


## Devotion and Doubt: Traversing through Spirituality and Skepticism in Arun Kolatkar's *Jejuri*

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the themes of skepticism and spiritual quest in Arun Kolatkar's poetry collection *Jejuri*, which is situated in the Maharashtra holy city of Jejuri. Kolatkar's style, which is distinguished by rich imagery, sarcastic humor, and cultural distinctiveness, combines a critical criticism of formal dogmatism and the immoral aspects of religion with respect for religious themes. The poems show the conflict between tradition and modernity in post-independence India by reflecting the constraint of religiousness and the unavoidable everyday disappointments. The study looks at how Kolatkar integrates influences from Western modernist authors with Marathi folk traditions, exposing the folkloric inclination to mix the holy with the everyday, by examining individual poems and his poetic approaches. This study examines the themes of skepticism and spiritual quest in Arun Kolatkar's poetry collection *Jejuri*, which is situated in the Maharashtra holy city of Jejuri. Kolatkar's style, which is distinguished by rich imagery, sarcastic humor, and cultural distinctiveness, combines a critical criticism of formal dogmatism and the immoral aspects of religion with respect for religious themes. The poems show the conflict between tradition and modernity in post-independence India by reflecting the constraint of religiousness and the unavoidable everyday disappointments. The study looks at how Kolatkar integrates influences from Western modernist authors with Marathi folk traditions, exposing the folkloric inclination to mix the holy with the everyday, by examining individual poems and his poetic approaches. Using sarcasm and comedy, the poet skilfully strikes a balance between faith and skepticism, revealing the intricacies of religious beliefs and providing a new angle on the spiritual journey portrayed in *Jejuri*. This research adds to a larger conversation on the meeting point of skepticism and faith in modern Indian poetry by offering a thorough examination of Kolatkar's writing.

**Keywords:** *Skepticism, Jejuri, Arun Kolatkar, Spirituality, Maharashtra.*

### Introduction

This research paper explores the themes of spiritual trip and disbelief in *Jejuri* by Arun Kolatkar. *Jejuri* is a compilation of poems set in the religious city of Jejuri in Maharashtra. Arun Kolatkar is a prominent professional 'who did not write major works in either Marathi or English.' Both poems are written in an extraordinary style characterised by deep imagery,

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heartless caustic humor, and historical and cultural specificity. The paper discusses how the author combines respect for religious factors and ironic exposure of this phenomenon's formal dogmatism and ungodly side. The poems reflect the themes of the compulsion of religiousness and inevitable daily frustrations, the elements of which the poet carefully exposes. The paper analyses specific poems and Kolatkar's poetic techniques that mix Western modernist writers' influence with Marathi folk traditions. The paper discusses that the roots of the folkloric tendency to combine the opposites of the sacred and the unclean, the divine and the everyday are in Jejuri. The events of the book occur in the 1970s when the newly independent country begins to be acutely aware of not only the colossal heritage of the past but also the future problem of inevitable modernisation. The features of a new reality are geometrically beautiful and theoretically dangerous modern technologies increasingly surrounded by the remains of the former attitude to the world, doomed to oblivion and dilution in consumer sandy times. It is shown how the poet criticises the industrialisation of religious rites and habits in India. The paper analyses the effect of the work, providing comprehensive analysis and evaluation.

**Keywords:** *Enlightenment, Ephemeral, Bhakti poetry, Modernization, Skepticism*

Arun Kolatkar (1932-2004) is an eminent Indian poet and a bilingual literary figure actively writing in Marathi and English. His style is characterised by an impressive wealth of imagery, incisive sardonic humor, and a profound sense of culture. One of the author's major works, *Jejuri*, has been rightfully considered a prominent example of modern Indian poetry. *Jejuri* is a collection of poems about the town 'Jejuri' in Maharashtra, which is aimed as an important religious place for Khandoba, the local deity, and an analysis of the human notions of faith and tradition, which Kolatkar brushes against, questioning the whole of humanity over the sacredness created by doubt.

