CHAPTER 4

Evolution of Balkavi as Poet

मी स्वच्छंदी, पुरता छंदी, धारी मी न कुणास
परी मोहिनी विविदूवणी सुष्टीता मी वास'

-- Balkavi in ‘मी’

The lines quoted above show Balkavi Thomre's Romantic cult of mind and his fascination for Nature; a Nature which has varied forms and features. This modern Marathi poet, though short-lived, established unparalleled rapport with Nature, which resulted in his poetic creations. Balkavi stands in modern Marathi Poetry as a Nature poet of renown who excelled in craftsmanship. He was a keen observer of Nature. He projected through his poems various elements in Nature. He was also a meditative thinker of the Marathi poetry of his time.

Balkavi had a very inconsistent education. He studied till intermediate and it was his deep interest in study of Sanskrit language and literature which helped him in his future writings.

4.1 Early Poetic Talent:

Born in a lower middle-class family from Maharashtra, Balkavi had a receptive mind. Gifted with a tender sensibility he began to write poems about beautiful nature-scenes quite lively. The first poem
‘चन्दकुंदा’ (Composed : 1903) is a fine example of this -

निंब, जांब, जांभूळ शेंदरी
तुवाली बहुतचि झाक मारी
पुढे पाहिली खेरी झाडे
जणू करती ना हात बाकडे
खांबा त्यांचा उंच बाढली
स्वर्गा कविकाया त्या बघली

Compoused at an age of thirteen, the poem has a telling evidence of the poetic calibre in the poet. The use of phrases such as ‘झाक मारी’, ‘कविकाया बघली’ show that the boy had a good sense of diction and word selection. The imaginative skill was at considerably high level as evinced in the lines -

जणू करती ना हात बाकडे, or
स्वर्गा कविकाया त्या बघली

The rhyme-arrangement and the syntactic discipline add to the quality of this first poem. Thus young Thomare's first poem has the seeds of a great nature poet in the making.

During the years of 1904 and 1905 Thomare had schooling at the ‘राष्ट्रीय पाठ्यालय’ of Shri Bhayyaraao Katkar. During the days he read the famous Sanskrit play 'Shankutal' by Kalidasa. His studied Ramdasas's famous 'Dasabodh' too. Thus young Thomare got good Knowledge of
Sanskrit language and religious Sanskrit literature. Some of his poems reveal influence of his Sanskrit studies.

At the age of Sixteen, the poet was sent by his father for socio-religious wanderings, with Ramchandrabuwa Vaidya. He travelled widely. He went to Ujjain, Agra, Mathura, Srinagar etc. with the aged man. Sudden death of Ramchandrabuwa caused him to cut short his tour and made him return to Erandol. During the wanderings Thomare had a good oppornity of writing on patriotic topics. Ramchandrabuwa gave him a good deal of opportunity to compose verse on varied topics for rendering them in their public performances. An example of Thomare's composition at the time is worth quoting --

अंधारामवणूकी प्रक्रियाकरणे चैतन्य वाहत्रिवियन
आला भूमिवरि, अपार जमली सर्वेच्छरची दया
माहा भारत एकलाचि तिजला हा पारखा जाहला
शंका ये तुजला अशी तरी कशी, आत्म्वि वाटे मला
नाही भारत बीन दुर्बल जरी माहा मला अप्रिय
भी न्यायप्रिय देव मारिन पहा आला तयाचे भय’’

In, the year 1906 his poem ‘मुलांस उपदेस’ was published in the weekly ‘देशकलचर्तमान’. The year 1907 was a year of great significance in the poet's career. Tryambak Thomare recited his freshly composed poem in the Kavisammelan held at Jalgaon in March 1907. The poem began as follows --
The effect of the poem was so gripping that the lovers of Marathi poetry present at the venue gave a thundrous applause to this poem. The thought expressed in this poem is humble as well as of introspective vein. The shows the maturity in Thomare at a young age of Sixteen. The guests of honour were so pleased with the young poet that the Chairman of function Dr. K.R. Kirtikar honoured Thomare with the title Balkavi. A great poet-in-making was applauded and felicitated on the grand occasion.

