitthal. Namdev believed that true worship comes from love and faith, not from rituals or caste differences. Through his simple songs and poems, he spread the message of equality, devotion, and unity among people. His teachings continue to inspire people even today.

About Namdev

- **Birth and Early Life:** Namdev was born around **1270 in Naras-Vamani** village in present-day Maharashtra to a tailor named Damashetti and his wife Gonabai, and he belonged to a lower caste; his full name was Namdeo Relekar, and before becoming a saint, he worked as a tailor and is sometimes said to have lived a troubled life before turning towards spirituality.
- **Spiritual Beliefs and Influence:** Namdev was deeply influenced by **Vaishnavism** and became a **devotee of Lord Vithoba**, and his philosophy included both **nirguna** (formless God) and **saguna** (God with form) ideas, while he strongly believed that true devotion comes from love, faith, and equality rather than rituals or caste differences.
- **Life as a Saint and Travels:** Namdev became well known for his devotional singing (bhajans and kirtans), travelled to many places across India, is believed to have met Sufi saints in Delhi, and spread his message of

devotion and unity by attracting people from different regions, castes, and professions.

- **Association with Other Saints and Followers:** He was associated with saints like Jnanesvar and Tukaram, and his followers included people from all sections of society such as potters, barbers, gardeners, untouchables, and women, showing his belief in equality and inclusiveness.
- **Religious Importance and Traditions:** Namdev holds an important place in the Varkari tradition of Maharashtra, where even today large groups of devotees travel together to Pandharpur during pilgrimages, and he is also respected in other traditions like **Sikhism**, Kabir Panthis, and Dadu Panthis in North India.
- **Literary Works and Contributions:** Namdev composed devotional poetry in Marathi that expressed deep love for God, wrote simple and meaningful **bhajans and abhangas** that were easy for common people to understand, and some of his hymns were included in the Guru Granth Sahib, while his work "**Tirthavli**" is considered an autobiographical account.
- **Style of Devotion and Teachings:** His method of spreading devotion included music, group singing (kirtans), and simple language, making his teachings accessible to everyone, and he focused on inner devotion rather than external rituals, encouraging people to develop a personal connection with God.
- **Close Follower:** Janabai was his devoted follower and maid-servant who referred to herself as "Namdev's servant" in her poems, and she was deeply devoted to Lord Vithoba, spending her life in prayer and service, with stories describing her strong faith and devotion.
- **Death and Legacy:** Namdev is believed to have attained samadhi around 1350 at Pandharpur, and his teachings and devotional songs continue to inspire people even today by promoting love, equality, and devotion beyond caste and social differences.

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