*Jejuri* is an insatiably Marathi response to the Marathi question of a god-forsaking village, but most successfully, it is an inquiry -of spirit in irritation with incredulity. The poems by Kolatkar are respectful denouncements of formalities of worship of gods and, on the other hand, the moments that seem divine. The poems are for piety and sacrilege, for danger that has always been a fragment of the proposal for somebody who veers against God. One core dear light, however, shines out forcefully from the assortment of *Jejuri*, a work almost totally no amount of skeptics may make heads or tails of but which doesn't matter to it since, like all good writing,

it has one through intricacy and indirectness to incite delight or upset pain depending on how vast are our faiths. R. Parthasarthy states, “In reality, however, the poem oscillates between faith and scepticism in a tradition that has run its course.” (Parthasarthy 40)

This study examines the division of spiritual exploration and scepticism in Kolatkar’s *Jejuri*. It will concentrate on the peculiarities of depicting religious practices and beliefs based on the closer analysis of key poems and variants. The overall aim of the current paper is to discuss how the author balances between faith and doubt. Investigating these aspects can provide a multi-modal approach to refuting some of the abandoned perspectives on spiritual exploration. In addition, such analysis can evoke a broader discussion of the book and shift the focus of the literary criticism involved in investigating the aspect of spiritual exploration. It should be mentioned that *Jejuri* was composed in the middle of the 1970s, a distinct period in Indian history and culture. A. K. Malhotra says about *Jejuri*, “among the finest single poems written in India in the last forty years.” (Mehrotra 54) At that time, the country attempted to define its identity in the post-independence era. The following paper describes the poet’s approach to balancing faith and doubt by employing a detailed analysis of his compositions.

First and foremost, it is crucial to mention that Maharashtra, where the events of *Jejuri* occur, demonstrates how the ancient and the contemporary mix is in India. Maharashtra is a state with a distinct historical past and vibrant cultural traditions. Kolatkar’s composition deals with the pilgrimage at ‘Jejuri’, the abode of the folk god Khandoba, who is worshipped as protect or a son in the form of the divine overlord, Martanda Bhairav. The pilgrimage to this site is the basis for Kolatkar’s poems. One can understand that these multiple aspects are inherent to many Indian states, which also have their own interests in literature. On the one hand, these states undergo a process of modernisation, yet on the other, dystopian characteristics dominate the presented area. It is important to emphasise that these peculiar features are reflected in the author’s works.

Kolatkar’s writing style can be described as laconic, with minimalism and rich imagery in language. He refers to both Western and Indian traditions, combining influences of modernist writers like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound with Marathi folk and bhakti poetry. Almost all of his works are written in a conversational tone that conveys the feeling of the dialogue to readers. In *Jejuri*, the style emphasises contrasts between old and new., exalted and ironic, profound

and superficial. Such a paradoxical perception continues throughout the work with the help of Kolatkar's specific style, achieved by shifting the observer's position to which the text refers.

'Jejuri' is a town in Maharashtra famous for its temple of Khandoba, a deity worshipped by many communities, including but not limited to farmers, shepherds, and warriors. Khandoba is a god of mixed origin and partakes in Hindu and popular local cultures. The temple on the hill is a well-known place of pilgrimage where devotees arrive to seek blessings, make their prayers, and participate in various rites. The fair in Jejuri, which is held once a year, is a truly spectacular event with thousands of pilgrims celebrating. For the people, 'Jejuri' appears to be linked with their identity, either because of personal experiences or family and community ties, so it is the central element of Kolatkar's taking stock of faith. In his poems, the author reveals not only the facts about 'Jejuri' as a physical place in many respects but even more as a symbol where the divine and the human meet, and it seems to be the right context for the entire phenomenon to ask the questions it arises.