4.2 Influence of Rev. Tilak and Keshavsuta:

Balkavi received scholarship of ten rupees per month from Dr. Keertikar. He was instructed to stay with well known poet. Rev. Narayan W. Tilak for academic development. He began staying with the Tilaks in early days of 1910. Tilak gives an intimate description of Balkavi's temper at that time. Tilak writes:

"बलकवीना आंशिकी विल्पम काऱ्युपार्मेण श्रृंख क्रतिगामुक्ते विंता करी भ्रमिण निष्कारण सुखा जिवाला केंद्राल्पार्मेत् विज्ञानवर्ग होकन बस्माच्या विकार जंलण होता. परंतु नगरस्फ स्थानिकी आशावादी व विनोदी मिश्रित गराडा फटलेला अस्तित्वामुक्तेत ल्याची ही वृत्ति सुवार्ताचा चालण होती." 1
This description is self-speaking as far as Balkavi's highly sentimental nature was concerned. All members of the Tilak family treated the poet affectionately. Tilak's wife Laxmibai loved Thomare with a mother's heart. Once when the poet fell ill with typhoid, she nursed him painstakingly.

In the company of Tilak's son Deodatta, Balkavi spent many happy moments. Some of the poems like 'निःसर', were written by him when he visited Mahabaleshwar with Deodatta Tilak. The poem 'निःसर' is a fine example of 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.'

गिरिश्चक्षरं वनमालाहि
दरीदरी धुमवित वेई !
कदवालसनि धेरून उडया
खेळ लतावलयी फुंटया.

झोप कोपुनी तुला तरी,
हांस लाडक्या ! नाच करी.
वालज्ञर तू बालगुणी
बाल्यचि रे ! भरिसी भूरनी !

The poem depicts the brook as seen and perceived by Balkavi. The brook gives the poet immense joy, so much so that he calls him the 'very life of the Muse of Poesy'.
Once Balkavi was asked to explain Tilak's famous poem 'वनवासी फूल' before the students of the 'Divinity School' of Ahmadnagar. He explained quite authoritatively the deeper meaning of the poem; in the presence of Rev. Tilak himself. He spoke on the two human natures naturally 'will to work' (प्रबृत्ति) and 'life of renunciation from work' (निर्बृत्ति). He pleaded that devotion to work is greater than retiring from work. The speech was remarkable. Tilak's comment on the event is worth quoting -

"'वनवासी फूल' हे इतके सुंदर काव्य असेल, अरे मला तरी आजपर्यंत वाटले नव्हते. महाराष्ट्रातील रसिक वगने याचे जे एकत्रे कोणते कला ते च्या योग्य आहे. ठोराने या अल्पवट 'उच्च दर्जंगा कवि असल्यास तो कवीच्या अंतःकरणाच्या आरपर ज्ञानार मनुष्य आहे, यांचा शंका नाही.'" ²

The two lines of the poem

प्रेमनाम जगदीश फुला रे ! काय आणखी सांगू ?
पुरे करी वनवास, याहीनी काय दुःखे मी मागू ?

were aptly paraphrased by Balkavi on that day. In this context M.V. Rajadhyaksha writes -

नगरच्या Divinity School मध्ये ही साक्षी वेळोश आनंदात
Tilak's friend Winslo's letter is worth quoting here:

Narayan Waman Tilak once said to me that Balkavi could interpret his poetry better than he could interpret it himself; and indeed his command of language, his power of interpreting every shade of nicety of phrase were superb. A lesson with him was nothing less than adventures and he left one with his appetite whetted for more. Under his tuition, learning of Marathi was not only a delicious pastime but an intellectual treat.

His critical faculty in analysing other poet's poems is quite evident. Similarly in some of his prose writings Balkavi has given his views on Poetry, especially modern Marathi Poetry. The built-up of his famous poem 'कवि' is similar to 'खऱे पुढ़ारी' of N.V. Tilak. Similarly the oft-repeated words in Tilak's poetry such as 'सुष्टीसती', 'शुक्लता', 'शुक्ली' are found in Bakavi's poems. The fact that since Balkavi stayed with Tilak family at Ahmadnagar for a considerably long time, some of his poetic
compositions naturally manifest the influence of Tilak.

**Keshavsuta** was the pioneer of moder of Marathi poetry. He had a Romantic poetic vision. In Balkavi's poetry, we can discern manifestations of Keshavsuta's poetic vision. In this respect D.K. Bedekar observes:

‘केशवसुतांत्वा व्यापक संबंधोला वस्तुवस्तूमध्ये सायंदर्य
जरी जाणवले, तरी ते गाँठ आलिंगिता आले नाही.
बालकर्नीनाच ती स्पर्शाचन समाधी लाभली.’