In *Jejuri*, Arun Kolatkar vividly depicted the religious practices and rituals of a pilgrimage. Through his eyes, readers can witness such practices that are a combination of both reverence and critical documentation of the events. There is a high note of how such practices raise communities' moral fiber, offering readers a chance to see and reflect on the meaning of these practices. The pilgrims follow the practices with high regard, and their specific intentions give meaning to their rituals. The above analysis of a section of the poem has shown the gentle yet critical way Arun Kolatkar describes the practices of religious rituals they do..

“What is god and what is stone / the dividing line if it exists/is very thin at 'Jejuri' / and every other stone is god / or his cousin / There is no crop other than god / and God is harvested here / around the year and round the clock / out of the bad earth and the hard rock.” (Kolatkar 28)

In this part, Kolatkar deliberates on the essence of divinity in the context of the blurred distinction between God and stone. The statement “the dividing line, if it exists, is very thin at 'Jejuri' proves the fluidity of symbols and demonstrates how ordinary, even trivial things can become holy or vice versa. In other words, as soon as the stones are found in 'Jejuri,' they are no longer usual stones but gods or manifestations of important religious principles.

“That giant hunk of rock / the size of a bedroom / is Khandoba's wife turned to stone / the crack that runs across / is the scar from his broadsword / he struck her down with once in a fit of rage.” (Kolatkar 28)

Here, Kolatkar relates a myth connected to a real stone at 'Jejuri'. The “giant hunk of rock” serves as a reminder of a story when Khandoba's wife is turned into a stone and issued a divine

but smiteful account. In other words, this giant stone object was originally a live person and is currently a stone item. Thus, the author explains how religious stories become physical objects, and “scar from his broadsword” signifies that many religious images have very complex and sometimes cruel backgrounds.

“Scratch a rock and a legend springs.” (Kolatkcar 28)

The final line captures the idea that sacred narratives come out of the ordinary. The poet guides the reader to see that religious meanings do not come from the stone. “a legend springs” from the simple act of scratching a stone. Kolatkcar demonstrates that the lines between the sacred and the ordinary are often blurred. Humans have constantly derived physical objects as sacred by imposing religious meaning on pilgrimage sites. The author points out to the reader that these religious rituals are made of ordinary, mundane activities. Moreover, Kolatkcar may also imply that such religious rituals are a mockery of religious beliefs, and the people have been executing them wrongly. Therefore, with the poem’s last line, one can suggest that the author tells the reader that the meaning of religious rituals is quite ambiguous. Kolatkcar’s symbolism and imagery in Jejuri are principal in telling the spiritual experiences. The rocky terrains in ‘Jejuri’ and the old sanctuaries in the destination are suitable examples of how symbols come into play. The rocks in Kolatkcar’s poem symbolise the struggles and challenges in life, while the ancient temples symbolise peace and hope in one destination.

In Arun Kolatkcar’s poem “Heart of Ruin”, the imagery and symbolism offer a rich exploration of spirituality. The poem reflects on the state of a dilapidated temple. It uses this physical decay to engage with larger spiritual questions. Here, we will analyse how Kolatkcar’s imagery and symbolism contribute to themes of spirituality and its complexities.

“The roof comes down on Maruti’s head.  
Nobody seems to mind.  
Least of all Maruti himself.  
Maybe he likes a temple better this way.  
A mongrel bitch has found a place  
for herself and her puppies  
in the heart of the ruin.  
Maybe she likes a temple better this way.  
The bitch looks at you guardedly

past a doorway cluttered with broken tiles.  
The pariah puppies tumble over her.  
Maybe they like a temple better this way.  
The black-eared puppy has gone a little too far.  
A tile clicks under its foot.” (Kolatkar 12)

The idea of “shattered” in the traditional historical places where religion takes people look up to and cleanses their minds—the devastation is inevitable, with the “roof” coming down in a very literal way. In other words, the collapse of traditional religious institutions and practices also ushers in the disintegration of the ideals and sanctity ascribed to such places. The temple, formerly considered the residence of gods, is now reduced to a “house of god” in a very different actual sense. Here, we see that Maruti, a deity associated with power and guarding, is not perturbed by the ruin. This uncaringness is a feature of the new spiritual outlook. The variables of gods are no longer associated with occurrence and are not confined to places or premises that are presumed religious or holy; instead, they are embodied in the familiar and dilapidated. The dog and the puppies represent the dog’s holiness in the ordinary and everyday, whereas an elegant and newly constructed temple does not depict the God.

“A mongrel bitch has found a place for herself and her puppies  
in the heart of the ruin. Maybe she likes a temple better this way.” (Kolatkar 12)

Kolatkar juxtaposes the image of the mongrel bitch, a creature which is widely considered unclean, with the sacred space of the temple to show the reader that normal general beliefs do not work in this poem. Dogs are best at home in ruin, and they feel at home in such a place. It means spirituality cannot be bound to form and place, as it can flourish even despite the ignorance of dirt. The dung beetle represents an ignored or humiliated element, firmly attached to the rubbish and decay.

The beetle’s response to the “click” of the tile under the puppy’s foot illustrates how petty disturbances can disturb the delicate balance of life. The beetle scuttles away to the “broken collection box” because all the retired priests are “funny kinds of ladies” who still believe in sacred things like the “collection box” being “sacred and potent “. The “broken collection box” is thus suggestive of the unworkable broken status of previous efforts to uphold religious traditions. The collection from those efforts is now easily available to the temple because the temple is no longer fully functioning.

“The broken collection box that never did get a chance to get out from under the crushing weight of the roof beam.”

This box, once intended to gather offerings, now lies crushed and forgotten, symbolising the futility of attempts to capture or contain the divine in material forms. Kolatkar uses vivid imagery to bring the physical state of the temple to life. The “broken tiles,” “crushing weight of the roof beam,” and “heart of the ruin” paint a stark picture of decay and abandonment. “A doorway cluttered with broken tiles.”

The decay of the temple is a central textual feature in the poem. This is because it helps understand the element of spirituality in the poem. The temple is used to set the scene in which the poem is occurring. As such, Kolatkar tells the reader that in the temple, “the attempts to interfere with the ways of God were not on a very grand scale”. Thus, The temple represents the unclean and devastated state of a place that was once orderly and probably neat and orderly. The status is used to subvert the traditional understanding of a sacred place that is usually neat and quiet. Additionally, the claim that “here where was half of everything there ought to have been, there was nothing” refers to the status of spirituality not being as ideal as the traditional beliefs portray the state to be.

“It’s enough to strike terror in the heart  
of a dung beetle  
and send him running for cover  
to the safety of the broken collection box  
that never did get a chance to get out  
from under the crushing weight of the roof beam.  
No more a place of worship this place  
is nothing less than the house of God.” (Kolatkar 12)

The poem’s final line comments that the temple’s ruin is a form of divinity. A place of religious reverence that has decayed becomes a spiritual symbol. The divine is still present in the less salubrious surroundings of a run-down temple. In “Heart of Ruin,” Arun Kolatkar uses symbolism and imagery to convey the poem’s themes in its context of ruin and neglect. The temple in ruins, the mongrel bitch and her puppies, the dung beetle, and the broken collection box are pictures that belie the knee-jerk conclusion of many that sacred is the opposite of corrupt. Kolatkar’s imagery is central to the argument that to be spiritual is not synonymous

with participation in piteous, repulsive religions. The poem's field permits the divine to be sought in the unremarkable and crumbled. This makes spirituality an ontologically and ethically complicated subject full of distinctions.