In Keshavsuta's poems there is abundance of creative myths. In fact 'imagination' is a significant device in many of his poems. Poems such as 'रवि', 'रूपित' show this faculty. Since Balkavi was a great admirer and reader of Keshavsuta this trait of Keshavsuta's poetry has influenced Balkavi too. For example poems like 'तारकाणे गाणे', 'अस्त्रण', 'भूलराणी', 'संग्रामरणी' contain tales of poetic imagination wherein the main characters are elements in Nature. With reference to Balkavi's utter faith in Keshavsuta's quality and image as a poet an event may not be out-of-place here. As quoted by K.B. Marathe, this incident throws light on Balkavi's respect for Keshavsuta as a great poet. During his stay at Pune in reaction to a young poet's derogatory remarks on Keshavsuta's poetry Balkavi said:

‘...ज्ञानेशून्यगातु विश्व निर्माण केले, नसत्यातुन अरसतेपणा
दाखलका त्या महादेवाता तुष्कन मूर्ख लोक देता यात याता काप म्हणावे.'
The fact that Balkavi joined a group of poets called ‘छत्तारी मंडळ’ comprising Gadkari, Karkhanis, Tipnis and others at Punc also proves his reverence for Keshavsuta. In this context Marathe comments -

“हे मंडळ केशवसुत कवीकः क्षमरार्थ स्थापन आश्लेषे असल्यामुळे बालकरीणा त्याचा विलक्षण अभिमान होता.”

As opined by late Ramesh Tendulkar -

“माइचा मते, केशवसुताची कामगिरी ही, की त्याच्या प्रभावाने बालकरीणा निरङ्गित एक तरल आणि रोमांटिक सौदर्यानाच्या शिलालेली गैली.”

This Romantic association was very much responsible for the creation of Balkavi's delicate and picturesque Nature poems. If Govindagraj (Ram Ganesh Gadkari) continued the tradition of Keshavsuta's love-poems, Balkavi continued and developed the poetic art of composing refreshing Nature lyrics. Contemporary poets such as Kavi Vinayak, Chandrashekhar, Govindagraj by virtue of their meetings, academic talks
and interaction of individual poems, also sparsely influenced Balkavi in respect of poetry composition.

Considering all factors it could be argued that Balkavi's poetic cult developed prominently on the direction showed by Keshavsvut and it blossomed in the interactive association of the Tilak family, especially in the shade of paternal care of Rev. Tilak.

4.3 Balkavis' Stay at Pune

After staying with the Tilaks and spending happy and gay moments in his life, Balkavi left Ahmadnagar for Pune in 1911. It was his letter of request to Shri N.C. Kelkar (Editor, Daily Kesari) which caused him to go to Pune. In Pune his companionship with Gdakari, Kolhatkar, Apte sharpened his poetic skills. During his brief stay in Pune, he wrote 'संक्रांत', 'कवी', 'बर्मबीर' and 'अस्त्र'. The poem 'अस्त्र' was composed as a result of simultaneous attempt by three poets (viz. Balkavi, Govindagraj and Kavi Shriram) to write on one common topic - the rising Sun. Balkavi used to attend meetings of upcoming poets at the residence of अन्नतनय. In those days Balkavi wrote an elaborately article entitled 'आधुनिक कविताचे जनक' (the Fathers of Modern Poetry) in the 'Kesari' daily. This article was a subject of talk of the Marathi literary circle at Pune. There were some articles of reaction in daily 'Kesari' after the publication of Balkavi's above referred article. Balkavi's capacity of analysing the position of contemporary modern Marathi poetry and his minute observation about subtleties of Marathi poetry are evident from the article. Thus Balkavi could benefit
from his stay at Pune. But if studied closely we see that he could write only one Nature poem (‘अरुण’) during the stay. On the contrary he wrote ‘धर्मवीर’ a poem based on religious and philosophic theme and two long prose articles. It shows that the urban environment and worldly liabilities of his younger brother Baburao and sister Kokila made him curb his natural instinct for composing poems. In the absence of conducive environment, his creation of Nature lyrics was restricted. Though the stay at Pune gave Balkavi an opportunity of interaction with many famous persons, from purely literary point of view, it proved to be less productive than his stay at Jalgaon or Ahmadnagar.

4.4 His Child Poetry:

Balkavi had a natural inclination for writing lyric poetry. The poem entitled ‘लहान मुलांस उपदेश’ was published in the periodical ‘देशस्थानवतमान’ in 1906.

He had an inherent emotional link with children and their emotional world. Childrens' dreams, games, demands and aspirations, emotional ups and downs are beautifully dealt with in his songs for kids. For instance, his ‘चांदोबा मनला वैई’ depicts a child's attraction for the moon. The child says to his mother -

मला दली, चांदोबा देथिल
ललायचा नाठी मी पलभल
The poem is well-rhymed and has musical element. More than this, it reflects the child's considerate and loving nature. The child tells his mother that if she gives the Moon to it, it would not weep anymore and would be satisfied playing with the priceless toy. The poem also expresses the element of wonder and even possible comradeship of the child with the moon. Thus Balkavi unfolds various child-emotions such as wonder, playfulness, possessiveness, sense of friendliness etc.

His another poem ‘रागोवा आला’ delineates his imaginative faculty which happens to be one of the strengths of Balkavis poetry. He writes:

रागोवा आला आला
गडे आमुच्या लाईला
पुंगले गं पुंगले गाल
पूळ झाले माझे लाल
       . . . . . .
हसली गं, हसली लाई
हे फूलही हसले बाई
ऊन पाउस ही एक गढ़े
एक ताईवे हसे रहँ

(‘रागोबा आला’)

The imagery of the sun and shower to describe the smile and pathos of the girl is ingenious and effective. The girl's world of experience is imaginatively poeticised by Balkavi, in this child-song.

Balkavi had seen the Christian missionaries closely. Children's world and child psychology has a prominent place in the missionary culture. Balkavi's sensitive mind must have been influenced by such kind of atmosphere at Nagar. This may be one of the reasons for the considerable number of poems for the kids, by Balkavi.

His ‘निजलेल्या मुलास’ is a famous child-poem depicting various regular activities in Nature. Balkavi appeals the sleeping boy to wake up and enjoy various joyful activities in the natural surrounding. It reflects the poet's minute observation of Natural phenomena. So also, the emotional link between man's mind and the daily activities in the world of Nature is also hinted at, in this poem:

पाहत लाहू गोविलांचा नाया भाऊ
केवळ हथलो केवळ ललतो
depicts the intentional and unintentional gestures of a very young child-boy as seen by his elder brother.

When Balkavi was engaged as teacher of the missionaries at Ahmadrnager he wrote his 'चिमणीचा घरटा जोरीस गेला.' It was inspired from an English poem entitled 'Who Stole the Bird’s Nest?' by Ela W. Wilcox. The English poem begins as follows:

Tir-whit, tir-whit, tir-whee,
Will you listen to me?
Who stole four eggs I laid
and the nice nest I made?

The theme in brief is that a sparrow’s nest is stolen. The sparrow enquires about it with a crow, a cow, a hen, a dog etc., but in vain. In the end, when a parrot suggests the sparrow to occupy its cage, she refuses and says:

जठो तुझा पिंजरा मेला, त्याचे नावहि नको मेला
राहीन भी घरटाविना! चिमणी उडून गेली राणा.

The sparrow’s love for a free, independent life is underlined. The poet also suggests the value of freedom. In the words of Damayanu
Pandharipande - "वालकबीव्य चार पाच बालगीतापकी की कविता सर्वत्र उक्त कविता म्हणजे येईल."

Any body would agree with the critic, as the poem unfolds the bird's preference for homeless life for the sake of liberty. Balkavi indirectly preaches the reader-children, the value of self-reliance, self-respect and freedom.

Balkavi has also written some more poems titled 'घोडा घोडा', 'माझा भाऊ', 'बसेत' etc. His child-poems are not only refreshing and entertaining for children, but some-times thought-provoking too. The inherent child-like nature of Balkavi is reflected in most of his child songs. It would not be out of place here to say that though Wordsworth has not composed poems for children, he has appreciated children's mental aptitude by saying -'Child is the father of the Man.'

We tend to agree with M.S. Patil's view that Balkavis' poetic world is regulated by child-related concepts. 'बालकवी जीवनसङ्ख्या' हे बालस्वरूप संख्ये नियत झळेले आहे."