Many poems in *Jejuri* stand out for their exploration of spiritual themes. One such poem is 'A Low Temple,' where Kolatkar contrasts the physical structure of the temple with the spiritual aspirations of the pilgrims:

"A low temple keeps its gods in the dark.  
You lend a matchbox to the priest.  
One by one the gods come to light.  
Amused bronze. Smiling stone. Unsure  
of itself. The roof could be anywhere." (Kolatkar 17)

The act of lighting the temple's gods symbolises the pilgrim's movement toward enlightenment and the gradual uncovering of spiritual truths. The gods are smiling stone, and amused bronze implies that the divine possesses a sense of humour and ambiguity – that the poet chose to downplay this aspect of faith reveals how Kolatkar's ideas on spirituality were characterised by ambiguity. The butterfly is free of the religious structure and calls to mind the beauty and simplicity of pure spiritual experiences unbound by religion. S. K. Desai says:

"Eliot mind is full of history, myth, legend and strong emotional attitudes, whereas Kolatkar's mind is free from knowledge which is always of the past, but fully engaged in the present with an implied convocation that simple, direct engagement with present is a way to truth." (Desai 65)

In *Jejuri*, Arun Kolatkar uses a critical approach to talk about religion and people's religious beliefs. Notably, in the poem "The Priest," Kolatkar focuses on the details describing how the priest performs his job. It is important to note that the poem "The Priest" represents a vivid depiction and would be a visible criticism of the commercialisation of religion. In other words, the priest has no feelings toward the religious ritual; his primary concern is his leisure or whether a meal will be supplied that day. The priest's main task is to ensure his comfort, and if the pilgrims do not hinder him, they may find some comfort while lying down around the priest. Kolatkar's poem "The Priest" reveals the insincerity of performing such rites that the faithful can follow as a duty, not having received spiritual benefits from them. In "The Priest," Kolatkar writes:



“An offering of heel and haunch  
on the cold altar of the culvert wall  
the priest waits  
Is the bus a little late?  
The priest wonders.  
Will there be a puran poli in his plate?  
With a quick intake of testicles  
at the touch of the rough cut, dew drenched stone  
he turns his head in the sun  
to look at the long road winding out of sight  
with the evenlessness  
of the fortune line on a dead man’s palm.” (Kolatkar 10)

The attention release by the priest to the everyday things in the hope of the arrival of the meal instead of to comprehension of God reflects skepticism because the author indicates that the priest is waiting for the meal in the house of the God and Kolatkar states that “I poise my sword and lance in murder mile For to-morrow I dine at the house of the Lord.” The everyday anticipation of food is never part of the praying process. Considering that in the novel the poet is noted to use irony and comedy as avenues for expressing skepticism, in the poem “The Priest’s Son,” the poet allows for a debate with the son of the priest without realisation of the spiritual sense of the debate. In “The Priest’s Son,” Kolatkar presents the following exchange:

“these five hills  
are the five demons  
that khandoba killed  
says the priest’s son  
a young boy  
who comes along as your guide  
as the schools have vacations  
do you really believe that story  
you ask him  
he doesn’t reply  
but merely looks uncomfortable  
shrugs and looks away

and happens to notice  
a quick wink of a movement  
in a scanty patch of scruffy dry grass  
burnt brown in the sun  
and says  
look  
there's a butterfly." (Kolatkar 26)

On the one hand, the boy's passage from the grand religious myth to the natural notice regarding a butterfly can be regarded as ironic. The feeling of awkwardness and refusal to answer whether the story is true, presents the manifestation of skepticism toward the story that is hardly appropriate in the religious dialogue. On the other hand, the tale about the butterfly follows the piece regarding Khandoba's victory, which can be viewed as a juxtaposition displacing the meaning of both parts. As a result, the trivial notice about the insect strongly contrasts with the solemn account regarding the great hero, which can be seen as Kolatkar's device to emphasise the criticism of the unquestioning acceptance of myths. Kolatkar's skepticism permeates several poems in " ", where he employs a variety of literary devices to question religious beliefs and practices. One significant passage is from the poem "The Priest":