4.5 Balkavis Nature Poems:

As he is famous for, Balkavis poems on Nature are the chief creations in his literary career. Balkavi was basically a cheerful and humorous person. But at times, he used to lapse into melancholy. His Nature poems may be divided into three broad groups. First, his poems depicting the beauty and various subtle phenomena in Nature. Poems like
अर्थात, संध्याराजनी, मधुरामिनी, तारकांचे गाणे, श्रावणमास, तपास असतो तर, आनंदी
आनंद गडे were the poems reflecting the poet's intense love for the
beautiful in Nature, and also his passion for union between the heaven and
the earth, his faith in the universal values such as love, peace, grandeur and
sacredness and personification of some elements in Nature. In this
respect T.V. Sardeshmukh observes:

"ही केवळ सृष्टीच्या नाहीत तर कविवद्वाची संवेदनाच्ये
आहेत." (These are not only the nature-pictures, but are profound
sensibility images of the poet's heart.)

The observation is quite apt. In the context of Nature poetry of Balkavi
Dr. G.N. Deshpande (a retired Professor of Marathi) of Yavatmal
comments:

केशवभूतानी निसर्गकविता मराठीत रूढ केली. एक अर्थांने समग्र मराठी
कवितेल त्यांनी परिवर्तन आपले. मराठी कवितेला प्रडविलेली निसर्गांचे दर्शन हे त्याचे
एक अंग होय. युडे या माण्यविल्ल बालकवीची लक्षणीय यश मिळवून वाटवाल केली.
निसर्ग कवितेचे त्याचे प्रभावी चित्रण (व्यंग्या व्यतिरिक्त फासे कुणी केले नाही. निसर्गाला
पाहताना माणसांचे दर्शन देख्याची बालकवीची उद्दी महत्वाची आहे. वानंतर अलिकडव्या
काळातील अशाच प्रुळीती निसर्गकवी नमुना नाही. महानौर यांचे नाव ध्यायेला लागेलः।

In the second type of Balkavi's poems the poet's
personal experience and Romantic aspiration is revealed. Before
commenting on the poetry of this period, his personal life should be
looked into. His father died suddenly in 1908. His mother asked him to marry within a short period. After marriage, Balkavi had to shoulder the household responsibilities. His elder brother was engaged in the National freedom movement. Balkavi's financial condition was also not sound. In such circumstances of unsound financial position, strained relations with elder brother and his quarrelsome wife, and unsteady professional life, his weak health resulted in his poems of reflection of worldly worries and dualistic outlook in life. His poems such as 'बालविहर', 'आनंदी पक्षी', 'पाखरास', 'यमाचे दूत' show this sense of feeding-up with sufferings and sorrows in daily human life. He says:

भवदुःखाया अनंत होऱ्री परि बुडतों पाही,
शांति मिळेना क्षणभर जीवा विषांती नाही.
काव्यदेवता अंतरली मज गरिबाला आज
काळ लोटला धाय किंती मन वरिताहे लाज.

(बालविहर, II 31-34)

The poet makes a direct mention of the harsh circumstantial compulsions which result into the poet's mind becoming a vacuum:

परिस्थितीची कठोर भूते,
क्षणत करती शून्य मनाते,
पूर्वस्मृति मग ताजी होते,
जठळे त्यांत हृदयाचे होउनि भूत

(यमाचे दूत II 9-12)
In his ‘कविताओं’ he has described the mundane life of people of the time. become images of people fed up with the trials and turbulations of the time. Wordsworth’s ‘The world is too much with us’, holds true with the characters portrayed in the poem by Balkavi:

काठाय्या आवर्तति भोवंडून गिरके ध्यावे,
चाचपतां अंधारात ठंबालूनि विक्वल बहावे.

(कविताओं II 71-74)

It is clear that the poet, in such desperate moments remembers the by-gone pleasing moments. Balkavis’ age around this time was 19-20 years. It is quite natural that his mind should be unable to cope with the sorrowful situations in life. Generally a young man of this age is engaged in taking college education. He enjoys the sweet moments of cheerful life of youth. Unfortunately, it was not the case with Balkavi. The emotional strife is evident in his poems of this period.

The third type of poems gives its readers agnostic, meditative and philosophical poems. Balkavi’s ‘हद्याची गुंतागुंत’, ‘संशय’, ‘उदासीनता’, ‘निराशा’ ‘अनंत’, ‘जिज्ञासु’ give us an idea that the poet was caught in dilemma about the choice between the life of pleasures ‘अनुराग’ and that of withdrawal from worldly passion (वैराग्य). He is unsure of both - of the life of faith and the life of faithlessness.
The poet is also not sure about the 'so-called help by God' in his life beyond death.

The poem titled 'संशय' expresses the poet's skepticism about the expected aid from God to whom the poet had offered his prayers, in his life. In his 'उदासीनता' Balkavi asks himself, as to whence the melancholy comes and grieves his heart:

In 'अण्णत', Balkavi has given his concept of infinity. In his view, the sky is the store-room of the Universe and is also the sea of 'Sublimity'.
He feels that in such a grand and wide Universe human existence is very trifle. Hence he gives a useful advice to 'man' not to consider himself indispensible and someone great -

‘मी’ ‘माझे’ या वृक्ष कल्पना तू कोणाचा कोण?  
कितेक गेले भी भे म्हणतां या चक्री विरून.  
(‘अनंत’, िल 19,20)

In ‘विज्ञानु’ (The Inquisitive) the poet confesses that he is a very weak and humble man who is fed up of wandering towards the Joyful things in life. He asks:

खराचुरू आनंद असो, की सर्वाच आभास?  
पडले कोडे लागे वेजे विच रंगवास?  
(‘जिज्ञासु’ िल 7,8)

In connection with the state of completeness of Balkavi’s poetry, Ramesh Tendulkar writes:

वालकीवीची कविता पूर्णांवस्तेला गेली असल्याचा अभिग्राम नाट्यछायाकार 
दिवाकरांनी त्यांच्या काळात आपल्या डावरीत लिहून ठेवला होता.13

मृत्त अभिग्राम असा -

“त्यांची (वालकीवीची) कविता पूर्णांवस्तेला गेली होती, केशवसुतांची 
मात्र पोहोचायची होती.”14
Above quoted compliment of Marathi playwright Diwakar is very significant. It gives us a clue and an impetus to look into Balkavi's poetry during the last few years of his life. There is definitely, a change in Balkavi's attitude of looking at things around him. The intense feelings expressed in Balkavi's lines such as 'आनंदाचा मागे वणवण दमलों भट्टून' ('जिजासु'), or 'उद स जीवन कंठायाते मग काही नाही' ('जिजासु'), or 'जेक्का झापड चेउनी जनि मनी अंधार सारा भरे - तेक्क कोण कोिरल सोबत मला हा प्रम्ब चितळतारी, भी पाहे पुणेल युनुस पुनःपुनरथी, अंधार सारा परी!' ('संदेश') show that he had played up his part in this world. In early poems he sang the joyous songs in praise of the beautiful and the grand in Nature. So also when he experienced the harsh realities in life, he released the pressure created by his heartfelt emotions, as it were, through his highly subjective poetical utterances. But when these harsh realities were too much with him, he seems to have decided to tread a different path. It was an attempt to seek the ultimate, i.e. the much-required solace for his perturbed soul. Since he had studied various Indian books on mythology as well as philosophy such as - the Bhagwadgeeta, the Dyaneshwari, Dasabodh, the Ramayana, his mind had developed a spiritual cult. During his life's last few days he had felt that someone should help him spiritually. His 'spirits' were yearning intensely to have such a 'saviour':

मज अ्यर्थ नको ती अमरपणची गाथी
कुण उठवा असल्या महानाथनि हलवानी
तू तुम्हारे कर उद्धार बोले हे कल्याणी,
परंतु सहायता या वृत्ति मर्यादा तवभमतः

(हयाची गुलाब)

But he did not get this help. One of the reasons might be that it was not destined. Though he could not achieve that solace (or some human source of that solace) we can say that his poetry had reached a definite stage. A stage, from where man can devote his remaining life for attaining the 'One'. In this sense it could be argued that Balkavi's poetry had reached a state of completeness - especially Balkavi's Nature poetry.

The words in the above quoted lines - ‘वृत्ति मर्यादा तवभमतः’ imply the intensity of his search for that 'solace'. In one of devotional prayers, the great Saint Ramdas writes:

कल्याण करी रामराय, रामराया

.......

तवभमत तवभम तौलदिच आइहे

हे जन हति धरी, दयाणा

.......

दास महणे, आपणे केले, पावले

दयेसी नाही सरी, दयाणा
The meaning of the word तरक्कळ in Molesworth's Marathi - English Dictionary is given thus:

1. Restlessness through pain; feverish disquietude bodily or mental.

2. Anxious eagerness

The meaning 'mental disquietude' applies in the context of Balkavi's तरक्कळ. This disquietude was due mostly to his frustration in the worldly life. Similarly the second meaning 'anxious eagerness' might also be one of the mental state through which Balkavi might have passed.