"The sun takes up the priest's head  
and pats his cheek  
familiarily like the village barber.  
The bit of betel nut  
turning over and over on his tongue  
is a mantra.  
It works.  
The bus is no more just a thought in his head.  
It's now a dot in the distance  
and under his lazy lizard stare  
it begins to grow  
slowly like a wart upon his nose." (Kolatkar 10)

In this passage, the sun functions as a spuriously effective barber. In the same way, the sun is the priest's barber, and it seems to be fulfilling the priest's spiritual needs through work with his razor. This is probably to show that the priest's work, which is supposed to be spiritual, is being reduced to a routine, physical indulgence needing the intervention of the sun's rays, a physical object. The sun works with a mantra. A mantra is supposed to be a spiritual tool. However, it is used here as a tired, overused, meaningless object that would help the priest when he tries to shave, and it is not necessarily spiritual. This also trivialises the mantra, as using it cannot be productive. The sun grew up to make the bus like a wart growing on the priest's nose. The priest also performs sacred duties, but from the poet's angle, these do not help anything, as the sun works on the priest's nostrils. This is also being used to trivialise the priest's work. Another example is found in "The Priest's Son":

“and happens to notice  
a quick wink of a movement  
in a scanty patch of scruffy dry grass  
burnt brown in the sun  
and says  
look  
there's a butterfly.” (Kolatkar 26)

Here, the poet criticises the religious story's rigidity and seriousness by contrasting it with a loose, never-ending simile. He emphasises the gap between religious symbolism and reality, aligning with his skepticism toward religious and cultural patterns.

In his *Jejuri*, Arun Kolatkar delves into the depth of the antagonisms between the spiritual and the skeptical, using many poetical devices and philosophical points to establish the connection between different polarities of faith, ritual, and skepticism. The following section will examine potential points at which faith and skepticism might converge and diverge in the text, analyse the spiritual evolution that the protagonists undergo, and dwell on how Kolatkar balances the power of the two and how the two dimensions overlap in 'Jejuri'. In *Jejuri*, Kolatkar often represents the moments at which the spiritual and the skeptical intersect, providing exciting insights into the nature of religious experience. One notable example is found in the poem "The Butterfly":

“There is no story behind it.  
It is split like a second.  
It hinges around itself.  
It has no future.  
It is pinned down to no past.  
It’s a pun on the present.  
It’s a little yellow butterfly.  
It has taken these wretched hills under its wings.  
Just a pinch of yellow,  
it opens before it closes and closes before it opens.  
Where is it?” (Kolatkar 27)

In this poem, the butterfly symbolises transient and ephemeral spiritual experiences. As it has such a short life on earth, not being able to hold anything past or gather anything that is on its way, faith is transient, too; it cannot be possessed or caught. The melancholic mood of the poem invokes readers to reflect on such a fleeting and imminent part of our lives, one that cannot be held and trapped. Spiritual experiences always slip from our hands – this is the message of the verse. This moment is characteristic in that spiritual experience is always bound to slip away, and it closely interacts with the doubt that Kolatkar puts into his depiction of religious practices. In contrast, “The Temple Rat” depicts a scene of everyday religious life with a tone of detached observation:

“The temple rat uncurls its tail  
from around the longer middle prong.  
Oozes halfway down the trident  
like a thick gob of black blood.  
Stops on the mighty shoulder  
of the warrior god  
for a quick look around.  
A ripple in the divine muscle.  
Scarce a glance  
at the fierce eyes and the war paint  
on the face of Malhari Martand,  
and it’s gone.” (Kolatkar 40)

Here, an everyday rat is placed in contrast to the god-like symbolism of a temple, which reflects a split between the sacred and the mundane. Kolatkar presents the rat as apathetic towards God and indifferent to engaging with it, lying next to its painted counterpart, signifying mundanity besides religiosity, a skeptical sight for religious ceremonies maintained piously promoting sanctity. The protagonists in Kolatkar's 'Jejuri' are mostly portrayed as disinterested spectators wandering around the pilgrimage site with skepticism that is tempered by curiosity. In the poem "Chaitanya," Kolatkar portrays a legendary figure with a sense of indifference:

"A herd of legends  
on a hill slope  
looked up from its grazing  
when Chaitanya came in sight.  
The hills remained still  
when Chaitanya  
was passing by.  
A cowbell tinkled  
when he disappeared from view  
and the herd of legends  
returned to its grazing." (Kolatkar 49)

In this poem, Chaitanya plays a minor even superficial, role, representing that all great spiritual figures are ultimately engulfed as just another event in nature alongside time. It is a poem that spiritual people and their teaching may be just as fleeting and mundane as anything else in life. We skip over the grand spiritual quest, though there is much religiosity to be explored in Auschwitz, too. It's as if this idea finally struck me: Jejuri reads like an outsider looking into religious practice on his travels. This kind of subtle equilibrium Kolatkar approaches to spirituality and skepticism in *Jejuri* gives a nuanced cleansing of the web that makes up religious belief. His work is not a polemic against religion as much as it tries to study every aspect of all religions. This juxtaposition of faith and doubt echoes throughout the collection thematically.

For example, in "The Butterfly," the brief, ephemeral nature of the butterfly reflects the transient nature of spiritual experiences, suggesting that these moments of faith are fleeting and elusive (Kolatkar 27). This reflects a broader skepticism about the permanence and reliability

of spiritual experiences. Conversely, “The Temple Rat” offers a more direct critique of religious practices through the mundane actions of the rat in the temple. Kolatkar represents the rat in a way that makes it seem indifferent to sacred signs, thus undermining any real stake in religious customs and rituals and purported piousness of spiritual spaces (40).

This moment of doubt is the most prominent amid the spiritual dimensions throughout the pilgrimage, reinforcing a sense that the sacred and the profane are indeed nothing more than two sides of reality. These thematic considerations make Kolatkar a rich tapestry of spiritual introspection and critical reflection. He employs spirituality as a somewhat labyrinthine sensibility, involving skepticism and belief that readers are supposed to wrestle with not merely as an objective fact but also somewhat subjective and always on the move alongside other matters of a human being.

The importance of spirituality and skepticism in Jejuri is significant as it allows Kolatkar to establish a comprehensive view of religious experience. To a considerable extent, the pilgrimage serves as the framework within which the more profound philosophical questions about the nature of faith and the appropriateness of rituals are being addressed. Meanwhile, juxtaposing the moments of spiritual admiration to those of trivial skepticism, the author includes a dimension of everyday life; such an approach pertains to and to religion, which questions the modulus of typical religious experience. Therefore, skepticism goes alongside spirituality as this approach allows understanding that the modus of faith might be both meaningful, rich and light.

Kolatkar’s investigation into these themes relates to a more universal statement about the place of spiritual belief in contemporary society. He does not issue pat responses and accessible critiques. However, he gives us a torn quilt from his life to make us realise some of the tangled messiness of faith in general. The underlying assumption here is that spirituality, like humanity itself, is not a static graven thing but a purposeful dynamic, thus growing and changing. Kolatkar has also contributed to inventing themes, not just the spiritual and skeptical. His use of form and content is groundbreaking, influencing new poets to follow him. Through Jejuri, Kolatkar has shown that poetry can significantly explore and interrogate spiritual culture. M. K. Naik says, “Jejuri could have been a far more substantial achievement had the poet’s vision been less fragmentary and had he not remained content with scratching the surface of the problem.” (Naik 218) Through his work, he pushes us to struggle with it, forcing readers to a

severe critical question to arrive at a vibrant palette of faith in a contemporary context. To put it all together, Jejuri is probably the Kolatkar's poetical philosophy, the epitome of how he reflected deeply spiritual yet doubt-craving questions. Kolatkar's work still speaks volumes to its readers, affording them a deep consideration of religion in the modern world.

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