It is human to have a yearning for the Ultimate (the Almighty). But such intense yearning is found in only some fortunate few. Balkavi had begun to feel such yearning. Of such 'fortunate few' people, only those who are supremely fortunate few obtain 'Guru' (the सदुत्तर) in life. It was not to be with Balkavi, as his life came to an end abruptly. But doubtless, he had started to experience this 'eagerness' for some solace in life. This is evident in his letters written to his brotherly friend Sonalkar about an unseen lady called 'Rama'. He writes some of his few poems under the name 'रमाईचा बाळ' (the enderead child of mother Rama).

Balkavi was eager to see the lady personally (at Jalgaon) but had to defer his planned viz. to Jalgaon many a time, because of his professional engagements. Thus we could infer that Balkavi (as a person)
was standing at a point in life which could well have been a turning point in his personal as well as poetic life.

It is evident from his poems as well as his letters written to his friends that by this time, he was searching for a 'solace' in life. An unseen woman (unseen by Balkavi) called 'रमा' could have been this person. He was very eager and impatient to see her personally. Their first meeting and future would-be meetings could have well been a turning point in his life, but it was not to be. He was proceeding to Jalgaon to see the woman personally. In his hurried walk near Bhadali Railway Station, he slipped and was hit by a running Goods train and died on the spot. Thus his doubts and skeptical thoughts expressed in his poems met an untimely end. In this respect, famous Marathi playwright and poet V.V. Shirwadkar (Kusumagraj) writes:

तो अपघात होता की आत्मघात ?

The untimely demise of Balkavi was a loss to the field of Modern Marathi poetry. But the progression of his poetry clearly reflects Balkavi's change from an extrovert to introvert.

**Balkavi and Mardhekar:** In recent past, critic and scholar of English and Marathi B.S. Mardhekar has made a re-evaluation of Balkavi's greatness as poet. In his essay 'वाह्यमहत्ता' he has put forth the theory of emotional equivalence in regard to newness of poetry. He says-- "
(emotional equivalence) स्थापित करने हेतु कविता के अनुभूति व्यवहार के प्रकार हेतु ".

Applying this theory to an excerpt from Balkavi’s poem मीहिनी he argues

“कविता विशिष्ट अनुभूति च स्वरूप अ = ब असे असते.याचे एक साहे उत्कारण म्हणजे उपमा. लुकलुकणारी तारका म्हणजे लुकलुकणारी तारका एकविच कठी नसलेल्या व्यक्तिची अनुभूती. पण लुकलुकणारी तारका = अध्यात्मिक तंत्रीतली बालिका असे स्वरूप ज्या अनुभूती ती कविची अनुभूती. महून तिचा अतिप्पार ‘तंत्रीतल अध्यात्मिकासे ! लुकलुकण तारारणी ! ’ असा बालकबळ्या काव्यपंक्तीतला

…… लुकलुकणात तारकेवीण ऐकू येणारा भावनासूर आणि अध्यात्मिक तंत्रीतला बालिकेचा स्वप्नातला भावनासूर ते अलग बीता कितीही आलढावाच्या असले तरी ल्यावा काव्य नाही. हे काव्य उत्सव होते ते ब्या शीन वेशांत संस्थावात (equivalence) प्रस्थापित केल्यानंतर.” (सीदर्श आणि साहित्य,मर्गकर,बा.सी. पृ.135)

In case of Balkavi’s ‘बैडवालितल रात्र’ also, Mardhekar applies his three rules of ‘Rhythm in a poem’ The potential quality of expansive words (such as उनाड, ओसाड, दाटला, धरे , पडल्या) in the poem gives the poem’s meaning a kind of depth. (सीदर्श आणि साहित्य,मर्गकर,बा.सी. पृ.108)

This is an original linguistic re-interpretation of Balkavi’s literary greatness.
Conclusion:

Balkavi's poetic genius was discovered by Rev. Tilak and Dr. Keertikar when the poet was very young. It facilitated the talented poet to develop his poetic art. The beautiful landscapes in the Khandesh and Satara district inspired Balkavi to compose wonderful and melodious Nature poems.

The poems of the middle part of Balkavi's poetic career reveal his realization of the contrast between the pure and untainted world of elements in Nature and the worldly human life full of sorrow. The reflective poems of the last poetic period of Balkavi show his mysticism and agnosticism.
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